

Queensland



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[Hansard]

Legislative Assembly

THURSDAY, 10 NOVEMBER 1932

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The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: I feel that, as the Committee has already spent two days in debating the question of freehold versus leasehold tenure, any remarks hon. members may make this morning will be practically a rehash of what has already been said.

Only one principle is involved in the Bill—the reinstitution of the leasehold tenure. Everyone must be of the opinion that that is right and necessary.

The wisdom of perpetual leasehold as against freehold has been admitted by most authorities. It is generally recognised that, in the last analysis, the State must have control of all land. If ever there was a time in the history of Queensland when that principle should be put into practice, it is now, because any hon. member with any degree of fairness who surveys the situation to-day, more particularly from the unemployment aspect, must realise that, if the State has control of all the land in Queensland, it can go a long way towards ameliorating present day conditions.

The Government have done a lot of good since they attained office, but what is preventing them from doing even more good is the fact that a good deal of the land is held under the freehold tenure. If freehold titles had not been given I venture to suggest that the situation of the unemployed would have been considerably eased, because the Government would be able to do tenfold what they are doing to-day. Any person with any degree of fairness will realise that, if no freehold tenures had been given in the past, Queensland would have been an immeasurably better State to-day.

When the Crown grants land under the leasehold tenure it reserves certain rights to the person who takes up the land. No matter by whom the land is held, equitable conditions obtain under the leasehold system.

The State is interested in effective land settlement, and, if people will only disassociate themselves from party shibboleths and understand the true position, they will admit that the State can only bring about effective land settlement under the leasehold system. No matter what the type of lease may be, leasehold is the only system that gives the State an opportunity to secure effective settlement. As every authority on the subject has stated, the form of tenure does not increase productivity, and it must be generally admitted that the freehold system simply gives an advantage to the speculator.

The ex-Treasurer went back a few years yesterday when referring to the history of workers' dwellings. I, too, have gone into the past to see what pearls of wisdom I could find regarding land tenures. Although the remarks have been quoted previously, I intend to requote them to-day, because they are the remarks of a gentleman, now dead, who is hailed as one of the greatest men that Queensland ever produced. I refer to the late Sir Samuel Griffith, who in his time did a great deal of good for Queensland. That learned gentleman said that, if he had the opportunity over again as head of a Government, he would not allow the alienation of a single acre of land. I commend those remarks to hon. members opposite. Let them disregard the views of hon. members on this side and consider for the moment the views of that learned gentleman, who achieved

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Mr. SPEAKER (Hon. G. Pollock, *Gregory*) took the chair at 10.30 a.m.

QUESTION.

TRUST AND LOAN FUND RECEIPTS AND PUBLIC CASH BALANCES TO 31ST OCTOBER.

Mr. MOORE (*Aubigny*): I desire to ask the Treasurer if he can give me a reply to the following question which I addressed to him on Tuesday last:—

"1. What amounts were remitted abroad towards overseas interest payments in October, 1931, and 1932, respectively?"

"2. What were the respective costs of making such remittances, including exchange?"

The TREASURER (Hon. W. Forgan Smith, *Mackay*) replied—

"I gave the information to the hon. member last night."

Mr. MOORE: No, you did not.

LAND ACTS AMENDMENT BILL.

INITIATION IN COMMITTEE.

(*Mr. Hanson, Buranda, in the chair.*)

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS (Hon. P. Pease, *Herbert*) [10.54 a.m.]: I move—

"That it is desirable that a Bill be introduced to amend 'The Land Acts, 1910 to 1931,' and other Acts in certain particulars."

I do not expect there will be very much debate on this Bill.

Mr. BRAND: You are optimistic this morning.

fame both in the political and the legal spheres.

Mr. NIMMO: What are you quoting from?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: I am quoting from "Hansard."

Mr. NIMMO: Where?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: I suggest that the hon. member look it up. Will the hon. member deny that the late Sir Samuel Griffith did say that? I commend the remarks to the hon. member, who doubtless knows that the late Sir Samuel Griffith was at one time Premier and also Chief Justice of Queensland. That is what he said.

Mr. DEACON: Where and when? (Interruption.)

The CHAIRMAN: Order!

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: I hope that will sink into hon. members. (Further interruption.)

The CHAIRMAN: Order! Order!

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: If hon. members have not read that, they are certainly not politicians. If they wish to be successful politicians, they should bring themselves up to date, and they should certainly have read everything said by their previous leader. If a survey is made of the older countries of the world, it will be found that they provide examples of all the abuses and vices of freehold tenure and landlordism. Everybody knows that, and it is not necessary to quote the page and date for that sort of thing. If anyone makes a survey of the older countries of the world he will learn of the abuses under landlordism. Everyone who lived in those countries and migrated to this country must realise that abuses and vices under landlordism were rampant overseas, solely due to the land being held under freehold tenure. The other States of Australia to-day are hampered in any attempt to place unemployed on the land through having no Crown land. That brings me back to my argument that the Crown must have control of all the land, and more especially in a time of unemployment.

Mr. EDWARDS: What do you mean by all the land?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: I mean that there should be no freehold. If the Crown had control of all the land in the State, it would be possible to do something to relieve the unemployment position. I realise the position in Victoria and New South Wales. I have been following the methods adopted in Victoria and New South Wales to deal with unemployment in connection with land settlement, and I find, more particularly in Victoria, that the land is practically all freehold, and the Government can do nothing to alleviate unemployment by means of land settlement; and in New South Wales the Government can do very little. Anyone who has followed the history of that State knows that the Government are attempting to do something for the unemployed by creating land settlement, and they are in a similar position to that which members of the Opposition have been howling about ever since this session started in connection with forestry. In order to get some land suitable for settlement, the New South Wales Government are now asking that land set apart for forestry purposes be made avail-

able for land settlement, and a first-class brawl has originated in the New South Wales Cabinet because the Minister for Forests is trying to preserve his forest lands, whereas other members of the Cabinet, realising that it is necessary to do something for unemployment, are trying to take away some of those forest lands for land settlement. There we have a concrete case proving exactly what I say—that, had there been no freeholding in Victoria and New South Wales, and also in Queensland, the Governments would have handled the unemployment position tenfold better than is the case at the present time.

A debate on this matter was initiated in England the other day by Lloyd George, and members of the House of Commons stated that the solution of unemployment in England is settlement on the land. What can England do in that regard? In that country the land was given away, the same as was the case in Queensland. If anyone makes a survey of the freeholding of land in Queensland, he will find that the best land was given away in the past to their friends by Governments—of whom the Opposition are the political survivors—with no reservation of rights. Everyone knows the scandal in connection with the separation of Queensland from New South Wales. It was originally intended that Queensland should include the Northern Rivers; but the Government of New South Wales desired to give some land to some of their friends, and the result was that the boundary was fixed at the Tweed River, otherwise Queensland would have included the Northern Rivers area. That is the political patronage which Governments of the past exercised, and this political patronage gave away all our best land.

The Labour Government came into existence in 1915, and the freehold form of tenure was abolished in Queensland on 1st January, 1917. Prior to that date freehold or leasehold was optional.

The Opposition in the debate on the Estimates of the Lands Department said: "Why not make it optional?" For exactly the same reason that we do not make it optional that a man can burgle a shop. Just as we put laws on the statute-book to say that he cannot burgle a shop, we put laws on the statute-book to say that he shall not have freehold. We prevent a man from burgling a shop by law; but, until Labour came into power, the Governments of the day, in the exercise of political patronage, enabled their friends to burgle the lands of the State.

Hon. W. H. BARNES: Mr. Hanson, I rise to a point of order. I ask that the statement about burbling, which is offensive, be withdrawn.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: To whom is it offensive?

The CHAIRMAN: The word "burgling" is an offensive word, and, as the hon. member for Wynnum asks for its withdrawal, I ask the Minister to withdraw it.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Very well, I will say "dissipating" instead of "burgling." I do not know how it can be offensive. Anyhow, the lands were dissipated in the past, there is no question about that; and that is why the perpetuation of freehold is not going to be consented to by the Labour Party. We have a duty to the people of Queensland. Hon. members opposite had that

duty when in power, but they fell down on it, and allowed the public lands to be dissipated. The public lands belong to the State. They do not belong to any political party, but to the people of the State, and there is no more right to make them freehold than to allow a man to break into a store and steal people's goods. This Bill is intended to prevent any further dissipation of the public estate.

There is another point in connection with freehold versus leasehold. Freehold is entirely for speculation. Why does a man take up freehold? It is not because it gives him any added security. Every security he desires is contained in leasehold; but he takes up freehold because immediately he does so practically the whole of the Crown rights disappear, and he can enter into speculation.

As the ex-Secretary for Public Lands knows, there are many common-sense men in Queensland who are engaged in land matters, and they do not want freehold. When the right to convert to freehold was placed on the statute-book by the Moore Government, these men did not convert their titles. The only man who took up freehold was the man who intended to speculate, and that is the reason for freehold land. Leasehold means settlement; and surely it is the job of every hon. member, especially in these times, to do something to promote settlement. Leasehold is entirely settlement, while freehold is entirely speculation.

Mr. G. P. BARNES: Don't you think there has been more speculation with leasehold than anything else?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Then that destroys the argument that leasehold is no good. It has been argued by hon. members opposite that leasehold is no good because the leaseholder has no right in the land. Now that the hon. member for Warwick says that leasehold allows of speculation. If that is so, it destroys the argument that leasehold is no tenure. The Opposition always say that a leasehold confers no rights whatever, and is not worth anything. The hon. member for Warwick now says we can have just as much speculation with leasehold as with freehold. That is not my opinion.

I am guided in my view by the soldier settlement at El Arish. The Labour Government of the day decided to give the soldier settlers there a decent livelihood. We placed them on the land at El Arish and they had a sugar-growing settlement—one of the most successful settlements in Australia—but the Government of the day provided that the soldier settlers could not deal in those lands for a period of years, because we wanted them to realise that the land was there for settlement and not for speculation. As member for the district, a request came to me after they had been there for one or two years asking to be allowed to convert to freehold, as they could get £2,000 or £3,000 from other people who desired to buy their property, showing how valuable it was. We refused to allow that. In any case of illness, where a man could not continue, the Land Administration Board went into his affairs, and allowed him to go off the land; and in all cases the prices which the buyers were prepared to pay ran into thousands of pounds. We refused to allow the majority of them to go off the land for ten years,

and the result has been one of the most successful settlements in Queensland. If that provision had not been put in by the Government of the day, practically all those soldiers—men who had not had money before—would have been lured by offers of £2,000 or £3,000 and gone off their land. Where would they have been to-day? Nearly all those soldiers' blocks are now worth from £7,000 to £10,000. The Government of the day absolutely prevented them from speculating. But for that, I guarantee that 80 per cent. of them would have accepted offers of thousands of pounds and have gone off the land; but the object of the State was to see that they were not allowed to do so, because the State is only concerned with settlement. We do not want to put a settler on the land and give him a chance of making a living, only to have him lured off the land for the sake of a profit of a few thousand pounds. We want to keep him there. I repeat that experience shows that freeholding is speculation and leasehold means settlement. Labour stands for settlement, and not for speculation.

Mr. DEACON: They convert if they get the chance.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Hon. members opposite gave them the chance; we did not. And if they did convert, what does it prove? That they wanted to speculate. While they were under the tenure laid down by the Labour Party, a big majority wanted to sell out; but the Labour Government would not allow it, because we protected them. If we had not had that provision in the Act, we could not have protected them. The Government were entitled to protect them because the Government wanted settlement. We did not want to give them a chance of making £2,000 or £3,000, dissipate their money, and go back on the labour market. That is what laws are for—to help people, and not to give them something simply because they want it. The Government of hon. members opposite altered the law because they desired to allow speculators to have a free rein. On the other hand, we are concerned entirely about settlement and desire to see settlers earning a decent living and not speculating.

In the next case, freeholding encourages landlordism. One finds that out in Brisbane. During the debate on the Estimates hon. members opposite remarked to hon. members on this side, "Why is your house a freehold?" As I interjected to the Deputy Leader of the Opposition, I have lived in Brisbane for twelve years. I have tried to get a piece of land adjacent to Brisbane in a decent living area as a leasehold, and I have not been able to get it. I am open to buy a piece of leasehold land in any decent suburb at a fair value.

Mr. BRAND: What about a worker's home?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: We cannot all get workers' homes. We are not eligible. Nobody can show me a piece of land in a decent living area adjacent to Brisbane where you can get a leasehold.

An OPPOSITION MEMBER: Why do you not convert to leasehold?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Where am I to get the money? I am not a wealthy man. I am trying to get leasehold land on which I would have to pay only a little. If I could find a leasehold block

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adjacent to Brisbane worth £200 and had to pay £6 a year for it, it would do me. But I cannot afford to pay £200 or £300, and I cannot get a leasehold. I ask hon. members opposite to get me a piece of land for £200 or £300 in any decent suburb as leasehold, and I will take it to-morrow; but I am not buying. I want to take it up by paying my £3 per cent. on the capital value. As a matter of fact, herein is the reason why the Labour Government provided workers' homes. The idea was to give workers a chance of getting homes adjacent to Brisbane, without having to buy them. The Government resumed the land, or made it available, and this was the only case in which a man could get a home without having a good deal of capital, the reason being that he had not to pay for the land. Land could be purchased at £200 to £300 an allotment; but the average working man is not in a position to provide that sum for the purchase of an allotment of land. The Government decided to initiate a scheme to provide for workers' homes—a scheme that involved the purchase of the land by the Government and its lease to the worker at a fixed rental per annum. It was then within the financial capacity of the worker to contribute the weekly rental fixed under the contract relating to the construction of his home. The Labour Government were then in power and a sufficient purchasing power was available to the worker, but this disappeared with the defeat of the Labour Government.

Mr. SIZER: The Labour Government are in power again to-day.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: We are correcting the wrongs of one act of dissipation on the part of the late Government.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I ask the Minister to address the Chair.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: The Labour Government decided to provide for the land requirements of the soldier settlers. The hon. member for Cairns has already pointed out that not one block of land was available for soldier settlement on the Atherton Tableland. Hon. members will recollect that the whole of the land there was held under the freehold tenure or under tenures that did not give the Crown the right of resumption. The Government had decided that soldier settlers should embark upon maize growing and dairying in this area, and it then became necessary for the Crown to repurchase its asset. In some cases the land had been sold by Tory Governments in the past for 2s. 6d. per acre, and it was necessary for the late Mr. W. N. Gillies, who initiated the scheme of soldier settlements in North Queensland, to pay as high as £80 per acre in some cases for the repurchase of this land on behalf of the Government. The hon. member for Windsor, who, at the time, was a member of the tribunal set up to watch the interests of soldier settlers, will be able to point to the difficult problem that confronted the Government in their endeavour to secure Crown land for soldier settlements. He will be able to say that only a very limited area of Crown land was available, and that it was necessary to repurchase freehold land at £70 to £80 per acre. The speculators of former days were able to purchase the land at 2s. 6d. per acre from Tory Governments. The hon. member for

Cunningham knows full well that the exorbitant prices paid for land for soldier settlements had to be continually written down year by year if the soldier settlers were to be given an opportunity to make a living. That loss had to be borne by the State.

Mr. EDWARDS: Where did that occur?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: At Atherton. The ex-Secretary for Public Lands, in common with other ex-Ministers, received deputations from soldier settlers urging that the land valuations be written down. I visited the Highlands soldier settlement the other day in company with the member for the district. The soldier settlers in that area were called upon to pay a tremendous price to the freeholders for this land, which is practically half stone, and generally is a wretched type of soil. That land had to be repurchased from some wealthy capitalist.

Mr. SIZER: Who bought it?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: I understand that some big business people in Brisbane purchased it from the Government.

Mr. SIZER: Which Government bought it?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: It was purchased by the board that was controlling soldier settlements.

