

Queensland



Parliamentary Debates  
[Hansard]

**Legislative Assembly**

**WEDNESDAY, 28 OCTOBER 1953**

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# Queensland Parliamentary Debates.

## Legislative Assembly.

FIRST SESSION OF THE THIRTY-THIRD PARLIAMENT.

Appointed to meet

AT BRISBANE ON THE FOURTH DAY OF AUGUST, IN THE SECOND YEAR OF THE REIGN OF HER MAJESTY QUEEN ELIZABETH II., IN THE YEAR OF OUR LORD 1953.

[VOLUME 2.]

WEDNESDAY, 28 OCTOBER, 1953.

Mr. SPEAKER (Hon. J. H. Mann, (Brisbane) took the chair at 11 a.m.

DEATH OF HON. W. FORGAN SMITH, LL.D.

REPLY TO MOTION OF CONDOLENCE.

Mr. SPEAKER: I have to inform the House that I have received a letter from the widow of the late Hon. W. Forgan Smith, LL.D. conveying thanks for the motion of condolence passed on 29 September.

### QUESTIONS.

LOSS ON TEMPORARY HOUSING.

Mr. KERR (Sherwood) asked the Secretary for Public Works and Housing—

"1. Will he give the House details of the loss amounting to £100,000 provided for in the Estimates of Ways and Means from Consolidated Revenue being portion of the accumulated losses incurred by the Queensland Housing Commission on temporary housing?"

"2. As this is only part of the loss, will he inform the House what was the total amount of the loss to 30 June, 1953?"

Hon. W. POWER (Baroona—Attorney-General), for Hon. P. J. R. HILTON (Carnarvon), replied—

"As published in the Auditor-General's Annual Reports to Parliament for the years 1948-1949 to 1952-1953, losses on temporary housing were—1948-1949, £4,344; 1949-1950, £14,581; 1950-1951, £27,073; 1951-1952, £40,814; 1952-1953, £49,794; Total, £136,606. The £100,000 is part of these losses totalling £136,606. The low rentals charged for temporary housing are inadequate to meet the costs the Commission has had to bear, including Treasury interest on capital invested, working expenses, depreciation, and management expenses. In addition to maintaining the buildings in a reasonable state of repair, the Commission employs caretakers, and maintains a staff of cleaners to ensure cleanliness and hygienic con-

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ditions in these areas. The charges made to tenants for electricity consumed have not been sufficient to meet the accounts rendered on the Commission by the Electric Authorities, and the deficiency is included in the loss above.

HIGH-LEVEL BRIDGE, HAUGHTON RIVER.

Mr. NICKLIN (Landsborough—Leader of the Opposition) asked the Minister for Transport—

"In reference to his answer on 26 March, 1952, that the high-level railway bridge over the Haughton River would be commenced about July, 1952, and completed about the end of 1953, (a) has the actual construction of this bridge yet been commenced, and (b) when is it anticipated that it will be completed?"

Hon. W. POWER (Baroona—Attorney-General), for Hon. J. E. DUGGAN (Toowoomba), replied—

"Owing to the limited amount of loan funds available, it was not possible to provide for this work on the current year's estimates. Certain preliminary work, by way of trial bores, insertion of works sidings, and preparation of materials and plant has been carried out, but completion of the work will depend upon the availability of loan funds."

GOODS SHED AWNING, BOWEN RAILWAY STATION.

Mr. COBURN (Burdekin) asked the Minister for Transport—

"In reference to his letter of 3 June, 1953, wherein he stated that an awning on the railway side of the goods shed at Bowen would be reviewed in connection with the estimates for 1953-1954, will he kindly inform me whether provision is being made this year for the work in question?"

Hon. W. POWER (Baroona—Attorney-General), for Hon. J. E. DUGGAN (Toowoomba), replied—

"It is regretted that the amount of loan funds available does not permit of this work being undertaken at present."

LATE RUNNING, BRISBANE-ROCKHAMPTON  
MAIL TRAIN.

**Mr. V. E. JONES** (Callide) asked the Minister for Transport—

“In reference to the fact that on several occasions within the past fortnight the mail train from Brisbane to Rockhampton has proceeded so slowly on its journey that it has been overtaken by the Townsville mail, which leaves Brisbane an hour later, and has been hours late to arrive at its destination, will he kindly investigate this matter and take appropriate action to eliminate the present dawdling and give a better service to the travelling public?”

**Hon. W. POWER** (Baroona—Attorney-General), for **Hon. J. E. DUGGAN** (Toowoomba), replied—

“The circumstances referred to have arisen as the result of an accelerated schedule running of the Rockhampton mail train providing for its haulage by a diesel electric locomotive, but owing to the withdrawal of some of these locomotives for certain adjustments there have been insufficient available to work the Rockhampton train each night. Even with the late arrival referred to the Rockhampton mail train, with two exceptions, has, during the period referred to completed the journey in less time than under the old steam schedule.”

#### PAPER.

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

Report of the Commissioner of Irrigation and Water Supply on the proposed St. George Irrigation Project.

#### STOCK ACTS AMENDMENT BILL.

##### INITIATION IN COMMITTEE.

(The Chairman of Committees, Mr. Clark, Fitzroy, in the chair.)

**Hon. H. H. COLLINS** (Tablelands—Secretary for Agriculture and Stock) (11.11 a.m.): I move—

“That it is desirable that a Bill be introduced to amend the Diseases in Stock Acts, 1915 to 1952, for the purpose of assisting stock husbandry and for other purposes.”

The Primary object of the Bill is to remedy the unsatisfactory position of the Stock Diseases Fund created under a provision of the Principal Act. The Stock Diseases Act was amended by Parliament some time back and the levies were increased, and as a result the fund recovered to some extent. However, notwithstanding the increased levies we find that the fund again slipped into arrears last year to the extent of £53,000. It is with the primary object of rectifying that position and maintaining and continuing to improve our services in the various fields of animal husbandry carried out by the Department of Agriculture and Stock that we are amending the Acts.

It is interesting at this stage to review what has taken place over a period of years and to show how the attitude of the department has gradually grown more and more realistic in connection with the services necessary for the stock-owners of this State.

