

Queensland



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[Hansard]

Legislative Assembly

FRIDAY, 15 OCTOBER 1965

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Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER (The Chairman of Committees, Mr. Hooper, Greenslopes) read prayers and took the chair at 11 a.m.

QUESTIONS

DEATH OF RAYMOND ROY SOLIS.—Mr. Windsor for Mr. Aikens, pursuant to notice, asked The Minister for Justice,—

Consequent on the reply of the Minister for Health to my Question in the House on March 31, 1965, was any criminal charge laid against the doctor whose negligence caused the death in a public hospital of Raymond Roy Solis and, if not, why not?

Answer:—

“A public inquest into the death of Raymond Roy Solis was opened at Biloela on June 24, 1964, and closed at Biloela on March 17, 1965, by the Gladstone Coroner. The completion of this inquest was indicated in the reply by The Honourable the Minister for Health on March 31, 1965, who then also stated that a copy of the Coroner’s finding had not yet been made available to him. The Coroner found that the evidence did not establish criminal negligence on the part of any person in connection with the death of the deceased.”

CONSTRUCTION OF LANDING STRIPS ON TORRES STRAIT ISLANDS.—Mr. Windsor for Mr. Adair, pursuant to notice, asked The Minister for Education,—

As residents living on the remote islands in Torres Strait are concerned at the extreme difficulty experienced in the transport of seriously-ill persons to Thursday Island Hospital, will he approach the Director of Native Affairs with a view to the urgent construction of landing strips for light planes on suitable islands?

Answer:—

“The matter of evacuation of medical cases from outlying islands to Thursday Island has been continuously under review by both medical and administrative authorities since the war years. There are many problems associated with the provision of an Ambulance service to the outlying islands, and the position has been previously examined by the Commonwealth Department of Civil Aviation, in conjunction with the Royal Flying Doctor Service, without positive result. The islands are under the jurisdiction of the Islander Councillors and this is a subject for consideration by the Islander Councillors Conference which commences its deliberations today. I am sure the Councillors will explore every possibility and submit recommendations to the Government, which will receive every consideration.”

LAKE CLARENDON PASTURAGE RESERVE.—Mr. Duggan, pursuant to notice, asked The Minister for Lands,—

(1) What is the purpose of the Lake Clarendon Pasturage Reserve?

(2) How is the reserve administered?

(3) Do any elected officers concerned with the reserve administration receive fees for their services?

(4) Have the rules governing the reserve recently been altered in relation to re-stocking and method of administration? If so, to what extent?

(5) How many personnel own legal rights to graze cattle in the reserve and, of this number, how many now exercise their right to do so?

(6) What proportion of the total number of cattle grazing is owned by the trustees?

(7) Have any steps been taken to ensure that the number of cattle grazing in the reserve is not excessive in relation to the feed available?

(8) Is any supervision exercised over the administration of the reserve to ensure that it is being used only for the purposes for which it was originally intended?

Answers:—

(1) “The reserve was set apart for pasturage and recreation purposes and is used for the depasturing of stock owned by landholders within the Lake Clarendon Repurchased Estate.”

(2) “By five (5) duly appointed trustees, namely—Robert Edward Lyons, Michael George Heenan, Alfred Ferdinand Jahnke, Kevin Herbert Sippel, and John Daniel Fitzgerald.”

(3) “There is no provision for payment of fees to the trustees for the Administration of the Estate.”

(4) “No. But new by-laws are under consideration by the Solicitor-General’s Office.”

(5) “According to latest information available, there are sixty (60) landholders holding legal rights to depasture stock on the reserve. At the present time it is not known how many exercise their rights to graze stock but an official inspection in September, 1964, revealed that only four (4) holding legal rights were grazing stock.”

(6) “It is not known what proportion of the total number of cattle grazing is owned by the Trustees and this can only be obtained by inspection.”

(7) “The number of stock allowed to graze on the reserve is governed by the by-laws and it is at the discretion of the

trustees to limit the number of stock having regard to existing seasonal conditions. A complaint in this regard was recently received and an investigation is being made today."

(8) "The reserve is subject to Departmental supervision and any complaints regarding the usage of the reserve are investigated by Departmental officers."

MOTOR-VEHICLE DRIVING LICENCES.—Mr. Sherrington, pursuant to notice, asked The Minister for Mines,—

(1) How many driving licences were issued during the years ended June 30, 1963, 1964 and 1965?

(2) Of these numbers, how many were for persons (a) under twenty-five years of age and (b) over twenty-five years?

Answers:—

(1) "During the last three years, the following numbers of Drivers' Licences have been issued:—1962-1963, 135,714; 1963-1964, 107,469; 1964-1965, 110,158. These figures relate to new licences issued and comprise original licences issued to persons not previously issued with a licence, new licences issued in replacement for licences which have been lost, mutilated or destroyed, and licences issued as renewals of expired licences."

(2) "No statistics are kept in relation to the number of licences issued to persons in particular age groups."

FREE A.I. SERVICE FOR DAIRY HERDS IN DROUGHT AREAS.—Mr. Hanson, pursuant to notice, asked The Minister for Primary Industries,—

(1) Is he aware that in the recent drought the Milk Board in New South Wales made funds available to provide free artificial insemination services for dairy herds in affected areas?

(2) Has similar consideration been given to the primary producers in the devastated areas of this State?

Answers:—

(1) "Yes. The Milk Board in New South Wales is the sole authority in New South Wales for the operation of A.I. Centres and inseminating centres. It employs all inseminators and charges the dairy farmers an insemination fee. Thus, it is in a position to provide direct assistance to dairy farmers using artificial insemination."

(2) "The Brisbane Milk Board is in no way associated with A.I. This is a function of my Department and the dairy industry. Services provided for the dairy farmer in Queensland are those of co-operative associations of the dairy farmers themselves. These co-operative associations

purchase semen from the Departmental A.I. Centre and then charge their farmers for the whole service. The cost of semen normally does not exceed more than 12 per cent. of the total charge. A.I. in the southern section of this State as an extensive commercial proposition was introduced in 1962, and is not yet fully developed, so that any form of assistance through cheaper A.I. would only help a small proportion of dairy farmers. The Artificial Insemination Advisory Committee is making a survey of the effect of the drought on A.I. services, but to date has only incomplete information. In general, I consider that assistance in the form of special loans through the Agricultural Bank to dairy farmers in necessitous circumstances provides adequate help to those dairy farmers who need it."

ADDITIONAL POLICE AT GLADSTONE.—Mr. Hanson, pursuant to notice, asked The Minister for Education,—

(1) Is he aware that several Customs officers, displaying great ingenuity, recently obtained considerable hauls of narcotics from overseas ships in Gladstone Harbour?

(2) If so, will he consider increasing police strengths in Gladstone so that in conjunction with Customs officers they may prevent similar odious practices or breaches?

Answers:—

(1) "No. As far as can be ascertained the sum total of all seizures of narcotics by Customs Officers at Gladstone since January, 1964, is a quantity of less than two ounces of opium."

(2) "The Police administration is aware of the requirements of the Police Service at Gladstone, and such requirements will be given due consideration when additional staff becomes available for allocation. As I advised the Honourable Member in a letter to him under date September 27, 1965, it is expected that some increase in the Police staff at Gladstone will be possible during the current financial year. Police personnel co-operate fully with Customs Officers at all times."

VISITS OF ITINERANT DENTIST TO NORMANTON.—Mr. Wallis-Smith, pursuant to notice, asked The Minister for Health,—

As the last visit of the dentist to Normanton was on April 3, 1965, and as there has been a marked increase in population due to extensive road and bridge works, will he consider an early visit of the dentist with more frequent services to follow?

Answer:—

"Normanton is visited by the itinerant dentist from Cairns, usually at intervals of from four to six months. The report of the dentist following his visit to Normanton in April, 1965, indicated that all the

aboriginal school children had been examined and, where necessary, treated, while all other persons who had presented themselves at the Dental Clinic had received whatever treatment they required. I have ascertained from the Cairns Hospitals Board that the itinerant dentist is due to visit Normanton again on the 20th of this month. He will be requested to make an assessment of the dental requirements of the district, so that the need for additional visits can be determined."

RAILWAY REFRESHMENT ROOM CHARGES.
—Mr. R. Jones, pursuant to notice, asked The Minister for Transport,—

As Queensland Railway Refreshment Rooms charge one penny to threepence in excess of normal prices for such items as confectionery, cigarettes, foodstuffs, &c., will he have this practice of over-charging the travelling public discontinued?

Answer:—

"I have no knowledge of the excess prices being charged as alleged by the Honourable Member. However, if he will furnish to me a list of specific items of confectionery, brands of cigarettes and foodstuffs and the names of the stations at which the rooms complained of are located, I will have the matter fully examined."

PAPER

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

Report of the Commissioner for Railways for the year 1964-65.

TOBACCO INDUSTRY PROTECTION BILL

SECOND READING

Hon. J. A. ROW (Hinchinbrook—Minister for Primary Industries) (11.14 a.m.): I move—

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

When I introduced the Bill I stressed that it was a most important one, although comparatively small. It was gratifying that all hon. members who spoke confined their remarks to the subject matter of the Bill, although it necessarily covers some aspects of production which will undoubtedly be raised again during the presentation of the tobacco industry stabilisation measure at a later stage.

It is important for hon. members to realise that the provisions of the Bill are to assist the industry in the protection of tobacco from pests and diseases. The various requirements contained therein, and the chemical protection measures employed by growers, are complementary to each other. Legislation alone would not achieve a great deal nor would chemical sprays under epidemic conditions. The soundest

approach is to support chemical control by effective crop sanitation practices. It is recognised that much will be achieved in the latter regard by means of normal departmental extension services.

The hon. member for Tablelands stressed the potential hazard of air pollution through the increasing use of spray materials. I agree with him that there could be sound reasons for reducing the use of spray chemicals. This might be achieved by the application of suitable cultural control methods, including the use of resistant plant varieties.

When introducing this Bill I mentioned that the principal tobacco disease, namely, blue mould, was capable of causing losses of up to £1,000,000 in seasons favouring its spread. I shall enlarge on my previous comments and give hon. members some further details, as suggested by the hon. member for Maryborough. It is perhaps unfortunate for Australia that it possesses numerous native species of tobacco which are closely related to the cultivated tobacco plant. Many of these native species harbour blue mould, which can thrive on them even in the drier parts of Australia well inland from our tobacco-growing areas.

Circumstantial evidence indicates that these disease-carrying native species can provide primary sources of infection in some tobacco districts. It is therefore highly likely that blue mould was present here before cultivated tobacco was first grown, and then simply moved into those crops. It is recorded that it was an important disease of the dark, air-cured tobacco grown around the turn of the century. The first tobacco was grown in my district on the Herbert River in the 1880's, and I understand from records that it was wiped out by blue mould. It was certainly a major factor in the collapse of the Beerburum tobacco settlement during the early 1930's.

While possessing a remarkable power to spread, blue mould requires fairly critical conditions for spore formation once the plant is affected. These conditions are most often associated with cool and humid or showery weather. Research has shown that although this disease is in a sense always with us, the chief danger from a practical viewpoint is an infection caused through the carry-over of diseased plants from one season to the next. This has been amply proved by plant pathologists in my department. Hon. members will appreciate that only one careless grower in a district can thus provide the source of infection for many of his neighbours' crops.

I was pleased to hear the hon. members for Carnarvon and Tablelands support the principle of correct residue disposal. The prevention of such sources of infection is an important objective of the Bill, and, at the request of growers themselves, substantial penalties for infringement have been provided.

Much the same position exists in regard to the major tobacco pests. Unlike blue mould, these are also pests of other cultivated crops. The tobacco leaf miner, for example, is known as the tuber moth of potatoes.

I should like to emphasise that under normal circumstances the Bill imposes no undue hardship on the tobacco-grower in the way of unusual requirements. I might say that grower organisations are themselves strongly behind crop sanitation measures and have repeatedly requested revision of the Act to make it more workable in this regard. I can assure hon. members that responsible grower opinion is fully in favour of the provisions of this Bill and wants to see strict enforcement.