Mr. SIZER: Which Government?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: The hon. member for Windsor will be fairer than the hon. member for Sandgate. The hon. member for Windsor has always assumed his share of the responsibility of advising the Government as to whether land should be repurchased or not. The board originally consisted of Mr. Coyne, then Secretary for Public Lands, the hon. member for Windsor, then Leader of the Opposition, and Mr. L'Estrange, who had been nominated by the Federal Government. This board had to examine all these propositions and make recommendations. Naturally, the Government would accept the recommendations of these gentlemen.

Mr. SIZER: Why, you had your own land officers.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: There was no land available, and the necessary land had to be repurchased. Because of the freehold system in Queensland, the Government had to repurchase land which was originally the property of the Crown. Most of that land was taken up originally at a small value. The Crown had to pay for that land at an inflated value in order to give the soldiers a chance to make a living. I give every credit to Mr. Marchant, who recently gave his home and grounds for the use of crippled children; but, if these high-souled patriots who owned the land which the Government were compelled to repurchase from them had done their duty, they would have redeemed the promise they made to the soldiers when they went away and given them the land. They should have said, "That is the price we owe to you; we give it to you." Ever since these soldier settlements were established, the Crown has been compelled to revalue the land in order to make the financial responsibilities of the settlers less irksome.

Mr. MAXWELL: What did your party do for the returned soldiers?

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The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: We did everything for them. We redeemed every promise we made.

I have been looking into ancient history in order to discover the position in regard to land settlement prior to Labour coming into power in 1915. In a debate on land settlement the late Mr. T. J. Ryan pointed out how land settlement was discouraged by the Tory Government. Tory Governments have always discouraged land settlement. They are not concerned about land settlement, and never have been. All they care about is land speculation. The Tory Governments of those days, of which hon. members opposite are the descendants, did not want land settlement. All they were concerned about was land speculation. The late Mr. Ryan said that land settlement was discouraged, and that insufficient land was made available to meet the demand for settlement. To a large extent this was due to the Government of the day not availing themselves of the power possessed to resume land from pastoral leases at the due dates.

Mr. MOORE: How did they do it at Wando Vale?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: The hon. gentleman no doubt heard about the man who talked about Wando Vale. He would have been turned out of Parliament but for the leniency of the then Labour Government. He learned that rumour was a lying jade. The late Mr. Ryan showed how the Tory Government of the day discouraged land settlement.

Mr. EDWARDS: What is the use of using such stupid arguments? Give us facts.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: When the hon. member speaks, he can use his stupid brain in order to show what happened. The position Mr. Ryan found was that the Government of that day did exactly what Tory Governments of the present day do. All they are concerned about is the speculator and the big landowner. Tory Governments of the past were only concerned with the owner of big pastoral lands, who, in a number of cases, did not purchase those lands which were given to them because they happened to be relatives or friends of the Government of the day. In order to substantiate his statement that insufficient land had been made available to meet the demand for settlement was due to the Government failing to resume pastoral leases at due dates, Mr. Ryan quoted from a return tabled on 29th July, 1914, showing that the number of pastoral leases of which notice of resumption had been given but not put into effect was 406. That is to say, the Government of the day failed to take advantage of their rights to resume these pastoral holdings, and simply allowed the squatters to carry on. The number of similar leases which had reached the due date and of which notice of resumption had not been given was 1,408. There you have 1,408 wealthy pastoralists whose leases expired in 1914, and to whom notice of resumption was not given. The area involved was 65,500 square miles. Instead of allowing settlers to take up the areas, the then Government, acting in the interests of the wealthy pastoralists, deprived the settlers of that right, just as the Moore Government extended the leases of wealthy pastoral companies during their regime. As I pointed out during my election campaign, the Moore Government took away the birthright of the

children of the West, not even for other people who lived in Queensland, but in the interests of such companies as the Scottish-Australian Investment Company, Limited—companies which, as Colonel Cameron pointed out, spent their profits overseas.

Mr. NIMMO: Did Colonel Cameron say that?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Yes; he said that Queensland was not suffering financially to the same extent as the other States, because the bulk of the wealthy pastoralists who in the past had drawn dividends from pastoral pursuits lived overseas and spent their money there.

Mr. MAHER: Are you sure he said "the bulk"?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Yes; and I say "the bulk," too. If the hon. member will analyse the return to which I have referred—a return prepared by the then Government—he will see that the Tory Government granted leases to big companies with affiliations overseas.

Mr. G. P. BARNES: After all, we lived on their wool.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: The profits of their wool were dissipated overseas. The Scottish-Australian Investment Company, Limited, and other people who had profited in Queensland and derived their profits from the lands of Queensland did not even spend their money here. The company or person who makes money here and spends it in the State is in a different category from those people who make their money here but expend it overseas—at European watering resorts and on English and Scottish estates. It was in those places that the dividends of the pastoralists were spent.

After hearing the late Hon. T. J. Ryan quote from the return which had been tabled on 29th July, 1914, the Denham Government opposed a motion moved by the then Labour Opposition that a select committee be appointed to inquire into the causes of the delay in opening lands for settlement. The Government of the day were not even fair enough to accept that motion. They had absolute power in those days, and never imagined for a moment that the people of Queensland would rise up and sweep them from office as they did in 1915. The Tory Governments were drunk with power, and were not prepared to be fair to the people of Queensland by appointing a select committee to inquire into such an important question. The motion was moved in two sessions of Parliament; but the then Government relied on their big majority to frustrate the wishes of the people of Queensland. In 1917 the Labour Government did their duty by the people of Queensland.

A perpetual leasehold is not subject to land tax, creates a greater security, and enables the selector to use all his capital in development. I would ask hon. members opposite who object to perpetual leasehold: Why did a Tory Government, when opening Canberra, make all the land perpetual leasehold and charge 5 per cent? The Government of the day, although it was a Tory Government, had probably a little more perspective than the Opposition in Queensland, and it desired to do something to make Canberra a rather good sort of city; so it decided that the tenure should be perpetual leasehold

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and it is perpetual leasehold to-day, exactly the same as land at Babinda and Tully. If any man will make a survey of Babinda and Tully—Tully particularly—under perpetual leasehold, he will see what perpetual leasehold means. Perpetual leasehold on the Tully has meant that in a couple of years one of the most thriving little towns in Queensland has sprung up. The man who took up land worth £200 or £300 simply had to pay 5 per cent. on the amount of the capital value, and the whole of his capital was available for building purposes.

An OPPOSITION MEMBER: Why do they want to convert to freehold?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: For the purposes of speculation. There is no man at Tully to-day who has a home who wants to convert his perpetual leasehold. The people who asked for conversion when the Government of the day gave them power to convert were the business men—the speculators in hotel sites. They are asking for freehold so as to get something more out of the Crown. I thought every hon. member opposite would have been behind the Government in trying to save some money, because every pound which goes out of the pockets of the Government goes out of the pockets of the people of Queensland; and, when these speculators wanted to get something out of Queensland, the Moore Government gave them the right to do it.

For the benefit of hon. members opposite, I want to give the definite land policy of the Queensland-Australian Labour Party on which we have fought every election. It has always been a plank in our platform. The land policy of the Queensland-Australian Labour Party is very definite. I am going to put it in "Hansard," and I hope hon. members opposite will read it and, after reading it, I think they will agree that the only worth-while policy is what we are advocating. The policy is—

"1. No further alienation of Crown land by sale of freehold. Existing contracts to be respected.

"2. Leasehold tenure only to be granted in the disposal of Crown lands. Rents to be periodically reappraised by the Land Court, in accordance with the term of the lease.

"3. Equalisation of rents payable by pastoralists and grazing farmers. No special concessions to pastoral lessees.

"4. Improved system of land settlement. Before land is opened for selection the Government to provide rail and road communication, water supply, and such partial development of holdings as will be of most benefit to new selectors."

The policy of the Queensland-Australian Labour Party is clear and defined. We do not stand for speculation. We stand for existing contracts to be respected, and all we ask is to see that the land of the people is not dissipated, and that every person who goes on the land in Queensland is given a reasonable chance of success. The policy further provides—

"The prickly-pear evil to be taken in hand by the Government and a scheme operated as early as possible to arrest the spread of the pest."

That has been done, and the spread of the pest has been arrested. If there is any work in Queensland which stands to the credit

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of the Labour Government to-day, it is the initiation of the prickly-pear policy, which in eight years has practically saved 1,000,000 acres from being ravaged by prickly-pear every year. Prior to the Prickly-pear Land Commission coming into existence, about 1,000,000 acres of land was devastated every year by prickly-pear in Queensland. The Labour Government, eight years ago, was the first Government to deal with the evil.

The continuous Tory Governments of past days were not concerned about doing anything really serious in regard to land settlement. If they had been during all the years they were in power, they would have dealt with the prickly-pear menace instead of allowing it to become the great evil it did; but they did not care about it. The big squatters of the day were responsible for the start of the growth of prickly-pear. The successive Tory Governments never attempted to deal with the evil. They were not concerned about the people's land, and it was left for the Labour Government eight years ago to initiate the Prickly-pear Land Commission, upon which hon. members opposite commented so favourably during the discussion of the Estimates of the Department of Public Lands. That was a wonderful achievement.

The Leader of the Opposition was not altogether favourable to the Bill which was introduced eight years ago, and he contended that one method of dealing with prickly-pear would be to roll it down with tractors. The hon. member for Murilla scoffed at the statement of the then Secretary for Public Lands, Mr. McCormack, who said that £100,000 a year would do the job. The hon. member for Murilla said that £1,000,000 would not do it. What has happened? During the greater portion of the eight years the Government have appropriated £100,000 per annum, and they had over £114,000 in credit at 30th June, 1932. If there is any credit due to any Government in the history of Queensland for what has been done for land settlement, it must go to the Labour Government of eight years ago which initiated the prickly-pear campaign. If anyone looks at the map of Queensland issued by the Prickly-pear Land Commission and sees the vast areas of Queensland previously devastated by prickly-pear which is now under land settlement, he must give credit to the Government of that day for what they did, in spite of the opposition they encountered. Every Opposition member who spoke at that time tried to throw cold water on the scheme. They talked about the cactoblastis.

Mr. MAHER: You are taking all the credit. What have the other Governments done? Who initiated the cactoblastis?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Who initiated it? It was the Labour Government of the past which had to do something; but when Opposition members were in power they did not do anything. They were a Government of inaction, but Labour Governments were Governments of action. If anything stands to the credit of any Government in Queensland, it is the initiation of the Prickly-pear Land Commission and its splendid work; and that is a tribute which cannot be taken away from the Labour Government. A glance at the map of Queensland issued by the Prickly-pear Land Commission will show the tremendous area of land now under settlement due entirely to

the action and foresight of the Labour Government of that day under the administration of the Department of Public Lands by Mr. McCormack. Every hon. member opposite condemned it then, just as they are condemning everything we bring forward for land settlement.

The hon. member for West Moreton asked who initiated the cactoblastis. Mr. Temple Clerk and the Government officials under the control of the late Mr. W. N. Gillies, at that time Secretary for Agriculture, and later the present Premier, who was then Secretary for Agriculture, co-operated with the Secretary for Public Lands, and they were responsible for the introduction of the cactoblastis. We had not the opportunity to do what the Leader of the Opposition of that day told us to do—to roll it down with tractors. Apparently that was the only solution they had.

Mr. BRAND: He did not say that.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: He did say that, and it is recorded in "Hansard."

Mr. BRAND: He did not say that was the only method.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: I am going to do my duty to the people of Queensland. I do not bring a Bill down here and try to cloak over what is in it. I try to put the case properly. It would have been sufficient to quote what the late Sir Samuel Griffith said and then sit down; but I am not going to allow the Opposition to get away with innuendoes and statements which are not true. I want the people of Queensland to realise that the only Governments that will carry out proper land settlement and are not concerned with land speculation are Labour Governments, for we are concerned with posterity, which hon. members opposite are not.

For the benefit of hon. members I shall quote the concluding portion of the Labour Party's platform, and I would point out that this platform was not drawn up to-day or yesterday. I pay a tribute to the Australian Labour Party as a whole and the men who framed this constitution. There is no better constitution regarding land matters in any part of the world than this document, framed by the pioneers of the Labour movement in Queensland. Our land policy is no new thing. Any man who follows politics realises that it was in the platform years and years ago; and its presence proves that the Labour movement of the past had only one consideration—the future of the people of Queensland and the preservation for them of the heritage of their lands. So to-day I pay a tribute to the older members of the Australian Labour Party in Queensland and Australia who were responsible for this wonderful land charter for the benefit of the people of Queensland and Australia. Let me read it—

"The Government will exercise its full rights of resumption of all pastoral holdings in areas suitable for closer settlement."

That is a policy to which any man who reads and thinks must subscribe.

I am sorry that the ex-Treasurer has left the Chamber, because I propose to quote an authority to which he must pay attention, for I believe he is a good Christian and reads his Bible, and I am going to quote

the Bible on land laws. I go back to Moses. (Laughter.)

Mr. MAHER: Where you belong.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Of course, hon. members will laugh. They would tell even Moses that he was not doing the right thing because he would not allow the speculators to have free play. Moses stood for the people—for the whole of the people. My authority on this point says—

"No landholder could part with his land for all time, for the form of tenure under which all land was held allowed him to hold it only until the time in each generation for redistribution among the families of Israel.

"In this way land could never be treated as an ordinary commodity, for the people's rights in the land were equalised in every generation.

"There was nothing in the land laws of any period greater than the statement conveying these laws to Israel—

The land shall not be sold for ever;
For the land is Mine.

For ye are strangers and sojourners with Me."

Mr. DEACON (*Cunningham*) [11.23 a.m.]: It is significant that the hon. gentleman wandered all over the world and even went back to the days of Moses in order to support his case. I take it that we may assume that, since he argued so much on perpetual leasehold, that is all that is in the Bill.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: That is so.

Mr. DEACON: I have my doubts about that; but, when the Bill comes along, we can discuss the other points which I am sure will be there. The Minister put up a record, because he talked the best part of an hour and said very little about the subject. He has certainly given us the opportunity to say something about the merits of perpetual leasehold and freehold; and, if there is anything else contained in the Bill, we can deal with it on the second reading.

If the Minister was right this morning in his assessment of the value of a perpetual leasehold tenure as a secure tenure, what he said during the discussion of the Estimates of his department and what he has said this morning has done more to destroy the security value of the perpetual leasehold tenure than anybody else could have done. We on this side could not have done more to destroy its value as a negotiable security. He has practically told us that this leasehold tenure has no value at all. He pointed out that, if all the land of the State were held under the perpetual leasehold tenure, there would be no difficulty in dealing with the problem of unemployment. He stated that the Government could simply take the land and do what they liked with it. That was his argument. We have always contended that the perpetual leasehold tenure as a basis of security was not popular with financiers; and the Minister has done more to support that view this morning than any other member of the Labour Party has ever done. The holders of perpetual leaseholds have always understood that the tenure had some value. As the name implied, the land belonged to the holder provided he paid the fixed rental charge, which is subject to periodical review by the Land Court. It

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has always been understood that the perpetual leasehold tenure, with a fixed rental charge, has a value in the same way as any other lease for a fixed term and carrying a fixed rental charge. If the contention of the Minister is right, and the Government can at any time take possession of the land without compensation—

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: I said nothing about taking it without compensation.

Mr. DEACON: That was the argument of the hon. gentleman this morning. He said that the Government would have the full control to do as they choose. Those were his words. If the Government are to have full control, where does the man who does the work come in? Where is there any security for his work? The Minister has done more to make perpetual leasehold unpopular as a land tenure than any hon. member on the Opposition side could have done. He spoke with authority, and he quoted the policy of the Labour Party in support of his argument. If the argument of the Minister is right, then the holder of a perpetual leasehold has a tenure which is of no value at all—one that can be taken from him by the Government at any time at a moment's notice and without compensation.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: No.

Mr. DEACON: He said the Government could deal with the land in any way they liked.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: That is absolutely untrue.

Mr. DEACON: The Minister must accept the responsibility for what he said. He said that the Government could assume full control of land held under the perpetual leasehold tenure. "Full control" means the control of everything.