The Division of Animal Industry of the Department of Agriculture and Stock, which is responsible for the administration of the Diseases in Stock Acts, had its genesis in the Stock Branch of the Home Secretary's Department in the late years of the last century, when that department was the predominant centre of Government administration in this State. Gradual development of the service to the animal industries was followed by the fusion of that branch with the Department of Agriculture and Stock in 1903, but real development began with the establishment of the Division of Animal Industry at the time of the major reorganisation of the Department of Agriculture and Stock effected in 1945. The need for improvement within the animal industry was then obvious and steps were immediately taken for the implementation of short and long-range experiment proposals aimed at the solution of the more important problems facing the industry.

This involved an expansion of staff in both the extension and research fields and in the latter connection facilities at Yeerongpilly and Oonoonba Animal Health Stations were extended, and later the Toorak Field and Rocklea Husbandry Stations were established. In addition, a wool laboratory provided facilities for the assessment of fleece quality and factors influencing fleece weight to help the sheep-breeder in the improvement of his flock.

On the extension side, the Cattle Husbandry Branch was established and already a considerable investigational programme associated with dairy cattle and calf-feeding problems has been carried out and the results passed on to the industry. The demonstration of fodder conservation as a precaution against drought losses and its adoption have already been responsible in a large measure in the saving of breeders and young stock to the industry in such circumstances.

Work associated with the production of marketable carcasses at an earlier age, involving measurement of growth rate in cattle on natural pastures, the economics of improved pastures associated with breed and strain improvement and progeny testing, has been demonstrated, and the industry has readily responded to their importance, as is evidenced in the growing demand for an extension of the demonstrations.

The investigation of new insecticides and their use in the eradication of the cattle tick in travelling stock have so influenced the industry that there is a complete change in outlook and a growing demand for total eradication.

Special work associated with the widespread occurrences of pleuro-pneumonia has already provided improved control measures and a marked abatement of the incidence of the disease.

Redwater in calves, Birdsville and coastal staggers in horses, humpy-back in sheep and sterility in rams are among the problems of economic importance that have since been resolved.

Problems of great economic importance to the sheep-grower, particularly in the North-West, viz., infertility in rams and mortalities in young lambs, are being thoroughly investigated and results as they appear are being passed on to the grower through the channels of the extension organisation that has been built up for the dissemination of information generally for the benefit of the sheep industry.

Pig-carcaass and bacon-appraisal competitions have resulted in an overall improvement in bacon quality approximating 14 per cent., and greater improvement still can be expected from the continuance of these competitions.

The importance attached to these services is the obvious change within the industry in its recognition of the value of the services provided by the Division of Animal Industry but it is well to remember that in the performance of services responsible for this changed outlook, considerable moneys are expended.

We find that from time to time the Stock Diseases Fund has been very much in arrears. There is a levy on sheep, cattle and horses and the money so collected is subsidised by the Government at the rate of 16s. in the £1. To the extent that the fund gets into arrears from time to time—I think the last time the Act was amended the fund was somewhere about £400,000 in arrears—these sums are made up from consolidated revenue.

**Mr. Nicklin:** Is there no regular Government endowment?

**Mr. COLLINS:** Yes, at the rate of 16s. in the £1. In addition to that 16s. in the £1 there have been very great inroads into the Treasury funds to make up the deficiency which is necessary if we are to maintain the necessary services to these industries. They are the lifeblood of our State and the source of our food supply and wealth. Their welfare and prosperity are vital to us. Therefore the Government have always been endeavouring to improve the services given to them.

We get considerable co-operation from the sheep and cattle industries and in order to interest the industries to a greater degree the department has recently created an advisory committee composed of representatives of the graziers in both the sheep and cattle industries and the Department of Agriculture and Stock, on similar lines to other advisory boards. The grazing industry has been very glad to co-operate with us. I gathered this from my discussions with the men in the industry itself and feel sure that they wish not only to maintain the services they are getting but to extend them as we find that desirable in the interests of the industry.

This Government are desirous at all times of working with our various primary industries, just as we are with the secondary industries, and the present amendments are being made in an endeavour to recoup the

losses that are being suffered at the present time. At the moment these losses are made up from Treasury funds, which are more limited now than they have been, because of the hundred and one instrumentalities the State is required to operate. It has to be remembered that the Treasury has to look after not only the Department of Agriculture and Stock but the Department of Health and Home Affairs and the Department of Public Instruction, the other two most important departments connected with the public welfare. We do not want to impose any undue strain on the Treasurer's funds, especially when we realise that the industries affected by the Bill are on a much sounder footing now than they have been in the past.

Amongst other things, we propose to make pigs subject to the levy. They have never been included hitherto. The pig industry is important but I regret I cannot say it is growing to what it should be and what it will be if the prices of grains drop. It is capable of using concentrated foods such as grains and converting them to animal flesh, which is a very profitable industry.

**Mr. Sparkes:** I was called out by the Premier. Did you indicate what you propose to do about the other stock?

**Mr. COLLINS:** Yes. We propose to increase the levy.

**Mr. Sparkes:** On cattle and sheep?

**Mr. COLLINS:** We propose to increase the maximum levy on cattle, sheep and horses, and we are including pigs. The main object of the Bill is to get more money from these industries and this in turn will be subsidised by the Treasury to the extent of 16s. in the £1 as in the past. This Fund gets into arrears from time to time and these arrears are made up from Treasury funds.

There are other slight amendments. One is an alteration in connection with what is known as the T.B. fund, which we can say is fairly financial now, not because the levy has been increased but because the incidence of T.B. has been greatly reduced. Good work has been done through the T.B. fund and we are fast eliminating the disease from our dairy herds in a very satisfactory way. I know that there have been constant demands for an increase in the amount of compensation but I do not propose to argue whether that is desirable at the moment. In the past, I have suggested that the amount of compensation should not be increased because a diseased animal, far from being an asset to a herd, is a distinct menace, but I am glad to say that the incidence of T.B. is decreasing greatly.

One of the bad contagious diseases affecting cattle is contagious plueropneumonia. We are strengthening our services in this field. Naturally, this means more money and, like all other Government departments, we are feeling the impact of increased wages and costs in general.