The hon. member for Carnarvon also raised the question of payment of compensation and wondered if it might be paid from the Tobacco Industry Trust Account Fund. Such payments could not legally be made from this fund, which was established under Commonwealth Act No. 57 of 1955. This Act specifies that moneys standing to the credit of the fund can be used only for the following purposes, or other purposes incidental to them, in conjunction with the tobacco industry—

1. Research or investigation;
2. The publication of scientific and technical reports; and
3. The training of persons and the dissemination of advice.

Any compensation claims would therefore have to be a charge against Consolidated Revenue.

There have been no instances of quarantine being necessary since the principal Act was introduced some 33 years ago, and I sincerely hope there never will be. It is essential, however, to provide for any possible emergency.

The Leader of the Opposition and the hon. members for Carnarvon and Maryborough referred to the subject of technical services to the tobacco industry. In my reply at the introductory stage of the Bill I dealt briefly with the contribution of the industry to a fund for the provision of such technical services. The tobacco-growing centres in Queensland are serviced by some 25 graduate and diplomate officers of my department who are engaged full time on research and extension work. The activities of these people are completely financed from the Tobacco Industry Trust Account Fund. Some additional part-time services covering the various specialist fields, extension, and administration are also provided from Consolidated Revenue funds as a normal departmental function.

With respect to the soil conservation issues raised by the hon. member for Tablelands, I agree that there is a vital need to conserve the Mareeba-Dimbulah tobacco soils. The special provision of Commonwealth funds for tobacco extension work has enabled my

department to place two soil conservation officers at Mareeba to work on this problem. I am happy to say that outstanding progress has been made, and the area protected has increased from 186 acres in 1962 to 6,321 acres by the end of the last quarter.

I commend the Bill to the House.

Mr. DUGGAN (Toowoomba West—Leader of the Opposition) (11.22 a.m.): The members of our committee who examined this Bill and investigated its many provisions concluded that it appeared to be acceptable and recommended at a party meeting that it should be approved. It is good to find legislation on which there is so much unanimity.

The tobacco industry is at present in a somewhat unfortunate position because of problems confronting those responsible for the production of tobacco and its manufacture. As the Minister pointed out, there will be an opportunity later to discuss a tobacco stabilisation Bill, and it would therefore be out of order for me now to depart from the general principles of the measure now before the House. I am in order, however, in emphasising briefly that primary industries are at present facing difficulties caused by drought, rising costs, and low prices for their products.

As was pointed out yesterday by the hon. member for Fassifern, primary producers do not have the opportunity to pass on rising costs. Every time there are increases in costs in secondary industry they are invariably passed on, unless savings can be effected by improved techniques, better methods of management, or increased mechanisation. In addition to being subject to the vagaries of nature, tobacco-growers are virtually compelled to sell at auction, and everything possible should be done to introduce control measures likely to ensure the highest possible quantity and quality of leaf produced. The Bill is designed with that end in view.

Unhappily, there are many diseases peculiar to the tobacco industry. Nature does some rather amazing things to effect a balance between the plants that are grown on the land. In almost every instance, a pest that assumes proportions sufficiently large to have a very serious effect on the economy of the country has a natural enemy that is able to control it to a reasonable degree, either biologically or in some other way. However, as advances are made in one direction by the introduction of biological or chemical control of a specific problem, further problems develop in other directions. That is one of the things that are constantly exciting the interest and attention of scientists. No matter whether it is in the field of medicine or some other field affecting the life of the community, a large band of scientists is continually trying to overcome problems that are common to human beings or to the products of primary industries. As the Minister pointed out, 25 officers of the department are specifically and extensively

engaged in the task of endeavouring to overcome problems confronting the tobacco industry and assisting it to market its product in an acceptable condition.

I have indicated already on behalf of the Opposition that hon. members on this side of the House are cognisant of the responsibility that devolves upon them to do all they possibly can, irrespective of the problems that may be discussed when another Bill is introduced later in the session, with the resources available to the State, to assist those who are engaged in this industry to overcome the problems of leaf miner, leaf spot, blue mould, and so on. Eventually, types of tobacco may be developed that are resistant to these diseases; but it is true to say that control measures may be effective for only a limited period. The transmutations and transformations that take place from time to time in plants or other living organisms that enable them to adapt themselves to a change of environment are one of the mysteries of nature.

I commend the Minister for introducing the Bill. Although in some instances the control measures are fairly strong and the penalties heavy, I think that, as the tobacco industry returns the State about £8,300,000 annually, we should see that the controls are exercised fairly but strictly.

The Minister referred to two problems, apart from the diseases that affect the plant itself, that confront the industry. He referred first to poor methods of soil conservation. I think it will be agreed by all hon. members that in this continent, which is the driest in the world, action must be taken to ensure that the acreage of arable land is not reduced by inadequate methods of conservation. It would be completely wrong to allow a greedy or incompetent person to permit erosion on land, the fertility of which has been built up over the centuries, by engaging in foolish or lazy practices. The ownership of land is determined under the statutes of the State, but the soil belongs not only to its present owners but to posterity. If Australia is to remain solvent, it must ensure that the tobacco industry and all other agricultural industries are maintained in such a condition that succeeding generations will be able to sustain themselves and enjoy a high standard of living. In a limited way, this is the objective of the Bill; therefore, it commends itself to hon. members on this side of the House.

The hon. member for Tablelands, who represents an important part of the tobacco-growing areas of Queensland, wishes to comment on the Bill in greater detail, so I shall not trespass unnecessarily on the ground that he wishes to cover. I approve of the Bill and the manner in which it has been introduced. The Minister has given us a clear explanation of its provisions and it has been drawn in such a way that it is quite easy to follow its intentions.

I have occasionally had to express regret at the phraseology used in drafting legislation. That is not meant to be a personal

reflection on the Parliamentary Draftsman. I should hate to have the task of embodying in proper language the intentions of the Legislature from time to time, but it certainly helps when we have simplicity of expression.

I do not think there is any doubt in anyone's mind that, constitutionally-wise, our legislation has generally been drawn up in such a way that there have been very few successful appeals against it as expressing the intentions of the Government of the day. That, of course, indicates that those responsible for preparing legislation in the form in which it comes before us in Parliament have done their job very well from the legal point of view.

In this instance, as I say, the Bill sets out fairly clearly all that is required and involved. It is refreshing to hear from the Minister that even those engaged in the tobacco industry—an industry that has had such a chequered existence—are anxious to co-operate in every possible way. We know that there are certain alterations contingent upon the particular problems posed by transferring the growing of tobacco from natural rainfall areas to irrigated areas. The provisions of this Bill attempt to correct those problems.

I should like, on behalf of the Opposition, to say to the Minister that we welcome this measure, which has also been welcomed by the industry. We can only express the hope that once we have overcome the marketing problems, on the production side this Bill will enable the growers to get the maximum return from their efforts and to produce a leaf of acceptable standard.

Mr. WALLIS-SMITH (Tablelands) (11.32 a.m.): The Bill, as the Minister said, is designed to protect the tobacco industry from disease, and I wish to pay a tribute to the Minister and those responsible for framing it. As the Leader of the Opposition has said, one can quite easily follow its contents. Its purpose is to achieve a background similar to that of the sugar industry. When we were having trouble over prices many people in the street said to me, "It is a pity the tobacco industry is not organised on similar lines to the sugar industry."

The Minister, by this Bill, is laying the foundation for an effective organisation to control disease, but there is one factor that I should like him to consider, namely, the type of people growing this crop in the North. It is all very well to have inspectors interviewing various farmers in the industry; but it is another matter to be sure they understand. These farmers would like to see the instructions, regulations and other parts of the Bill set out in their own languages. In saying this, I am not advocating a retrograde step. I say it because I know that the people concerned would co-operate more if they fully understood what was required of them. They will nod their heads and say they understand, but those who know them well realise that they have only a vague understanding.

As the Minister said, one farmer might produce a disease-carrying crop that will infect many others. The scheme is only as strong as its weakest link, which in this case would be one farmer who did not co-operate.

Mr. Windsor: How many languages would you suggest?

Mr. WALLIS-SMITH: I think the Minister would understand what I mean, and the Tobacco Board would be able to advise him on the point. I think the position would be met if the salient points or the main provisions of the Bill were translated into the various languages.

The Minister raised the point of native species of tobacco. Previously I have mentioned that after clearing his land, very often the landholder cannot cope with the regrowth. Much of the regrowth in the northern area consists of wild tobacco, the seed of which is so fine that it can be carried on the wheels of vehicles, by stock and in many other ways throughout the district. I mentioned this matter when the Minister for Lands introduced legislation dealing with the giant sensitive plant. I raise it again now because the Minister for Primary Industries has highlighted the native species of tobacco.

Some of the worst offenders in this respect are the local authorities who control the roads throughout the area. I refer particularly to the roads between the two growing areas of Innot Hot Springs and Dimbulah. Native tobacco is the only growth the farmers see on the side of the road as they travel backward and forward. Frost will not kill the plant; it merely stunts it. Apparently cutting it down will not kill it.

There will have to be a concerted drive to eradicate the native tobacco menace from the whole district. It would be very wrong to impose heavy penalties on farmers for allowing disease to spread if local government or government departments allow this pest to thrive in their areas. No-one could argue against that. A farmer should not be told, "It does not matter so much about the wild tobacco on the roads as long as you look after your farm."

I am glad to see that the Minister for Local Government is in the Chamber. I hope that in consultation with the Main Roads people he can arrange for a regular onslaught on this menace in my electorate. It may be present in many other areas but I am speaking of the area I know. Perhaps it could be attacked annually before it reaches the seeding stage. I know that the disease is not necessarily on the plant at the seeding stage, but it can be on the foliage and stalks at other times.

The Bill will improve the income and economy of a very important area of North Queensland. Any legislation that will do that will receive the full acclaim of the House.

I give full credit to the research officers, advisory officers and soil conservation officers who are working continually in this area. It is more than just a job to them. They are very sincere in their desire to see the country transformed from a non-productive area to a part of the State that can stand on its own feet.

I asked the Minister a question recently about the possible reclamation of some of the soil that has been washed away. He admitted that 6,320 acres are now under control. However, a lot of land has been lost and cannot be reclaimed. I hope the Minister can see fit to assign other areas now served by water to farmers whose land has been depleted. It is no good trying to prevent disease if the farmers have not suitable soil for growing tobacco. Buyers and assessors—the people who assess the value of the tobacco before it goes on the floor—generally know what type of soil a particular lot of leaf comes from. This demonstrates the importance of soil for tobacco growing. It is graded into four categories. Now that there is a marking-time period in the industry, consideration should be given to farmers who claim they have insufficient high-grade soil. They should be given adjacent areas, or other suitable areas, to add to their own so that they can produce the outstanding leaf which the Bill is trying to ensure.

Hon. members on this side of the House, together with our Leader, are very satisfied with the Bill. I hope that somehow the Minister can give effect to the one or two observations I have made when the Bill is promulgated in the various growing areas.

Mr. McKECHNIE (Carnarvon) (11.41 a.m.): I thank the Minister for answering my queries, particularly the one concerning the Tobacco Industry Trust Account Fund. I was rather perturbed as I realised that the fund was low and I could not see how we could pay compensation from it. However, the Minister has made it quite clear that payments will not be made from the fund and that, if compensation payments are necessary—which is extremely unlikely—they will come from Consolidated Revenue.

I wish to express my appreciation of several things that have happened since the introduction of the Bill. I am very pleased that the committee controlling the Tobacco Industry Trust Account Fund has decided to continue operations at the Inglewood Tobacco Experimental Station at Whetstone until the waters of the Coolmunda Dam are available. When this water is available they will be able to carry out suitability tests and quite possibly a rejuvenation of the tobacco industry in the Inglewood area could be the result. In fairness to the department, I must say that it has been stressed that this may not be possible. I welcome the prospect of the station being continued for at least another three years until this water is available, when tests may be carried out as to its suitability for tobacco-growing.

The second matter for which I wish to express my appreciation concerns the Federal Minister for Primary Industry, Mr. Adermann. He made a determined stand in the marketing situation which has developed in the last few weeks. Leaders in the industry, and individual growers, have all expressed appreciation of the strong stand taken by Mr. Adermann on this matter. It is most heartening for the future of the stabilisation scheme to know that he feels so strongly about these matters.

I look forward to speaking on the stabilisation scheme when it is introduced. I know, of course, that we should steer away from stabilisation matters when discussing this Bill. I again thank the Minister for his answer and express my appreciation for the two events which have occurred in the meantime.

