Queensland

# Parliamentary Debates
[Hansard]

## Legislative Assembly

**THURSDAY, 2 APRIL 1908**

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# LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY.

THURSDAY, 2 APRIL, 1908.

The SPEAKER (Hon. John Leahy, *Bulloo*) took the chair at half-past 3 o'clock.

## QUESTION.

### HOTEL LICENSES ON OAKS GOLDFIELD.

Mr. MAY (*Flinders*) asked the Home Secretary—

1. In reference to a paragraph appearing in the *Brisbane Courier*, of this morning's issue, that the miners on the Oaks Goldfield are not in favour of hotels being erected on that field, can the Government prohibit local magistrates from granting a license to any person who may apply for same?

2. If, later on, it is deemed necessary that an hotel should be established, why could not the Government open an hotel on that field; thus initiating the principle of State control of the liquor traffic?

The HOME SECRETARY (Hon. A. G. C. Hawthorn, *Enoggera*) replied—

1. No.

2. The department are considering the whole question.

## RELIGIOUS INSTRUCTION IN STATE SCHOOLS REFERENDUM BILL.

### THIRD READING.

On the motion of the HOME SECRETARY, this Bill was read a third time, passed, and ordered to be transmitted to the Legislative Council, by message in the usual form.

[*Hon. G. W. Gray.*

## FORMAL MOTION.

### BUSINESS OF THE LANDS DEPARTMENT.

On the motion of Mr. HUXHAM (*Brisbane South*), for Mr. Adamson, it was formally resolved—

That there be laid upon the table of the House a return showing—

1. The number of despatches, including letters, parcels, packets, etc., sent out from the Lands Office during the year 1907, and also the number sent out during the first three months of 1908.

2. The number of officers employed in the Despatch Branch of the Lands Department.

3. The number of hours outside prescribed regulation hours worked by these officers.

4. The amount of overtime pay, tea money, or gratuity paid to these officers.

## OLD AGE PENSIONS BILL.

### COMMITTEE.

Clauses 1 to 5, inclusive, put and passed.

On clause 6—"Who may receive pensions"—

Mr. MULLAN (*Charters Towers*) noticed that the age at which a pension might be drawn was fixed at sixty-five years. He should like to know from the Minister whether he would accept an amendment inserting after the words "sixty-five years" the words "or is physically incapacitated." He knew that the Bill went a long way, for which they ought to be thankful, but he thought the Committee would agree with him that in a place like Charters Towers——

The PREMIER: That would mix up two subjects.

Mr. MULLAN: He was prepared to admit that it would do so to some extent, but it was pretty hard that in places like Charters Towers, where miners became afflicted with miners' phthisis, and were rendered physically incapable of following their occupations, they should not be entitled to pensions just as if they had reached the age of sixty-five years. The trouble was that they would be entitled to the indigence allowance, but considering that it only amounted to 5s. per week, and the old age pension to 10s. a week, it was a pity that they could not be included among the pensioners.

Mr. W. H. BARNES: Perhaps a larger indigence allowance will be made.

Mr. MULLAN: If the indigence allowance were increased, it would certainly overcome the difficulty.

The HOME SECRETARY could not see his way to accept the suggested alteration. As the hon. member was aware, the Government at the present time provided for cases that would not come within the scope of the Old Age Pensions Act, by means of indigence allowance and Dunwich. The question of increasing the indigence allowance had not yet been considered by the Government, but it probably would be considered as soon as an Old Age Pensions Act was passed, because there were many things attaching to such an Act by which they would gain experience. It would necessitate an overhaul of the whole system of indigence allowance and charitable relief generally.

Mr. MULLAN: Believing in the possibility of the indigence allowance being increased, and the system being changed, perhaps it would be better not to press the amendment at that stage.

Mr. HUXHAM would like the Minister to reconsider the matter. In two of the Old Age Pensions Acts of other States—those of New South Wales and Victoria—there was a provision such as that suggested. In New South

Wales the age was fixed at sixty, and both in that State and Victoria pensions were given in the event of persons being unable to follow their occupations. He thought the matter was well worthy of being brought within the scope of the Bill.

* Mr. BARBER (*Bundaberg*) suggested that as the climate of many parts of Queensland prejudicially affected women of even strong constitutions, especially those who had reared families of from five, six, seven, eight, or nine children, they should be allowed to qualify for a pension at the age of sixty years instead of sixty-five years. With regard to the question raised by the hon. member for Charters Towers, that difficulty had been faced by the New South Wales Government, who had passed a Bill either last session or during the present session, providing that people who had attained the age of forty years, and were totally incapacitated for work, should receive the same allowance as those who received old age pensions.

The HOME SECRETARY: They have no indigence allowance there.

Mr. BARBER: That was so; but the indigence allowance was a miserable pittance. Those hon. members who had had to work pretty hard themselves knew that there was a large number of men in this country, as well as in the other States, who were afflicted from their birth to such an extent that they were unable to work, and he thought that such people should receive some assistance from the State. He was aware that this matter did not come within the scope of the present Bill, but he hoped it would receive the favourable consideration of the Government, and would be dealt with next session or during the life of this Parliament.

The PREMIER: He would ask hon. members to remember that no one pretended that this Bill was the last word on this subject in Queensland. (Hear, hear!)

Mr. BOWMAN: It is a good word so far.

The PREMIER: It was a good word, but nobody imagined that it was the last word. At the same time he would also ask hon. members to remember that the taxpayers had better not be overmuch hurried in this matter.

Mr. BOWMAN: I do not think they would grudge paying an old age pension.

The PREMIER: No; not till the taxes got too heavy.

Mr. BOWMAN: Put a land tax on.

LABOUR MEMBERS: Hear, hear! and laughter.

The PREMIER: All those things were most desirable, just as it might be desirable that everyone who called for it should get a pension of £2 a week, with an extra allowance for holidays—(laughter)—but he hoped hon. members would recognise that they were taking a long step forward in this Bill.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

The PREMIER: And that it was very much wiser to take this long step, see where they were, than to attempt too much at once. He did not expect that the matter would stop there.