All these things go to prove that it is imperative, in order to keep these funds

solvent, to levy more money on stock. Contagious pleuro-pneumonia has been with us, I suppose, virtually ever since Queensland has been a State and it is possible ultimately to virtually eliminate it, although the job is not an easy one. Much of the country where the cattle are reared is in vast areas and the cattle are running in sparse numbers over these vast areas and even if it was possible to inoculate them you could not muster them all at the one time. We hope to make a bigger drive to eliminate the scourge—and it can be called a scourge—

**Mr. Sparkes:** Are you proposing to inoculate the cattle before the disease is in an area?

**Mr. COLLINS:** There seem to be carriers in areas and although they do not show signs of the disease they are a constant source of trouble. If we could eliminate them we could reduce the incidence of the disease generally and it would be a big advantage to the cattle-raiser.

**Mr. Sparkes:** I agree with the inoculation of cattle on the road but on the station I do not think that you should inoculate them unless you have a particular reason.

**Mr. COLLINS:** I am prepared to hear argument on that. Cattlemen would probably know more than I do but the Minister has the problem.

**Mr. Sparkes:** I appreciate that. It is one of our worst troubles.

**Mr. COLLINS:** It has a big influence on our interstate trade. If we can do anything to eliminate the scourge it cannot be done without increasing fees. I do not think that anybody disagrees with increasing fees if in return he gets increased service. You cannot get something unless you pay for it and I am sure that if there is a quid pro quo the grazing industry will welcome the amendment with open arms, particularly in increasing of the levy on stock.

**Mr. Sparkes:** I am not quibbling about that.

**Mr. COLLINS:** A more serious loss, although perhaps not so obvious, is that caused by the incidence of ticks in Queensland.

**Mr. Sparkes:** Now you have got something.

**Mr. COLLINS:** It is beyond the capacity of anybody to estimate the loss graziers and dairymen suffer because of ticks. The loss is enormous, and it is largely unseen, in this respect: during the onset of a drought the ticks are usually worse than when the cattle are fat and in good condition. It is only the female tick that engorges itself and you can see them in millions sapping the lifeblood of the cattle. If they were not there we would not have such loss as we have in the thickly-infested areas. The same thing applies to pleuro-pneumonia. Much of the loss is caused because it is impossible to muster and get the cattle clean but in the more closely-fenced areas and densely-populated areas, where the cattle are under control, it has been possible

to eliminate the disease, and by constant dipping which has been done by many people, to eliminate the tick. However, the clean beast is liable to an outbreak of tick fever—and I have seen this happen—from stray cattle that are infested with ticks and get into the paddock. The ticks transfer to the clean cattle, cattle that have been clean since they were calves and that have not been inoculated against redwater by ticks. The owner of the cattle takes that risk. I do not say it is not a risk worth taking. If you can eliminate ticks, the cattle will do infinitely better than if they are infested with ticks.

New insecticides that have been introduced during the last few years, such as D.D.T. and Gammexane, show greater promise than arsenic of eliminating ticks. Some of these insecticides will keep cattle free from reinfestation from ticks for about 12 or 13 days, whereas arsenic keeps them free for only two or three days. In some areas it may be possible to do something in this regard. I say it may be possible because it is a matter of trial and error and of overcoming the difficulty of dealing with people who wish to co-operate and others who do not. Of course, they may have their reasons for that. We have seen it happening in New South Wales, where the Commonwealth Government have spent a great deal of money in trying to eliminate ticks, with the object of gradually working up to Queensland. I think official tick-eradication work has been going on in the north-eastern corner of New South Wales for many years; from memory, I think it is about 15 or 20 years. However, if we are to wait till New South Wales is cleaned up before any money is spent in Queensland we shall all be dead, not from ticks but from worry.

The tick-eradication work in New South Wales has not proved very successful. I am told that in certain parts of the United States large areas of country have been made tick-free, but just how they have done it I do not know. The hon. member for Aubigny and many other Queensland cattle men have been over there and have seen what has been done, but I do not think any of them has ever said that we should do the same in Queensland. For that reason it has not been done. We should be doing a tremendous service if we could clean up tick infestation. The cost of fighting the tick has come out of the common fund, which is provided by the Treasurer and the cattle-owners.

I feel sure that when hon. members on both sides of the Chamber examine the Bill they will agree that it is very desirable.

**Mr. Nicklin:** I do not think you mentioned the increased rates of levy.

**Mr. COLLINS:** I did not mention the amount of the increase, but to let the hon. member into a very close secret I will say that we are taking the opportunity of doubling it. We may not reach the upper limit.

**Mr. Sparkes:** I have never known you to fail to reach the upper limit.

**Mr. COLLINS:** I just thought of that. When I doubled the levy previously we did not think we should reach the upper limit; there was no evidence at that time to lead us to think that we should. However, we were not aware of the tremendous inflation that was to take place and the reduction in the value of money as the result of the change of Government in the Federal Parliament. We are compelled to take notice of the lessening value of money, and as cattle and sheep have increased enormously in value since that time I am sure that the levy we propose to impose will not fall half as heavily on the people concerned as the original levy did.

**Mr. NICKLIN** (Landsborough—Leader of the Opposition) (11.35 a.m.): It was rather interesting to observe that the Minister divulged the main purpose of the Bill right at the end of his speech and he almost went on to blame the Federal Government for his action in having to increase the levies. It is a wonder that he did not drag in the shortage of loan funds and then hang out the pawnbroker's sign.

The practice of increasing levies on stock to carry on the various activities of the department in the interests of the stock-owners of this State must be examined very closely. I do not think anyone will deny that the value of the work being carried out through the collection of the levies for the Stock Diseases Fund is of great value to the State. It is particularly valuable and very necessary and great credit must be given to the officers whose activities are financed from the fund.

First of all let us have a look at the subject of levies on stock in their various forms. The levy under consideration now is not the only levy on stock. There is an imposing list of levies on stock for various purposes in this State. First of all, there is the stock assessment under the Diseases in Stock Act, the one that we are considering. Then there is the special T.B. assessment, the proceeds of which are paid into a Stock Diseases Compensation Fund. Then we have the registrations and inspections under the Dairy Produce Act, the good old bull tax under the Dairy Cattle Improvement Act, which is now collected by way of precepts on the factories, and the stamp duty collected under the Buffalo Fly Control Act. Lastly we have the fees in connection with the slaughter of cattle, calves and pigs. All of these costs add up to a considerable amount.