Mr. COSTELLO: Freehold land can be repurchased upon the payment of compensation.

Mr. DEACON: The Minister stated that the Government would be able to control the land for the purpose of coping with the problem of unemployment, which means that they can terminate the lease at any time. The Minister adopted the same argument during another debate. He has used that argument on two different occasions within the past ten days. He definitely stated that the perpetual leasehold tenure granted by the Government has no value at all.

I am not going to discuss the question of perpetual leasehold tenure versus the freehold tenure at any length this morning. When we reach the second reading stage, we shall be able to ascertain definitely just what are the intentions of the Government, and we shall then make an endeavour to protect the people who have taken up land under the perpetual leasehold system. The Minister has certainly placed the matter much more clearly before the people to-day. If the Minister's speech is broadcast by the newspapers, then every perpetual leaseholder will feel uneasy because he will be doubtful as to whether it will be advisable to make any improvements. That uneasiness will be brought about by the statement of the Minister that the lease can be terminated by the Government at any time. There will be no progress in land settlement under such a policy. The Minister must withdraw the statement he made this morning

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and the other day, and tell the people that a perpetual leasehold cannot be disturbed under the terms and conditions of the lease given, or else say that it is intended to be something of no value, and that the Government of the day must always have control, with power to alter it as they choose, and to resume without compensation.

The Minister has touched upon land matters which do not come within the ambit of this Bill. He has dealt with the extension of pastoral leases by the late Government, and indulged in a lot of windy argument. He said that the late Government, by their policy in this respect, took away the birthright of the children in the western areas. The Minister has not said whether the leases he refers to have been dealt with or not. I am within my rights in referring to the terms on which the extension of leases was granted. All that the extension of the pastoral leases mentioned by the hon. member involve was that the lessee got an extension of half his area for five years on the expiration of his present lease, and an extension of one-half of that half for a further five years at the end of that period; therefore, of the present lease half the area is available by resumption by the Crown, and at the end of the first five years of the intended period half of this area is resumable. That is, within five years, three-quarters of the whole area will be resumed by the Crown. That is not taking away the birthright of the child. The Minister must know from his administration of the department that the demand for grazing selections and the number of applications for such selections have fallen off very considerably owing to the difficulty of obtaining finance. It is known to every person on the land that it is not possible to secure finance easily at the present time. Only men who can finance themselves make application. Even in such cases the occupation of a grazing selector at the present time is not a goldmine because of the low prices that are ruling. A man can put his money into the pastoral industry to-day and easily lose it. A lot of people are looking at it in that way. It is a speculation. A person can take up a lease and stock and improve it, and then lose everything. Pastoral leases and grazing selections have a reasonable measure of security of tenure. That is to say, they have a tenure for a fixed period, at the end of which time compensation is granted for the improvements effected. The rent under such a tenure cannot be increased on account of the improvements made; neither can the fact that improvements have increased the carrying capacity of the land be taken into consideration in fixing the rent. The rent must be based each term by the Land Court on the unimproved value of the land. That is the security on which money can be borrowed in order to finance these holdings. The perpetual leasehold tenure has not any of these advantages. That tenure is much inferior to the tenure of a grazing leasehold. When we have heard the Minister on the second reading of this Bill, possibly we shall have a much worse opinion of perpetual leasehold tenure than we have formed this morning after his explanation of the objects of this Bill.

The Minister spoke of the work of the Prickly-pear Land Commission. I do not want to belittle any of the efforts of that commission, but the hon. gentleman was not

quite fair to his predecessors in office. The commission which was sent to America to inquire into the matter was appointed by the Denham Administration, at the suggestion of Sir Edward Macartney, who was then Secretary for Public Lands. The information which that commission obtained enabled it to make recommendations, which, in turn, permitted the Government to formulate a policy which led to the introduction of the cactoblastis and other pear-destroying insects.

Prickly-pear spread on leasehold land to a much greater extent than it did on freehold for the reason that the leaseholder did not have as good a tenure as he has now. He was there for a stipulated period of time, and had no interest in spending large sums of money in eradicating the pest. The man who cleared his holding of pear had his rent increased; the man who let it go had his rent reduced. The hon. member for Dalby pointed out that the leaseholder who let the pear go unchecked did not have his land resumed, but the man who spent money in the work of eradication lost his run. In those days there was no encouragement given to the lessee to clear the land of prickly-pear. It naturally follows that a man on leasehold land will not spend the same amount of money in improving his land as the freeholder will, because the latter has everything to lose by not keeping the pest in check. Most of the freehold land was cleared of the pear. Of course, there were a few exceptions in the case of lazy and thriftless selectors; but that type is to be found in every section of society.

The Minister laughed at the idea of eradicating prickly-pear by rolling it down. It may interest the hon. gentleman to know that in many places it was the practice to do so. Where the land was cultivable the prickly-pear could be rolled down, and the land then ploughed and sown with crops. Thousands of acres of wheat were planted in that way. That is a quicker way to destroy the pest than by the use of the cactoblastis. After the pear is rolled down, the land can be ploughed and the crops sown straight away. Continual ploughing quickly destroys the prickly-pear. Two years after that is done, there is no sign of the pear. The trouble is that so much of our land is not cultivable.

Possibly I am going outside the scope of this Bill, but the Minister mentioned all these things in his introductory speech, and did not indicate that they were not included in the Bill. I am at a loss to know the contents of the Bill until I peruse it. One thing is certain, that the Government are legislating for perpetual leasehold, and that only. No necessity exists to introduce a Bill to do that, because, in throwing open land for selection, the Government can stipulate that it can be taken up only under the perpetual leasehold system. They can do that under the present Land Act. When land was opened by the late Government, the tenures were made optional. The selector who wanted a perpetual leasehold could have that tenure if it suited his pocket. If it suited his pocket to have a perpetual leasehold, he could take up the land under that tenure. That is the policy that will win through in the long run. It does not matter what the Government may do at the present time, because, sooner or later this party will be in office again, and, sooner

or later, we shall give every selector an opportunity to change his tenure.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: The people will hound you down.

Mr. DEACON: The hon. gentleman knows that he has many troubles. He knows that his Government have many troubles; and he knows that at times all Governments become unpopular. They are bound to be unpopular at the present time.

The CHAIRMAN: Order!

Mr. DEACON: Sooner or later, we will give the selectors the opportunity to convert into freehold at the capital value. When they had that opportunity before, a large number did convert, and a lot more would have converted were it not for the fact that they were not financially able to meet the heavier payments. One thing in favour of perpetual leasehold is that it allows a man without much capital to settle on the land; but he does not care to do much in the way of improvements until he gets a better tenure. The Minister has done his best to destroy all interest in the leasehold tenure. Whether he will be able to explain that away in his next speech remains to be seen; but he certainly has done a lot of harm to his own party and its land policy.

Mr. MOORE (*Aubigny*) [11.43 a.m.]: We listened this morning to a very extraordinary speech from the Secretary for Public Lands. That is nothing new.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I allowed the hon. member for Cunningham a good deal of latitude in connection with the question before the Committee. I did so purposely in order to give him an opportunity to reply to some of the statements made by the Minister. The Minister made it very clear that there is only one principle contained in this Bill, and that is the principle of leasehold tenure as against freehold tenure. I am going to ask hon. members to confine themselves strictly to that principle in the future.

Mr. MOORE: I had the opportunity, by courtesy of the Minister, of seeing a copy of the Bill, and there is a good deal in it other than the question of perpetual leasehold verses freehold.

The PREMIER: Because you get the courtesy of an early copy of a Bill that does not give you the right to discuss the Bill in detail. (Interruption)

The CHAIRMAN: Order! Order!

Mr. MOORE: I have never suggested that I was going to discuss the Bill in detail. Half the speech of the Minister in introducing the Bill was on the subject of the eradication of prickly-pear and what the Government have done; and I have the right to say something in reply without going outside the Bill at all. I could move the elimination of the words "in certain particulars" in order to widen the scope of the Bill, if I desired to do so; but I want to talk about the absolute unreliability of the Minister who has introduced this Bill. First of all, he purported to make a quotation from Sir Samuel Griffith, and said that it was to be found in "Hansard." It never was in "Hansard."

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: It is in "Hansard."

Mr. MOORE: That shows the misleading attitude of the hon. gentleman. It is in

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"Hansard" because it was quoted by an hon. member and put in "Hansard" as a quotation. It was not put in by Sir Samuel Griffith.

THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: I said it was reported in "Hansard." He did say it.

MR. MOORE: He may have said it, but he did not say it in "Hansard," and he did not say it in this Chamber. Then the hon. gentleman went on to say that the first Government that had taken any action at all with regard to prickly-pear was the previous Labour Government, and that, if there was any credit due to anybody, it was due to them. Did we ever hear anything so silly?

THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: Who constituted the board?

MR. MOORE: I will tell the hon. member, who is only a new member. He would not have been here at all if he had not been running round the State looking for an electorate that would have him. I will quote from "Hansard" for 1912 from a speech delivered by the then Secretary for Public Lands, Hon. E. H. Macartney, now Sir Edward Macartney, on the second reading of the Prickly-pear Destruction Bill. He stated, as reported on page 1721 of "Hansard"—

"This Bill is a very short one, but none the less it deals with a very important subject. I do not know of any subject of greater importance at the present time. Hon. members who have seen the annual report of the Under Secretary for Lands will notice that the Under Secretary opens by saying that so far as the prickly-pear question is concerned, no subject has given the department greater anxiety during the past year than prickly-pear."

Then, on page 1724, he said this:—

"Acting on their advice, an experimental station has been opened at Dulacca, under the supervision of a highly qualified scientist for the purpose of watching experiments and conducting experiments as to the best methods and generally to find out the most economical method of destruction. I hope something will result from that, more particularly as the scientist in charge is specially qualified and is specially applying her mind to the diseases which are sometimes noticed in the pear."

Later, he stated—

"Acting also on the advice of that board, a commission has been appointed to visit foreign countries to ascertain whether it is possible to find any insect enemy or disease for the purpose of destroying the pest."

THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: He did nothing. He talked, like all your Governments did.

MR. MOORE: That commission went overseas, and it was owing to its visit overseas that the cochineal insect was brought here. It was owing to that commission that biological means of dealing with the pest were taken and that the prickly-pear station at Dulacca was established. The Minister now gets up here, relying on people not remembering these things, and puts forward the suggestion that the first steps were taken only eight years ago. It shows what relia-

bility can be placed on the statements of the Minister when introducing a Bill of this sort.

The main factors in the Bill comprise two definite points which constitute the ideals of the Labour Party. First of all, there is perpetual leasehold, with reappraisal, so that the individual who puts his industry and brains into the job of developing his farm and making it more productive shall not reap the fruits of industry, but will have it taken away by reappraisal. The ideal of the Labour Party, of course, is that the man who is industrious, thrifty, competent, and does his job, shall not be allowed to enjoy the fruits of his labour. But it shall be shared by those who do nothing towards the result. That is really the whole objection to the perpetual leasehold system.

I could understand the perpetual leasehold system if there were no periodical reappraisements or with reappraisements, say, every ninety-nine years; but, with periodical reappraisements every fifteen years, the man who brings his land into greater activity will have his rental increased according to the value of his improvements. He has to put in all the work necessary to bring the land into productivity; yet fifteen years afterwards a reappraisal is made, and the result of his labour is taken away from him because the rent is raised on account of the work he has done. That is one system. Another is the system under which the Minister takes the power to alter the terms and conditions himself, and to reduce the capital value and the rent.

That is exactly what the present Secretary for Agriculture found fault with when there was a suggestion that money might be loaned to private individuals from public funds to enable them to clear their land and make it more productive. He complained that it introduced the principles of political patronage and political victimisation. That is exactly what this principle does. It makes it possible for political patronage to creep in, because it applies not only to a group of individuals but also to an individual, and the individual may come along and pitch a tale to the Minister and get a reduction of his rent. The whole position ought to be dealt with by the Land Administration Board or the Land Court—not by the Minister. That is what those bodies are for. It is they who should go into all the questions surrounding each case, taking into consideration the rights of the community as well as the rights of the landholder; but this Bill allows the Minister to alter terms and conditions, and also does away with what the ex-Minister described as the best tenure that has ever been introduced into Queensland—the homestead tenure. Never has a system given greater satisfaction or more opportunity to the man with very small capital—very often to the man with none—to make a home for himself and become a prosperous settler. Practically all the most successful settlers—one might say all the most successful settlers—in various parts of the State long distances from the railway, where an enormous amount of hardship was involved, took up their land under the 2s. 6d. an acre homestead tenure, with ten years to pay, with conditions of residence and improvements. Any hon. member can go through a large number of the farming districts and see that these are the people who have built up those districts. They would never have been built up by the Minister's policy. His whole

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argument was that the Crown should have the opportunity of resuming the land without compensation.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: It was not. The Labour Party's platform says that we must pay compensation.

Mr. MOORE: That was the hon. gentleman's whole argument. I would like him to go back to the case of the Trades Hall in Brisbane. In the time of Mr. Ryan as Premier, a Bill was to have been brought in providing for a perpetual leasehold tenure in accordance with the Labour Party's platform; but the trustees could not borrow money to build a hall under that tenure, and it was decided to give them a freehold. If the trustees of the Trades Hall in Brisbane could not borrow money on a perpetual leasehold, what chance has the ordinary individual in the country of borrowing money to develop his holding, except from the Agricultural Bank? The Agricultural Bank is not in a position to find all the finance that is necessary. Does not all this show that the perpetual leasehold system is not the proper sort of system or tenure for the development of this country?

As a matter of fact, this Bill is quite unnecessary, because the Government could have carried out their desires by proclamation, merely opening any land they have for selection under the perpetual leasehold tenure; but they have brought in the proposal, and I think the damage that will be done to land settlement will be irrevocable for some time to time. Going on the land is not so easy as some people seem to think. It means much hard work, long hours, and any amount of hardship.

At 11.55 a.m.,

Mr. GLEDSON (*Ipswich*), one of the panel of Temporary Chairmen, relieved the Chairman in the chair.

Mr. MOORE: The settler is prepared to perform the hard work, very often for seven days in the week, because he realises that he is creating an asset and that he will be able to reap the results of his labour conserved in his farm when he sells or leaves the district. He will not bother if the results of his labour are to be taken from him by reappraisal of rent. He will then merely occupy the same position as a man who leases a farm from another. The lessee is concerned only about how much he can make out of the property during the period that he is there, and that will be exactly the position taken up by the farmer who holds a perpetual leasehold from the Government if he is not to reap the reward of his labour. A grazing leasehold is in a totally different category. It is a different system, and it applies to a different class of country and to a different occupation. The cost of improvements on an ordinary leasehold property are very much less per acre than the cost of improvements required to develop a farm. The people who are prepared to develop this country are the people who should be considered. If they express a desire for a particular tenure, they should be at liberty to obtain that tenure. The difficulty is that other people wish to share in the results of their labour without having contributed to the effort. That is the policy of the party opposite. They believe that the thrifty and the industrious man should be compelled to share his accumulated reward with people who have not assisted him in

his work. The policy of the party opposite is to reduce all to the one level; and this Bill merely assists to carry that ideal a little further. With the Labour Party it is not a question of tenure, but a question of policy. They believe that the industrious man should be penalised in favour of the individual who is not industrious.

Mr. FOLEY: You have no right to sell or to give away the land of the people.

Mr. MOORE: What does selling the land mean? The Government have the right to resume any land at any time for public purposes; and they have the right to impose taxation upon the land—a right they frequently exercise. A land tax is a capital tax; it matters not whether the revenue is secured by way of taxation or by way of rent. The Government still have the land. The individual who performs the work should be allowed to reap the results of his labour. He is not likely to carry out the same amount of work if he is to be deprived of the fruits of his labour by periodical reappraisements of rent. No man in his senses would do that. Hon. members opposite talk about a community-created value; but the value is created by the individual who is prepared to go into the scrub and prepare the land for production. That is not a community-created value.

Mr. FOLEY: The rent is not reappraised on the value of improvements.