Mr. BOWMAN (*Fortitude Valley*): With other hon. members who had spoken, he felt gratified that this measure had been introduced; but it was a very peculiar anomaly that a man or woman of sixty-five years of age should receive a pension of 10s. a week, while many deserving persons under that age had a difficulty in getting even 5s. a week. He therefore hoped that the Government would consider the advisability of increasing the indigence allowance. There were men who were older—from a physical point of view—at fifty-five years of age than others at sixty-five, and they were deserving of consideration. He did not think the reaching of a specific age should be the only qualification for an old age pension at the rate of 10s. a week, and hoped the time was not far distant when the Government would see their way to include every person who was incapacitated for work as entitled to receive an equal pension. A pension of 10s. a week was not such a great deal.

The PREMIER: Not to get; but it is a great deal to pay.

Mr. BOWMAN: They had voted a great many sums for less desirable objects. He did not think there was any grant which would meet with more general approval than an old age pension. During the election campaign there was no proposal which was received with more favour than that of an old age pension, not only by those who were in need of the pension but even by persons more fortunately circumstanced. It should be the object of the Committee to render assistance to those who were more unfortunate than their fellows, and he hoped the Premier and the Minister in charge of this Bill would take into consideration the advisability of increasing the 5s. a week indigence allowance. When he referred to this matter on the second reading of the Bill, the Home Secretary stated that the indigence allowance of 5s. a week was simply given in lieu of a home at Dunwich. There were many men and women who had no desire to go to Dunwich, and there were many men in Dunwich to-day who would feel themselves at liberty to come under this Bill.

The HOME SECRETARY: There are a large number who cannot do so.

Mr. BOWMAN: There was a large number who could, and if they wished to leave Dunwich and claim a pension under this Bill there was nothing to prevent them doing so. Why should persons of sixty-five years of age receive a pension, and those who were a year or two younger, but in more distressed circumstances, not be entitled to come under the Bill? He interjected just now that they should impose a tax on land values, and in that way secure money for the payment of old age pensions. In almost every other State in Australia they had a land tax from which they derived a revenue for the payment of old age pensions. He, and the party with which he was associated, were anxious to see a land tax imposed, and they were going to advocate such taxation until they got it. He hoped that the leader of the Government would not be behind the rest of the Premiers of Australia, but that he would introduce such a measure as he had indicated.

HON. R. PHILP (*Townsville*): He did not see what a land tax had to do with this Bill. The income tax of Queensland came to much more than the land and income taxes of either New South Wales or Victoria.

Mr. SUMNER: Our local authorities taxation is a pretty stiff one.

HON. R. PHILP: With regard to the age at which a person became entitled to a pension, while it might be a very fair thing for persons living in Southern Queensland, he did not think it was fair for the residents of North Queensland, where people aged more quickly than they did in the South. He thought that people living in North Queensland should be allowed to qualify for a pension at a lower age than those living in Southern Queensland, and he would suggest that north of the tropic of Capricorn the age should be sixty years, and below that sixty-five years. Rockhampton was the hottest hole in Queensland.

(Laughter.) It was known as the city of the three S's—"Sin, sweat, and sorrow." At any rate, a man who had worked twenty years in North Queensland was nothing like the man who had worked twenty years in Southern Queensland, and he was of opinion that there should be some such differentiation in the qualifying age as he had suggested.

The PREMIER: With regard to the remarks of the leader of the Opposition concerning the salubrious district of Rockhampton—(laughter)—he might state that men there maintained their health and strength so long that, really, if he had considered only the Rockhampton district, he would not require to put the age lower than seventy. That place used to be called "the city of sin, sweat, and sorrow"; but all that was altered, and it was now known as "the city of saints, salvation, and soda-water." (Laughter.)

Mr. KENNA (*Bowen*) rose to repudiate the suggestion of the leader of the Opposition that a man aged more quickly in Northern Queensland than in Southern Queensland. If they made the differentiation in age [4 p.m.] proposed by the hon. member, that would be an advertisement to the world that the climate of North Queensland was not suitable for white people.

The PREMIER: As a matter of fact, Bowen is one of the healthiest cities in the world.

Mr. KENNA: That was so. Anyone going to North Queensland would see that there were a great many more men of advanced age than were to be found in many of the Southern districts. The climate of North Queensland was very much maligned. The health statistics showed that people lived just as long in North Queensland as in Southern Queensland.

Hon. R. PHILP: You have never lived in the North.

Mr. KENNA had lived for two years in Bowen. The hon. member for Croydon was a standing advertisement to the salubrity of the climate of North Queensland. (Laughter.)

Mr. WINSTANLEY (*Charters Towers*) had lived in North Queensland for the last twenty-six years, and there was no getting away from the fact that the conditions of life generally were harder there than in Southern Queensland. Still there was something in what the leader of the Opposition said. There was also something in the idea that age was not always a correct criterion as to whether a man was able to work or not. He had just received a letter from a man who was over sixty-five years of age, who had been working down in a mine, and who was as well able to do his work as men ten years younger. For ten years he had worked at other things until quite recently, when his eyesight failed. There were other men who were not nearly sixty years of age whose constitutions were broken down. Men working in the vitiated atmosphere of a mine, and among the dust of the machines, were frequently unfit for work long before they were sixty-five years of age. The man he had mentioned had refused to accept the advice of his friends, and apply for an indigence allowance, because he was one of those sturdy, independent men, who refused to take anything in the nature of charity, and he must have been pushed to the extreme limit when he asked for an indigence allowance. If ever there was a man who was entitled to an old age pension, it was that man. He had always lived a sober, industrious life, and had reared a large family of sons, who were unable to do more than look after their own families. There were numbers of men who had not reached the age of sixty-five who were unable to support themselves, but they did not like the idea of accepting charity. One of the good features of an old age pension was that people got it as a right. If the Government were going to pay 10s. by way of indigence allowance, then the recipients of that allowance might as well get a pension under the Act, as there would be no difference to the State from the financial point of view, whilst people would sooner receive the money as a right than as a pauper's dole. Many people under the age of sixty-five years were in distressed circumstances through no fault of their own, and they were entitled to some consideration.