The fund that we are discussing now, the Stock Diseases Fund, has rarely paid its way, as is evidenced by the fact that from time to time considerable sums are transferred from consolidated revenue to that fund. When you consider the amounts collected under the other forms of stock taxes it will be seen that consolidated revenue is not finding a great deal of money to maintain the Stock Diseases Fund in a solvent condition. Therefore, it comes back very largely, in the final analysis, to the stock-owners and the stock of the State. Again, as I will point out later, the department is using some of

the money that is collected by way of levies on stock to relieve itself of its own responsibilities to a large extent, particularly in the case of the Stock Diseases Fund to which the Government make a contribution of 16s. in the £1 on the levies collected. They are more generous in their approach to this fund than they are in respect of the Stock Diseases Compensation Fund to which they pay a subsidy of only 10s. in the £1. Indeed, when we are looking at these various funds, I think it is worth while looking at the position of the Stock Diseases Compensation Fund. The Minister said it was in a sound financial position.

**Mr. Collins:** That is the T.B. fund?

**Mr. NICKLIN:** Yes. We find that the credit balance of that fund has grown from £51,566 at the beginning of the financial year to £76,133 at the end of the financial year and that very large increases in fees were collected by the Department of Agriculture and Stock during that year. This fund was only established in 1945 and that is not so bad for seven years.

**Mr. Collins:** It has nearly eliminated T.B., too.

**Mr. NICKLIN:** It has gone a long way towards eliminating T.B. The important thing is to examine the position of levies to see whether there is not some justification for a decrease in the levy to the Stock Diseases Compensation Fund or, alternatively, an increase in the amount of compensation payable for a beast. Here we are doubling the levy under the Diseases in Stock Acts, and as some quid pro quo, in view of its position it would be justice to the cattle men to decrease the levy collected under the Stock Diseases Compensation Fund. Its financial position is interesting. During the last financial year the fees paid amounted to £56,502 compared with £19,032 the previous year, which is a tremendous jump in 12 months. The Government's responsibility amounts to only 10s in the £1. After all, the operations of this fund are not so much for the benefit of the cattle-owners—although it is a benefit to them to eradicate T.B. in their herds; the major benefit is received by the general public because they are able to get disease-free milk. It is really a health responsibility.

**Mr. Power:** It is the responsibility of the dairyman not to sell diseased milk.

**Mr. NICKLIN:** It is a health responsibility, and the Government are only prepared to subsidise the contributions by the stock-owners who have to suffer losses in their herds. For instance, are any of the owners of patent medicines, whose products are checked, compelled to pay a levy to the Government? They are not; the Government pay the cost of policing those activities. Are the wage-earners asked to contribute towards the maintenance of the Industrial Court? Of course they are not. Because these people are dairymen they are asked to contribute heavily. After all, who gets the benefit? The people get the benefit and the

State gets a benefit as a result of this contribution towards the elimination of T.B. in dairy herds.

The Government's support to this fund is very niggardly. The compensation paid last year amounted to £10,120 and the previous year it amounted to £3,176. The compensation is very miserly; the maximum payment is £6 for a condemned beast. Hon. members know how far £6 will go in buying a beast to replace the one that is condemned. That is not the only thing. When this fund was first created, its purpose was to compensate the dairyman for any loss he may have suffered in the destruction of T.B.-infected beasts.

We find that this fund has become an excellent milch cow for the Department of Agriculture and Stock. Veterinary fees and testing fees are charged against it but when this legislation was introduced it was never intended that these charges should be made against this fund for these services.

**Mr. Collins:** I do not agree with you there.

**Mr. NICKLIN:** We find that since the beginning of the fund the call that has been made for these purposes has risen from £5,484 in 1949 to £18,756 in 1951 financial year and £50,063 in 1952 year just completed. That is a mighty drain on this fund to help the activities of the Department of Agriculture and Stock but all the dairymen get a miserly £6 a head for any beast that is destroyed. Finding that the credit balance of the fund now amounts to £76,133 we say there is urgent need for some review of it in two directions; to decrease the levy and increase the compensation payable to the dairy farmers. The Government should also review their responsibilities in regard to the amount charged against the fund for departmental activities and in respect of the proportion of endowment the department makes to the fund. When we are considering the question, as we are on this legislation, of doubling the assessment on stock under the Stock Diseases Act and when we also take into consideration the large amount paid by stock-owners in this State under the various headings under which they are called on to pay a levy, it is essential that we should also review the whole incidence of taxation on stock. The Stock Diseases Compensation Fund is one that cries to high heaven for some review by the Minister with a view to some relief to compensate for the doubling in the assessments under the present Bill.

As I said at the outset, I do not think there would be any objection whatever by stock owners to accepting a larger share of responsibility for the very important work carried out under the Stock Diseases Act and through the Stock Diseases Fund, but we should examine the whole incidence of taxation on stock, the activities of the Department of Agriculture and Stock, and the charges that department makes against these various funds for work that should really be a charge on the departmental revenue. We shall have the opportunity of examining these aspects of this matter further when we get a copy of the Bill.

**Mr. SPARKES (Aubigny) (11.49 a.m.):** The Minister has explained the reasons for the introduction of this Bill and I suppose most stock men will appreciate what has been done by the department in various fields as regards stock. At the same time, it is a rather steep rise when it is doubled, as the Leader of the Opposition said, in all directions. As the Leader of the Opposition has also said, it is high time there was a general overhaul. After all, we seem to be one-eyed, to look in one direction and forget that the benefit is not solely to the man with stock but that it is a benefit also to the whole of this State. If we could eradicate the tick, for example, it would certainly benefit the whole of the State.

**Mr. Collins:** It would benefit the cattle-raisers a great deal.

**Mr. SPARKES:** Of course it would, and in turn it would benefit the State. This morning the Minister spoke of the enormous losses caused by the ticks. If we can eradicate them, the State must benefit. If a hail-storm wiped out the whole of the wheat on the Darling Downs this afternoon, it would certainly be a grave loss to the wheat-growers but it would also be a loss to the State, and the same thing applies to stock. I do not think the Minister and his Government have given that point as much thought as they should.

The Minister mentioned pleuro also this morning and said that further action might be taken in connection with inoculation. I have been associated with cattle all my life in areas from the far north to the far south and my experience has been that you rarely get a pleuro outbreak unless you start to do something with your stock. The Minister's officers will agree that in 99 cases out of 100 it is not until stock have been shifted from one place to another that the outbreak occurs. On the area where I breed all my bulls and everything else, neither tick nor pleuro has been known.