Hon. J. A. ROW (Hinchinbrook—Minister for Primary Industries) (11.43 a.m.), in reply: I thank hon. members for their contributions to the debate. It is indeed pleasing to introduce a Bill which is acceptable to both sides of the House and, more particularly, a Bill such as this which, although it is comparatively small, is nevertheless extremely important. This is a move to control the diseases and pests which decimate our agricultural products, more especially tobacco.

The Leader of the Opposition referred to droughts, costs, and low prices, which affect our primary industries. I agree with him entirely. I have been a primary producer. It is for those reasons that we, as primary producers, and those in charge of primary industries, are at all times trying to ascertain ways and means of reducing costs and improving our products. I believe that that is an important point in the tobacco industry. I do not want to bring stabilisation into it, but it has been said that our tobacco is not of the same quality as imported leaf. I deny that emphatically. Experts have told me that the top and medium qualities produced in Queensland are equal to anything produced anywhere else in the world. With the improvement in production, general composition, and presentation of our product, we will have a stronger case for protection.

It is important that we keep a close watch on farm costs. That is one of the aims of the Bill. Our growers should be able to cut disease costs and improve varieties and ultimately produce a more desirable article. The variety generally grown is the Hicks variety, 80 per cent. of the seed of which is produced by my department and sold at nominal cost.

I agree that it is the responsibility of this Parliament and of the community to discharge its debt to posterity. Speaking as one who has been engaged in the agricultural industry, I appreciate that what we pass on to future generations is our responsibility. Therefore, we must at all times endeavour to bring in better controls and improved

methods of production in order to preserve the land and improve the quality of our products.

The hon. member for Tablelands made an interesting contribution to the debate. I was pleased to hear his reference to the good work of the officers of my department. It is heartening to them to be praised for the work they do and for the dedicated way in which they carry out their responsibilities. I have been to Mareeba and have seen the set-up, and I know the work done by my officers up there. It is pleasing to hear praise expressed by hon. members.

The dissemination of control methods in other languages is indeed a knotty problem. There are people of foreign nationalities in the sugar industry, particularly in Ingham, to whom we have sent out circulars in both languages. But I believe most members of the younger generation understand English quite well. I know that in my district there are many people with foreign-sounding names. They have all assumed their responsibilities as citizens and have made valuable contributions to Queensland. I can assure the hon. member that I will pass his request on to my officers so that consideration can be given to sending out circulars in different languages. The farmers would then at least be able to comprehend the meaning of them.

The control of noxious weeds on the roadside is a matter for the Co-ordinating Board. That problem is encountered not only on the roads on the Tableland but throughout Queensland. Weeds such as knobweed and groundsel present a real problem. Associated with it are difficulties caused by spraying, when conflicts arise through the use of weedicides for weed control in areas close to plants susceptible to them. If a farmer has to control weed by the roadside, it means added expense for him.

As a matter of interest, I may say that I have just received from Mr. Winterton a note saying that wild tobacco bush, which was referred to by hon. member for Tablelands, is not a carrier of tobacco diseases. I must confess that I did not know that myself.

Mr. Wallis-Smith: That does not mean to say that it will not be.

Mr. ROW: I am sure that it is not now. I must confess that I was not aware of that. Our so-called wild tobacco bush is not a nicotiana at all. It was the native species of nicotiana to which I referred in my speech. I thought I knew every weed in the bush, nevertheless I was not aware that our wild tobacco bush is not a carrier of blue mould.

Mr. Wallis-Smith: Then I have done some good in making you aware of that.

Mr. ROW: As a matter of fact, we have both made ourselves aware of it.

Dealing with eroded land also presents problems. In the sugar industry, the substituting of eroded land has to be done with the approval of the Central Sugar Cane Prices Board. Where lands are eroded, subject to erosion, or likely to suffer further erosion, consideration is always given to substituting them. There is, however, one aspect of this matter to be kept in mind. If a farmer, by negligence or bad land husbandry, is himself responsible for the erosion, should he be given another farm to ruin? Each case has to be determined on its merits and a decision made whether the erosion is the fault of the farmer or has been caused by circumstances beyond his control. This matter does not come under my control; it is within the jurisdiction of the Department of Irrigation and Water Supply and the Department of Lands.

Mr. Wallis-Smith: I think you should include soil surveys as well.

Mr. ROW: Soil surveys are included. Officers of my department make soil tests, and experiments are carried out at the research station on the Atherton Tableland. In addition, work is done on tobacco farms to ascertain the class of soil, its productivity, the fertilisers required, and so on.

The hon. member for Carnarvon referred to the compensation fund. I think I covered that matter fairly well in my speech when moving the second reading. I said no instances of quarantine have been necessary since the principal Act was introduced 33 years ago, and I sincerely hope that there will not be any in the future. I trust that the measures proposed by the Bill have the effect of controlling diseases and that it will never be necessary to pay compensation to growers who have to eradicate good crops in diseased areas.

I thank hon. members for their contributions, and I commend the Bill to the House.

Motion (Mr. Row) agreed to.

COMMITTEE

(Mr. Hodges, Gympie, in the chair.)

Clauses 1 to 22, both inclusive, as read, agreed to.

Clause 23—Regulations—

Mr. WALLIS-SMITH (Tablelands) (11.57 a.m.): Subparagraph (c) says that regulations may be made in respect of prescribing the varieties of tobacco that may be grown in any tobacco district or any defined part of a tobacco district and prohibiting the growing of any variety other than that prescribed. It seems to me that it is possible that the type of tobacco that a farmer may grow may be governed by the introduction of certain types of plants in an area. I should like the Minister to tell the Committee whether the type of leaf decided on by the grower could be prohibited. Frequently buyers want only a certain quantity of a certain type of leaf; they are not interested

in any other type. If a farmer is told to grow a certain type of leaf, it may not be in his best interests to do so because he may already be producing the type of leaf that the buyers want.

Hon. J. A. ROW (Hinchinbrook)—Minister for Primary Industries) (11.58 a.m.): I think this is just a regulatory provision. I point out to the hon. member for Tablelands that, in the sugar industry, varieties of cane are set out for each district, and I believe that the application of this clause will probably be along the same lines. As I said earlier, the principal variety of tobacco grown in Queensland is Hicks. However, other varieties might do better in a certain district, and those varieties, of course, would be confined to that district. In another district they may not give the same quality of leaf.

Mr. Wallis-Smith: You are going to make it mandatory?

Mr. ROW: I do not think so. I give the hon. member my assurance that no hardship will be imposed on the growers by this provision. If growers want to grow a certain type of leaf that is marketable and will provide them with a good monetary return, they will be allowed to do so. Of course, it must be a good type of leaf, and it will have to have the full support of the manufacturers as to quality. A watch must be kept on the quality of the leaf required by the manufacturers and the type of leaf that can best be produced by the growers. In my opinion, the provision merely imposes a set of conditions similar to those applying in the sugar industry—to use the vernacular, "horses for courses."

Mr. Wallis-Smith: We are preventing and prohibiting, also.

Mr. ROW: That is so. However, I can assure the hon. member that there will be no hardship.

Clause 23, as read, agreed to.

Clauses 24 and 25, as read, agreed to.

Bill reported, without amendment.

SUGAR EXPERIMENT STATIONS ACTS AMENDMENT BILL

SECOND READING

Hon. J. A. ROW (Hinchinbrook—Minister for Primary Industries) (12.1 p.m.): I move—

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

During the introductory stage of this Bill, certain comments on particular clauses were made by hon. members. I propose to deal with the matters raised in some detail so that the items commented on will be fully clarified and there will be no misunderstanding in regard to the proposed amendments.

The hon. members for Mourilyan and Mt. Coot-tha both expressed concern that, when a cane-grower was ordered to destroy

diseased cane and the block in question also contained healthy cane, the amendment would limit the grower's right to be compensated. I have already made it clear that if the proportion of diseased stools in a block is small the matter is normally dealt with by digging out the offending stools. But if the disease incidence is high the only means of preventing spread of the disease onto adjoining blocks or neighbouring farms is to harvest the cane and then plough out the stubble. In effect, the crop is harvested, and, instead of being ratooned again, it is ploughed out.

Certain cane diseases which spread from stool to stool may take weeks or months to develop symptoms which are visible to the eye, so the authorities concerned with disease control must take into consideration the fact that the apparently healthy stools in a block containing disease may be infected although not yet showing visible symptoms.

The hon. member for Mt. Coot-tha also referred to the possibility that cane stunted as a result of plant food deficiency or because of poor growth conditions may be classified by an inspector as "deemed to be diseased" and be the subject of a plough-out order. I assure hon. members that in all cases where a plough-out order may be required, the relevant disease is first identified by a pathologist of the Bureau of Sugar Experiment Stations and an order is issued only after consultation with the Director and the Bureau's solicitors. Orders cannot be issued by inspectors employed by cane pest and disease control boards.

The very great benefits to the industry resulting from this legislative control of sugar-cane diseases are reflected in the present-day high productivity of assigned lands. Such scourges as gumming disease, which occurred so heavily in the early twenties, and downy mildew disease have been completely eradicated from this State by a combination of destruction of diseased fields and the replacement of susceptible types by resistant varieties.

Fiji disease, which caused very serious crop losses in Southern Queensland in past years, has now disappeared except for a section of the Rocky Point district. Here again, the issuance of destruction orders in badly diseased fields was the most potent measure in attaining control.

Cane diseases can make insidious inroads into production and, if not checked, can militate against the improvements resulting from cane-breeding. One of the benefits resulting from this system of disease eradication is that sugar-cane crops, unlike many horticultural crops, do not have to be sprayed or treated periodically with fungicides or bactericides to keep them disease-free.

The method of disease control established in the sugar industry is to use disease-free planting material, to ensure that knives are sterilised before cutting plants, and to dig out any diseased stools which occur as the

result of spread from other blocks. It is only in extreme cases that an order may be issued for the destruction of cane, and this applies when a serious disease may occur in an otherwise clean area or where it is essential that the last remnants of a disease be cleaned up in a district.

The hon. member for Bundaberg expressed concern at the change in machinery which would result in the Bureau's annual levy being proclaimed by the Minister in the Government Gazette instead of by the Governor in Council. The change envisaged is not designed to relax any controls. In the past the Governor in Council has acted on the Minister's recommendation. Under the proposed amendment the Minister gazettes the levy and thus simplifies the legislative machinery.

Under the present arrangement an Order in Council has to be prepared each year and submitted to the Governor in Council. The gazettal by the Minister will streamline the procedure, without relaxing the need for ministerial control.

Another clause of the Bill gives power, not previously possessed, to cane pest and disease control boards, with the approval of the Minister, to recover by civil action amounts due to such boards for services or materials. Cane pest and disease control boards supply to cane-growers such items as clean plants from nurseries, and insecticides for insect pest control purposes. There have been instances where growers have not paid the fixed sums for such materials and the relevant boards have not had the power to recover the moneys due. The amendment proposed will rectify this position.

Finally, the clauses relating to superannuation funds will ensure that cane pest and disease control boards and the Sugar Experiment Stations Board will have power to establish, vary and support superannuation or provident schemes for the benefit of their staffs. This power, in the case of cane pest and disease control boards, will be subject to ministerial approval, and the conditions governing the schemes must be approved by the Minister.

Mr. BYRNE (Mourilyan) (12.9 p.m.): This Bill, dealing specifically with sugar experiment stations and generally with the sugar industry, is very desirable in that it makes provision for mills to be supplied with clean cane. We know that the industry is beset on many sides with the problem of diseased cane. The purpose of the Bill is to ensure that the industry gradually gets the advantage of the supply of first-class cane only. Therefore, the legislation must receive the approval of everyone associated with the industry. It is most desirable, necessary and timely. Its object is the elimination of disease. There is no doubt that we need better quality cane. To me it appears that the Bill is purely of a machinery nature and is one in respect of which the industry could take no umbrage whatsoever.

We must ensure that levies do not get out of hand. This is the first time that power has been given to the Minister to gazette levies. In my view levies are becoming so heavy that the time is not far distant when growers in the sugar industry will not be able to stand any more.