The HOME SECRETARY: Hon. members seemed to lose sight of one feature in the indigence allowance, and that was that a man who had only been in the State for two or three years might become a claimant for the allowance, whereas nobody would be entitled to an old age pension unless he had resided in the State for twenty-five years. At present they were paying about £34,000 under the indigence allowance, and Dunwich cost about £37,000. He had not gone into the question of a differentiation between North and South Queensland; but it might be information to hon. members to be told that they expected, under the Bill as it stood, to pay about £119,000 a year in old age pensions; but, if the age were to be reduced to sixty years, it would come to about £223,000 per annum, which hon. members must agree was too much for them to look forward to at present. They were doing very well under the Bill. Later on, as things improved, it might be necessary to increase the amount.

Mr. BOWMAN: What number of people over sixty-five are receiving the indigence allowance?

The HOME SECRETARY: He thought there were over 2,000.

Mr. MANN (*Cairns*): The only reason why there should be a difference between the North and South was because the cost of living was higher in the North. The statement that people became old more rapidly in the North was a libel on North Queensland, because most of their health resorts were in the Northern portion of the State. Look at the health of the people of Atherton, Mareeba, Cooktown, and other places in the North! With the exception of one or two places, like Townsville, the climate of North Queensland was the best in all Australia. (Laughter.) Flinders street, in Townsville, had the reputation of being the hottest place in North Queensland.

Hon. R. PHILP: After Cairns.

Mr. MANN: He had lived in Cairns for sixteen or seventeen years, and he had been in Townsville a good many times. The fact that the sun struck off Castle Hill made the town portion of Townsville almost unbearable. The people of North Queensland would resent the idea that they were unable to look after themselves. There was one old chap in his electorate who was over eighty years of age, and he was hale and hearty, and earned his own livelihood. There were a few women who were not yet sixty, but who were unable to do anything for themselves, and the 5s. a week indigence allowance was not enough to keep them in North Queensland unless they had some other source of income. It would be advisable to find out whether those under the age who asked for assistance were unfit to earn anything, and those people might be given a larger allowance than 5s. a week.

HON. R. PHILP would like to ask why it was that miners' wages at Gympie were £2 10s. per week, at Charters Towers £3 per week, at Croydon £3 10s. per week?

Mr. JACKSON: Because living is dearer in the North.

HON. R. PHILP: There was not much difference between the cost of living in Charters Towers and Gympie. Boarding-houses charged about the same. Some things were dearer in Charters Towers, but others were cheaper. The Federal Government, in fixing the bonus on white-grown sugar, recognised the difference between the three great divisions of the State. Dr. Maxwell pointed out that a man could do more work at Bundaberg than he could in the North, and the Commonwealth Government accordingly granted a larger bonus in the North.

The HOME SECRETARY: The health statistics show that North Queensland is as healthy as any part of Australasia, except New Zealand.

HON. R. PHILP: If a man worked hard in the North, he was older at sixty years of age than a man in South Queensland was at sixty-five.

Mr. JONES (*Burnett*): It was gratifying to know that the Bill would do away with the miserable indigence allowance; but he thought the age limit was too high, especially for those engaged in dangerous occupations, such as mining. The average life of a miner in Queensland was shorter than the average life of those engaged in other industries. There were very few miners who lived to the age of sixty-five.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: No, no!

Mr. JONES: There were very few men of sixty-five years of age at work in the mines of Queensland.

The HOME SECRETARY: There are a good many receiving the indigence allowance, all the same.

Mr. JONES: But they were unable to work. There were very few miners who had reached the age of sixty-five who were capable of doing a day's work. The hon. member for Charters Towers quoted one case. He was sorry that the suggestion of the hon. member for Charters Towers was not adopted by the Minister, because they should make some provision for those men, perhaps by raising the indigence allowance or by introducing an Invalid Allowance Bill. They wanted to see their aged people provided for as a right, and they should not have to go cap in hand to the Minister and plead for an allowance. He was pleased with the Bill, which was a vast improvement on the last Bill introduced. He heartily agreed with the idea that they should impose a land tax to provide funds for certain purposes, not necessarily for old age pensions alone. They wanted revenue in connection with the old age pensions, State insurance, workers' compensation, and invalid allowance, and a fund for these could be provided by a compulsory system of State insurance. They should also have a land tax which was a revenue-producing one.

Mr. LENNON (*Herbert*) supported the suggestion of the leader of the Opposition with regard to differentiating between those living in the Northern and Southern portions of Queensland. It was recognised that the cost of living was dearer in the North than in the South by the Education Department, by banks, and other institutions who paid extra allowances to their officers in the North, and he hoped that would lead the Minister to seriously consider the suggestion of the leader of the Opposition. He was pleased, indeed, to see the measure put before the Committee in its present shape. It was quite different to the last measure introduced, which had received a good deal of condemnation, particularly from that portion of the House in which he sat. Clause 6 provided—

Subject to this Act, every person of the age of sixty-five years, whilst in Queensland, shall be qualified to receive a pension.

And it was satisfactory to observe that there were no limitations or restrictions in this Bill like those which disfigured the last Bill. He thought that by allowing the pension to men who lived in the North five years earlier than those living in the South would not mean the large increase which had been mentioned by the Home Secretary, because the population in the North was only one-fourth of the whole State. He estimated that it would mean the expenditure of about a fourth of the amount set down—a fourth of £120,000—so that the total amount would not come to the £240,000 mentioned by the Home Secretary. It must also be taken into account that a great number of the miners in North Queensland were a sturdy class, and many of them absolutely refused to accept assistance under any of the previous Bills that had been passed. He hoped that they would be prepared to accept it under this Bill, because they would be able to get it as a right. He would quote briefly from a letter he received from a man who wrote about a miner in his district. There was an old prospector who wanted assistance to carry on his work, which he had devoted himself to for many years past. This man, writing of this prospector, said—

He is one of that class of very independent old miners who will never seek assistance, and if you only mention the old age pension to him he is up in arms at once. Two of the same class of old diggers have committed suicide in this district in the last three months, both somewhere about seventy years of age.