Mr. MOORE: The improvements are taken into consideration. If the land has an increased carrying capacity, it is called upon to bear a higher rental. How is the carrying capacity improved? Not by an act of God, but by the work of the individual who provides the water facilities, who subdivides the land into small paddocks, who carries out the work of ringbarking and clearing, and possibly the fertilisation of the land with a view to bringing it into production. He is entitled to the results of his labour; but the Land Court reappraises the rent after considering the carrying capacity of the land. That is what they base it on.

Another factor taken into consideration is the proximity of the land to the railway; a still further factor is the locality in which it is situated. The main reason, however, is the carrying capacity of the land. If that carrying capacity has been increased, naturally the rent increases. That is what will happen in the smaller areas in the farming communities under this legislation. That is to say, that when the settler increases his production capacity, the Crown will reappraise his rent. The result will be that the settler will get so sick of being penalised for bringing the land to its fullest production capacity that he will not bother about it.

The Minister said that land on which soldiers had been settled had cost £50 or £60 per acre, and that the political ancestors of this party had received a benefit by past Governments by paying a price three times in excess of the value of the land. To show that the Government paid too high a price, we have only to recognise the fact that the Crown has on several occasions brought about a reduction in these land values. The Minister complained that the price paid for the land was too high. Why was the land bought at such a high price? The Government of the day was under no compulsion to purchase it. We all know that freehold is more attractive to the

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settler, because it gives him a better opportunity to secure financial assistance, which gives him more heart in working his property. It is true that the settler cannot show the benefits of freehold in cash; but he has the satisfaction of knowing that any improvements he effects adds to the value of the property, and does not increase its rental value.

The statement made by the Minister in relation to sugar-cane lands was all so much moonshine. He knows, as we all know, that it is not the land that is of value but the cane assignment. If it were not for the cane assignments this land would not be worth 30s. an acre. The hon. gentleman might just as well talk about a corner block of land on which a hotel had been built being worth a certain figure, and contend that all the land in the vicinity was of a similar value, when he well knows that it is the hotel license and not the land which is of value. The Government have added to the value of cane lands by granting cane assignments. Why should not a man who goes on the land be allowed to sell if he desires to leave it? Whoever buys it will work it. The main objective in settlement is to see that the owner brings the land into production. To do so it does not matter whether it is this man or that man. Why should a man, because he takes up land, be compelled to stay there for the rest of his life and be refused permission to sell or transfer his lease? A man who goes into business, such as keeping a shop or hotel, is not condemned by the Government to stop there for the rest of his life, but is allowed to dispose of his business if he desires. Why should not a man on the land have the same opportunity? A man does not purchase land without a desire to work it; and, in the event of a change of ownership, production goes on in much the same manner as when the previous owner held it.

Then the Minister went on to make all sorts of absurd suggestions about absentee owners, and said that the people who live here paid income tax. Does he not know that people who own land in this State and live overseas pay more in taxation through a higher rate in the form of an absentee tax?

The hon. gentleman endeavoured to build up a case first of all by suggesting that the late Sir Samuel Griffith made a speech in "Hansard," and, on being asked when he made it, would not furnish the information.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: The only thing that matters is, did he make it or not?

Mr. MOORE: The hon. gentleman put forward a suggestion which was misleading.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: You got it so it could not be misleading. I quoted what he said.

Mr. MOORE: It is all very well for the hon. gentleman to wriggle out of it in that manner.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: I am not wriggling out of it. I quoted what he said.

Mr. MOORE: The hon. gentleman also claimed that the Labour Government were the only Government which had done anything in regard to the prickly-pear land.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Quite true.

[Mr. Moore.

Mr. MOORE: I read to the hon. gentleman out of "Hansard" to disprove that statement. I did not say something and then say it was in "Hansard," and fail to give the page and year. I gave the page and the year, and pointed out that the Government of the day appointed a commission which went overseas to investigate the problem. That shows the absolute unreliability of the Minister when introducing a Bill or saying anything in this Chamber. He cannot build up a case on the policy of the Government, but puts forward a case based on misleading statements. What reliance can be placed on him? Surely, if he has a case, he can build it up on principles! If not, why should he bring in a Bill at all? He ought to rely on principles in his advocacy rather than build up an imaginary case founded on irrelevancies. The Government have had experience of perpetual leasehold, of the increase in land settlement that has come about under the freehold system, of the fact that holders of perpetual leases have agitated for freehold, and of the desire of local authorities in the different areas where the perpetual leasehold tenure is operating for the Government to allow conversion to freehold because in many instances the local authorities cannot secure rates from perpetual leaseholders. The Government also know that the local authorities have complained that they could not take possession of land held under perpetual lease where the rates were unpaid, and that it frequently happened that the improvements on the property were mortgaged to someone else—possibly the Agricultural Bank, as that is the only institution that will lend money on that tenure. Hon. members opposite know perfectly well that local authorities have been placed in the position that perpetual leaseholders were able to snap their fingers at demands by local authorities for payment of arrears of rates, so that the freeholders had to provide the revenue for the road and other facilities made available by the local authorities. With all that knowledge at their command, the present Government, per medium of the Secretary for Public Lands, say that their desire, in introducing this Bill, is to help the settler, and that the result will be to encourage land settlement. I can only say that I oppose the Bill and will move an amendment to widen its scope. I consider that section 129 of the Land Acts should be amended, because the 10 per cent. penalty for overdue rent is too high at a time when interest and other charges have been reduced. When interest rates were high, a penalty rate of 10 per cent. might have been justified; but no one can claim that it is fair to impose such a penalty if an unfortunate selector is unable, through climatic conditions, to pay his rent on the due date. I do not know the practice of the present Minister, but I do know that most Ministers have exercised a certain amount of discretion in the imposition of that penalty; but in doing so they have been breaking the law, which gives them no discretion in the matter. The law in that respect should be altered.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Why didn't you alter it when you were in power.

Mr. MOORE: The present position is totally different. Interest has been compulsorily reduced by 22½ per cent. Why should the Crown be put in the position of a Shylock, who can say to an unfortunate selector

who is the victim of adverse climatic conditions and whose rent is unpaid, "You shall pay 10 per cent. extra as a penalty?"

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: The same Crown was the same Shylock when you were in power.

Mr. MOORE: I think some alteration should be made in that respect, and, in order that it may be done at the appropriate time, I move the following amendment:—

"Omit the words—
'in certain particulars.'"

The resolution will then read—

"That it is desirable that a Bill be introduced to amend 'The Land Acts, 1910 to 1931,' and other Acts."

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS (Hon. P. Pease, *Herbert*) [12.9 p.m.]: I do not propose to accept the amendment. During the three years that the hon. gentleman who is now Leader of the Opposition was head of the Government, he had ample time to do what he is now asking me to do. After abusing me at considerable length, he moves a most stupid amendment.

I do not propose to accept the amendment. The Bill I am discussing deals solely with the question of perpetual leasehold. Next session I purpose bringing in a Bill to consolidate the Land Acts, when any evils that we consider exist will be removed. Following the usual policy of Labour, we shall do our work properly, and not in a haphazard fashion. We are not going to do it piecemeal, and, when in opposition, we are not going to say, "We will do so and so," and then, when we get into power, not do it. We are not going to do anything hurriedly, although we certainly hurried on this Bill because we want to stop the dissipation of the public estate once and for all. I do not propose to accept the amendment. When the Leader of the Opposition was the Leader of the Government he had ample power and time to put that amendment on the statute-book, and he did not do it.

Mr. EDWARDS (*Nanango*) [12.12 p.m.]: There is no doubt that the Minister, in moving the introduction of this Bill, went out of his way to make political propaganda. It seems to me regrettable that in the present stage of land settlement in Queensland a Minister should find it necessary to attempt to make political propaganda out of land settlement. He told the Committee definitely over and over again that no land administration of the Nationalist or Country Party had ever been of any value to the State of Queensland. Anyone who is prepared to make a statement like that is so imbued with the policy of the Labour Party, which is the nationalisation of all land, that he cannot understand any other policy, or else he has failed to equip himself with sufficient information to understand what has taken place. Take the Darling Downs as an illustration! The whole of the Darling Downs has been settled under the freehold tenure. Take the great Burnett district? Take Fassifern! Take the best settled areas in Queensland! All those districts have been settled under the freehold tenure; and there has been no more successful settlement in small areas in any part of Australia. Yet the Minister definitely stated that those settlements have been a failure. I say without

any hesitation that, if it had not been for that sound class of settlement, the State of Queensland would not have made anything like the progress it has made in the past.

It annoys one to think of the little knowledge the Minister possesses in regard to the practical side of land settlement. What is essential in land settlement is a contented population. We want settlers who are prepared to go into the wilderness, build homes for themselves, and be content to live on the land and develop the country, and thereby bring about progress in every other industry. That is what land settlement should mean. Hon. members on the Government side are not prepared definitely to state exactly what they mean by land settlement. What they actually mean is the nationalisation of land and the nationalisation of the homes of the people. They are not game to say it, but are simply prepared to flounder on. They know that at the present time the influence of Mr. Beasley and men like him is the influence behind the Government. It is not a question of the Minister wanting to bring in this amending Bill at all, but a question of people outside driving him to do it. That is where the influence is coming from, because the Labour Party is not going on sufficiently quick with the nationalisation policy to suit certain people outside who have not enough and do not wish to make homes for themselves, but who want to take advantage of the labour of people who go on the land and make homes for themselves. It is a pity that this check is being given to land settlement of the proper class in Queensland. I say a check, because it will not be long before the Government are put out of office and another Government will come in who will give the settlers the opportunity of getting freehold again.

Mention was made by the Minister about land in the sugar districts being of great value, some holdings being worth £6,000 or £7,000. Do hon. members opposite argue that the sugar industry is getting too much from the people of Australia, or that the people know that another Government will come in which will enable them to secure the freehold tenure? It is stupid in the extreme to say that the Government have not got full control over the land when it is freehold, seeing they can impose increased taxation, if they desire, an undeveloped land tax which can be imposed.

Mr. FOLEY interjected.

Mr. EDWARDS: I will give every assistance possible to see that land is put under cultivation; but, if the hon. member thinks I am going to assist him in having the crops which shall be grown and the area which shall be placed under cultivation controlled by the Government, he is mistaken. I am not going to do anything to compel small people to take land under perpetual leasehold conditions, when the Government can come along and reappraise the land and raise the rent after a man has improved the land.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: That is not true.

Mr. EDWARDS: It is true.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: You give me one case.

Mr. EDWARDS: I defy the Minister or any inspector to go into the scrublands of the Burnett at the present time and make

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a definite statement as to what the land is worth in its undeveloped state. The land is supposed to be valued in its undeveloped state. The local shire councils are raising the valuations from time to time on account of the development which has been carried out by the settlers. That is just what the Government intend to do. The perpetual leasehold tenure does not tend in any way to develop the State along the lines the settlers require. If we wish to make them a contented people, we must give them the tenure they require. We have full power at any time to deal with freehold land, and it is unfair for the Government to check the progress and development of the State by cutting out freehold tenure. The Government know that this is only a question of pushing forward their policy of land nationalisation. Hon. members opposite would want freehold tenure if they went on the land, as they know the security is much better under freehold than under leasehold tenure.

It was interesting to note the attitude of hon. members opposite in regard to the prickly-pear question. They laughed at the Leader of the Opposition when he stated that pear had been rolled down. That shows the need of a practical mind in regard to these matters. Thousands of acres were put into cultivation by first rolling the pear. I myself have put the stripper over a wheat crop in country where small prickly-pear was growing in with the wheat, and have still stripped a good crop of wheat. It proves how little of the practical side of land settlement is understood by hon. members opposite, and indicates the administration we are likely to get from the Minister.

The hon. gentleman took all the credit to the Labour Government for eradicating prickly-pear, but it was Sir Edward Macartney who, when Secretary for Public Lands, appointed the travelling commission which brought back the cochineal insect and initiated the experiments which have resulted in the eradication of the pest so far as it has gone to-day. Let us be a little fair, and not always look at the political side of every question.

I think it is ridiculous to cut out the old homestead tenure. Some of the finest settlement in Queensland was brought about under that tenure. Hon. members opposite argue that we should give the people a chance to use their capital in the development of the land, but that argument goes to the four winds when they cut out this tenure, which gave to the people an opportunity of keeping their capital and paying only 6d. per acre per annum and of becoming contented settlers, because they knew they were working for something that belonged to them. If the hon. gentleman were building a home and knew that the Government had the power to raise his rent, how would he like it? How would he work? He would not work in a way which could be compared with the work of people who know that some day they can make their homes their own. Unfortunately, not enough people have been encouraged to get their own homes or we would not be asking people to go on the land to-day. More people would be on the land and fewer in the cities to whip the Government into what they are doing. The best settled areas of the State have been taken up under the freehold system. Is the hon. gentleman who introduces this Bill prepared to go on to the

Downs or up into the Burnett and suggest that the settlers there should convert to perpetual leasehold? I say without any hesitation that he is not stupid enough to make such a suggestion to people who have established themselves in their homes in those districts, because they have made a success of their undertakings, and they have not only built up land settlement but also other industries which have helped to develop Queensland.

The hon. gentleman may think that the freehold system means holding land out of production, but I could take him to areas in Victoria where he would find it impossible to put unemployed on the land, because in hundreds of miles of country in the Western districts round Hamilton and through the mallee country and other places he would not see one big holding. In such districts as these the first opportunity of settlement to make a start came when men had the opportunity to go on to the stations—and not all in the richest country either—and take portions and use them for three years. When those portions would not grow a decent wheat crop again, they got other portions, with the result that many of those farmers came out independent and were able to get selections of their own. The Government would be doing a great deal more good if they were to develop the richest land by providing water and the wherewithal for the present settlers to extend their holdings. That would be far better than an attempt to check land settlement, as is being done to-day under the guise of providing perpetual leasehold. That does not concern hon. members opposite so much as the question of the nationalisation of the land and the homes of the people. If the present settlers were encouraged to conserve fodder and water, and generally to become contented with the conditions of land settlement, a considerable amount of capital would be attracted for investment in Queensland. Settlers would be attracted, not only from our own people, but also from other parts of the Commonwealth. I hope that the policy will be pursued, and that the stupid suggestions the Minister made this morning will not be persisted in.

The Leader of the Opposition suggested that the 10 per cent. penalty imposed upon selectors who are in arrears with their rent should be reduced. If the Minister were honest, he would admit that interest rates are declining every day. A loan of £8,000,000 has just been launched at 3½ per cent., which clearly shows that interest rates are on the decline. Is there not a better opportunity to-day to reduce the 10 per cent. penalty than when we were in power? I have always held that it was entirely wrong to aggravate the difficulties of a settler by the imposition of a 10 per cent. penalty when he was in arrears with his rents. If we are earnest in our desire to promote land settlement, we should extend every assistance to the people already settled on the land. I do not suggest that settlements similar to that which is being established at Beerburum should be provided. Create contentment amongst the existing settlers and allow them to develop their farms without the aid of artificial conditions. It is upon that basis that Australia has been developed so far. No artificial conditions were provided in the olden days. The settlers did not come back to the Government when they were in trouble. We should

encourage them to rely upon their own initiative. We should not tolerate political interference and the taxation burdens that are imposed merely because the Government wish to retain control of the land. Allow the people to go out into the country with the one idea of development. Only then will the country progress and prosper. The unemployment problem can be solved only if the settlers are able to place an additional quantity of wheat, maize, pumpkins, or other primary products upon the railways for transportation. Help the people to get back to work. That is the only way in which the unemployment problem will be solved. It will certainly never be solved by unwarranted interference with settlement, tending to make for discontent from one end of the State to the other.