The matter of poor quality sugar has been referred to. One of the essences in the production of good quality sugar is good quality cane. Not long ago I directed a question to the Minister asking for the names of the mills which had produced poor quality sugar, and to what extent it had been produced. I hoped that the Minister might be able to name them but unfortunately he was unable to do so, although he did say that conditions affecting the production of poor quality sugar had improved considerably. In the circumstances, the mills were not slow to seize upon this opportunity to impose penalties on growers for dirty cane, over-burnt cane, delays, and so on, but many of us believe that the mills have contributed to producing poor quality sugar.

It is not my intention to deal at length with the measure before us, for it is necessary and will be appreciated, I think, by all cane-growers in Queensland. However, I should like to refer briefly to the unfortunate state of affairs following the announcement in this morning's Press that a new international sugar agreement has not been entered into. In other words, our overseas delegation has been unsuccessful. It is a very sorry state of affairs that the sugar-producing countries could not come to some understanding. Sugar is being sold at an unreasonable price, much below cost of production, yet there has been no possibility of securing an international agreement, which is so desirable. If we had been able to secure an international sugar agreement an improvement in price would have followed naturally and there would have been a great improvement in the price of sugar sold overseas.

I should like the Minister to tell me if the Bill envisages the destruction of diseased cane in areas other than cane farms. For instance, Crown land at times has stools of cane on it which, very obviously, carry disease. One can tell merely by looking at them. If the provisions of this measure do not apply to the Crown obviously all the good work which the industry does, and will do by reason of the increased powers in the Bill, will be in vain. I hope that the Minister will answer that question later. In the meantime, I reserve further comment until I hear his reply.

Hon. J. A. ROW (Hinchinbrook—Minister for Primary Industries) (12.15 p.m.), in reply: It is quite obvious that this Bill has received the support of the House. It is designed purely to streamline the present set-up of the Sugar Experiment Stations Board. The Bill will give the Board more power and, generally speaking, will improve the conditions under which members of the Bureau of

Sugar Experiment Stations and the Cane Pest and Disease Control Boards work, and it will give them a superannuation fund. It will give them power to keep under control the diseases which beset the sugar industry. The high quality of cane presently grown in Queensland is evidence of the fact that the Bureau has been successful.

In my introductory speech I gave a comprehensive outline of the improvement not only in tons of cane per acre, but also in sugar.

The hon. member for Mourilyan, who made the only other contribution to the debate, is particularly interested in this industry, as he comes from Tully. He expressed the hope that the levies would not get out of hand. The present levy of 5½d., which the growers pay to the Bureau, has existed for some time. I think it will be sufficient to enable the Bureau to carry on. As a cane-grower who pays the levy I can assure the hon. member that I shall take a personal interest in seeing that the amount is not increased drastically.

I place on record my appreciation, and the appreciation of the 8,000 Queensland growers, of the tremendous value of the work done by the Bureau. In addition to its office in Brisbane and its station at Eight Mile Plains, the Bureau has experiment stations at Meringa, Ayr, Mackay, and Bundaberg. Recently there was a field day at Bundaberg and the interest of growers and other people interested in the industry was evidenced by the fact 800 people were present. Annual field days at research stations are keenly anticipated by growers, who make use of the investigations, findings, and advice given by the Bureau's officers on varieties, types of soil, fertilisers, disease and pest controls, and other matters associated with sugar-cane production.

The quality of the sugar being manufactured this year is quite high. We were concerned about this matter last year, and the growers and millers were told that the quality of the sugar for the home-consumption and export markets must be high. We are now exporting sugar to highly competitive markets. In the case of all exports, it is the quality of the article that counts. Improvement has been made following the imposition of penalties on the mills and on the growers. Some growers consider that the penalties have been too harsh. I am not prepared to argue that matter because it is the Central Sugar Cane Prices Board which sets the penalties to be imposed on growers.

I should like to say in passing that the sugar industry receives from the Government less support than does any other industry. It is self-contained; it looks after itself. All that it receives from the State Government is a grant of £7,000 per annum towards the maintenance of the Bureau of Sugar Experiment Stations. It has its own executives and its own organisations financed solely by

growers' contributions. It depends on no Government charity, endowment, grant, or other form of assistance. In addition, the industry has contributed heavily during the last two years to the development of bulk-handling facilities.

The hon. member for Mourilyan referred to the destruction of diseased cane on Crown land. Power already exists to have such cane on abandoned land destroyed. It will be noted that clause 7 omits the word "alternate" and inserts the word "alternative", thus giving added power to control plants that could contaminate those adjacent to them. I hasten to assure the hon. member that power exists to have diseased cane on abandoned or Crown land destroyed.

I thank hon. members for their contributions, which I am quite certain will be of help to this great industry.

Motion (Mr. Row) agreed to.

COMMITTEE

(Mr. Hodges, Gympie, in the chair)

Clauses 1 to 7, both inclusive, as read, agreed to.

Bill reported, without amendment.

BRANDS ACTS AMENDMENT BILL

SECOND READING

Hon. J. A. ROW (Hinchinbrook—Minister for Primary Industries) (12.24 p.m.): I move—

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

The principal object of the Bill is to give recognition to desirable livestock practices relating to the branding and earmarking of stock, and to permit these practices. Hon. members will no doubt agree that as management practices improve, existing legislation sometimes proves rather cumbersome and restrictive in that it does not make way for the acceptance of desirable changes. Provision is made in the Bill to give recognition to certain practices that have been requested by producer organisations.

A further object of the Bill is to give wider scope for the control of registration of brands and earmarks, and to eliminate as far as possible the misuse of brands and earmarks.

The enactment of this legislation will also simplify the machinery for the registration of brands and earmarks on account of Government departments, public instrumentalities, and breed societies, and remove certain anomalies and difficulties of interpretation in the existing Act.

Much of the debate that followed my introductory speech was directed to stock stealing, compulsory branding, and the use of earmarks. In the course of the debate

hon. members introduced many questions relative to these matters, but as the activities of police officers of the Stock Investigation Squad and the impounding of cattle do not come within the ambit of the operations of my department, I shall confine my answers to matters relevant to the administration of the Brands Acts. Nevertheless, it is agreed that, just as the original Brands Act of 1872 was framed with the object of assisting in the recovery of stray and stolen stock, the prevention of cattle and horse stealing, and the detection and conviction of horse and cattle thieves, the proposed amendments should assist measurably in the prevention and detection of these crimes. It must be recognised, however, that branding and earmarking alone cannot halt the stealing or illegal use of stock. The stock-owner can assist in making the continued carrying out of such practices extremely difficult by ensuring that his animals are legibly branded and, if also earmarked, correctly earmarked.

In answer to a suggestion by the hon. member for Barcoo that branding be made compulsory, I advise the House that the Bill does not make branding compulsory but still allows the stock-owner to elect whether or not he should brand. As I pointed out in my reply at the introductory stage of the Bill, only Western Australia and the Northern Territory provide for compulsory branding. My department does, however, recommend that stock-owners take advantage of the opportunities for registering brands and earmarks and, having registered them, using them. Some dairy farmers, particularly stud breeders, elect to use a tattoo within the ear because they consider that a fire brand disfigures the animal. There are also many people who own only one cow or horse. In these cases, and in the case of a person who, for humane reasons, has an aversion to branding, compulsory branding with fire brands or chemical brands would seem to be an unnecessary imposition. Compulsory branding could possibly lead to the need to make cross-branding compulsory, and no doubt this would be opposed strenuously by persons connected with the marketing and use of hides. The hon. member for Townsville South has already made a statement that the sides of some beasts look like pakapu tickets.

The Leader of the Opposition voiced his concern that the producer was required on many occasions to furnish a great deal of statistical information. No doubt he has been relieved to find that the Bill imposes no additional obligation of this kind upon the primary producer. The requirement to submit brands returns is actually a safeguard for the registered owner because the possibility of cancellation of registration is avoided.

The hon. member for Clayfield referred to the hundreds of good brands held by firms, companies and banks, and suggested that, as many are not now in use, the disused

brands should be cancelled and made available for re-allotment. I reiterate the statement that I made at the close of the debate on the introductory stage: the Registrar has called for brands returns for this year and will also require returns to be submitted during 1966 and 1967. These returns will enable the Registrar to ascertain positively which brands are not presently in use or required for further use by the registered owner. Action can then be taken to cancel those brands.

Mr. Duggan: What period has to elapse at present?

Mr. ROW: Five years, and five years will still have to elapse before the brands are eligible for re-allotment. This is to ensure, as far as practicable, that disputes will not occur about the ownership of stock branded with re-allotted brands. As a further safeguard, administrative practice is to re-allot brands to applicants in areas other than the areas in which the brands were previously used.

It is estimated that some 20,000 disused brands will become available for re-allotment in eight or nine years' time. The Registrar assures me that there is a sufficient number of brands available for registration to satisfy the needs of prospective applicants.

Mr. Duggan: You mentioned that 20,000 brands will become available. Have you any idea how many are in operation at the present time?

Mr. ROW: No, but I could find out for the hon. gentleman—possibly 70,000.

The hon. member for Townsville South has mentioned the difficulty in interpreting brands. I feel sure that the amendments contained in this Bill will do much to ensure that brands are correctly placed on an animal. However, amendment of the Acts will not be a cure-all, as no legislation can prevent the careless or inefficient application of a brand.

The hon. member for Clayfield, in the debate on the introduction, made reference in his comments on the National Cattlemen's Association of the United States of America to the publication of details of prosecutions for stock stealing. At present, apart from information published in the Press, the Registrar of Brands is not advised of the result of any prosecution relating to stock stealing or branding or earmarking offences committed under the Criminal Code. Legal advice is that the supply of this information by police officers—who incidentally are inspectors under the Brands Acts—to the Registrar of Brands would be classed as the publication of defamatory matter and the officer passing on the information could find himself involved in court action. In order that the Registrar may be advised of these matters without the risk of court action following, amendment has been made to section 17A so that the information can be obtained from the police officer.

The hon. member for Fassifern has drawn attention to the size of cattle brands. This matter received a good deal of consideration some years ago and, in order to assist in the conservation of hides, maximum and minimum sizes of branding instruments were laid down. The varying end result according to the age at which branding is carried out was no doubt given due consideration at the time. Amendment of the Acts does not alter the permissible sizes but lays down the method to be adopted in determining the size of characters in a brand—that is, the vertical measurement. This is determined from the branding instruments themselves and not from the brand as appearing upon the animal. The method of determining the size has been set out so that there can be no argument should a person be found in possession of oversized branding instruments. With this method defined, it will be possible for positive legal action to be taken.

Both the hon. member for Fassifern and the hon. member for Burnett touched on the subject of the registration of more than one cattle earmark in one district with the same brand. A registered cattle earmark consists of one or more cuts on either or both of the ears of cattle. Present administrative practice is for no registered earmarks consisting of more than two cuts to be allotted. The Acts at present provide for the registration of only one cattle earmark in each district with a registered brand. There is an exception in the case of a stud breeder who may register up to three cattle earmarks for use with a horse and cattle brand in the one district. It has been argued that the extension of this privilege to other than stud breeders could tend to encourage stock stealing.

On close examination hon. members will see that the extension does not lend itself to malpractice any more than the present system does. There is nothing in the Act at present which limits one brand to one person. It is possible for a stock-owner to register multiple brands and register a different cattle earmark for use with each of those brands.

It would be more advantageous from a neighbour's point of view if only one brand was used with more than one earmark rather than many brands and earmarks. There is sometimes the necessity for more than one earmark, particularly in view of the need for quick identification of animals being used in complex breeding programmes.

It may not be generally appreciated that earmark districts range in size from approximately 5,000 square miles in closely settled areas to up to 52,000 square miles in the far western areas. Frequently it is found that one person owns more than one property in the one district but because of the neighbouring earmarks it is not always possible for this person to be allotted a registered earmark which is suitable for both properties. In most cases it is desirable for him to use only one brand, and amendment to the Acts

will allow him to register an earmark for use on each of the properties with his registered brand.

Provision is made in the amendment that in all cases where application is made for registration of more than one earmark in the one district with the one brand the Registrar must be satisfied that the allotment of the additional earmark or earmarks is justified. It must be borne in mind that just as all stud breeders did not avail themselves of the existing concession it is likely that but few stock-owners will seek to take advantage of this extended concession. I have confidence in the Registrar, Mr. Clarke, that he will see there is no abuse in the registration of additional earmarks.