The writer mentioned the names, but for obvious reasons he (Mr. Lennon) would not give them. The letter then went on—

They are really too old to work, and they all look on the old age pension as a charity.

That was the way they viewed the last Bill.

Mr. MULCAHY: And the indigence allowance.

Mr. LENNON: They looked upon that Bill as being merely a charity dole. He trusted that those men, when they realised the character of this Bill, would come under its operations.

Mr. JACKSON (*Kennedy*): He had not heard the whole of the discussion on this clause, but he understood that the question of the indigence allowance had been introduced into it. He thought that might be better discussed under clause 14, subclause (7) of which referred to it. If, however, there was no objection to discussing the question now, it was all right. In some of the other States provision was made for persons getting the old age pension when they were engaged in unhealthy and dangerous occupations, and he would like to see something of that sort in this Bill, more particularly with regard to miners. However, he recognised that the Government could not do everything in this Bill. It was a good Bill, as he had pointed out on the second reading. The ideas of members were that there should be something else besides old age pensions. This question of pensions would not be complete until they had not only an Old Age Pensions Bill but an Invalidity and Accident Pensions Bill——

An HONOURABLE MEMBER: The Workers' Compensation Act provides for accidents.

Mr. JACKSON: There were many men and women workers who were not employees, and who sometimes met with accidents, and they had as much right to be protected as the men and women who reached the statutory age of sixty-five. He did not think there was any possibility of altering this Bill. He was afraid that it would not be in order if it were introduced unless another message providing the

appropriation were sent down. Last year, when he had the honour of occupying the position of Chairman of Committtes, now occupied by Mr. Maughan, he gave some attention to the procedure on that question, and, in spite of the quotation read last night by the hon. member for Bowen, he found that it would not be in order to widen the scope of the Bill by reducing the age of the pensioner from sixty-five to sixty years, or to alter it in any way that would require an increased expenditure under the consolidated revenue, unless there was another message sent in from the Governor. There was no occasion to go into that question now, but he thought the question might be raised when the Bill got into Committee. Of course, the Government could get over that difficulty by sending in another message. The Committee recognised that this was a good Bill indeed. No doubt later on they would have an invalid and accident pension scheme introduced, but in the meantime he hoped the Government would look into the question of increasing the indigence allowance.

The HOME SECRETARY: We are looking into it.

Mr. JACKSON: He was glad to hear it. It would be right for the Government and for Parliament to vote a certain amount of money, but instead of it being called an indigence allowance it might be called an accident or invalidity allowance. There was a little bit of a stigma about the word "indigence," and it would be better to have it widened and called the invalidity or accident allowance. If they could not arrange for that by making it statutory, the Government could bring it in in the same way as the indigence allowance. He thought the indigence allowance should be increased to the same amount as the old age pension. It was a standing grievance with members that the allowance was so small. The arguments which had been made about the increased cost of living in the Northern districts also applied to the Western districts.

Mr. COYNE: Hear, hear!

Mr. JACKSON: The cost of living was higher in the Western districts than either at Mackay, Bowen, or Townsville. Once they got away from the coast the cost of living increased. However, no possible scheme which they could devise could apply fairly to all. If the old age pensions scheme were raised for those up North——

The HOME SECRETARY: It would be invidious to differentiate.

Mr. JACKSON: They differentiated with regard to the public servants, including the school teachers and railway servants. If they could apply the principle to the public servants, he did not see what was to prevent them from applying it to the old age pensioners or those receiving the indigence allowance. However, the Home Secretary had promised to look into it. One of the first acts which the Government should do was to increase the indigence allowance. And the same principle with regard to the relatives not maintaining their aged relatives, which was provided for in the old age pensions scheme, should also apply in the case of the indigence allowance. If that were done there would be nothing like the heart-burnings or the delay caused that were caused now. There was a great delay caused now by the inquiries which had to be made not only in Queensland but also in New South Wales. They even went South to inquire into the financial position of sons and daughters to see if they could support their aged parents. As the Government had intended to look into the question of the indigence allowance, the Committee might let this clause go through. (Hear, hear!)

Mr. HAMILTON (*Gregory*) agreed with what had been said about limiting the age at which a man could get a pension to sixty-five. There were many men who spent a large number of years in Northern Queensland and in the Western districts who had a far rougher living of it than those in other parts of the State, and the men in these districts became physically weaker at sixty-five than men in the Southern portion of the State who were nearly ten years older. He knew a great many men who had been living a long time in the West —they were the pioneers of the country, and were out there still—and although many of them were not fifty-five years of age, they were physically incapable of earning their own living—in fact, some of them were now in Dunwich Asylum. There was a difference in the climate even in Queensland. There were men in Queensland who at sixty-five years were hearty and strong, while men in the North at that age were pretty old men. He thought a man of fifty-five or sixty years of age should be entitled to receive a pension. The question certainly required a little more consideration, and even though it might involve greater expenditure to grant pensions to persons sixty years of age, he did not think Parliament would grudge it. He would certainly like to see the Government take action in the matter.

Mr. MITCHELL (*Maryborough*) thought every member of the Committee would like to see the age reduced to sixty, but that would still leave the question of differentiation unsettled, and would not satisfy those in the North and West. Although the [4.30 p.m.] age might be reduced, Northern and Western members would still advocate a differentiation. Although he said some very hard things about the Bill of last session, it was only fair that he should say now that they had a Bill before them which would bear comparison with any Old Age Pensions Act in Australia, and he hoped that it would be passed almost immediately. In regard to the indigence allowance, there was one thing that might be improved. Under the Bill they had removed many obstacles against persons getting old age pensions, and they might well remove some of the obstacles against the indigence allowance being granted. A great many hard things had been said about the Home Secretaries who had been in charge of Dunwich. Whether the want of funds or the individual was to blame he could not say, but he knew that it was very much easier now to get the indigence allowance than it had been in the past.

An HONOURABLE MEMBER: No.

Mr. MITCHELL: He hoped that spirit would not only be maintained but that it would grow to the advantage of those requiring the indigence allowance, and that in a very short time the allowance would be increased, if not to 10s., at least to 7s. 6d., although he would prefer to see it increased to 10s. That would enable miners who had not attained the age of sixty-five years to draw something from the State which would materially assist them. Unfortunately, that class of people were as diffident about accepting an old age pension as the indigence allowance, but if the age were reduced to sixty they might feel that they were getting the allowance from the State not as a charity but as a right, and that whether it was called indigence allowance or pension.