**Mr. Evans:** Or buffalo fly.

**Mr. SPARKES:** Or buffalo fly, which goes to show that these troubles are introduced.

**Mr. Collins:** It shows you the value of policing the regulations.

**Mr. SPARKES:** That is so, but the point is that the man who keeps his stock in a clean area does not run anything like the same risk as the man who buys bullocks from the Territory and brings them in. Usually such bullocks spread pleuro in every direction, as the Minister and his officers have seen.

If we are to be told that we must muster our northern stock and inoculate them, I presume it will be with virus sent up from down here. Without wishing to be critical of the department, I must mention that it has been my experience that results have been much better when using the natural virus in preference to what is called the cultivated virus. Any man worthy of the name of cattle man knows that he can take virus from a

beast and inoculate his herd against pleuro, and that is the most practical way of dealing with it. When pleuro has struck any beast on our properties we have immediately shot the beast, opened it up and, if the virus has been suitable, taken it and inoculated the rest of the herd. I point out here that I have no wish to detract from the gravity of the disease. I know how serious it is. I have been on various committees and deputations to Federal Ministers in an endeavour to send stock to New Zealand and pleuro has been one of the drawbacks. There is no pleuro in New Zealand and they do not want it taken there, just as we do not want to bring foot and mouth disease from England. It would seem that the Minister wants large sums of money for the purpose of going into the big areas of north-west Queensland and the Territory to start inoculating cattle. I do not think it is warranted for that purpose.

Once stock go onto the road they should be inoculated as a precaution, because it is when you start to travel stock that pleuro breaks out. I am only a layman but it is my opinion that the disease exists in every beast.

**Mr. Collins:** You don't think that you can eliminate pleuro-pneumonia?

**Mr. SPARKES:** If the Minister wants to push something down my throat I suggest that he get a stick. I should be more pleased than anybody else if we could eliminate any of these diseases. I am suggesting that you should not go up into the big areas and try to inoculate the stock. Is it the suggestion that you should go to an area running 20,000 or 30,000 head of clean cattle, muster them all and inoculate them? Are you going to do that with cultivated virus? Does the Minister propose to wait until there is an outbreak of pleuro and take the virus from the diseased cattle and inoculate the rest or is he going to have the virus sent up from Brisbane? I have had a lot of experience with pleuro and I contend that I can handle pleuro as well as the next man. I suppose some of the Minister's veterinarian's might say, "He wants his brains brushed," when I say that pleuro is more or less dormant in every beast. It is when you start to work cattle and put them on the road and knock them about that pleuro manifests itself. I know of an instance in which some cattle were brought from Eidsvold to the Downs and sold in the saleyards, but we would not touch them with a 40-ft. pole. In Jandowae a man said to me, "I can't understand why you don't buy some of those bullocks." I will not mention names, but I said, "I would not touch them with a 40-ft. pole; if you gave them to me I would not put them on the run with my good cattle." Every man who bought those cattle got an outbreak of pleuro and had to inoculate. Pleuro is a pretty difficult thing to eradicate and I realise that if we could do it it would be a great achievement. I think that the Minister might be biting off a little more than he can chew if he is going to muster the big areas and inoculate the stock. One property I am looking after has in the vicinity of 10,000 cattle, and I say definitely that we

could not muster all of them. That is only a small property. We should not get them in unless it was dry and the stock came to the river or the various bores. We have never had pleuro on this property and I should say that in the Taroom district there has not been an outbreak of pleuro in the last 40 years. I am right behind doing anything possible to eliminate these diseases but the Minister should tread warily before he takes upon himself the job of forcing everybody to inoculate all of his cattle, particularly on the big properties that have never had pleuro in their district. I say frankly in this Chamber that I would resent that action. On the other hand, however, I say that if you are shifting 4,000 or 5,000 cattle off a property and going onto the road with them inoculate them by all means. If pleuro broke out, the man who would not inoculate should be in a lunatic asylum.

The hon. gentleman has said that in the U.S.A. ticks have been eliminated in certain areas. That is so, and it has been done by dipping, but I want to be frank and say that I do not see how you can do it in Australia. Conditions in the U.S.A. are not entirely the same as ours. When you go into the big infested areas of this State the difficulty is to get the cattle.

The Minister instanced the ravages of the tick in times of drought. I quite agree with what he said. I have seen even the feet and the legs of cattle break open from the ravages of ticks that have been missed.

The great trouble in Australia is that to a very large extent this hits a man's pocket. He says, "I clean up my cattle and in comes an outbreak of tick and I lose about 20 per cent. of my cattle from redwater." We all know what has occurred in New South Wales. The argument down there became so heated that some people even threatened to shoot the inspectors. I am not suggesting that that will happen in Queensland; none of the officers need worry about that. Millions of pounds were spent in trying to prevent the tick from getting into New South Wales, and millions of pounds have been spent in trying to stop its spread. It is a very remarkable thing, but there is not one tick on the western side of the Great Dividing Range, which runs north and south close to the east coast of Australia. However, the tick has gone right down the coast and nothing has been able to stop it. The officers of the department do a great job, but they have not been responsible for the fact that the tick has not gone into western Queensland.

**Mr. Collins:** I think we all agree with that.

**Mr. SPARKES:** That is a sane and sensible way of viewing it.

**Mr. Collins:** It is the climatic conditions.

**Mr. SPARKES:** We do not know what it is.

Many years ago I told one of the officers of the department that I would set aside an area of land and put a 10-ft. fence round it.

I said to him, "You can put half a dozen of the tickiest cattle you can find in that enclosure under any conditions you like, and I will guarantee that inside two years you will not be able to find a tick on them." His reply was, "That is all right, but they have to get acclimatised gradually." He said also, "I will show you a live tick that has been in a refrigerator." Nobody can tell me that the climate has anything to do with it. I have been told that grasshoppers too can live in a refrigerator. At all events, for some reason or other the tick has not gone into the western country.

**Mr. Collins** interjected.

**Mr. SPARKES:** A little while ago a man from Jimbour bought a bull—I think it was an Ayrshire—from the Department of Agriculture and Stock at Gatton.