Mr. WIENHOLT (*Fassifern*) [12.29 p.m.] : There is a clear division of thought between the two political parties on this important subject, and I find myself on the side of those whom the Minister was pleased to describe as "burglars." These "burglars" number many tens of thousands throughout the State, and I hope to see tens of thousands more settled as quickly as possible. I should like the Minister to consider whether his proposal to provide only for the perpetual leasehold tenure will not eventually mean they have fought a losing battle. Although the Government may think it unlikely to occur for many years, yet the pendulum will swing and a freehold-giving Government will come in. The holders of perpetual leases will then rush to the Government in order that their perpetual leaseholds may be converted into freeholds. Then a Labour Government might come in again, and again restrict freehold, with the result that another crop of perpetual leaseholders will be created, which, when the pendulum swings once again, will all be converted to freehold. The only manner in which that could be prevented is for the Government, holding the views they do, to announce that not only will they not give a freehold tenure now, but, if any freehold is given after a change of Government, when they are returned to power again, it will be taken away.

There is also this question to be considered. The Secretary for Public Lands may not realise the Government has no power to give away the freehold in land. My point of view is that the Government have not the power to give the freehold title of land in its real sense because the State Government no longer have control of the freehold in the truest sense of the word. I take it that the freehold is the selling of the land whereby the man who purchases it becomes free of rent. As a matter of fact, he purchases the capital value and the freehold. The State cannot give a freehold title because the Federal authority has now come in and imposed a land tax which is equal to a rent.

The PREMIER : In the final analysis, there is no difference between a land tax and land rent.

Mr. WIENHOLT : In many cases the owner of a freehold property pays more in Federal land taxation than he would pay in rent if it was a perpetual leasehold. The owner of freehold, however, is under an obligation to make the best use in developing it. Any Government also has the moral right to resume freehold for defence, rail-

way, closer settlement, or other public purposes. It might not be wise to do so; but they have that moral right, provided they pay just the fair and right value—neither more nor less.

The Minister and some members of the Opposition have unfolded their views on the relative merits of freehold and perpetual leasehold. Some hon. members have contended that it is even in the interests of the man and the land that he should have a freehold and not a leasehold. Where do they stop in that argument? The Secretary for Public Lands said it was better for a man to be able to erect a home on a perpetual leasehold than to put his capital into purchasing freehold. Then why not lease a motor car and not purchase one? Why not lease a team rather than own your own horses?

The PREMIER : In many cases that is so.

Mr. WIENHOLT : If the argument of the Minister is logical, would it not be better for a man to hire his trousers from a pawnshop rather than purchase them outright? (Laughter.) The serious part of this controversy—and although the Minister drew attention to it in his speech to-day, I hardly think it was mentioned during the debate on the Estimates—is that the vital subject of unemployment is very much concerned in the question of leasehold versus freehold. I agree with the Minister in this respect, although he looks at the matter from an entirely different point of view to myself. The hon. member for Maranoa really put his finger on the vital point when he said that freehold land in his electorate is much more improved than leasehold. That is exactly the point. Wherever a block of leasehold adjoins a block of freehold—some properties contain both freehold and leasehold—you will find that the whole of the improvements are on the freehold block.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS : That is when the same person owns both freehold and leasehold.

Mr. WIENHOLT : That is so; but, even where you see freehold alongside of leasehold you will always see that more improvements are put on the freehold block. The Minister quoted to us the law of Moses, where every fifty years the titles were wiped out altogether, and the land fell back to the controlling authority. Under that system I am afraid that there would be very little improvement placed on the land in the forty-ninth year.

The same thing with leasehold, and, worst of all, that dreadful title known as "occupation license," where you have even to get the special approval of the Land Court for any improvements. I am an Australian and a Queenslander, but I do say that there is an unfortunate fault developing in us in that we want to have our cake and eat it. We seem to have got into that frame of mind that we can only see our own side; whether it is from a distorted sense of extreme patriotism I do not know. People get up and vilify the old country; yet we only exist under the shadow of the White Ensign. The other day we heard a Minister state that he had a son of a famous imported dairy bull. Other Ministers know how important it is to grade up our stock. We import horses, bulls, sheep, and swine; yet, when we breed anything good, like the merino ram, we hear it stated, "Don't let

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that go out of the country because other people might use it to grade up their stock." We cannot have it both ways. It is very easy to drive along a nice bitumen road, built to a great extent out of loan money, in a nice easy car, and condemn and vilify the pioneers who trod those same tracks in the dust of their own bullock wagons. Freehold versus perpetual leasehold is a matter for political and academic argument. It is very arguable. We hold our own opinions; but we cannot have it both ways. How many of the pioneers who first bought and took up land in Queensland exist to-day? I say not 5 per cent. of them fought and battled through their conditions. Where they did buy freehold they incurred huge debts to buy the properties, and I do not think 5 per cent. of them came through the natural financial troubles that took place. The selectors to whom the hon. member for Nanango referred and who have fought through and taken up selections in the Burnett and other districts, and have won their freehold titles, are carrying on the same pioneering work.

I am with the Minister in his attempt to settle as many people on the land as possible. Unlike the hon. member for Enoggera and the hon. member for Leichhardt, I do not think that we should restrict land settlement from any fear that the people will not be able to market their products. The Minister has only to go to some country show and view the "single farm" exhibits to see what a man can produce for his own needs on his own farm. I believe that, when the Government provide good, sound, careful and economical government, they have no more need to worry about the products of the farmer than they have to worry about supplying people with toothache to a dentist.

This is a matter on which we have different opinions. We shall not be able to persuade each other as to the wisdom of our respective contentions, but I see no reason for bitterness or an exhibition of personalities in the debate. I think that all hon. members are honestly and eagerly anxious to see more men put on the land, or, as the Minister very aptly said, to see more men emancipated—I like that word—from the rut of unemployment and placed in homes of their own.

The Minister must remember that a great proportion of the early settlers—the men who made homes for themselves—started by getting employment from others already on the land. The whole country is crying out for improvements at the present time, and those improvements would be made if the money was there to make them instead of being paid in taxation or paid to the Loan Council to be handed back for political expenditure. There is room for improvements on every holding that I know of, and, if these improvements could be made, the work would financially help the new settlers in their start.

Mr. NIMMO (*Oxley*) [12.42 p.m.]: I would not have taken part in this debate had not the Minister put over certain things this morning. The hon. member who has just resumed his seat said that he did not think any good would come of the debate because our minds are already made up. I think some good might come of the debate, because there is no question that, by reverting to the perpetual leasehold tenure, we are going to put the clock back for some years. We

can brush aside many of the statements made by the Minister this morning, because they were irresponsible statements and made for the express purpose of trying to cause delay. The Government want the debate protracted because there is not much business on the paper. That is the whole thing in a nutshell. We have to do our duty to the people, and reply to some of the matters put over this morning by the Minister.

The hon. gentleman mentioned Canberra as an example of the benefits of perpetual leasehold. I do not think we could have a more glaring instance of the failure of that tenure. Any man who visits Canberra must recognise that, had it been settled under freehold tenure, there would have been a fine city there now. Instead of that, we have one of the biggest white elephants to be seen anywhere in Australia.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: That is not the fault of leasehold.

Mr. NIMMO: If the freehold of the land had been sold, the people would have built their homes there. It was designed by an idealist who knew very little about cities. It is a tragic thing for Australia that Canberra was settled under the leasehold tenure. Many people forfeited their leases and went away. We had the spectacle, during the Labour regime, of many people speculating in perpetual leaseholds. There was never so much speculation in freehold. People bought a perpetual leasehold, paid the first deposit, and, if any improvement took place in the district in two or three years, they sold out at a big profit; but, if no improvement took place, the lease was forfeited and the State got the land back again. It has been a case of neglect all through the piece. We have had our prickly-pear troubles in Queensland, and they were bad enough in 1912, when a prickly-pear commission was appointed to visit different countries and make investigations as to biological methods of getting rid of the pear. We know the neglect which has occurred in keeping selections clear of prickly-pear under the perpetual leasehold system. Many people took up land under that system and neglected to keep it clean, and the pear grew apace. The growth of prickly-pear was very considerable after the Labour Government resumed office, mainly through people having no interest in keeping down the pear on land held under the perpetual leasehold tenure.

The Minister cited the case of the Tully township in North Queensland. That is a town of mushroom growth; it is a very fine town and has grown rapidly. The majority of the people there were very thankful that there was a change of Government three years ago, and they took advantage of the opportunity to change from the leasehold to the freehold tenure. I have the assurance of the Lands Department that some of the owners of the land with the best buildings on it in that centre have converted to freehold, and the Minister knows it.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: But they are the capitalists.

Mr. NIMMO: The capitalist is very often the man who has worked very hard and saved up a little money, with which he has paid the deposit for the purchase of the property on which the money was spent in improving. He has pluck and courage, and

{*Mr. Wienholt.*

has developed these towns in the North. Possibly the Minister may have an interest in one of the hotels there.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: I have no interest whatever.

Mr. NIMMO: If the Minister has an interest in a hotel in Tully, more power to him.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: I have not. You may rest assured of that. I have no interest in any hotel.

Mr. KENNY: You have an interest in freehold land in Tully.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: No.

Mr. KENNY: You got it for nothing, too.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: That is like the rest of the hon. member's statements; there is no truth in it.

Mr. NIMMO: Getting back to the contention of the Minister that we are giving away the birthright of the people by granting freehold, if all the land in Queensland had been held under the perpetual leasehold system, it would have been overrun with pests, rubbish, and growth of all kinds. People would never have developed the land under leasehold tenure as they have done under freehold tenure. As the hon. member for Fassifern pointed out, in every case the improvements are put on the freehold and not on the leasehold.

There are many other disadvantages which would have operated in Queensland if we had had perpetual leasehold at the inception. No one would have any interest in the country. It is the little bit of freehold land that people secure that creates the anchor which holds them to the land for all time. Many people who bought a piece of freehold land in their early struggles, and have had to stick to it because it was freehold, have made a success of it. If they had had to leave the land in the early stages of their careers, the development that has taken place in this State would not have occurred.

It is almost impossible to get an advance on a perpetual leasehold. If a man builds on a perpetual leasehold in town, or even in the country, no institution cares to advance money on it.

Mr. WATERS: They have done so in the pastoral areas.

Mr. NIMMO: That shows how little the hon. member knows, and how blindly he gives his vote. There is no perpetual leasehold in pastoral areas, but an entirely different tenure, with which we have no fault to find. Grazing leaseholds are accepted by every hon. member on this side. They exist in respect of very large areas of land while we are finding out the best purpose to which the land can be put.

To-day we have numbers of unemployed who are taking up land in the country and, with their families, putting their hearts and souls into the work of getting it ready for the production of crops. It is a nice state of affairs that at the end of fifteen years an inspector can come along and raise their rent perhaps fivefold, simply because of the work they have put in, with the result that, instead of having the benefit of the results of that work at a time when they need a little money to give them comforts in life, they must pay away what they have earned to the Crown.

In 1914 the perpetual leasehold system was not in operation, yet this country had gone ahead in a wonderful way. We had most of our present public buildings and most of our railways and only a reasonable amount—£56,000,000—of public debt. Everyone in the farming districts and in the cities was prosperous. There was no despair. To-day nearly everybody views the outlook up to a certain point with a feeling of despair. When Labour got into power in 1915, perpetual leasehold was introduced and freehold was not allowed. There was no inducement for people to take up land, but simply an encouragement to flock to the cities and participate in the orgy paid for by the borrowed money that was spent mostly in the cities. The Government then had to borrow more money and spend it to keep the country moving. If we had had freehold tenure, much more settlement would have taken place, to-day country and city would have been more evenly balanced, and we would not find so many people viewing the prospect with despair. I hope that the Government will not choose this time to reimpose the system of perpetual leasehold, but that they will treat this Bill as some other of their Bills are likely to be treated—drop it, and give us a chance of getting rid of our unemployment problem. The Moore Government had the problem practically solved, and the Labour Government should not choose this time to bring in a system which gives the people in the country no hope, no outlook for the future, nothing to work for. If people can get freehold and can work hard for a period, knowing that thereby they can make homes for themselves, we have a solution of our problem; but once this Bill is put on the statute-book there is no hope of a settlement of the unemployment problem by putting people on the land. I urge that argument on the Minister as strongly as I can.

Mr. GODFREY MORGAN (*Murilla*) [12.55 p.m.]: The old familiar topic of leasehold versus freehold has been debated in this Chamber for many years, and it bids fair to become a political seesaw. The perpetual leasehold tenure will be the only land tenure available during the regime of a Labour Government, whilst a freehold tenure will be provided upon their defeat and the accession to office of a Government holding entirely different political views.

During the regime of the Labour Government over a period of fourteen years thousands of settlers acquired their land under the perpetual leasehold tenure because they had no alternative; but immediately upon their acquirement of the land they became active advocates for a change of Government, realising that a change would bring them a change of land tenure. Eventually they were successful in obtaining a change of Government, and were able to fulfil their hearts' desire. In 1929, we informed the people that, if we were returned to power, perpetual leaseholders would be given the right to convert to freehold. Approximately 99 per cent. of the settlers acquired land under the perpetual leasehold tenure during the reign of the Labour Government, but almost to a man they converted to the freehold system immediately the opportunity presented itself. The Labour Government will probably control the affairs of this State for the next two and a-half years, but there will then be a change of Government, with a reversion to the freehold system. Realising that a

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change of Government must eventually take place at the next elections, the prospective settlers will acquire land under the perpetual leasehold tenure, and will immediately become advocates for a change of Government and a reform in land tenure. Their objective will be to convert their tenure to freehold. The basis of the land policy of the party opposite is that the land shall belong to all the people, and that no individual shall be in a position to say, "This is my own piece of land; this is my piece of earth." Hon. members opposite hold to the view that everything associated with the land should be subject to collective ownership. That may be all right in theory, but it is very bad in practice. I am safe in asserting that every hon. member opposite who required an area of land for his own purpose would steadfastly refuse to accept land on any but the freehold tenure.

At 2 p.m.,

The CHAIRMAN resumed the chair.

Mr. GODFREY MORGAN: No matter what political views a man might hold, if he is desirous of obtaining even an allotment of land to build a home on, he invariably selects the freehold tenure if it is offering. I do not know whether the Minister owns any land at all, but, if he does, it is probably freehold.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: I own no land. I shall only have my 6 feet allotment when I pass away.

Mr. GODFREY MORGAN: If at some future date the Minister decides to select land, there is no doubt that he will take freehold if it is offering. He will not allow his political principles to interfere with his business. That is what one discovers in regard to those who advocate leasehold. The history of Queensland will show that, although this State has for the greater part of the time been controlled by what hon. members opposite are pleased to term Tory Governments, no Government has at any time been prepared to give away large grazing areas of leasehold land. Right up to the advent to power of the Labour Party, Governments were only prepared to give a living area to selectors.

I listened attentively to the speech delivered some days ago by the hon. member for Rockhampton, who talked as though the Moore Government had given away large grazing areas in the Western country. He also talked about the cheapness of production in the pastoral industry, which he attributed to the leasehold tenure. I admit that land rentals in this State are cheaper than in other States; but the Moore Government never at any time gave away large freehold areas in the West. The only land which that Government opened under conditions which permitted the selector eventually to obtain the freehold title was land set aside for mixed farming, such as prickly-pear selections and agricultural farms. We never opened a grazing area under the freehold tenure. No Government in Queensland has ever done a thing like that.

Mr. FOLEY: Some of the best pastoral lands in our Western areas are freehold.

Mr. GODFREY MORGAN: That land was originally opened to selection as leasehold, but the selectors acquired the freehold subsequently. It is true that at certain times when railways were being constructed land in the vicinity was thrown open, but not in

big areas. As a matter of fact, to-day some of that land can be bought as freehold for less than was paid for it originally. From a grazing point of view it is not profitable to open land under freehold conditions.

There can be no gainsaying the fact that the owner of freehold land, whether it be a quarter of an acre of land in the town, or 2,000 or 3,000 acres in the country, is an infinitely better citizen than if he holds the land under leasehold. It makes no difference to the individual whether the Government is the landlord, or whether Brown, Jones, or Smith is the landlord; the individual has to pay rent to the landlord. Where land is not likely to become the property of the holder, the same attention will not be devoted to it as would be the case under freehold, where most of the money that is made from the land is put back in improvements to make the land more productive. If the land is not his own property under leasehold—

Mr. FOLEY: It is his own property.