Mr. COWAP (*Fitzroy*): During the debate some members had spoken about the age at which some miners contracted miners' phthisis. Even if they reduced the age to fifty, there were miners who would still not be entitled to an old age pension. He had known men of forty to contract miners' phthisis. The only way in which people of that class could be provided for would be to grant them a pension if they were incapacitated from following their occupation. They could hardly bring those men under the old age pensions scheme, but they could give them a more substantial indigence allowance. He admitted that he did not care much about the indigence allowance, and preferred something that could be claimed as a right. He would like to see the Bill go through, and the Home Secretary could then consider the question of increasing the indigence allowance to 10s., and applying it to those who were totally incapacitated from work, instead of sending them to Dunwich. The cost of maintaining a person in Dunwich at the present time far exceeded the indigence allowance now granted, and he thought it would be much better to give the difference to those people who were really in need of it.

Mr. KEOGH (*Rosewood*) held that it was a very good thing to increase the indigence allowance from 5s. to 10s. per week, which would not be more than sufficient to keep needy people in their later days. He noticed that no provision had been made in the Bill in regard to compelling sons and daughters, who were in a position to do so, to assist their parents.

Hon. R. PHILP: There will be an amendment on that.

Mr. WOODS (*Woothakata*): There was a great deal in the contention of the leader of the Opposition that greater assistance should be given to the aged and infirm in Northern and Western Queensland. The statement had been made by some members that miners particularly became old more quickly in the Northern part of Queensland than elsewhere, but he could assure hon. members that he knew several miners in his district over seventy years of age who were making a living for themselves.

Mr. JONES: They are gully-raking.

Mr. WOODS: Although they might be gully-raking, the hon. gentleman would admit that those old pioneers were leading a far harder life than miners working for wages, and doing more good for the country. Another point about those old men was that they would rather die under a gum-tree than accept a pension. (Hear, hear!) The proof that very little charity was being received by the miners of Queensland from the State was to be found in the fact that out of 1,400 inmates of Dunwich only 200 came from Northern Queensland. That was a strong refutation of the statement made by the leader of the Opposition, that men got older more quickly in Northern than in Southern Queensland. He was satisfied the hon. gentleman would, after consideration, agree that North Queensland, particularly where the miners were congregated, was not only the healthiest part of Queensland, but the healthiest part of Australia.

The HOME SECRETARY: Statistics say so.

Hon. R. PHILP: You have never been there.

Mr. WOODS: The hon. gentleman took very fine care that he did not stop there very long.

Hon. R. PHILP: I was referring to the Home Secretary, not to you.

Mr. WOODS: The hon. gentleman only stopped there long enough to drink champagne at the banquets he attended, and then cleared out. He wanted to say that the finest body of men in Australia to-day were to be found on the mining fields of North Queensland, and the most independent body of men, too. He hoped the Home Secretary would accept the suggestion of the leader of the Opposition and increase the amount to be paid in Northern and Western Queensland. They had been told by the Home Secretary that it would cost a great deal more. They were well aware of that, but if it cost double the amount to relieve the old and infirm men and women of Queensland the money should not be grudged. He hoped the Government would go into the matter, and if they were not able to deal with it in this Bill, that they would bring in an amending Bill next session, giving greater consideration to the old and infirm of the State, the men who had pioneered the country. It was the duty of the Government to take particularly fine care that the old and infirm of the State should not be allowed to die in the gutter.

Clause put and passed.

On clause 7—"To whom pensions may not be granted"—

Mr. PETRIE noticed that aboriginal natives were excluded from the operation of the Bill. He did not see why that should be so, for their country had been taken from them, and they had not been treated too well in the past, although they were now under the care of a protector. If an aboriginal had behaved himself, and had worked as hard as any white man, he should be entitled to a pension upon becoming old and infirm. He would like to hear what the Home Secretary had to say on the subject.

Mr. APPEL (*Albert*): In the electorate he represented there were a number of aboriginal natives who worked equally as hard as white men, and should not be excluded from the operations of an Old Age Pensions Act.

An HONOURABLE MEMBER: They have no votes.

Mr. APPEL: They had votes, and he certainly thought there should be no differentiation between them and white men. He should like to hear an expression of opinion from the Home Secretary on the subject.

The HOME SECRETARY: It was news to him that aboriginals had got votes; but whether that was so or not, in view of the fact that we made other provision for aboriginals, he did not think it advisable to bring them under this Bill. There were many cases in which it would be inadvisable to give an aboriginal 10s. a week for himself. He admitted that the aboriginals had large claims upon us, but at the same time he would point out that a considerable sum of money was voted every year providing for their wants and for their protection.

Clause put and passed.

On clause 8—"Necessary requirements"—

Mr. MULCAHY: According to subclause (iv.) one of the requirements was that the applicant for a pension must be "of good moral character," and that he was and had been for the five years immediately preceding the date of his application "leading a sober and reputable life." He knew that that provision was in the New Zealand Act, but if it was carried out strictly great hardship might be inflicted upon old persons applying for pensions. A man might have been leading a sober life for three

or four years, but would nevertheless be debarred from receiving a pension. It might be contended that a great deal would depend upon the commissioner and the men who administered this measure, as to whether that provision would operate harshly or otherwise; but. if literally interpreted, it might lead to the infliction of great hardships. A man might not be guilty of habitual drunkenness, but might take a little liquor occasionally, and if he did that he might be disqualified as a claimant for a pension. Why not reduce the period from five years to two years or one year?

Mr. D. HUNTER: If you leave out the word "sober" that will meet the case.

The HOME SECRETARY: This provision was similar to that contained in the New South Wales Act. In the Bill brought down last year there was a much more stringent provision, which was taken from the Victorian Act. The Government had now adopted the provision which was more lenient towards applicants, and he did not think that the hon. member need fear that the commissioner would insist upon a too strict interpretation. The Government did not propose to make it a hard-and-fast rule that a man should be absolutely a temperance man for the whole five years, but a certain amount of concession would be made.