**Mr. Collins:** It was the Department of Public Instruction.

**Mr. SPARKES:** All right, but what that department has to do with an Ayrshire bull I do not know. At all events, whether it came from the Secretary for Public Instruction or the Secretary for Agriculture and Stock, the bull came up to Jimbour. As far as anyone could see it was perfectly clean; it was subjected to the usual number of dippings. I think it came up at about Christmas-time. We had some very muggy weather during January and February, and the man who bought this bull lost about half his herd. He said to me, "I don't know what is wrong with these cattle." I said, "You have pleuro in your herd. Give that beast a bit of a run and he will start to cough and wheeze." They gave him a run but he did not cough at all. I thought it was peculiar, as the symptoms were similar to those of pleuro. Then I said, "You have redwater in your herd. Where did you get the cattle?" He then told me about the bull. That man lost heavily. The outbreak was only about 10 miles from my own property. Nothing was done and in fact nothing could be done to stop it.

In some of the western places dips have been built but there has been no need to put a single beast through them. I do not think it will ever be possible to get rid of the ticks in Queensland under present conditions. I did think that perhaps some scientific method might be found for doing it. I held the view once that perhaps a beast could be inoculated and as soon as a tick got on it the tick would die. That was the layman's point of view. There are many difficulties associated with the eradication of ticks. For instance, when we bring stock from Baroondah to Hornet Bank they have to be inoculated, otherwise we lose quite a number from redwater.

**Mr. Collins:** Then there are certain breeds of cattle on which the ticks will not live.

**Mr. SPARKES:** I am associated with a company that is interested in cattle that came from America. We were told the ticks would

not live on them. Perhaps I had better not enlarge on that subject because I should be divulging private business.

**Mr. Collins:** The female tick that lives on them will not breed.

**Mr. SPARKES:** It is a strange thing that you can have cattle in perfect health but put them on the road and they are not 100 miles away when they develop redwater.

**Mr. Muller:** Less than that.

**Mr. SPARKES:** The greatest curse to the cattle industry of Queensland, not excluding droughts, is the tick. He kills more cattle than any disease and more than drought. Hundreds of thousands of cattle were lost in the north-west of the State to drought a couple of years ago but I do not think it would be possible to estimate the loss of cattle through ticks any more than it was possible to estimate the economic loss to Queensland through the prickly-pear. Therefore, anything that can be done to eradicate the tick will be a godsend to the cattle industry and the State as a whole. However, I hope that very careful consideration will be given to the matter to see that the large amounts that are collected by way of levies are spent for the benefit of the State.

**Mr. MULLER (Fassifern) (12.8 p.m.):** It was especially interesting to note that in the course of his speech the Minister talked about everything else but the purpose of the Bill.

**Mr. Collins:** I did not.

**Mr. MULLER:** There is only one real principle in the Bill and that is the increase in the levy on stock. I can appreciate the Minister's point about the various diseases in stock and how difficult it is to grapple with them but there is only one principle in the Bill.

**Mr. Collins:** And that is that you are not able to pay your way?

**Mr. MULLER:** It is not a question of not being able to pay my way. I will deal with that aspect of the matter later. There is a growing desire on the part of the Government to charge the whole of the administration of the Department of Agriculture and Stock to the primary producer.

**Mr. Collins:** We are paying 16s. on every £1 collected. What are you talking about?

**Mr. MULLER:** If the Minister will be patient he will hear what I have to say. Up to a few years ago the stock levy amounted to a few shillings, just an infinitesimal sum, and it was levied for the purpose of getting information. However, in the past few years it has been the desire of the Government to seize on this tax or levy for the purpose of raising revenue. It is only a few years ago that the levy on stock was doubled. I speak from memory but I think

it was about two years ago and now the purpose of the present Bill is to double the levy again.

**Mr. Collins:** I gave you the reasons for that.

**Mr. MULLER:** I know the hon. gentleman did. I assure you that this is going to bring a very strong complaint from the stock-owners. People complained bitterly about the last increase and now that you have doubled it again the complaint will be louder. Unless a complaint is raised the Minister will probably come along in two years' time and double it again. The Minister said that we were living in an inflationary period and there was every justification for increasing the tax. This Government from time to time have seized on our agricultural industries for the purpose of raising revenue. A few years ago the T.B. levy was imposed for the purpose of minimising or eliminating T.B. in our herds. I believe that legislation was necessary to endeavour to solve a difficult problem that had been under consideration for a number of years—years before I came to this Parliament. We felt that this legislation was more or less a national matter and that the people of Queensland should contribute towards the eradication of T.B. which was a growing menace. It was agreed that a diseased beast was worth next to nothing. Mr. Bulcock was in charge of the department at the time and when I complained that the rate of compensation was low he said, "What is the value of a diseased beast?" You cannot argue that a diseased beast had any value, but it was agreed that the person who was unfortunate enough to have a number of his stock react to the test was entitled to some consideration. On the South Coast reactions were as high as 90 per cent., and in one team of working bullocks 100 per cent. Just imagine the circumstances of a struggling dairy farmer who may be hit like that!

**Mr. Collins:** The working bullocks would not be subject to the levy.

**Mr. MULLER:** No; but that is beside the point; you cannot stop me. When that levy was imposed and the rate of compensation was arrived at, the idea was to help people whose herds showed a high percentage of reaction. I can remember cases where the reaction was 60 per cent.; and that meant a great hardship to the owner. The compensation was £6 per head, which was some relief. The point I make is that when that legislation was introduced the value of a dairy cow was approximately £8 or £9 a head, and the rate of compensation was £6, whereas today it would cost £25 to replace a dairy cow with one of equal quality.

**Mr. Collins:** I still say that a diseased beast was worth nothing.

**Mr. MULLER:** The hon. gentleman can argue that way. Mr. Bulcock told me that.

**Mr. Evans:** A house destroyed by fire is worth nothing.

**Mr. MULLER:** As the hon. member for Mirani said, "A house destroyed by fire is worth nothing" but the owner is compensated if it is insured.

**Mr. Collins:** You can insure your own cattle.

**Mr. MULLER:** The man who contributes a T.B. levy actually contributes to an insurance scheme. He submits his cattle for a test, which is in the interests of the health of the people, which should be our first thought. That levy was paid for that purpose and the compensation for a beast was £6 a head when the value was £8 or £10 a head. However, today the value is approximately £25 or £30 a head. The Minister holds the proceeds of that tax in the coffers of the Treasury. The Leader of the Opposition quoted from the Auditor-General's report, which disclosed that at June last the fund showed a surplus of £76,000. The time has arrived when there is every justification for an increase in the compensation rate. If it was right at that time to almost cover the cost of replacement, i.e., the amount of £6, by the same token the replacement rate nowadays should be increased to £18 or £20 a head.