The hon. member for Belmont in the course of the debate made mention of the illegal practice of earmarking without first branding. Every effort is being made by inspectors to advise stock-owners that not only is this practice illegal but also that an earmark on its own is not *prima-facie* evidence of ownership.

Mr. DUGGAN (Toowoomba West—Leader of the Opposition) (12.38 p.m.): I have often remarked to my colleagues on this side of the House that when you are in Opposition it is extraordinary the range of subjects that come before you for examination. Not having the benefit of ready access to members of the Public Service to provide us with information on these matters, I would be masquerading under false colours if I attempted to indicate that I was an authority on the subject of brands. It is a matter of some wonder to me that those responsible for the design and registration of brands have been able to allot 70,000 different brands throughout the State.

I am rather amazed at the dexterity with which people are able to quickly determine the ownership of animals. This is attributable no doubt to the very excellent system of recording registrations over the years, and the obvious knowledge, experience and skill of those responsible for the administration of this Act. While I was somewhat amazed that the number was 70,000 I was equally amazed at the rapid facility with which, from a state of ignorance, this information was more or less collected out of the air in a matter of about one-tenth of a second. It says much for those who help the Minister that they had this information so readily available.

As I said when we were dealing with the Tobacco Industry Protection Bill, we have some members on this side who represent pastoral areas. They have some knowledge of the need for effective legislation covering the branding of animals. It is tremendously important that we have such a system because, as was mentioned during the debate, our beef-cattle population is almost 50 per cent. of the Australian total, our dairy-cattle population is something over 20 per cent. of the

Australian total, and our sheep population is also quite a considerable percentage of the total. It is therefore incumbent on the authorities to see that every effective step is taken to provide for the positive identification of ownership of animals.

With the present high prices for stock, it is true that in areas which are not badly ravaged by drought there is a temptation at times for cattle to be taken from their rightful owners. This imposes quite a heavy responsibility on the Stock Investigation Squad in the Police Force to ensure that cattle stealing is kept to a minimum and, when complaints are made and evidence is obtained, to ensure that prosecutions are launched.

I pay a tribute to those responsible for the administration of this legislation, which contains many matters of detail. The committee on this side of the House examined the amending Bill fully, clause by clause. Apart from one or two private reservations about the merits and demerits of compulsory branding of cattle, as mentioned by the hon. member for Barcoo, there is unanimity of opinion in our committee on accepting the proposals.

The Minister has advanced an interesting and quite persuasive defence for the failure to implement a system of compulsory branding in Queensland. Certainly, as the Minister said, there are many people who for various reasons would not think it desirable to go to the expense and trouble of having a brand registered when they keep only one or two cows for domestic purposes. We would impose a hardship on them by insisting on compulsory branding.

There are also the other matters of cross-branding, disfiguration and certain other factors which have to be taken into account by the owners of stock, and I suppose we should respect their wishes to some degree. If there is an element of risk of theft involved they must balance up their feelings on this matter with the calculated risk of losing unbranded animals. On the balance, it may be desirable to keep to the present practice of voluntary branding of stock, at the same time giving publicity from time to time to the advantages which accrue to owners from branding and the registration of brands.

I mentioned that the various clauses are quite extensive in character. They provide for many contingencies. For instance, there is provision for an increase in the penalty from £50 to £200. That seems quite a substantial penalty, but when it is remembered that the £50 penalty was initially imposed in 1872 it cannot be said, taking into account the depreciation in money values in the intervening period of almost 100 years, that the £200 penalty provided in the Bill is unreasonably high. Stock stealing is a serious offence, therefore it is not unreasonable to take cognisance of the increase in the value of stock and, in addition, the depreciation of money values generally.

I do not wish to weary the House. There seems to be a slight disinclination for a lengthy debate on the Bills we are debating this morning. They do not lend themselves to controversy or disputation. While I like to see Parliament gainfully employed, I do not believe in talking for talking's sake, and I do not think, from my own point of view, that I can offer anything constructive in relation to the acceptance or rejection of this measure. The reasons for it have been given virtually seriatim and they have been examined. We believe, taking into account all the factors involved and the reasons advanced by the Minister, that the provisions appear to be reasonable and acceptable. It is in that spirit that I wish to indicate the attitude of the A.L.P. to the Bill.

Mr. MURRAY (Clayfield) (12.44 p.m.): Like the Leader of the Opposition, it is with a somewhat apologetic air that I enter this debate. I do not wish to weary the House. I agree that, generally speaking, this is a fairly straightforward measure. I suggest to the Leader of the Opposition, if he has not already done so, that he will find it extremely interesting to look at the Brands Book. I am not sure whether the hon. gentleman has done so.

Mr. Duggan: I have, but not recently.

Mr. MURRAY: It is an extremely interesting and educational document, and it gives some indication of the difficulties involved in branding. I suggest that the hon. gentleman have a look at it and at the system of registration in the relatively small offices where that work is carried out, as it would explain a good deal to him.

I visited the department this morning and found the officers most helpful in the matters on which I wanted clarification. Having had a look at the Brands Book and discovering that hundreds of brands were owned by the Bank of New South Wales—I suspect other institutions could be in the same position—I went to see what the story was as I felt that these brands had gone out of circulation. The officers of the department explained to me that the bank had required the brands to be lodged as security, so that only a minute percentage of them would actually be out of circulation. It seemed to me that it would have been advantageous to have some of the clearer brands, which are the older brands, put back into circulation because of the difficulty being experienced in the choice of a clear or fool-proof brand today as so many brands have been taken up.

One of the principal aims of the Bill is the protection of property. It is amazing how little public interest is aroused by cases of stock-stealing, and how difficult it is to prosecute offenders. Even if a case dealt with only a few head of cattle, a large sum of money would be involved. On the other hand, if a person broke and entered a building in Brisbane, or any other place, and

stole something valued at £20 or £30, quite a witch-hunt would develop—and properly so. Nevertheless, sometimes large numbers of stock are stolen, valued at large sums of money, and it is extremely difficult to trace them, largely because of a lack of co-operation on the part of people who could help the Stock Investigation Squad but refuse to. I agree broadly with the Leader of the Opposition that it is a long time since the penalties have been increased. They should be kept at a high level in order to be an effective deterrent.

I believe that almost all property-owners and stock-owners will brand whenever they can. Sometimes one finds a pet animal around the farm which is unbranded because, for some sentimental reason, the children say, "Please, Daddy, don't brand it, don't hurt it." Compulsory branding would be a disadvantage where large areas are involved and where stock are uncontrolled. I know of a case in which I had an interest. In the Northern Territory we had about 15,000 head of cattle. We would not know exactly how many we had because virtually none were branded, and there were no boundary fences. No cattle were branded, because all the stock mustered at the several mustering camps during the year would have had to be thrown and tied. They were watched at night, and those mobs, except for a few head let go for various purposes, were then taken off to market. Very little of that sort of thing goes on now. Gradually herds are coming under control, although there are still many properties in the Gulf Country and the Peninsula where it is virtually impossible to brand, and where compulsory branding would not be desirable.

I believe that people will brand wherever they can for the normal protection of their property, and to cause less confusion. There are still unfenced properties in the Peninsula and other areas, and mustering camps are attended by people from the adjoining properties who try to sort out their cattle. This mainly concerns calves or yearlings, or "mickies", as they are usually called. They are sorted out by the people from the adjoining properties. Of course, a lot of roguery goes on, and the old saying, "If you want to eat your own beef, go and visit your neighbour", still applies in many areas. It is a sort of popular introduction to dinner-time.

Mr. Duggan: A gentleman's agreement?

Mr. MURRAY: A sort of gentleman's agreement, yes. The fact remains that to some extent it is still almost considered honourable to kill your neighbour's beast and to find out from him how yours are killing. That practice is, however, decreasing as properties in the Far Outback are coming more under control.

One thing that worries me a little is the enforced use of a dual branding-iron for brands containing several letters or marks, or whatever they are called. Branding with

double irons can be done satisfactorily when the stock are under tight control, such as calves in a branding cradle in which they cannot move about too much, or adult stock well held in a race, or under some restraint.

Mr. Row: It is only the horizontal letter.

Mr. MURRAY: Quite so. I am sure that there will be some properties where, because the means of applying this type of restraint does not exist, the preference would be to carry on for the time being with single units. A single iron, if placed on a beast correctly, gives much better control of the brand. It is very difficult to place correctly a brand containing several letters when the beast is not under sufficient restraint to prevent movement. It will be found that one will be clear, but only portion of another.

Mr. Newton: Some would use three separate brands.

Mr. MURRAY: It is the usual thing on most properties to have three separate irons. Our brand was 2ZK, and we used separate branding irons and went as carefully as we could. However, mistakes are made, which is one of the reasons why the Minister and his departmental officers want this provision introduced. Where there are these funny letters on their side, mistakes can easily be made if they are not contained on a dual brand. Mistakes will be made, anyway. If men are in a hurry or careless, brands can be placed in the wrong way. As the Minister knows, there will be fewer mistakes by having them on the one brand. However, there may be many more indistinct brands, and distinctness of the brand is what we are attempting to achieve. I make that point because some people may wish to continue using separate irons, and I hope that the provision relative to the placing of letters in a certain series on dual irons will not be enforced too strictly. The brand is important because ears can be damaged in all sorts of ways, and I agree with what the Minister said on this subject.

On the general question of the stealing of stock and the detection of stolen stock, I say to the Minister once again that I believe the industry should be asked to endeavour to find ways of giving more assistance in the detection of stolen stock. If he consults with the United Graziers' Association and other organisations representing the industry, and his colleague the Minister in charge of Police, he may well find that there is some way in which they can assist. The Stock Investigation Squad is a small one, but it could grow to a large one. In my opinion, its work could be made much more effective if the system used in the United States of America was introduced. In that country, officers of the Cattlemen's Association are equipped with a station-wagon, in which they carry all their gear, and a small trailer, in which they carry a horse. They move round the country from sale to sale, and I think they

have the right to inspect stock in transit, too. They remain in certain broad areas and are smart stockmen who are familiar with brands. They can quickly detect anything wrong in a saleyard or when a shady deal is in progress, and they then report to the proper authorities. Such a scheme could well be introduced in Queensland in an endeavour to eradicate, or at least reduce, stock stealing, which is rampant in many areas of the State. As I mentioned at the introductory stage, the Minister is well aware of this situation.

Mr. Chinchin interjected.

Mr. MURRAY: I believe that the people concerned with stock should pay for this service. I do not think it is necessary for the State to do it. If the industry wants it, I think it is something that the industry itself could supply in co-operation with the State. It would be a very progressive move indeed.

I support the Bill, but I thought I should make these comments on it.

Motion (Mr. Row) agreed to.

[Sitting suspended from 1 to 2.15 p.m.]

COMMITTEE

(The Chairman of Committees, Mr. Hooper, Greenslopes, in the chair)

Clauses 1 to 23, both inclusive, as read, agreed to.

Bill reported, without amendment.

STOCK ACTS AMENDMENT BILL

SECOND READING

Hon. J. A. ROW (Hinchinbrook—Minister for Primary Industries) (2.17 p.m.): I move—

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

As I indicated in my introductory speech, the principal objects of the Bill are—

To strengthen the State's defences against the spread of disease among our flocks and herds;

To define more clearly the authority of the Minister to enter into agreements with private veterinary surgeons for the carrying out of veterinary services on behalf of the Department of Primary Industries;

To bring the provisions of the Act relating to assessments on milk and cream into line with modern industry practice;

To set out clearly the purposes for which moneys from the compensation fund may be used.

To bring pet shops under the supervision and control of the Department of Primary Industries; and

To remedy certain defects in the law relating to permits and waybills for travelling stock.

The State's defences against the spread of animal diseases are being strengthened by the insertion in the Acts of a list of notifiable diseases. I think all hon. members will agree that prompt notification of the appearance of disease—especially an exotic disease—is essential if it is to be brought under control or eradicated in the quickest possible time.)

With regard to the question of agreements with the Minister and private veterinary surgeons, this is nothing new. In fact, ever since the commencement of the tuberculosis eradication project in 1944 the Minister has been authorised to appoint approved veterinary surgeons for the carrying out of tuberculin testing of dairy cattle. Since 1959 he has also been authorised to enter into agreements with these approved veterinary surgeons on the question of mileage fees charged by them in providing veterinary services—other than tuberculin testing—to dairy farmers, who voluntarily contribute additional assessments for that purpose.