Mr. MULLAN wished to know who was to fix the standard of morality for the individual? Was it to be the commissioner or the Government? He suggested that the word "moral" and the word "sober" should be omitted. The clause would then require that an applicant for a pension should be "of good character," and that he should be "leading a reputable life." There was no question of principle involved in the deletion of those two words, and their absence from the clause would afford more latitude and facility in the administration of the Bill.

Mr. COYNE was very much afraid that the gentleman who would be entrusted with the administration of this Bill would find it very difficult to determine what a "sober" man was, especially in a case in which a man was convicted for drunkenness on the mere evidence of a constable. Only a week or so ago he read in the newspapers of a man who was found insensible on the footpath, and was locked up by a policeman on a charge of drunkenness. An hour or so afterwards the lockup-keeper knocked at the door of the cell, and, receiving no answer, went in and found the man dead. The doctor who subsequently examined the body said the man had had no drink whatever, but had simply met with an accident which had rendered him insensible. It seemed to him that in such a case the evidence of the policeman would be the determining factor as to whether a man was sober or otherwise.

The HOME SECRETARY: No.

Mr. COYNE: He could understand it being stipulated that a claimant for a pension should not have been an habitual drunkard for a specified period, but he could not understand the insertion of the word "sober," as that would preclude any man convicted once of the offence of drunkenness during the preceding five years from coming under the provisions of the Bill. It would be a very simple matter for a policeman who had some malice against a man to lock him up on a charge of drunkenness, and the magistrate would accept the policeman's word against the inebriate's every time. With regard to the question of morality, he would like to know who was to say what was a moral person. Some persons who went to church on a Sunday thought it no harm to have a game of cricket afterwards, while other persons thought that such a proceeding was immoral.

An HONOURABLE MEMBER: No.

Mr. COYNE: Well, that it was irreligious. He thought that the term "reputable" covered everything. If a man was an habitual drunkard, or was anything but a sober man, he would not be considered a reputable citizen; and if a man led an immoral life he could not be termed a reputable citizen. Therefore, he was of opinion that it was sufficient to retain the word "reputable," and that all the other words in the subsection were mere surplusage, which might lead to maladministration of the Bill.

Mr. LENNON hoped the Minister would accept the suggestion of the senior member for Charters Towers. Surely it was sufficient to say that a man was "of good character and leads a reputable life." That was sufficiently high praise for anybody. With regard to the question of sobriety, the records of the police courts and other courts in Australia showed how difficult it was to determine whether a man was sober or not. Some years ago a policeman in Melbourne arrested a man for being drunk and disorderly. The policeman was asked if the man was very drunk, and he said, "He was spacheless, your worship." The man could not have been very disorderly if he was speechless. In another case evidence was being given as to whether a man was actually sober or not, and one witness said he was "three sheets in the wind," and another that he was "half-seas over," but none of them would say that he was absolutely drunk. Another witness was asked whether a man was sober, and he replied that "he was as sober as a judge." The judge not being a rabid teetotaler himself, saw the point, and the remark convulsed the court. He thought the Minister should be content to retain in the clause the words "good character" and "leads a reputable life."

The HOME SECRETARY did not know that there was any very great objection to striking out the word "moral," and in substituting the word "temperate" for the word "sober."

Mr. MURPHY: Look at the money you make out of the drink.

The HOME SECRETARY: Did he understand that the hon. member meant to suggest that they should encourage drunkenness?

Mr. MURPHY: No; but I say the State makes a great deal of money out of drink.

The HOME SECRETARY: Well, that was not a question they had to deal with in the present Bill. He moved that the word "moral," on line 24, be omitted.

Amendment agreed to

Mr. D. HUNTER suggested the omission of the words "five years immediately preceding such date." If they were going to penalise men because they could not keep up to the mark for five years, the tendency would be for them to sink lower and lower. He would like the limit to be made one year. He knew how hard it was for men who were addicted to drink to keep from it, and, if they were to be penalised in this way, they were likely to become disheartened. He hoped they would give such men a chance of rising again. They had always the power to stop the pension.

[5 p.m.]

The HOME SECRETARY: The term of five years seemed to have worked very well in New South Wales, New Zealand, and Victoria, and, until they saw how the Act was going to work, they might leave it at that. He begged to move the omission of the word "sober," with the view of inserting the word "temperate."

Mr. PAGET (*Mackay*) asked the Minister to define what he meant by the word "temperate"? Was it to be temperate in regard to drinking, temperate in regard to eating, or temperate in regard to language? He thought the word "sober" was better than the word "temperate," as most men were intemperate in some way or other.

Mr. McLACHLAN (*Fortitude Valley*) thought there was going to be a good deal of trouble in administering the Act if either the word "sober" or the word "temperate" was inserted. "Temperate" was preferable to "sober," but the clause would be better without either, allowing it to read "leading a reputable life."

The HOME SECRETARY thought he had met the Committee very fairly. The word "temperate" did not go as far as the word "sober," and hon. members might let the amendment go.

Mr. W. H. BARNES (*Bulimba*) did not know that the word "sober" was not better than the word "temperate." In regard to drink, one man might be strictly temperate after he took six drinks, whilst another man might be knocked over with one drink. The word "sober" expressed what was intended better than the word "temperate." A great deal would depend upon the administration. They could not pass a measure which would be perfect in every detail, and he took it that the Act would be administered as liberally as possible. He did not think that anyone who was in charge of the business would try to put difficulties in the way. He spoke as an advocate of the Bill.

Amendment (*Mr. Hawthorn's*) agreed to.

Mr. HAMILTON (*Gregory*) moved the omission of paragraph (v.)—

During the twenty years immediately preceding such date he has not for any offence or offences been imprisoned for any period or periods amounting in the whole to five years or upwards with or without hard labour.

If a man had committed a crime and had served his sentence, he had paid the penalty, and should not be persecuted any further. (Hear, hear!) Supposing that fifteen years ago a man had been brought into conflict with the law and had been imprisoned for five years, for the last six or seven years he might have lived a thoroughly sober and reputable life; and yet he would be debarred from getting a pension, although he might require it as badly as anybody in the country. He knew several cases of that kind. To insert such a provision was like following a man as long as there was life in his body.