The buffalo-fly tax was introduced when the buffalo-fly was threatening Queensland. This fly was a menace and nobody knew, nor has any person ever been able to explain in this Chamber, what might be done to stop the spread of the fly. It is true that the discovery made by scientists in the use of D.D.T. to a large extent did stop the spread of the fly, but the levy would not have made any great contribution to its eradication. There is a very substantial credit in the Buffalo Fly Control Fund. Since its inception £168,000 has been collected and today there is a surplus of £19,000.

Another tax referred to by the Leader of the Opposition is the levy for the Dairy Cattle Improvement Fund, at one time known as the bull tax. The dairying industry contributes to that fund of the Department of Agriculture and Stock approximately £4,000 each year. Then there is another tax contributed by butter factories, which pay a levy on all butter manufactured. That too is paid to consolidated revenue. We find that all these taxes, the T.B. tax, the buffalo-fly tax, the diseases in stock tax and others, all of which are being increased from year to year, are being used to cover the cost of administering this department.

Is there any other section of the community that is asked to pay for special services? It might be contended that primary industry should make some contribution towards the maintenance, say, of the Animal Health Station at Yeerongpilly. I would say right here that I have every respect for the work of that station. I heartily congratulate the officers attached to it for the work they are doing, but the point I make is; is it not entirely the responsibility of the people who run stock to finance the whole of the activities of that department? I know it has done a great job but I should like to remind the Minister that whatever has been done has

not been done only in the interests of the stock-owners but of all the people of this State.

There is not the slightest doubt that the greatest menace the stock of this State is the cattle tick. One could not estimate the losses we suffer each year. I live in tick-infested country and am acquainted with some of the great problems confronting the officers of the Stock Department, particularly the veterinary scientists, in the control of the tick. As the hon. member for Aubigny mentioned this morning, after inoculation stock are presumed to be immune, but take the stock of ticky country to fresh country and they will develop redwater. I saw that myself when moving my own cattle from one paddock to another, perhaps 8 or 10 miles away. These cattle were immune to the tick. They were leaving a tick-infested paddock but in the new paddock they encountered another tick and the disease would show up. The officers of the department have got over that problem to a large extent. They inform me that they have now discovered 18 different organisms that will cause redwater. From a combination of these organisms they have a formula they inject into the bloodstream of cattle that will overcome all these diseases. I honestly believe that they are right.

We have to inoculate all cattle we bring from clean country. A few months ago I had at Yeerongpilly for inoculation a bull that I brought from the South. That bull could be turned into any part of the State with confidence that it is immune to disease. In the days when we merely inoculated with blood from a beast that we thought was affected by a disease, the result was doubtful. A mighty job has been done in connection with vaccination. Although I believe that these services are necessary, although I agree that we should make some contribution to their cost, I also believe that Consolidated Revenue should contribute something because, after all, we are all taxpayers, whether we are stock-owners, business men or professional men.

**Mr. Sparkes:** The only difference is that the stock-owner pays tax three times over.

**Mr. MULLER:** That is so. First he pays land tax, and that is serious enough because the Government seize upon every opportunity of increasing taxation. They also call upon the stock-owner to pay income tax on his earnings. Then he has to pay all these other taxes for the protection of stock when in actual fact that should be the responsibility of all people of the State, not one section.

I have no complaint about the work of the department or the interest the Minister is taking in it. I know that since he took over this portfolio he has taken a special interest in encouraging and improving the work of the department. We stock-owners have not the slightest objection to making some contribution towards the cost of the services rendered, but when the Minister tells us that the costs of the various sections of the department are increasing from year to year—he was rather shy this morning; the

Leader of the Opposition had to drag from him the information about the extent of the increase in cost—

**Mr. Collins:** You have a very good imagination.

**Mr. MULLER:** The Minister told us about the work of the department and about what had been done in treating diseases in stock, but when it came to what he actually intended to do under the Bill, he felt ashamed. Why, he actually went red when the Leader of the Opposition asked by what amount it was intended to increase the levy! He blushed when he said, "We are going to double it." If he did not know it was wrong to do that, he should have known it. He has been a primary producer, he has owned stock, and he has moved amongst stock-owners for years. He should have a good knowledge of the many charges met by those stock-owners, yet he intends to double the tax, and this despite the fact that it was doubled about two years ago. Once again I record my protest against this unfair imposition.

**Mr. HEADING (Marodian) (12.24 p.m.):** I was very interested in the speech delivered by the Minister when introducing this Bill to increase the diseases in stock tax by 100 per cent. I agree with the hon. member for Fassfern when he says that the Minister was slow in mentioning the actual amount by which it was intended to increase this levy. Why, it is not so long ago that it was increased by 100 per cent. on the amount then obtaining.

**Mr. Collins:** I gave you the reason for it.

**Mr. HEADING:** The Minister said that costs have increased. Recently I read a couple of articles written by the Minister for Transport in which he referred to the ever-increasing costs of industry, of primary industry in particular, not merely in Queensland but in the whole of Australia. I want to say that the Government are one of the organisations, if I might apply that term to them, that are particularly keen on increasing costs in primary industries, because I have a recollection of increases imposed in relation to transport charges and increases in rates and taxes. We are now getting this one. There are probably others that I cannot think of at the moment. The Minister discussed the work of his department in introducing this Bill and made many statements that did not have much to do with the Bill, so far as I could judge from what he said. He spoke about the Division of Animal Industry and the reorganisation of the Cattle Husbandry Branch.

**Mr. Collins:** All causing increases in costs.

**Mr. HEADING:** I hope the hon. gentleman will recognise that these are added costs and that every branch of primary industry is suffering from added costs. I suggest that he should be very careful in deciding the amount of tax to be imposed on a particular industry.