As I indicated during the introductory debate, mileage schemes of this nature are now operating successfully in the Murgon, Kingaroy, Nanango, and Gympie districts. As time goes on, I have no doubt that this form of voluntary assessment scheme will be extended to a greater number of districts and embrace a wider range of veterinary services.

There is no question of the department imposing any project for such veterinary services on dairy farmers; in fact, the opposite is the case, as the department acts only at the specific request of the group of producers concerned.

The special assessments levied for these projects are subsidised by the Government at the rate of 10s. in the £1. This is a factor which I am certain progressive dairy farmers duly appreciate.

The only proposed extension of the existing ministerial authority relating to agreements with veterinary surgeons is for the purpose of enabling the Minister to implement a project, already approved by the Government in principle, for encouraging veterinarians to set up in practice in the more remote areas of the State—in areas where there is virtually no commercial production of milk or cream. At this juncture I do not intend to say any more on the subject as I will be dealing with it in greater detail later on when I come to the points raised during the introductory debate by the Leader of the Opposition.

So far as the amendment relating to assessments on milk and cream is concerned, I need only say that this is mainly for the purpose of bringing the Act into conformity with the latest industry practice whereby some factories now pay suppliers on the amount of butter fat in their cream rather than on the amount of butter actually manufactured therefrom.

At the same time the Brisbane Milk Board, at its request, is being relieved of the responsibility for collecting any assessments

on milk supplied to the city of Brisbane, and all such assessments are being made payable in future direct to the Department of Primary Industries.

I wish to make it quite clear to hon. members that there is no change in the basic rates of assessments that have been levied on milk and cream for years. These are one-tenth or one-twentieth of a penny per gallon of milk and one-fifth or one-tenth of a penny per pound of butter depending on the frequency with which tuberculin tests are carried out. In those areas where a veterinary mileage scheme is operating these assessments are increased to one-tenth and one-fifth of a penny respectively.

All assessments are paid into the compensation fund, and the amendment relating to this fund sets out the various purposes for which moneys in the fund may be used. This is mainly with the object of indicating clearly the relationship of such payments to the types of veterinary services rendered to dairy farmers by approved veterinary surgeons, for instance, tuberculin testing and mileage fees. The only new provision is for the purpose of enabling the fund to be used in the development of artificial insemination of dairy cattle owned by contributors to the fund.

With regard to the amendment concerning pet shops, its main object is to guard against the spread of disease—for instance, distemper or hepatitis—from such premises, and to provide that animals kept therein receive adequate veterinary care and treatment if and when required.

Over the years certain procedures have developed in respect of the issuing of permits for travelling stock which have been aimed at making the Act's provisions in this regard less irksome to stock-owners. These procedures include the issuing of permits for stock travelling between neighbouring holdings for watering or feeding purposes. These permits have usually been issued for periods of three months, or even longer, and there is some doubt as to whether stock inspectors are authorised to issue such permits as the Acts stand at present. The amendment is for the purpose of ratifying such procedures and is for the benefit and convenience of stock-owners generally.

Much of the introductory debate centred about the engagement of private veterinarians to undertake work on behalf of the department of Primary Industries; the possible introduction of exotic diseases into Australia and the operation of the Commonwealth quarantine service in that regard; the cattle tick problem in Queensland; and the effect on the dairying industry of the amendments relating to assessments on milk and cream.

Some of the matters raised bore little or no relation to the contents of the Bill, while others revealed a misinterpretation on the part of some hon. members of its objects. That is understandable because they had not seen the Bill. However, as some of the questions asked touched upon important

aspects of livestock raising in this State, I shall do my best to answer them as fully as time will permit and their relative importance warrants.

The Leader of the Opposition said he was distressed to hear that the Department of Primary Industries was obliged to enter into arrangements with private veterinarians to carry out work on its behalf. He also expressed the opinion that the department should provide more veterinary fellowships so that it could fulfil its obligations to the livestock industries through its own staff. I can only infer from these remarks that the Leader of the Opposition is unaware that, for the past 20 years, the department has relied mainly upon the services of approved veterinary surgeons for the tuberculin testing of dairy cattle under the tuberculosis eradication project. At the present time 49 approved veterinary surgeons are employed part-time on this project.

The system of appointing approved veterinary surgeons to do this work has served a dual purpose. Firstly, it encouraged young veterinarians to set up in country districts by providing them with a steady basic income from testing fees upon which they could build a practice. In this way farmers were assured of the services of a veterinary surgeon to attend individual animals when affected by sickness or injury. Secondly, it released departmental veterinary officers from routine testing so that they could devote all their time and energies to general disease control and prevention through investigatory and advisory action. The two are really complementary, and neither the Government veterinary officer nor the private practitioner can hope to provide a complete service on his own.

I would be the first to admit that my department could do with more veterinarians, but, likewise, it could do with more agricultural scientists, chemists, economists, &c. The needs of all primary industries—animal and agricultural—must be served to the utmost limits of the department's budget. In this regard I should have thought it unnecessary to remind the Leader of the Opposition, a former Minister of the Crown, that all Government departments—like good housekeepers—must do the best they can with the money available to them. Knowing the value of veterinary surgeons to the livestock industries, the department is doing its best to employ as many as possible itself while at the same time assisting others to set up in private practice in country areas.

At the present time the department has on its payroll 54 qualified veterinary surgeons. In addition to these, 14 agricultural scientists and 20 science graduates are engaged full-time on work relating to the livestock industries. These are employed mainly in the animal husbandry branches, the Animal Research Institute at Yeerongpilly and the Animal Health Station at Oonoonba.

So far as veterinary scholarships are concerned, the department at present is supporting 31 scholarship holders at the University of Queensland. These are spread over the five-year course as follows—

	No. of students
First year	5
Second year	6
Third year	8
Fourth year	3
Fifth year	9

The system of operation of the Commonwealth Quarantine Service—particularly with regard to the possible introduction of exotic diseases into Australia—was raised by the Leader of the Opposition and the hon. members for Clayfield and Townsville South. They expressed admiration for the quarantine services and paid tribute to the fact that they had been so successful in keeping Australia free from serious outbreaks of exotic diseases.

However, fear was expressed by two of the hon. members that perhaps more could be done by way of inspecting and treating the footwear and clothing of persons entering Australia from overseas. I can assure hon. members that this aspect of quarantine inspection has not escaped the attention of the authorities. Of late, in cases where persons entering Australia have had contact or association with livestock in countries where foot-and-mouth disease exists, their footwear and clothing have been treated appropriately upon arrival.

At this juncture, perhaps I should say a word about the general set-up of the quarantine service. The overall control of the service rests with the Commonwealth Department of Health and all operations are carried out under Commonwealth legislation. So far as animals and animal diseases are concerned, the chief veterinary officer in each State acts as an agent for the Commonwealth.

The Leader of the Opposition suggested that in my introductory speech I "drew the long bow" about foot-and-mouth disease and rabies in an endeavour to shock the House into accepting the Bill. I can assure the hon. gentleman that nothing was further from my thoughts. Nevertheless, I must say that rabies ranks as one of the most feared of all diseases of animals because of its horrifying implications for humans.

Foot-and-mouth disease is generally regarded as being the disease most likely to effect an entry into Australia and at the same time the one calculated to have the most serious economic consequences.

Contrary to the hon. gentleman's belief, both of the diseases I mentioned have occurred in Australia before. Foot-and-mouth disease occurred in Victoria in 1872, and rabies in Tasmania in 1867. In the Tasmanian incident a child died as the result of being bitten by a rabid dog. Further, an outbreak of rinderpest occurred in Western Australia in 1923.

Of course, the quarantine services were not so highly organised in the early days so that we need not wonder how such diseases could occasionally find their way into the country. Fortunately, livestock populations were much smaller and more concentrated in those days and this assisted in the early diagnosis and eradication of disease. It would be too much to hope that such outbreaks occurring today among our larger and more widely scattered livestock populations could be diagnosed and eradicated so quickly. In the event of an exotic disease entering any State of the Commonwealth today, that State would be primarily responsible for its containment and eradication. However, all the other States and the Commonwealth would assist the State concerned to the best of their abilities.

Agreement was reached a number of years ago by the Commonwealth and States on a formula for contributions to a national fund to fight foot-and-mouth disease should it ever occur. For the purpose of providing the necessary legislative machinery to carry the agreement into effect, the Queensland Parliament in 1958 passed the Foot and Mouth Disease Expenses and Compensation Fund Act. Like all other hon. members, I trust we may never have occasion to use the provisions of that Act, but we must maintain a realistic attitude to the problem and give every assistance and support to the operation of the quarantine service.

The cattle tick also was the subject of reference by the Leader of the Opposition and the hon. members for Clayfield and Townsville South. The hon. member for Townsville South waxed quite eloquent on the subject, but revealed only a partial knowledge of what is already established about the cattle tick and what is being done to control it. When discussing the dipping of cattle he said that "from an economical point of view it might have been better in the first place to let the cattle die." I cannot conceive that any practical grazer who has come to grips with the tick problem would agree with such a defeatist attitude.

Further, the hon. member stated that calves were not born with immunity to tick fever but "by some mysterious process" acquired immunity while suckling their mothers. The facts of the matter, as revealed by experimental work carried out by officers of my department, are that calves born of immune mothers become immune as a result of suckling and taking in antibodies present in the colostrum or first milk. The immunity gained in this way lasts only about six weeks unless reinforced by actual tick infestation. On the other hand, calves born to non-immune mothers gain no immunity as a result of suckling and are fully susceptible to tick fever. These susceptible calves gain immunity under natural conditions by becoming infested with ticks bearing the red-water organisms and surviving the initial infection.

The hon. member went on to say that so far as he knew nothing had been done to grapple with the problem of immunising cattle against ticks by some form of inoculation. Actually, some research has been done with this object in view, so far without success, but the position is not without hope. So far as protection against tick fever is concerned, the work of preparing more effective vaccines has gone on all the time, and only recently the research institute at Yeerongpilly released an improved vaccine which has given very satisfactory results in field use. It contains a more standardised number of organisms per dose than earlier vaccines, and this among other things has given the new vaccine greater reliability.

So far as the treatment of tick fever is concerned, there are on the market a number of drugs which are quite effective for this purpose, and graziers who understand the problem usually keep supplies of these on hand.

Complete eradication of the tick presents a very different problem, as I said in my introductory speech. Much was made of the fact that the cattle tick was eliminated from a large area in the United States, and it was argued that similar action should be taken in Australia. However, the ticks in these two countries are not identical and there are still cattle ticks in the southern part of Florida where stock-owners, like those in Queensland, have learnt to live with them.

There is a great difference between climatic conditions in Texas and those in much of the tick-infected parts of Australia. Houston in Texas, for instance, is situated in about the same latitude as Grafton in New South Wales, and cattle ticks extend into the tropical areas of North Queensland and the Northern Territory. An eradication programme carried out in New South Wales was only partly successful, and it appears that we require to know much more about the tick and its habits before we embark upon what would be a very costly and disruptive programme. We must not, like the hon. member, decry the scientist but should encourage him to work with the progressive graziers in solving the cattle-tick problem.

The hon. member for Barcoo discussed the voluntary assessments levied for subsidised veterinary mileage schemes and sought information on the rate per mile and average mileage allotments under such schemes. As I have already indicated, these projects are not imposed upon dairy farmers by the department but result from specific requests from groups of farmers. Doubtless there are some producers in each of the four groups now operating who might not favour a mileage scheme, but I can assure the hon. member that the department does not act till it is satisfied that a large majority of the dairy farmers concerned have expressed themselves in favour of the scheme. Surely this is borne out by the fact that there are at present only four such schemes operating in Queensland. The approved veterinary surgeons concerned receive 1s. 6d. a mile

for mileage travelled by them in treating farm animals owned by contributors. The annual limit of mileage in each instance is 20,000, and each of the four schemes is self-supporting financially.

The hon. member for Barcoo also raised the question of tuberculosis in beef cattle and suggested that it was time a tuberculin-testing programme was introduced for beef cattle. This is a matter that is currently receiving attention from the Pastoral Advisory Committee, which comprises representatives of the pastoral industries in Queensland and the Department of Primary Industries. One of the greatest drawbacks to the introduction of a tuberculin-testing scheme for beef cattle is the shortage of veterinarians to undertake testing. However, quite a number of individual owners of beef herds now have their cattle tested at their own expense, and it is hoped to evolve a plan for more general testing in the near future.