Mr. GODFREY MORGAN: Under perpetual leasehold it is not his own property, and I suggest that, if the hon. member at any time desired to take up land and a choice were given to him, he would select freehold.

Mr. FOLEY: No.

Mr. GODFREY MORGAN: Then I can only think that the hon. member does not desire to take up any land. I could name a dozen or more Labour members, who may not be in Parliament to-day, who have taken up freehold land, and have stated that, when the choice was available to them, they would be fools not to take up freehold land. If the holder of certain land has £200 available, it is as good for him to put that money into improvements as to put it in the Savings Bank. He is making his property more productive, and at the same time he is increasing the value of his land, so that when, say, after thirty or forty years on the land he is looking to enjoy the eventide of his life in peace and comfort, he can sell the land, together with the accumulated profits he has put into the land over the period that he has held it. When he reaches an age at which he desires to retire, he may sell the land for £10,000. That represents the accumulation of his life's work. Has he not earned every penny of that money, and is he not fully entitled to it? On the other hand, if he has a perpetual leasehold, when the time comes for him to retire he can only sell the improvements on the property. He may have paid as much as £500 in rental during the time he occupied the land; yet the property is no nearer his own than when he first took it up. If he takes up the land under freehold conditions, every payment he makes goes towards making the property his own. If a settler has freehold, when he retires, he leaves the land to his son or daughter, if he has one, and, if not, he sells to someone else.

Mr. O'KEEFE: He can sell the leasehold to someone else.

Mr. GODFREY MORGAN: Under the leasehold system he can only sell the improvements. The land is never his own. Many men in the past have taken up freehold and carved out homes from the dense scrub. They have made the property produce wealth and given employment and

[Mr. Morgan.]

have thereby helped to keep the people in the city in luxury. Not only have they had to use their own manual labour but they have also used the labour of their wives and families, and provided employment for those who perform that class of work. They have been public benefactors; yet the Secretary for Public Lands would do all the injury he could to individuals of that description. If you place a settler on the land under leasehold conditions, he will be disgruntled the whole of his life, or at least for the whole period that he remains on the perpetual leasehold. He is not going to be satisfied with his tenure, and will pray night and day for a change of Government so that he may get the opportunity of converting his land to freehold. He will not put the same improvements on the property that he would if he knew that he could get the freehold. The Secretary for Public Lands said that we did not want any settlers from the South coming to Queensland, as we had plenty of our own people who desire to take up land. People desiring to take up land come here from the South with a certain amount of capital, and that wealth enables them to give employment to those who are in need of it. That is an addition to the wealth which we already possess in Queensland. We are not going to attract people from the South or other parts of the world to take up land here under the perpetual leasehold system. We are going to do an injury to our State by making that tenure compulsory. Victoria and New South Wales were largely settled in the early days, and the sons of the old settlers have not the same opportunity to get land that there was formerly. They, therefore, look to Queensland, Western Australia, and other States in which to settle. Before the Labour Government obtained control in Queensland, it could be said that 75 to 80 per cent of young Victorians with a certain amount of capital were looking towards this State with a desire to take up land here. They were not going to other States to any great extent; but the moment the Labour Government altered the freehold tenure to leasehold tenure they turned to Western Australia, which was then beginning to boom. There was no opportunity to get freehold here, so they turned their faces to the west, with the result that Western Australia, which ten years ago was not producing enough wheat for its own requirements, has now become the granary of Australia, and is producing almost as much wheat as any other State.

By altering our tenure to leasehold we have prevented intending settlers from the South from taking up land in Queensland, and have thereby done an injury to our State.

Mr. O'KEEFE: You have no proof of that.

Mr. GODFREY MORGAN: From an Australian point of view it perhaps does not matter where people take up land; and it may be just as important that West Australia should be populated as that Queensland should be; but from our point of view we did injury to Queensland by preventing settlers from taking up land here under freehold tenure. These people were bred under freehold conditions in the older States, and they look upon the freehold tenure as most desirable. I know scores of people who will not go on land except under that tenure, as they say they are not going to work for the benefit of a landlord or a

Government. They want to obtain a freehold title and get the reward of the labour they put in on their holdings.

The people in Ireland were discontented when working for English landlords. They desired to obtain a freehold title, and eventually they got it. The British Government passed legislation enabling the Irish tenants to obtain freehold under a scheme of land purchase. It does not matter to the farmer in Ireland whether the landlord is the Government of Great Britain or any individual, as eventually they get the freehold on fair and reasonable terms. That is what we want in Queensland. We want the people to be able to go on the land, so that with fair seasons and a little good luck they will be able to make money from their labour. Does anyone begrudge the farmer making a little wealth?

Mr. BRAND: Yes; the Minister does.

Mr. MORGAN: Very often he sacrifices all the comforts of life. His children are educated in an inferior fashion compared with those in the city. In every way he makes sacrifices; yet, because he accumulates a little bit to retire upon, some people think that he has done too well.

Mr. G. P. BARNES (*Warwick*) [2.20 p.m.]: The Leader of the Opposition put in one sentence what the effect of this Bill will be when he said that it will damage the prospects of land settlement in Queensland. How long are we going to be in learning from our experience? Queensland has not existed long as the life of a State goes, but in the years of her history we have exposed to our view the success or failure of the two systems of perpetual leasehold and freehold tenure of land. It is a surprise to me that a Government who, for fourteen years at any rate, tried out the perpetual leasehold system and have before them the records of its absolute failure which are telling against the State to-day, should, especially in a time like the present, endeavour to reimpose that policy. Nearly all our troubles to-day are due to the fact that land settlement was not encouraged at the same rate as we built railways. Had that been the case, we would not now be in such a pickle with our railways. Otherwise, how is it that, after the expenditure of so many millions of money, we are transporting less goods than we were some years ago? Certainly, other transport has taken away a portion of our traffic; but I saw figures the other day showing that it only means a loss of £200,000. The real cause is that land settlement was discouraged by the perpetual leasehold tenure.

Any man who had anything to do with the early days of settlement in Queensland knows that the fundamental idea in the mind of the selector in the country then was a freehold. Hundreds of such men have crossed my path and appealed to me for help, and I do not know of a single one who, when cross-examined as to his ideas for the future, did not cherish the idea of "a farm of my own." That idea has dominated, and will continue to dominate, every man who makes the best out of land settlement. I say without hesitation, with actual proof before me, that land settlement such as we have seen on the Darling Downs, in my own district and elsewhere, would never have taken place had perpetual leasehold been the only tenure on which land could be taken up.

Mr. G. P. Barnes.]

Are we to ignore the fact that over the past fourteen or fifteen years closer settlement experiments have practically been a failure in this State? Despite that experience over a period of years, and despite the tragic administration of the Labour Government, they are prepared to-day to persist in the passage of a Bill to provide for the perpetual leasehold tenure and the abolition of the freehold tenure. The Bill is doomed to failure. The Government have a high purpose to serve in connection with land settlement, and I really believe that their hearts beat true in their endeavour in that direction; but the conditions of land settlement must be made acceptable to the people. It is our duty to warn the Government of the mistake they are making, and to point out to them that the mistake will redound to their discredit, as their tragic administration over a period of fourteen years stands to their discredit to-day. They failed to observe the conditions required by the people on the land. I am not speaking in any careless way; but I am earnestly endeavouring to induce the Government to be guided by the experiences of the past. I am more than ever convinced that the Government are making a very serious blunder in anticipating that closer settlement will be a success under the perpetual leasehold tenure. I am not suggesting that there should be any interference with the leasehold system as applied to grazing and pastoral areas, but I am inclined to the view that a pastoral leaseholder can be placed somewhat in the same position as a share farmer in that he will do only what is required to be done to further his financial interests. Is it likely that a Crown tenant who is liable to periodic rent reappraisements is going to carry out a considerable amount of hard and difficult work when he realises that a proportion of the result of that work will be exacted by the Government at a later date? Such conditions will deter men from doing that amount of work which otherwise would be done. Give a man a block of land as his very own, and he will put his very life into it, and in doing so he will serve the country in an admirable way. The Minister stated that in the past the land had been acquired on a freehold basis merely for speculative purposes. That may be the case with town allotments—I have known it to be so—but I cannot say that such has been the case in connection with general land settlement. I cannot call to mind any man who has received more from the sale of his property than he has expended in its development. I cannot recall one individual who has made a profit over and above the cost of the work involved in developing his property. There is no speculation in land, although there may be speculation in other directions. We want men to settle on the land and put their hearts into the work of production. We can only encourage settlement by inculcating the best hope in the selectors; and that hope will be inspired by the fact that, after years of pioneering hard work, the land will become their own. I hope that the Government will yet realise their mistake and the absolute injury they are doing to the State, because, by carrying out the purposes of this Bill, they will seriously retard settlement.

Mr. KENNY (*Cook*) [2.31 p.m.]: There is no need at all for the introduction of this Bill. Much has been heard from the Minister and other speakers of the merits of freehold versus leasehold; but it is time that

[*Mr. G. P. Barnes.*

there should be definite legislation enacted on this question. Neither political party will waive its ideals on this question. The Labour members believe in leasehold; the Opposition are bound to freehold. The late Government, believing in the freehold principle, gave the people desirous of settling on the land the right to decide whether they should select freehold or leasehold tenures. That statute now exists, and the Government can utilise it. In fact, they have been acting on it since they have assumed power. They have opened lands to selection on the perpetual leasehold basis and have ignored the freehold tenure. The present Act is wide enough to carry out the objective of the Labour Party, but if our land legislation is to be amended with every change of Government, then it is high time that the Constitution was altered so that it may include a definite policy in regard to land settlement. Let it be a part of the Constitution that intending selectors can select land under either leasehold or the freehold tenure. That will save much time that is now wasted with every change of Government in altering the land laws to bring them into conformity with the views of the political party in power. I shall be disappointed if, when the Opposition are again returned to power, they do not give the holders of perpetual leasehold selections the right to convert to freehold. If the Government can give effect to their land policy in so far as the leasehold tenure is concerned, and the Government by the legislation already on the statute-book can restrict settlement to the leasehold tenure, why the necessity for this Bill?

There was something more than that in the minds of the Government. All must admit that there is no value in land in its virgin state. Value is given to land by the selector who works it, and by the improvements he places upon it. Selectors in the outback and isolated districts who pioneer settlement undergo hardships and sacrifices in order to bring that land to a state of production. If, after years of hardship and sacrifice, not only on the part of the selector but of his wife and family, he desires to sell his interest, then he does not receive nearly the value of the time and energy which he has expended in improving his selection. We have only to attend the auction sales which are held every day to have this fact exemplified. Why are selectors encouraged to go out and pioneer settlement and develop the land? Solely because they believe that they have a right to the land and that they will make homes not only for themselves but for their children and grandchildren. These people are prepared to put up with the hardships so that eventually they may secure the title deeds to the property. When they have the title deeds they may, if they so desire, sell the land to any person.

The policy of the Labour Party is not only perpetual leasehold but perpetual residential qualifications. It is undeniable that the policy is having a ruinous effect on the development of the State. Agricultural industries throughout the world have been built up on a freehold tenure. Great Britain, the United States of America, France, Belgium, Spain, Italy, Portugal, Germany—these and other countries have built up their agricultural industries on the freehold tenure.

Mr. EDWARDS: But not Russia.

Mr. KENNY: Russia did so at one time, but the freehold tenure does not exist there now.

Mr. FOLEY: Production has been trebled in Russia.

Mr. KENNY: In the countries I have mentioned we have the landlord, the tenant, and the share farmer. Although the freehold tenure was altered in France after the French Revolution, it was again built up under the capitalistic system; and in that and in other countries we have the landlord and the tenant, and the type of person who, according to the Deputy Leader of the Government, is exploiting the person to whom the land is leased. Did one ever hear any more ridiculous statement than that of the Deputy Leader of the Government that the people who have freehold tenure are burglars? I wonder if, when the hon. gentleman goes to bed at night, he ever lies awake wondering what other people think?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: I never lie awake to think. (Government laughter.)

Mr. KENNY: I know the hon. gentleman never waits to think. (Laughter.)

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I ask the hon. member to deal with the Bill.

Mr. KENNY: If the hon. gentleman did wait to think before he made pronouncements on land policy, there would be less chance of land settlement being retarded. If he waited to think, people would not be afraid to come into this State and take up land. If, however, he does not wait to think, it will be a hopeless position for Queensland so long as he is Deputy Leader of the Government. I would advise the Premier to make his deputy wait and think before he makes statements that will be detrimental both to the Government and to the State.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: You ought to be pleased if I am doing that.

Mr. KENNY: No, I am never pleased at another man's downfall. I like to extend a helping hand, because this is my native State, and its welfare is even more dear to me than the reputation of the Deputy Leader of the Government.

The hon. member for Leichhardt referred to Russia. That country had freehold tenure at one time; but, with the coming of the Revolution, that tenure was altered, and now there is nationalisation of land and of the homes of the people. That is the policy the Labour Party is aiming at in Queensland.

Mr. FOLEY: There has been increased production in Russia.

Mr. KENNY: Yes, with conscripted labour. We could do the same if we conscripted our farmers. I say definitely that I am not going to stand for that objective. It is a calamity that the Labour Party should say that their objective is the nationalisation of land in Queensland. We know that countries in close proximity to Russia followed Russia's policy in regard to the nationalisation of land. Germany went in for a little nationalisation of land; but what is the position in Germany to-day? The sole aim is to build up a nationalised peasantry in order to build up the Fatherland. It would be undesirable for Queensland to bring our farming community down to the peasantry

basis. If that is the objective of the Labour Party, let them say so.

The hon. member for Normanby admits that the nationalisation of the farmers is the objective of the Labour Party. It is the desire of the Government to nationalise the farmers and give them leaseholds. If they do that, we shall build up a peasant class in Queensland, which will be a calamity. We should endeavour to develop the State on sound lines. The people have shown definitely that they desire the freehold tenure. The fact that 3,500 settlers converted their land into freehold in three years proves conclusively that the people desire the freehold tenure. In bringing in this amending Bill the Labour Government admit that the people desire freehold. If that were not so, there would be no occasion to amend the Act, because the Government could give the option of either leasehold or freehold, and then, if the people desired freehold, they would take the land up under that tenure. Any increased value in land is well earned by the settlers who pioneer a district. The value has been built up by hard work and as a result of hard conditions. The settlers look forward to the time when they will have their own homes, and they are fully entitled to any increased value in the land, or to what hon. members opposite call the "unearned increment." I say they are entitled to it, and we should not try to take it away from them.

Let us take, for instance, an area where we have the freehold and leasehold tenures combined in the pastoral districts. The holders of those areas put their improvements on the freehold part of their holdings because a freehold title is a good security. They use the leasehold portion of the area for grazing purposes, and put as few improvements as possible on it, because the rent can be appraised every fifteen years by the Government.

Hon. members opposite have said that a revaluation of a leasehold is only based on the unimproved value of the land. Is that correct?

Mr. FOLEY: Yes.

Mr. KENNY: I can quote an instance in my own electorate where a man was trying to convert from leasehold to freehold. The policy of the late Government was that the improvements connected with the land had to be considered as the property of the individual. The Crown lands ranger was asked to value the unimproved value of the land. When he went to make the valuation he valued it at £98 per acre, whereas the local valuation was £4 per acre. That shows the valuations that are placed on unimproved land when a person wishes to convert from leasehold to freehold. When the fifteen-year period is up and the land has to be revalued, the Government send out the Crown lands ranger to give the unimproved value of the land, and, if it is going to be valued at £98 per acre, it will be unfortunate for those settlers.

A GOVERNMENT MEMBER: What did the Land Court say?

Mr. KENNY: This gentleman appealed to the Land Court against the valuation, and the court fixed the valuation at £36 per acre unimproved value, whilst the unimproved value according to the local authority was £4 per acre. You can buy farms alongside that place at £5 an acre unimproved.