Mr. RYLAND (*Gympie*) really believed that the paragraph should be omitted. When a man had served his sentence, it should not come up against him again. They did not know when this might be their own case. (Laughter.) There were many cases in which men were more sinned against than sinning. Those provisions had been drafted in the early days of old age pensions, when people wanted all sorts of restrictions imposed. "The quality of mercy is not strained," and they should show mercy in such cases. General Booth, in one of his best addresses, referred to "the undeserving poor," the outcasts—those who were supposed to have sinned against the community: and he said that they were the people who required specially to be looked after—that it was a greater virtue to look after them because they were undeserving than to look after the deserving poor. These people would have to be looked after, even if they had done wrong, and they should let their sins be cast into the sea of oblivion. (Hear, hear!) Each day they prayed, "Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive them that trespass against us."

Mr. MAXWELL: Why do not you forgive the trespasses of those who left your party?

GOVERNMENT MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. RYLAND hoped that the Minister would take into consideration the matters he had brought before him.

Mr. PAGET agreed with other hon. members that when a man served his sentence he should not be debarred from participating in something in the nature of an old age pension when he reached the age to qualify him for it. He thought when a man served a sentence for any crime he committed that he had been sufficiently punished. At the same time, it must not be overlooked that it would be a deterrent to men who had committed a crime not to do so again if a clause something like this were left in the Bill.

Mr. MULLAN: How can it be a deterrent to a man who committed a crime twenty years ago?

Mr. PAGET: The provision said that so long as a man had not been imprisoned for five years altogether in the last twenty years it was all right.

The HOME SECRETARY: It means that so long as he has not spent one-fourth of his life in gaol in the preceding twenty years.

Mr. PAGET desired, with the junior member for Gympie, to see that "the quality of mercy was not strained" in all cases. Still, it might be advisable in some cases to leave the clause in, so as to act as a deterrent to our criminal population not to continue in that course.

Mr. WINSTANLEY (*Charters Towers*): The idea in the subclause was that if a man should happen to get into gaol, although he was not necessarily a criminal, he would be debarred from partaking of an old age pension. There were a lot of men who served sentences for what were called "political offences," and no one would regard them as being criminals. As a matter of fact, some of the best men who ever trod this earth served sentences in that way. John Bunyan served twelve years in goal, but no one would regard him as a criminal, although he would be debarred from getting an old age pension under this Bill.

Mr. PAGET: There are exceptions in all cases.

Mr. WINSTANLEY: He was pointing out the exceptions. There were many men who would prefer to go to gaol for conscience sake and things of that description, and they would not be able to qualify for a pension under the Bill. The clause should be considerably modified.

Mr. MULLAN: One of the chief objections to the deletion of subclause 5 was that by its retention it would be a deterrent against crime. How was that going to apply to people who had committed a crime in the past? A man might have been in prison and been liberated fifteen years from gaol. It could not be a deterrent for him, and it would be no

deterrent to others who had committed crimes in the past. Yet all these people would be deprived of the benefits of this Act. The Bill provided that the time that a man was in gaol would not be counted as the period during which he had resided in Queensland. These men would be handicapped to that extent; that was a penalty in itself, and they might have to wait five years longer so as to be able to say they had been twenty years in Queensland. Subclause 4 said that a man must be of good moral character, and for the five years immediately preceding must have led a sober and reputable life. If a man had been in Queensland for twenty years, even if he had been guilty of some indiscretions in his early life, if he had lived a reputable life for five years, then they might wipe out subclause 5 altogether and grant him the old age pension.

Mr. W. H. BARNES was somewhat in sympathy with the attitude taken by the members of the Labour party. When a man paid the penalty of his crime, it might be considered that he had suffered enough. He suggested that the subclause might be retained, but there should be something added to it. He suggested the addition of the following words:—

unless the Minister in charge of the administration of the Act considers that there are good reasons why the pension should be paid.

(Hear, hear!) The Minister in charge of the Act would know quite well whether the person applying should receive a pension or not. That would solve the whole difficulty of the Labour party.

Mr. KEOGH: What Minister will be in charge?

Mr. W. H. BARNES: It would apply to any Minister in charge. Whatever party was in power, it would be the duty of the Minister to administer the Act fairly, and in the best interests of the State. (Hear, hear!) They were all dealing with the measure on non-party lines. He hoped the Minister would accept the addition to the clause which he had proposed.

Mr. KEOGH rose to uphold all that had been so forcibly put by the Labour members. The Bill provided that a man should not be imprisoned for any offence at all, and did not necessarily state criminal offence. He (Mr. Keogh) had a painful recollection of thirty-five years ago, when he put in six weeks in Her Majesty's gaol. (Laughter.) Would he be allowed to come under the provisions of this Bill? (Laughter.)

LABOUR MEMBERS: No.

Mr. MURPHY: You did not put in five years, did you?

Mr. KEOGH: No. (Laughter.) It would be a wrong thing indeed to leave the subclause stand as it was. If they gave men who had been imprisoned an old age pension it would probably be the means of preventing them from getting back into prison again. It would be far better for the country if that subclause were deleted altogether.

Mr. GRANT: While a good deal could be said for the deletion of the clause, he thought the amendment of the hon. member for Bulimba would meet the case much better. The subclause would be a hardship on some men who twenty years ago served a sentence of imprisonment, and who had paid the penalty of their crime. If that person had lived a reputable life ever since he had come out of gaol, it was not right that he should be deprived of his pension. He quite agreed with the interjection made by the hon. member for Burke to the members of the Labour party. The Labour members said they could forgive the trespass in others, but in spite of that fact there was an undying vendetta against certain men sitting on the Government side of the House. Evidently there was no forgiveness for trespassers there. (Laughter, and Hear, hear!)

Mr. RYLAND: You are wrong there. I have forgiven everyone long ago.