On the question of cattle ticks, the hon. member asked what progress was being made at Glenlogan. This property is situated on the Logan River near Jimboomba, and is being developed by the Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation for research into cattle ticks. I understand that the work carried out there to date has been mainly developmental and that research work will begin in earnest next year.

The hon. member for Port Curtis discussed the risk of the introduction of disease into Australia in ships' garbage. He asked the Treasurer to bring down legislation under the Harbours Act to provide for the installation of up-to-date incinerators and disposal units at the various ports under the control of port authorities.

Although this is a matter for the Treasurer, I do not think it will be out of place for me to make a few remarks on it. The subject has been discussed by the chief quarantine officers of all States and representatives of the Commonwealth Quarantine Service at the biennial conference of Commonwealth and State veterinarians. It has also been discussed by the Australian Agricultural Council. The gravity of the situation has been recognised by all concerned, but there has been disagreement on the question of who is responsible for ensuring the safe disposal of garbage from overseas vessels—the Commonwealth, or the States. I am happy to be able to say, therefore, that it is confidently expected that important developments will take place in the near future. These will relate to the disposal of garbage not only from overseas ships but also from aircraft.

The hon. member for Clayfield asked what was being done to control vibriosis in Queensland. This reproductive disease is fairly widespread among our cattle. Treatment is difficult and is of rather doubtful value. However, the disease is self-limiting—that is, it tends to die out as cattle develop immunity to it. As a result of research work here

and overseas a commercial vaccine is now available, and my department will collaborate with the manufacturers in a testing programme to prove the efficacy of the vaccine prior to its release for general use. It is hoped that by this means the incidence of the disease and its economic significance will be very greatly reduced.

Mr. DUGGAN (Toowoomba West—Leader of the Opposition) (2.41 p.m.): It is obvious that the Minister's speech was prepared prior to the discussion that took place on the Bills that were before the House earlier today. Psychology is a very interesting subject, and a very baffling one. I should have thought, in view of the almost lyrical phrases used by all hon. members who took part in those debates and their warm co-operation, that the Minister would have been a little more generous in criticising the remarks made by members on both sides of the House at the introductory stage of this Bill.

He began his speech by saying that an examination of the contributions of hon. members disclosed either that the matters raised had no relevancy to the Bill or that the arguments used were based on false premises. He then gently, but nevertheless strongly, rebuked several of us who had had the temerity to make certain points. In particular, of course, he reminded me of the nostalgic fact that I was once a Minister of the Crown and had had some responsibility for seeing that money was expended wisely.

If he had not been in a mood to chastise hon. members on this side of the Chamber I think we probably would have had a little less to say, because I am conscious, as every member of this House should be, of the need to allocate Government funds carefully and ensure that they are spread over the widest possible field. That was precisely the reason why I asked whether it would be possible to examine a proposal to attract more permanent veterinarians to the Public Service to meet the requirements of the Department of Primary Industries. I was told that this practice has been followed for 20 years, and that it is very wise to provide the opportunity for a number of people to establish themselves and, by carrying out these so-called services in the country, get a basic income that will enable them to remain in country areas. The fact that the demands made upon them by the Department of Primary Industries ensures that they receive a basic income indicates the need for a full-time appointment.

However, there is a tendency for Governments and municipalities to engage consultants—architects, engineers, and others—whose fees are often very much higher than the salary that would be needed to employ a full-time specialist. Engineers usually perform at least part of their extra duties in the council's time because the road construction project or other project on which they are working is in its own area.

The Minister says that is not feasible because if we have full-time officers doing so-called routine testing there is a greater demand on the departmental officers engaged in research work. I suppose much of this specialist work is repetitive in character. That applies to any specialisation. A teacher's work is somewhat routine; a dentist's work is very much routine. The filling of cavities and the making of dentures is very much a routine that continues the whole time. After all, it is important. If the argument is that routine responsibility will be thrown on private veterinarians, then it follows that they will have less time for the problems that confront the areas in which they may have established themselves in practice. If all a veterinarian's time is taken up in routine matters he cannot make a contribution to the problems of his area, and no doubt there are many problems which may be peculiar to particular areas of the State. However, my main point is that it is more economic, in Government departments generally, to attract to full-time positions men who can carry out these tasks.

It obviously would be foolish to fly a veterinarian from departmental headquarters in Brisbane to Winton or some such place if there was someone there who could do this work. But I am quite certain that in a general programme of work undertaken by these departments arrangements are made in such a way that an economical survey or programme of work would be drawn up which would enable these veterinarians to be fully occupied.

Mr. Hughes: Don't you think that if your scheme was carried right through the Public Service it would tend towards a top-heavy Public Service?

Mr. DUGGAN: No, I think it would have the reverse effect. By the time you co-opted all these people and attended to their vouchers and did all the other necessary things, a few more people would have to be employed in the department. I do not think it would have that effect at all, unless you have a certain number of veterinarians here and put a certain number in charge of them, and so on, following Parkinson's theory, which sometimes produces an economic or political Parkinson's disease.

On the other point made, there is uniformity between the hon. member for Clayfield and myself. I noticed that the Minister did not keep on referring to the fact that we both raised identical matters for investigation.

Mr. Murray: I feel deeply honoured.

Mr. DUGGAN: Apparently the hon. member for Clayfield is finding a little more harmony with this side of the House than he finds with some other section. However, I do not want to disturb the

harmony by introducing that subject. I suggest to the Minister that the point raised is deserving of some consideration.

As was evident from earlier Bills introduced by the Minister, this department, by and large, is an easy one to administer.

Mr. Row: Who told you that?

Mr. DUGGAN: Well, generally speaking. My mind goes back over many years of successive Ministers in charge of this portfolio. This is a department that provides services to primary producers and its aim is to try to inveigle from successive Treasurers money to pay for more research work and to provide additional services to primary producers. From them, some appreciation flows back to the Minister. There have been occasions when we have had Ministers like Mr. Bulcock, who had definite theories on the particular type of pig that should be produced, which theories were very hotly contested by those engaged in the industry. This brought forth some adverse publicity. But, generally speaking, it is a fairly easy-going department and one does not find the criticism being levelled at the Department of Primary Industries that is directed at other departments from time to time.

Generally speaking, I think it is a very rewarding department. Probably it is staffed by a bigger percentage of specialist officers than any other department. Very often through their specialities these officers can make a very positive contribution, but it is not always easy to get a man who is extremely knowledgeable in his speciality and who also possesses an administrative capacity. It is difficult to get men with these combined qualifications. You can get a good administrator who is not a specialist, and you can get a specialist who is not a good administrator. I think it can be said without serious argument that generally speaking the Department of Primary Industries runs along fairly smooth lines until, as the hon. member for Aspley interjected a little while ago, the need arises for the imposition of a tax on some section of the farming community, when resentment is expressed by those upon whose shoulders the burden falls.

The Bill is designed to produce a certain result. Firstly, it deals with pleuropneumonia. It is gratifying to learn that the steps taken throughout Australia have resulted in a diminution of the incidence of this disease, and it seems that in the foreseeable future we will be able to say that this problem has been "licked". It is good to know that we have made these important advances in this direction, but we still seem to be confronted with problems that are rather difficult to solve because of the cattle tick. The Minister suggested that it was costing the industry £10,000,000 a year. That is a great deal of money lost to the cattle industry because of the incidence of the cattle tick. It is unquestionably true

that it could be controlled, but whether it could be controlled economically is another point.

In closely settled areas there can be stringent dipping regulations and closer surveillance over the movement of stock, which perhaps might not only control but eradicate this pest. But because of our vast area and the way cattle are scattered on pastoral holdings it is tremendously difficult and costly to introduce effective control measures. I can only express the hope that sooner or later somebody will come up with an answer to this problem.

The other matters the Minister referred to seem to be straightforward proposals. He mentioned the payment of compensation and the bases of assessment of certain levies imposed on suppliers of cream to butter factories. There are currently some differential methods operating in the industry. If there can be some uniform basis of assessment it seems to be a sensible provision, and certainly there will be no serious quarrel with the proposal.

The Minister mentioned the control of pet shops, and so on. I suppose that that is something the Minister is very anxious to accomplish so that when he is invited on some occasion to make a speech by the Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals he can say what the Government is doing to ensure great happiness to little children, and that sort of thing. I do not know that this proposal has any tremendous economic significance but if there is evidence of the need for this amendment and the Act has been tidied up, no-one would quarrel at the decision to ask for authority to do so.

On the question of carcasses, it seems obvious that more appropriate steps should be taken than have been available to the Government previously. We all have lively recollections of the swine fever outbreak in New South Wales and the economic disaster that occurred in the pig industry in that State at that time. We know the effect that it had on pig-meat supplies in Queensland. Reference to these matters has a psychological effect and deters people from buying in the belief that, with swine fever, there might be a risk involved in buying pork because it may be contaminated in some way.

I have left until last what I think may be one of the most interesting observations. During my time in Opposition I think this is the first speech I have heard by a Minister in which Labour Governments of the past have not been blamed for something. I refer now to foot-and-mouth disease and rabies. I think the last outbreak of foot-and-mouth disease was in 1872, and the last outbreak of rabies was in 1867. These are things in respect of which the Minister could not point to past Labour Governments and say that they were the result of inept administration. There is a pressure from internal events that compels Government

spokesmen to tell the truth about these matters in the hope that it may produce some goodwill in the light of the projected three-cornered contests. In the event of the abolition of preferential voting it may be a good thing to create the proper atmosphere. A good politician takes care to make a good impression as he does not know where he is likely to land.

In the main, the amendments are largely machinery in nature. The need for them has been brought to the Minister's notice by his departmental officers as a result of their observations and experience. They should help this industry, which is of tremendous economic significance to Queensland. As I said this morning, no-one can be other than impressed with the need to take all possible steps in these times of difficulty to ensure that we get the best possible results from the use of our land and what it produces. If we take effective action to reduce losses, thus ensuring greater returns, this will be reflected in greater earnings overseas which, in turn, will create greater spending power, with a very desirable overall effect.

We have examined the provisions of the Bill and we believe that they are necessary. For that reason, I indicate to the Minister that we have no desire to oppose the Bill either at the second-reading stage or when the clauses come before us in Committee.

Mr. HUGHES (Kurilpa) (2.53 p.m.): I have a few very brief observations to make on this measure. It may be somewhat mundane to speak about the breeding of small birds and to deal with the aspects of the Bill concerned with pet shops. This matter has been skirted around somewhat by those who have far more knowledge than I of stock, the incidence of disease and the control of certain diseases in stock, the movement of stock, and so on.

I pay a tribute to the Leader of the Opposition and the hon. member for Clayfield for their versatility of presentation. Not for a moment would I pit my knowledge or wits against them on those matters. However I have been approached by two persons about certain provisions in the Bill relating to pet shops and how they will be affected. We must be careful not to override the privileges of citizens, or regiment them with controls. The provisions in the Bill concerning this matter must be policed with common sense and discretion.

I believe that fish and game inspectors should be understanding in their approach to people who have made the breeding of birds their life's work. I am informed that unfair treatment has been meted out to people who keep birds.

Mr. Row: Birds come under the provisions of the Fauna Conservation Act.

Mr. HUGHES: Yes, but I am speaking about the provision in this Bill dealing with pet shops. There must be a common-sense and realistic approach to the adoption and policing of the provisions in this Bill in

that regard. No person who keeps birds or animals in a cage is necessarily sadistic. Most people derive a good deal of comfort and solace from their pets and lavish great affection on them. One matter raised with me was the prohibition that might be placed on the importation of birds and small domestic animals particularly for breeding purposes. Through you, Mr. Speaker, I ask the Minister to enlighten me of the quarantine and other conditions that will be enforced.

Mr. Row: As I said, native birds come under the Fauna Conservation Act.

Mr. HUGHES: Then they will not be affected by the provisions of this Bill. That answers many questions which I could canvass.

I assume that all provisions of the Bill which deal with domestic pets—not only those in regard to cruelty—will be policed carefully. I do not say that birds or pets should be caged, but it is necessary to cage them for the purpose of selling or exchanging them in pet shops. I hope that in the policing of the provisions of the Bill a common-sense view, rather than a harsh or bureaucratic one, will be taken.