Mr. Kenny.]

That will be the basis of revaluation when a perpetual leasehold is revalued at the end of the fifteen-year period.

The selectors who have taken up perpetual leasehold selections have been very desirous of converting to freehold. An argument was used with regard to land at Tolga by the hon. member for Cairns, who said that these lands were given away at 2s. 6d. per acre. I agree with the system of giving land to settlers at 2s. 6d. per acre in order to develop the State. The hon. member for Cairns said that, when his party came into power, they resumed this land at Tolga; but he did not tell us they paid £14 per acre for it. He told us that Chinamen were on the land before it was resumed. When the Chinamen were on the land, leasing it from the man who owned the freehold, they were paying something like 15s. or 16s. per acre rent.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: It was £1 per acre.

Mr. KENNY: When the Labour Party came into power they resumed that land, which belonged to some of their friends, at prices up to £14 per acre. They charged the returned soldiers whom they were repatriating on that land a rental of over £1 per acre per annum. The State was a harder taskmaster than the ordinary freeholder at that time. It took quite a lot of money to buy that land.

Mr. FOLEY: The original owners got it at 2s. 6d. per acre and sold it at £15 per acre in many cases.

Mr. KENNY: That interjection convinces me that it is necessary for the Labour Party to have at least one primary producer amongst them. Does the hon. member realise that scrub falling on those areas costs up to £4 per acre, and that with the big tropical jungle there it will cost about £20 an acre to grub the land before corn can be put in? Does he realise that it costs money to fence and to put up a house and barn on the property? Without stopping to think, he says that originally they only paid 2s. 6d. an acre for it and afterwards sold it for £15 an acre. I admit that a number of men paid more than £14 an acre, but the fact remains that the soldiers were put on that land with that capitalisation. During the late election campaign I was condemned by the hon. member for Cairns, who said that those people were offered freehold and had not got it yet. They have not, for the simple reason that the Labour Party and the Government put that valuation of £14 per acre on it and the selectors could not afford to pay it. They did not have the opportunity to convert to freehold because they realised that it was not worth that to them to-day. Is that an argument against freehold?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Had it been leasehold, they would not have had to pay that.

Mr. KENNY: They would still have had to pay for the improvements, and any man who knows the procedure adopted in resuming the settlements for soldiers at Tolga, Kairi, and Atherton knows that the previous Labour Government were not careful what they paid and the holders to-day are paying in consequence. When the Government did give them leases—the same as the Chinamen had—they would not give them areas large enough to enable them to make a living.

[Mr. Kenny.

It remained for the late Government to clean up the mess. Men were transferred from Tolga to the Burnett and to Mareeba, so that the remaining settlers, after sacrificing many years of their lives, might get living areas. If this policy is adopted by the Labour Party now, there is no hope for Queensland in land settlement, judging by our previous experience. North Queensland has been sacrificed already. Queensland was developed on the old homestead tenure of 2s. 6d. an acre, the best tenure ever introduced in this State; and I would like to see North Queensland developed on that basis now. If hon. members opposite are game enough to come forward with a scheme to develop these scrub lands with all their timber, I will support them. We would have no difficulty in getting settlers from New South Wales and Victoria. There would be an influx into this State.

Mr. G. C. TAYLOR: What about the men already here?

Mr. KENNY: They will have the opportunity, and they will be able to get the finance which is necessary. We could open the land on a definite tenure, and the State could be protected by a provision that the timber should not be sacrificed. The settlers would have a job for years to come in their own backyards while they were removing the timber and improving their holdings. They would not have to go to the Agricultural Bank and tie a dead weight of debt round their necks. They would get sufficient from the timber they were cutting and carting, as others did in years gone by. I make no apology for saying that earlier settlers were assisted because they were able to exploit the timber on their holdings; but the Labour Party should benefit by the mistakes that were made in the early days. They should see that the natural asset of the timber was protected, but at the same time give the settlers an opportunity to make a living by removing it themselves. That could be done on sound lines to the benefit of the selector. If that policy were adopted by the Labour Party, they would be acclaimed by every intending settler. We would have hundreds of applications for every block. We had thirty or forty men ready to go on the land at Cooktown; but, when the present Government took office and said, "You can only get a perpetual leasehold," what happened? They did not select.

Mr. O'KEEFE (Cairns) [2.55 p.m.]: The question of perpetual leasehold versus freehold has been thrashed threadbare in this Chamber; and no fresh arguments have been adduced by hon. members opposite in justification of their contention that the policy of the Labour Party should not be adhered to. The hon. member for Cook should know that the land referred to in North Queensland was taken up in large areas in the early days by moneyed men, and was allowed to remain idle until they could utilise the services of the Chinese in its economic production. Large tracts of this country were leased to the Chinese for £1 per acre per annum, and they were under contract to fell the scrub on the respective areas. The land was held by the Chinese for seven or eight years, and then reverted to its owners. The real owners should have been the Queensland Government. It should be the duty of the Government to lease the land, and not to sell it as freehold.

Hon. members opposite, and the hon. member for Murilla in particular, have stated that the people of Queensland are opposed to our land policy; but during the past few months I have received applications from landowners, particularly in the Bowen electorate, seeking permission to reconvert their holdings from the freehold to the perpetual leasehold tenure. In 1930 the land laws of the State were amended by the Moore Government to provide for the freehold tenure, with the option of a perpetual leasehold tenure. I have one application dated the 7th of this month, in which permission is sought to reconvert the freehold tenure of an agricultural farm of 1,280 acres to the perpetual leasehold tenure. I do not think it is necessary for me to mention the name of the applicant, but I am prepared to lay the letter on the table. I also have another application from the Bowen electorate dated 31st October, 1932, in which the applicant seeks the permission of the Agricultural Bank and the Department of Public Lands to reconvert his freehold land to the perpetual leasehold tenure. That is sufficient proof that the landholders are not prepared to accept the assurance of hon. members opposite given from the hustings that the Labour policy was wrong. They have now had a taste of the policy of the Nationalist Party, and they have expressed the desire to return to the Labour Party's policy of perpetual leasehold. We have always contended that the poorest sections of the community are financially unable to purchase freehold land, and that their only prospect of securing land for the purpose of earning a livelihood is under the perpetual leasehold tenure, as provided by the policy of the Labour Party. On a previous occasion I represented the electoral district of Chillagoe in this Parliament. Portion of that electorate is now within the boundary of the electoral district of Cook. I was repeatedly informed by many farmers in that portion of the new Cook electorate that they did not desire the freehold tenure. They were wise enough to realise that the perpetual leasehold system provided them with a cheaper means of acquiring land for their purpose. The application which I have produced this afternoon is further proof that these selectors do not favour the freehold policy adopted by the late Government.

Mr. MOORE: You only charged 1 per cent. on those blocks.

Mr. O'KEEFE: When the hon. gentleman visited the Atherton Tableland and unfolded his policy to the people there, they did not accept it.

Mr. MOORE: Naturally, when they were only paying 1 per cent. for their blocks.

Mr. O'KEEFE: That is further proof that our policy is the right one. That is the only way we can induce the poorer classes to go on the land, and that is the only way we can get settlers. We have had many instances where large landholders have leased—not freeholded—a portion of their land to people for settlement purposes. No one can truthfully argue that the rightful ownership of all land should not be in the State. No person should hold the freehold title to his land. As we perceived from year to year under our policy of perpetual leasehold before, we shall find that a better class of selector will be attracted to the land, irrespective of what the hon. member for Murilla has stated, and we shall have more

selectors under that policy than heretofore. I have yet to learn from any person, no matter what his politics may be, that more prolific crops can be grown on freehold land than on leasehold. No person receiving a perpetual leasehold has any ground for complaint. The conditions of the lease provide that, if necessary, the land can be handed down to his children. Under the lease they have first preference to it. Those who complain about the land tenure of the Labour Party are those who retain the freehold in land and lease it to others who desire to engage in production. I gave a striking illustration last week of a dairy farmer in the Burnett district who, after successfully working his property, leased his freehold to another selector and retired to the city.

Mr. KENNY: If he has improved his property by his labour and capital, then he has every right to do so, and deserves the income he receives from it.

Mr. O'KEEFE: It appears to me that the argument of the hon. member amounts to this, that the freehold in land should be vested in the individual and not in the State; but the individual and not the State should be permitted to lease it.

Mr. MOORE: The argument of the Minister in favour of leasehold is that the Crown can resume it when it likes.

Mr. O'KEEFE: The illustration I gave of the lands on the Atherton Tableland, which were selected originally at a nominal figure, and leased by the owners to Chinamen, who had to fell the scrub before being able to grow maize, and then costing the State from £12 to £20 per acre to resume when required for soldiers' settlement purposes, is an example of the rotten system of freehold. Those unfortunate soldier settlers are to-day suffering the penalties of the policy of past Governments. The hon. member for Cook stated that the areas made available to these settlers were too small. I admit that; but that was not the fault of the Government of the day, but of their advisers. I think a land court was held at the time; but, at any rate, information was given to the Government that a certain area was required to enable a man to earn a reasonable living for himself and his family by maizegrowing. As time went on the Labour Government saw the anomalies that existed; and, when I became member for Chillagoe, in 1926, I stated that the Government would have to take some men off the land in order to provide larger areas for the remainder. That action was being taken prior to the advent of the Moore Government, and was continued during their regime. My point is that I am receiving communications from people who have converted from leasehold to freehold now asking for a reconversion to leasehold.

Mr. DANIEL: That is probably because they have to pay so much land tax.

Mr. O'KEEFE: Hon. members opposite are continually saying that insufficient areas are given to settlers; yet we have the hon. member for Keppel interjecting that the areas are too large. There is only one tenure that is any good, and that is the perpetual leasehold tenure.

Mr. MOORE: Do you believe in a 10 per cent penalty being imposed on a man who is late in paying his rent?

Mr. O'Keefe.]

Mr. O'KEEFE: I am not debating that question. I am stressing the fact that the policy of the Labour Party is perpetual leasehold. I would also add that the hon. member for Cook should learn more about his own electorate before he makes such rash statements.

Mr. C. TAYLOR (*Windsor*) [3.8 p.m.]: If ever a mistaken policy was being adopted by the Labour Party, it is in connection with this Bill.

It has frequently been stated in this Chamber during this and in other debates that there is no greater production from land held under the freehold tenure. I say unhesitatingly that there is a greater production from freehold than from leasehold land, and I shall explain my reason. If ever there is an incentive for a man to do his best on the land, it is when he has the knowledge before him that, by constant application to and diligence in his work on the farm, he will get a greater return than the man who has a leasehold property. Why is it that with leasehold property there is what is called a reappraisal of the unimproved value of the land? What caused any improvement?

Mr. BRAND: The farmer's labour.

Mr. C. TAYLOR: Exactly. It is the labour and industry of the farmer and those assisting him that makes the land more productive. If the landlord raises the rent after twenty or thirty years, why does he do so? What has happened to justify an increased rental?

Mr. LARCOMBE: Public expenditure on roads and railways.

Mr. C. TAYLOR: Who are the public? The people living in the area—the same people who are cultivating the land. They are the people who are building the roads and improving the district. So far as agricultural land is concerned, reappraisal of rentals is absolutely illogical; and that policy cannot be sustained in any shape or form, because the land itself can do nothing. It is only by the industry of those settled on it that any improvement can be brought about.

We have heard a good deal from hon. members opposite about unearned increment. I say it is an earned increment. It is the men and women who work all round the clock who have created that earned increment, and they are entitled to the increase in value.

The Secretary for Public Lands referred to the Beerburum soldier settlement. I was associated with the land committee that was responsible for the settlement of soldiers at Beerburum; and it is one of the regrets of my life that that settlement turned out a failure; but I say advisedly that, had the men who settled on Beerburum and in other centres been given a freehold title, there would have been quite a number of those men on those settlements to-day.

The Secretary for Public Lands also said that if all the lands of the State were held under leasehold the problem of unemployment would not be nearly so acute as it is in Queensland to-day. That is only a statement. Go into any of the settled agricultural areas in Southern Queensland to-day, and you will find very little unemployment. Start from Ipswich; go up to Laidley, Forest Hill, Gatton, and as far as

Helidon, and you will find closely settled agricultural areas all being worked by as fine a class of settler as you will find on God's earth. Those settlers have been working for thirty or forty years and have made good, and have produced immense quantities of agricultural produce—butter and other things. In nearly every instance the land they own is freehold. These men have done splendid work in assisting in the development of this State. Then go North as far as Gympie! In that area there is not much agricultural production; but you find quite a lot of dairying and a wonderful lot of fruit being grown. That area is all closely settled; and, if you take the railway reports for many years past, you will find that that section of our railways is one that pays. It has been paying all the time, while other sections have been going back.

Take the history of the estates which have been repurchased by various Governments in Queensland.

At 3.15 p.m.,

Mr. O'KEEFE (*Cairns*), one of the panel of Temporary Chairmen, relieved the Chairman in the chair.

Mr. C. TAYLOR: What has been the experience in regard to these repurchased estates? After they have been repurchased and opened for selection, settlers have taken them up, rentals have been fixed, and other matters arranged in regard to tenure, and so on. Has any one of those areas ever been a success under perpetual leasehold? Have the conditions been satisfactory to the settlers themselves?

Mr. LARCOMBE: Some of that land should never have been sold.

Mr. C. TAYLOR: If it should never have been sold, it should never have been bought.

The Secretary for Public Lands referred to Victoria, and stated that there was more unemployment there than in Queensland or in any other State. I am not in a position to say whether that is so or not, but Victoria is one of the most prosperous States in the Commonwealth, and there may be reasons why there should be more unemployment there than there is in Queensland. They built up their secondary industries in Victoria under a very high tariff, irrespective of any other State in the Commonwealth. They did not consider Queensland, New South Wales, South Australia, or Western Australia in the matter. I am not finding any fault with them for that policy. They have tens of thousands of employees in their factories. A slump has occurred during the last two or three years, and it is only natural that, when there are thousands of people employed in factories and a depression occurs, there will be a considerable amount of unemployment.

THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: There is no land available to put them on; it is all freehold.

Mr. C. TAYLOR: There is not very much land available. It is more difficult to bring land settlement to a successful issue in Queensland than it is in New South Wales or Victoria, because the climatic conditions are very different down there to what they are in Queensland.

How is it that, when a dry period occurs in Queensland, we have to go mainly to Victoria and New South Wales for supplies of oaten chaff, lucerne chaff, potatoes, and

[Mr. O'Keefe.

all the necessary requirements of both animals and people in this State? We never send anything of that kind down there. We send a lot of fruit, and hides, skins, and cattle; but we practically send no agricultural produce. That shows the difficulty of making agriculture a success in our State as compared with Victoria.

It is all very well for hon. members opposite to say that the perpetual leasehold tenure is as good as, or better than, the freehold tenure. Our own experience and the experience of others we have been told about points in quite another direction. When a man takes up a farm on the leasehold tenure and there is to be a reappraisal of rent at the end of fifteen years, is he going to continue to improve his holding within a couple of years of the expiration of that term, when he knows that in a couple of years he is either going to have his rent raised or the leasehold taken from him? He is not going to do anything of the kind.

Another disability incurred under the perpetual leasehold system arises where a man has a perpetual leasehold of 100 or 200 acres and his son also has 200 acres. The father dies and his leasehold has to be sold because it cannot be transferred to the son, owing to the fact that he has already a selection of his own. No matter what improvements may be upon it, it must be sacrificed. This and other difficulties prevent the successful use of the lands of our State under the perpetual leasehold system.

There is nothing more foolish than to say that the beautiful prosperous areas of Queensland are public estate which has been dissipated. During the whole period of their alienation they have returned an income to the Government in the way of land taxation, railway freights, and otherwise; and to say that the land has been dissipated is childish in the extreme. Hon. members opposite know that that is incorrect.