**Mr. Moore:** Would you like some of the services you have cut out?

**Mr. HEADING:** I have not been speaking from that angle because I recognise the good services the department has given to many branches of industry, but at the same time we have to consider the cost angle. Hon. members opposite are the ones who are complaining that people are leaving the land—

**Mr. Moore:** And they come into my electorate and buy big blocks of flats.

**Mr. HEADING:** When they capitalise their farms they have to get something to live on. However, I do not propose to allow the Secretary for Health and Home Affairs to divert me from the subject. I am saying to the Government that costs have to be watched very closely, because it is part of their job, as well as the job of other people. It is of no use trying to pass the buck and blaming the Commonwealth Government, because the Queensland Government are the people who have direct contact with us in this State and they are the people we have to look to for the amelioration of some of the difficulties we suffer from. The Minister in charge of the Bill spoke about the eradication of the tick and said that there was a growing demand for it. I will not mention places but a motion was passed airily at a meeting in a certain district to press the Department of Agriculture and Stock for the eradication of the tick in Queensland. I think the Minister will remember that meeting. I am only sorry that I was there as a guest and not as a speaker because I should have liked to tell those people some of the difficulties they would have to contend with. I would have told them that after the effort to get rid of the tick had been in operation for a year or so they would be squealing against the necessary and rigid control that would have to be exercised in order to try to eradicate all ticks from Queensland. The Minister has already pointed out that so far the New South Wales Government have been unsuccessful in their efforts to eradicate the tick. I do not know whether they have cleaned up any particular areas, but I hope that when a start is made in Queensland stock-breeders will not be expected to carry the cost. If they are, it will break every one of them.

For the benefit of people who are much younger than I, I would say that when I first came to Queensland and settled in the Murgon district there were no ticks there; at any rate, there was no redwater. I was there when redwater first came into the district and I saw many hundreds of cattle die from it. I understand it was introduced by ticks. Many people on the land were completely wiped out. There was one man about two miles from me who had been engaged in cutting scrub and had put by enough money to get a small dairy herd. One day he said to me, "I won't have to go out cutting scrub any more. I am going in for dairying." However, after the redwater scourge had swept through the district he had left only two head of his herd.

Cattlemen are deeply concerned about the eradication of ticks. Naturally they would like to see ticks eradicated but they realise

that if ticks are eradicated, unless every possible care is taken the cattle will lose their immunity and will be wiped out by redwater.

I was very interested in the Minister's advice that pigs were to pay the levy towards the Diseases in Stock Fund. He said it was intended to double the tax, but I am not sure whether he intends to apply the double tax to pigs or whether they will start on another footing.

**Mr. Collins:** I will start very lightly.

**Mr. HEADING:** There are now only half as many pigs in Queensland as there were in 1940-1941.

**Mr. Collins:** Pigs are much fewer in numbers since the price has been increased.

**Mr. HEADING:** The price was not increased sufficiently. The cost of rearing pigs was ignored when the price was increased.

**Mr. Collins:** Pigs have gone back in numbers.

**Mr. HEADING:** Of course they have. That is a story in itself. During the war the high cost of grain wiped out half the pig industry in Australia. As I say, in Queensland we are down to about 50 per cent. of the numbers that we had in 1940-1941. I suggest to the Minister that if it is intended to place any added costs on the pig industry they should be very light indeed. I do not know why he wanted to include them.

**Mr. Collins:** To get a little more money.

**Mr. HEADING:** What is he going to do with the money to help the pig industry? We are already paying a tax for the inspection of pigs.

**Mr. Collins:** We give a very good veterinary service to the pig-raiser.

**Mr. HEADING:** I am not belittling the service that is given to the pig industry, but I repeat that as the result of increased costs the number of pigs in Queensland has been halved. The industry is not in a position to carry any added burdens.

The hon. member for Fassifern reminds me that perhaps the idea is to increase the tax just to get more money, but I hope that is not the attitude of the Government. The purpose of the levy is to help in the elimination of T.B., which would be in the interests of Queensland and Australia generally. It is just as important that the people of Brisbane should get T.B.-free milk as it is that I should have T.B.-free cattle, but I have always held the view that it should not be the financial responsibility of the primary producer to eliminate T.B. in cattle. I suggest that the Government might consider increasing the compensation to be paid to a stock-owner who has to destroy his cattle because of the presence of T.B. I know of quite a number of stock-owners who bore the cost themselves. If a farmer receives only

£2 a head for a condemned beast it is hardly worth his while seeing that he is called upon now to pay £20, £25 and up to £35 for another beast to replace it.

I do not propose to go into all the figures that I have taken out of the Auditor-General's report on the subject, but I should like to deal with the method of imposing the levy. The charge is so much a 100 head of stock or part of a 100.

**Mr. Collins:** What do you do in the bacon factories when a pig is over a certain weight?

**Mr. HEADING:** The levy on stock is £1 a 100 but if an owner has 102 he has to pay another £1 for the extra two head. I remember that on one occasion I sent in my wife's stock as being 105 and the extra 5 cost another £1. Why not make it so much for the first 100 with grades of 25?

**Mr. Collins:** You have a limited weight for first-grade pigs in the bacon factory and when they are 1 lb. over they are second-grade. Why not adjust that? You must draw the line somewhere.

**Mr. HEADING:** Of course you must draw the line somewhere but it would be in the interests of the Government to say so much for each 100 and then work in steps of 25.

**Mr. Collins:** The whole system of levying is very unsatisfactory but we do not know of any better way.

**Mr. HEADING:** We might be able to devise a better way.

**Mr. Collins:** Do you think it would be better if we imposed a levy on the product of the industry, the carcass of the beast or the pig, or on the butter and the wool?

**Mr. HEADING:** The Government are already doing something like that. Instead of imposing the levy on each 100 head or part thereof they could put a levy on the first 100, with jumps of only 25. Is the Minister satisfied that he is collecting all the levy that should be collected?

**Mr. Collins:** I am quite satisfied that we are not, otherwise we should not need to increase the levy.

**Mr. HEADING:** That is the very point that I make and the matter should be investigated. I suggest that it is not fair that the fellow who is honest and pays for the number of beasts he has should have to pay also for the other fellow who does not put in the correct number. In my opinion the rise in tax is too steep; 100 per cent. more is a terrific impost. We must bear in mind that the primary industries are carrying a tremendous load of cost today.

**Mr. Collins:** You do not know that that is in the Bill.

**Mr. HEADING:** The hon. gentleman told me that he was going to double it.

Progress reported.

The House adjourned at 12.44 p.m.