Mr. MURRAY (Clayfield) (3.3 p.m.): I assure the Leader of the Opposition that he can always look forward to my support of or agreement with any matter that he originates or any matter introduced by a Minister if it is for the benefit of the State. It is indeed pleasing that the measures put forward by the Minister have been accepted by hon. members. There is no doubt that the broad principles and details of the Bill are desirable, and I support them.

Only a few years ago it was claimed that there was one veterinarian for every 1,500 sheep properties. I am not sure whether that figure is accurate, but it sounds startling when put that way. I do not know what happens when we relate it to cattle, sheep, and dairy farms, but one thing is certain: we are short of veterinary officers.

The number of students quoted by the Minister is alarmingly low. I have always believed—this theory has been expounded by other people—that we should be taking more positive steps to increase the number of veterinary students.

Mr. Duggan: I think I saw recently that there were about 45 vacancies throughout Australia.

Mr. MURRAY: Yes. It is well known that many veterinarians find the cat-and-dog trade in the cities very financially and socially profitable, and this draws a lot of them from pastoral areas. I know that the Minister and the officers of his department are aware of the problem. What is to be done about it? There must be an answer. Somehow or other it must be possible through the Public Service to make this work more attractive and encourage young men to enter the field.

I have no doubt that much thought has been given to the matter, nevertheless one must keep expressing concern about it.

At the introductory stage of the Bill I said—

“We are told that ticks are now costing us £10,000,000 a year which is a heavy burden on the State. I believe that the cost must be much higher, because so many factors that cannot be assessed come into the problem. Surely eradication is a task that we should face up to in a positive way.”

I then mentioned the eradication programme carried out in the southern States of the United States many years ago. I also mentioned that although ticks had not been eliminated, their incidence had been reduced till they were no longer an important factor. Certainly outbreaks occur, but they are dealt with quickly and do not present the problem they once did.

A great deal is heard about ticks. Every now and again articles appear in “Queensland Country Life” and other pastoral journals in which various people claim that ticks can or cannot be eradicated. This is something that has been kicked backwards and forwards for years and years. I do not believe that it cannot be done. There seems to be so much confusion on the matter. Is it that we fear the task of facing up to the problem? What stops us? Is it physical factors? Is it the politics of it? Is it the great problem of moving stock, if it is to be done in this way, to clean areas? Is it that we do not yet know enough about ticks? Considerable research has been done, and apparently work is still being done in an attempt to find out more of the life cycle and behaviour of the cattle tick, which I understand varies from area to area.

I have been told that if the work done in the New South Wales border area had been based on findings that have since been made, perhaps more would have been achieved. Perhaps that programme was embarked upon without sufficient knowledge of what we were really trying to do. I do not know whether that is the case, but it seems extraordinary to me that we do not seem to be able to face up to this problem and eradicate ticks. Their cost to the State is enormous, and relatively the cost of eliminating them will be the same as the years and decades pass. I do not think the cost should be taken into consideration. Surely we should face up to the problem and adopt a more definite policy on it.

The other factor that I want to mention is this: if we could get more extension work and more veterinary officers through the department—I know it is short of them—much good could be achieved, not only by eradicating disease and preventing its spread but also by improving production in many ways. Calving and lambing is one instance that comes to mind. A great deal of good work has already been done in this field, and we know many of the causes of low calving

and lambing percentages; but if the figures could be increased by 3, 4 or 5 per cent., the advantage to the economy of the State would be very great.

I know that the department wants to do this type of work and the result would be worth while if we could afford to do it. Dedicated officers want to carry out research of this type, and sometimes I think that Queensland, and Australia generally, is missing out and losing many opportunities for economic gains because of its inability to allocate, somehow, sufficient money or attract the required number of officers to the department to really get on with the job. There is nothing original in what I am saying, but let me reiterate it in commending the Bill.

Mr. HARRISON (Logan) (3.12 p.m.): I am very pleased that the Minister has introduced a Bill to amend this important Act, and I am sure that all stock-owners throughout Queensland will welcome its provisions. A great deal of thought has been given to the Bill, which will strengthen the Government's hand in dealing with problems affecting stock, particularly diseases.

There are one or two points that I should like the Minister to make really clear. Let me take first the levies on milk and cream in the dairy industry. I understand that the Minister has given an assurance that these substantial levies, which are being retained—I know they were in the Act—will be used only if there is an outbreak of serious disease amongst stock or, perhaps more importantly, to assist in dealing with an outbreak of exotic or introduced disease such as foot-and-mouth disease. If Australia is ever unfortunate enough to have an outbreak of foot-and-mouth disease, it should not be the sole responsibility of the dairy industry, or, indeed, of the State Government, to deal with it. It should be a matter of concern to the whole of Australia and to the Commonwealth Government.

There is just one word that I want to say to the Minister on this subject. I heard him say, either during the debate or in answer to a question, that he was satisfied that the controls in force and the precautions taken against the introduction of foot-and-mouth disease, for example, and similar diseases, are adequate. I should like to be sure of that.

Australia is in a peculiar position, with a tremendous length of coastline and many points of entry. The position was not so bad when entry was made by sea. I have always believed that we have been free of this sort of thing because travel to Australia was by sea and entry was made only after a long voyage. Today the country is entered after air travel lasting only days, or even hours, and I think that the safeguards taken at the point of entry by aircraft should be strong enough and meticulous enough to give us the security we want, and should make every effort to maintain.

I have not been outside Australia but I know many people who have travelled overseas quite recently, including members of my own family. From them I have learned that there is a fairly cursory supervision over entry at Darwin, for instance. I believe that the aeroplane is sprayed, but the passengers could have been in contact with foot-and-mouth disease in various countries in Europe or other parts of the world. The spores could be on their boots or their clothes, or in their luggage, and from my point of view I should like to have them all put through the dip.

I should like to see everything subjected to a very thorough examination, because this is vital to Australia. We are the most fortunate country in the world today. Our export trade, particularly in the beef field, is at stake if we get an outbreak of foot-and-mouth disease. I put before the Minister my hope that everybody in Queensland, and elsewhere, is taking this matter seriously and doing everything possible to get full co-operation between the State Government and the Commonwealth Government in this regard. I leave the Minister with that thought.

I do not like to be a party to just accepting that we are taking precautions against these things. I want to be sure that our precautions are sound enough to keep Australia safe. That is one question that is perhaps not covered, to my satisfaction, by the legislation or by the comments that have been made. When we are passing a measure such as this, I feel that this is the time for Queensland to give a lead to the rest of Australia. This is the time to give prominence to the matter, because this is a time of great danger to our valuable stock industry.

I should also like an assurance from the Minister that the levies he is providing for will not be implemented in respect of the dairy industry until we are sure that we have this machinery working, or in the event of a serious outbreak of disease.

Reference was made by the Minister, and the hon. member for Clayfield, to the tick problem. I, too, regard this as a tremendously important matter to Queensland—and it goes a little beyond Queensland into New South Wales. It affects only parts of Queensland, but, as hon. members know, the estimates that we have been making on behalf of stock-owners—the estimates that I have been making as spokesman for the dairy industry in Queensland—show that at least £10,000,000 a year could easily be lost through the ravages of ticks. We need to redouble our efforts in trying to control the cattle tick. Money spent in that direction will help to safeguard the cattle industry.

"Glenlogan" was referred to. The C.S.I.R.O., in co-operation with the Department of Primary Industries, is doing its best to find an answer to the tick problem. We have had a quickening of interest in this subject lately. I regret that the C.S.I.R.O. has

lost the services of a man like Dr. Riek, who is an acknowledged expert on tick diseases. I hope that the C.S.I.R.O. will find an adequate replacement for him, and that work on the eradication of the cattle tick from Queensland will continue at Glenlogan. I know that the work done there will be of valuable assistance to the Department of Primary Industries. There is always a ready willingness on the part of the department and the C.S.I.R.O. to work together in finding the answer to this problem.

Mr. Murray: Both Dr. Riek and Mr. Mahoney have left that work now.

Mr. HARRISON: Yes. I hope we can find suitable replacements for these men. I do not think we have lost Dr. Riek's knowledge, even though he has gone into the private sector.

I wanted to make these few comments before complimenting the Minister on bringing down this Bill to bring the Act up to date. I am sure he will give consideration to the matters I have raised. It is not good enough just to be told that our safeguards are sufficient to prevent the introduction into Australia of diseases such as foot-and-mouth disease. We must be sure that the safeguards are 100 per cent. effective.

Hon. J. A. ROW (Hinchinbrook—Minister for Primary Industries) (3.23 p.m.), in reply: Once again I should like to express my appreciation to hon. members on both sides for their contributions. From the general discussion it would seem that hon. members are in agreement with the proposals in the Bill.

I hasten to assure the Leader of the Opposition that I did not intentionally mean to be caustic in my remarks. Indeed, it is not my manner to be so. I did not intentionally endeavour to score off him. To be quite frank, I have a tremendous appreciation of his versatility. As Leader of the Opposition, from time to time he is required to make speeches "off the cuff" on a great variety of Bills without knowing much about what is in them. I assure him that if I said anything which upset him it was not intentional.

The hon. gentleman and the hon. member for Clayfield had quite a big discussion about veterinary surgeons in Queensland and Australia. It is a matter of concern that we need 100 to 150 more veterinary surgeons in Australia. This is due to the incidence of inspection within our meatworks. I understand the position in Queensland is improving. As I said before, this is often restricted by finance. The important fact is that we are trying to get as many veterinarians as possible. The encouragement of private practitioners to go to the West, on the basis of a subsidy paid by the department, will prove fruitful, and will assist the people in the far flung areas. The veterinarians in my department carry out disease-control measures as well as research, which is mainly into the more important diseases of animals.

Mr. Murray: I presume that you would have a number tied up with administration work.

Mr. ROW: Yes, that is so.

Private practitioners handle cases concerning individual animals. Very often our own men who are situated where there is no private practitioner carry out this work voluntarily and readily.

My portfolio is most interesting and rewarding. When I introduce a Bill which is not controversial, and which receives the support of both sides of the House, I get a great deal of pleasure, particularly when it is of importance to the primary industries of the State.

The hon. member for Kurilpa referred to pet shops. The measure applies only to shops dealing in animals, dogs, cats, and so on. I understand that there is only one such shop in Brisbane.

Mr. Houston: You are badly misinformed.

Mr. ROW: If the hon. member will contain himself I should like to tell him that there are about eight shops in Brisbane dealing in fauna—that is, birds. Those dealing in birds are licensed under the Fauna Act. Those dealing in animals must be licensed so that we will have some control over the animals sold. I hasten to assure the hon. member for Kurilpa that this is purely a precautionary measure so that people buying cats, dogs, or other animals will have protection and can buy healthy animals free of disease. Without wasting time, I point out that I have details of all the pet shops and bird shops in Queensland. If anyone wants this information I will be only too happy to supply it.

As usual, the hon. member for Clayfield made a very considered and helpful contribution to the debate. I assure him that we are concerned, as is the Leader of the Opposition, about the shortage of veterinarians. Ticks are costing the State a vast amount. I am assured by my departmental officers that they are applying themselves diligently to finding ways and means of controlling this problem.

I was very pleased that the hon. member for Logan entered the debate. He is very knowledgeable, particularly on pastures, the dairying industry, and stock generally. I hasten to assure him that the levies on milk and cream are to be used for the control of T.B. and for the improvement of A.I. services. In no way will they be used for the control of exotic diseases that may come to this country, although I hope that they never do. As I said at the beginning of my second-reading speech, there is a national fund, sponsored by the Federal Government. If it has to be implemented at any stage, 50 per cent. of the money will be contributed by the Federal Government and the other 50 per cent. by the States. I assure the hon. member that I share his concern about the possible introduction of exotic diseases.

I understand that the Federal Government is now showing more concern and applying more control over people coming from areas where foot-and-mouth disease and rabies exist. In my position on the Council of Agriculture I shall pursue the matter and see that rigid controls are applied against the possibility of the introduction of those diseases.

I thank hon. members for their contributions.

Motion (Mr. Row) agreed to.

COMMITTEE

(The Chairman of Committees, Mr. Hooper, Greenslopes, in the chair)

Clauses 1 to 21, both inclusive, as read, agreed to.

Bill reported, without amendment.

The House adjourned at 3.33 p.m.