I am utterly opposed to the perpetual leasehold system. The late Government did not say to the selector, "You must take a freehold." They said, "If you want perpetual leasehold, there it is." The result was that practically no applications were made during the three years the late Government were in power for perpetual leasehold selections, whereas several thousands of persons holding perpetual leaseholds converted them to freeholds. These individuals are the best judges of what is best in their interests and in the interests of the country; and, when they make a choice, any Government, whether Labour, Nationalist, or Country Party, should give them what will offer them the greatest encouragement and help them to do what we so badly need—that is, to settle on the land and produce more wealth.

Mr. BRAND (*Isis*) [3.23 p.m.]: I listened with great interest to the Minister. One might at least expect that a Minister who had no experience at all in land settlement, and had never experienced its difficulties, would not endeavour to tell those who wish to settle on the land the proper way to go about it. Anybody who has experienced the difficulties associated with making a living from the land must know that the land settler has to cut himself off from social activities and put up with unfavourable conditions; yet the Minister tells us that it is the Government policy that such a man shall have only a perpetual leasehold and—

what is more—remain on the land unless, through illness or some other disability, he is allowed to sell.

Before Labour came into power, the freehold system had settled the majority of the lands of the State very successfully, and a system which has given such service to the State should not be lightly brushed aside by a Government whose members have no experience of land settlement. I say unhesitatingly that the consensus of opinion amongst settlers of this or any other State is in favour of a freehold title every time. The late Government allowed the perpetual leaseholder to convert to the freehold tenure, and, as a result, over 6,000 perpetual leaseholders decided upon that course. That shows conclusively that the settlers themselves regarded the freehold system as the better tenure. The primary producer has to contend with considerable difficulties, and he should be given the right to accept the title that he desires. The perpetual leasehold system does not create the incentive to improve the land to its utmost which is prompted by the freehold system. From my knowledge of the Wide Bay and Burnett district, I know that to be true. Without exception, the land held under the freehold title always exhibits the most improvement. I have had a long experience of the settlers of the Wide Bay and Burnett district, most of whom hold their land under the freehold system. I have mixed freely with them, and I know that they are an honest and splendid type of people. They pride themselves upon their honesty; and it was with surprise and regret that I heard the Minister liken the freeholder to a burglar. That is a libel upon the people of Queensland who hold their land under the freehold title. I desire to say a word in their favour, and to inform the Minister that they are just as honest and as honourable as any other section of the community, and that they are certainly more honest than some of those who are endeavouring to change the title of land to-day.

The Minister went to great pains this morning to try to prove that the perpetual leasehold system has proved a wonderful success in establishing the soldier settlement at El Arish. He added that the beneficial conditions imposed by the Labour Government made for the success of the settlement, and materially assisted in retaining the settlers on the land when otherwise they might have sold out to advantage. The hon. gentleman certainly knows that the agricultural farm tenure which applies in that settlement is a freeholding system, which provides for a residential qualification, and that he has the power to extend the period if he so desires. The settler who takes up land under the agricultural farm tenure has to perform certain residential conditions before he can apply for his title.

The contention of the Minister that only the perpetual leasehold tenure will prevent land speculation is not sound. If land speculation is to take place, then possibly it will take place to the same extent under one tenure as under another. The Minister is not correct in his assertion that certain people prefer the freehold tenure because it provides an opportunity for land speculation. The people of Queensland have expressed a desire for the freehold system because they wish to make a living from the land, and they wish to be assured that

Mr. Brand.]

their hard work can be converted into cash whenever they so desire. That does not operate to the same extent under the perpetual leasehold system. Under that system it is not so easy to convert your labour into cash as when the labour is expended on freehold land.

Only two speeches have been delivered on this question from the Government benches, from the Secretary for Public Lands and one from yourself, Mr. O'Keefe. The other members of the Government Party have been just as silent on this question as they were during the election campaign on the wonderful platform of the Labour Party. The Minister was not reported in all the speeches which he delivered during the recent election as having made one reference to the desire of his party to revert to perpetual leasehold. As a matter of fact, hon. members opposite, generally speaking, made no reference whatever to the land policy mentioned by the Minister. Had they done so, one would expect to find some reference to it in the policy speech of their Leader, which was delivered at Mackay. The only reference made to land settlement in that speech is the following:—

“The Labour Party will pursue a vigorous land settlement policy with a view to bringing the valuable lands of the State into proper use, and also to provide those who are willing to engage in land pursuits with suitable areas of land under reasonable conditions.”

If you take notice of that sentence, Mr. O'Keefe, you will notice no reference to perpetual leasehold. The Secretary for Public Works during his campaign did not make any reference to the wonderful policy of perpetual leasehold.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: I did.

Mr. BRAND: If the hon. gentleman did so, his remarks were not reported.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: I referred to it at Malanda.

Mr. BRAND: It is a strange thing that a body of men will come into Parliament as a party urging one system of land tenure when their organisations throughout the State, particularly the Trades Hall and its members, desire a freehold title to the land on which they have erected their buildings. The Trades Hall in Brisbane has been built on freehold land. I have also in mind the Trades Hall at Bundaberg, which, when transferred to the trustees, was transferred as a perpetual leasehold. The hon. member for Bundaberg was asked why he did not procure the freehold for them, and he had to tell them that he had been a member of the Labour Party all his life, and that that party had a policy which he was going to stick to. Yet those representatives of the Trades Hall wanted to secure the freehold title of that land. I do not blame them. They were sensible men, because they were expending a large amount of money in putting a building on the land.

Mr. BARBER: We fixed them up all right.

Mr. BRAND: Of course you did, but they would have preferred the freehold title to that land rather than a perpetual leasehold. They told you when it was being handed over to them to try and get the freehold.

Mr. BARBER: There was never any request made for a freehold.

Mr. Brand.

Mr. BRAND: It is an inherent desire on the part of the Australian race to own the freehold title of the land on which they build their home or earn their living.

Mr. BARBER: Mr. O'Keefe, I rise to a point of order. If the hon. member for Isis says that the Bundaberg Trades and Labour Council asked for the freehold title of their land, it is a deliberate lie.

Mr. BRAND: I have not said that. The hon. gentleman has not quite followed me.

Mr. BARBER: I followed you all right.

Mr. BRAND: Mr. O'Keefe, I rise to a point of order. I resent the hon. member for Bundaberg saying that my statement was a deliberate lie.

Mr. BARBER: I will withdraw, but it is untrue.

Mr. BRAND: That is quite satisfactory to me.

Mr. BARBER: You go to Bundaberg and tell them that.

Mr. BRAND: If the hon. member reads my speech in “Hansard,” he will see that I have not misrepresented him or anyone else. I know exactly what the press report stated in connection with the handing over of the Trades Hall site in Bundaberg.

Hon. members on the Government side prefer the freehold system; so why deny to men who undertake land settlement the tenure that they most keenly desire? I look upon the speech of the Minister as saying in effect to those who take up land, “I am going to have the luxuries of life. I am going to live in the city; but you can go into the country. I will not give you a freehold title, and you will have to remain in the country to keep me in luxury in the city.” In qualifying his policy in that respect, the Minister quoted a passage of Scripture in which it was stated that the land was to remain for the people for all time and they were not to dispose of it. We on this side know that the perpetual leasehold system is the thin end of the wedge to try to keep people on the land. In its early days the Labour Party had one taxing system in mind—taxation of the people on the land. We on this side take up the cudgels on behalf of the primary producer, and give to him that encouragement which is his due. Instead of taking toll from those who are prepared to cultivate the land, it would be infinitely better to give them living areas, provided they are prepared to live on those areas. If such a liberal policy were adopted, it would induce people to go on the land, and we would not be faced with the acute unemployment which exists to-day.

The land settlement policy of the Moore Government was most liberal. After all, it was only what is the right of those men who are prepared to live on the land and create the wealth of this State—the men whom hon. members on the Government side are prone to term the backbone of the country. The Moore Government gave them a reasonable deal. Many instances can be recorded where reversion to freehold has been attended with much success. The hon. member for Cairns mentioned instances in the Bowen electorate where persons had applied for reconversion from freehold to perpetual leasehold. I, on the contrary, had

applications from the Bowen electorate, prior to the present Government attaining office, asking for the conversion of land from perpetual leasehold to freehold; and the majority of the people who converted to freehold are retaining their land under that tenure. I cannot see why it should be a crime to own freehold land, nor can I see how the State is detrimentally affected thereby. What we should be most concerned about is to have successful settlement in Queensland, and to get successful settlers we must give them the tenure they require. We desire that all our lands should be put to full productive use, and, if the Minister desires to bring that about, he will continue the policy initiated by the previous Administration.

I would advise the hon. gentleman to drop this Bill, as already there is provision in the Land Acts to enable any settler who so wishes to take up land under the perpetual leasehold system. No settler is compelled to take up freehold. If he so desires, he can get a perpetual lease. He can have his choice. It is to the credit of the previous Administration that in almost every instance when lands were settled they were taken up under the freehold tenure. I submit that the freehold tenure has more virtues than has the perpetual leasehold tenure. The Minister would have this Committee and the people outside believe that it is cheaper for the poor man to settle on the land under perpetual leasehold. I can only say that I have never found any difficulty in that respect. The people in my electorate who have Labour sympathies, when settling on the land, desire the freehold tenure under the agricultural farm system. When we find so many of the rank and file of the Labour Party favourable to the freehold system, why not allow that system to continue? Why change it at a time when we want more settlers and greater production? In every newspaper and in every statement by experienced men, members of Parliament are urged to settle the lands of this State under liberal conditions and under a tenure that will promote good settlement. The hon. gentleman did not convince me, nor do I think he will convince the people outside, and particularly the producer, that the leasehold tenure is in the interests of settlement. Again I say that those who have not had experience on the land cannot hope to be in a position to say which is the more satisfactory tenure. A majority of the people favour the freehold system, and those who require perpetual leasehold do not number 3 per cent. of the population of the State. I would like to know why the producers of our wealth should have to submit to a perpetual leasehold tenure. I urge the Minister to withdraw the Bill. It is not going to promote that prosperous settlement which we are all looking for, and which he evidently hopes for. He must recognise that those who are going to settle on the land must be encouraged; that they must have inducement and incentive to do so; and that will lie along the lines of a continuation of the policy of the Moore Government. The Minister will do well to follow in the footsteps of men who have had great experience with regard to land settlement, and he will thereby be enabled to lay down a policy which will promote settlement in Queensland.

I think that you, Mr. O'Keefe, mentioned the repurchase at £15 an acre of land at

Tolga which was originally taken up at 2s. 6d. an acre. Instead of repurchasing that land, the Government should have made available Crown lands in that locality, of which there is quite a large area, and settled people upon it. That would have been better than repurchasing the Tolga lands.

There have been many mistakes in Queensland with regard to giving the freehold to the purchasers of large areas in the past; but those mistakes were made in the early history of the State, when it was necessary to have capital to enable our vast areas to be opened up and improved. We owe a debt of gratitude to those early pioneers, who, before the advent of railways and other conveniences, went into the distant parts of the State and settled on the land under many difficulties. Those men performed a great service to Queensland; and it ill becomes one of the present generation to maintain that these people were burglars and did not deserve the freehold title to their land. I stand every time for the freehold tenure. It is the policy of our party, and it is the best policy for Queensland.

OPPOSITION MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

At 3.48 p.m.,

The CHAIRMAN resumed the chair.

Mr. DANIEL (*Keppel*): I have not heard a reasonable argument which would convince any fair-minded person that perpetual leasehold is a better system of tenure than freehold tenure; in fact, I think the Government are only bringing this Bill forward simply because it is their policy; it is really the policy of the Trades Hall.

The hon. member for Cairns mentioned that he had received a letter some time ago asking that the owner of some freehold property should be allowed to reconvert it into leasehold; but he did not tell us how much land that man held. A person has not to pay land tax unless he has more than £500 worth of freehold property, and probably when this individual found that he would be subject to extra land taxation he wanted to convert from freehold to leasehold tenure. I have had letters from men asking me to have their leasehold converted into freehold; but in some instances, I am sorry to say on account of certain regulations, these people were not able to get their holdings converted. If we had been returned to power they could have done so. They will, however, be able to obtain freeholds when our Government get back to power.

About four years ago there were some people who left Queensland for Western Australia because they could not secure freehold. As soon as the Moore Government came into power in 1929, those people sold their land in Western Australia and took up land in Queensland under the freehold tenure.

Hon. members opposite know that, when the trustees of the Brisbane Trades Hall proposed to take advantage of perpetual leasehold tenure, the banks would not lend them a penny on it, and they had to get freehold. A similar remark applies to the Agricultural Bank, which will not lend a penny piece on leasehold land other than to buy cattle or to improve it. Why, then, do hon. members opposite say that leasehold is far better than freehold?

Mr. Daniel.]

I know a married couple who, forty-seven years ago, took up land just outside Brisbane. They sold it last week. Those people have reared a family of ten, and their sons have freehold farms of their own. After those people had lived forty-seven years in Queensland and improved the country, would you deny them the right to sell? Thousands of other people came here forty or fifty years ago and did the same thing. Hon. members opposite will find that people who take up leasehold land will not stay on the land, because they cannot sell it. They may be able to get something out of it for the improvements, but not otherwise; whereas those with a freehold title have the right to sell the land and also their improvements.

I hope the Minister will not persist with his Bill, but that, in the interests of Queensland, he will withdraw it.

Question—"That the words proposed to be omitted (*Mr. Moore's amendment*) stand part of the question"—put; and the Committee divided:—

AYES, 27.

Mr. Barber	Mr. Keogh
" Bedford	" Larcombe
" Bruce	" Llewelyn
" Bulcock	" Mullan
" Conroy	" O'Keefe
" Cooper	" Pease
" Copley, P. K.	" Stopford
" Copley, W. J.	" Waters
" Foley	" Wellington
" Funnell	" Wilson
" Gair	
" Gledson	
" Hanlon	<i>Tellers:</i>
" Hayes	" Taylor, G. C.
" Hynes	" Williams

NOES, 22.

Mr. Barnes, G. P.	Mr. Morgan
" Barnes, W. H.	" Nimmo
" Brand	" Peterson
" Clayton	" Roberts
" Costello	" Russell
" Daniel	" Sizer
" Deacon	" Taylor, C.
" Edwards	" Wienholt
" Kenny	
" Maher	<i>Tellers:</i>
" Maxwell	" Fadden
" Moore	" Nicklin

PAIRS.

AYES.	NOES.
Mr. Smith	Mr. King, R. M.
" King, W. T.	" Tozer
" Dash	" Plunkett
" Collins	" Grimstone

Resolved in the affirmative.

Question—"That the resolution (*Mr. Pease's motion*) be agreed to"—put; and the Committee divided:—

AYES, 27.

Mr. Barber	Mr. Llewelyn
" Bedford	" Mullan
" Bruce	" O'Keefe
" Bulcock	" Pease
" Conroy	" Stopford
" Cooper	" Taylor, G. C.
" Copley, P. K.	" Waters
" Copley, W. J.	" Wellington
" Foley	" Williams
" Funnell	" Wilson
" Gair	
" Gledson	
" Hanlon	<i>Tellers:</i>
" Hynes	" Hayes
" Larcombe	" Keogh

Mr. Daniel.

NOES, 22.

Mr. Barnes, G. P.	Mr. Nicklin
" Barnes, W. H.	" Nimmo
" Brand	" Peterson
" Clayton	" Roberts
" Costello	" Russell
" Daniel	" Sizer
" Deacon	" Taylor, C.
" Edwards	" Wienholt
" Fadden	
" Maxwell	<i>Tellers:</i>
" Moore	" Kenny
" Morgan	" Maher

PAIRS.

AYES.	NOES.
Mr. Smith	Mr. King, R. M.
" King, W. T.	" Tozer
" Dash	" Plunkett
" Collins	" Grimstone

Resolved in the affirmative.

The House resumed.

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

Resolution agreed to.

FIRST READING.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS (Hon. P. Pease, *Herbert*) presented the Bill, and moved—

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

Question put and passed.

Second reading of the Bill made an Order of the Day for to-morrow.

The House adjourned at 4.4 p.m.