Mr. GRANT: The amendment of the hon. member for Bulimba would leave it in the hands of the Minister. Whatever Minister has been in charge of the indigence alowance he had always meted out justice with mercy, and, in fact, was inclined to the mercy side. Because a man made a lapse ten years ago, no Minister would deprive that man of his pension.

Mr. SUMNER supported the amendment of the hon. member for Gregory.

Mr. KEOGH: I think it would be better to knock subclause 5 out altogether.

Mr. SUMNER thought it would be better to try to reform a criminal instead of persecuting him. A cartoon in the "Review of Reviews" last month exemplified this. At the bottom of the cartoon were these words—

The more our authorities consider the reform of criminals instead of punishing them, the more we shall lessen our criminals.

That was so to a great extent. A man should not be followed up because he had been a criminal. At any rate, the States did not do it, although it was done a good deal by private individuals. They knew how difficult it was for a man coming out of gaol to get a job. He, Mr. Sumner, had a man in his employ who was sent to gaol for twelve months, and when he served his sentence he took the man back again. Good Christian people had told him that he had made a mistake in taking the man back, and there were others who did not want to work with him. He, Mr. Sumner, said that he had taken the man back and he was going to allow him to continue his work. Very few employers of labour would give a man of that sort a job, and he was generally hunted about from pillar to post.

Mr. HAMILTON: They drive him back into crime again.

Mr. SUMNER: Even in Brisbane such a man would not have a chance of getting employment. He thought some effort should be made to reform these men, and induce them to remain straight, but he thought it would have a bad effect if this subclause was allowed to remain in the Bill. He contended, with the hon. member for Gregory, that if a man had served his five years that should absolve him, and no other man should bring his [5.30 p.m.] misfortune up against him. He had paid the penalty, and he did not see that the State should follow him up. He would support the amendment of the hon. member for Gregory.

Question—That the words proposed to be omitted (*Mr. Hamilton's amendment*) stand part of the clause—put and negatived.

The HOME SECRETARY: He must say that he was inclined to accept the amendment of the hon. member for Bulimba.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: The question has been decided.

Hon. E. B. FORREST: We were waiting to know what you were going to do, and you let the thing slip through.

Mr. PETRIE wished to ask the Home Secretary what the Government intended to do with regard to property that had been handed over under the present indigence allowance system. Subclause (vii.) provided—

The net capital value of his accumulated property, whether in or out of Queensland, does not amount to two hundred and sixty pounds or upwards.

He knew old people who were receiving 5s. a week who had transferred their property to the Government. What would be done in their cases? Would the properties be retransferred to them? If they came under the Old Age Pensions Act, he supposed that would be done.

The HOME SECRETARY: That matter had not at present had consideration. In any case, most of the properties were of very small value indeed; and, seeing that the indigence allowance was being kept on, he did not think that the properties which the Government at present held would be interfered with.

Mr. W. H. BARNES thought the argument of the hon. member for Toombul was a strong one. When a person receiving 10s. a week was relieved of certain responsibilities, surely a person in receipt of indigence allowance should be placed in the same category. At present, if a person had a small property, he had to hand it over to the Government in order to receive indigence allowance, and if it were a fair proposal to make certain exemptions in the case of those who came under the Bill, he thought all poor persons should be treated in the same way. He hoped the Home Secretary would give the Committee his views upon the subject.

The HOME SECRETARY: He had already said that the matter had not received consideration. He was quite willing to go into it and do what he considered a fair thing.

Mr. HUXHAM noticed that under subsection 7 £260 was the limit of the capital value of accumulated property which a person receiving a pension might hold. He maintained that that was too low a valuation, and that it should be fixed at, at least, £400. Accumulated property of the value of £400 at 6 per cent. would only bring in £24. They had heard a great deal from time to time about the thriftlessness of certain people, and because they were thriftless it was argued that they should not receive certain benefits. When a man saved a few pounds for his old age, he thought every opportunity should be given to him of supplementing it by an old age pension. There was an admirable article of the February issue of "The World's Work, and, as it was somewhat *apropos* to the present discussion, he would read it to the Committee—

I am fully convinced that this recklessness and improvidence is mainly to be traced to the hopeless condition of the labourer. Give him hope, and you have struck at the root of his worst vice. Inspire a man with the prospect of success in an undertaking, and you give the motive for exertion to accomplish it. Is it not chiefly the desire of securing comforts in the decline of life that stimulates the middle classes to the practice of prudent habits? So let a poor man feel that every sovereign he can put into the savings bank will go to supplement the pension to which he will become entitled from the country, and he would not, as now, regard it just as so much saved to the poor rate. This is literally his feeling now, and it is a sentiment of which the mere money cost to the country is something incalculable. Only let him feel that what he can spare from immediate wants will certainly add to his comforts in old age, and you apply the strongest incentive to thrift and provident habits.

Mr. MANN: That refers to the individualist.

Mr. HUXHAM: Well, in an individualist age they must deal with the matter in that sense. He could see no objection whatever to a person with accumulated property to the value of £400 having the benefit of it for all time. In New South Wales provision was made for pensioners retaining property to the value of £390.

The HOME SECRETARY: And in Victoria it is only £200.

Mr. HUXHAM: He could not help saying that he viewed the Bill with the highest approval, and considered that it did the greatest credit to the Government. In comparing it with the Acts in force in New Zealand, Victoria, and New South Wales, it stood preeminently high, and he should be sorry to see anything done which would make it less liberal than he hoped it would be, because, with a few necessary amendments, it might be made a model measure.

Mr. PAGET: With respect to the request of the hon. member for Brisbane South he would point out that subclause (vii.) said—

The net capital value of his accumulated property, whether in or out of Queensland, does not amount to two hundred and sixty pounds or upwards.

Then if hon. members would turn to clause 11 they would find—

The net capital value of accumulated property shall be assessed in the prescribed manner, and, unless otherwise prescribed, the following provisions shall apply—

(a) All real and personal property owned by any person shall be deemed to be his accumulated property;

(b) From the capital value of such accumulated property there shall be deducted all charges or encumbrances lawfully and properly existing on such property, and also the sum of fifty pounds.

That made the exemption £310. He would also refer to subclause (c) of clause 11 in which it was provided that the local authority's valuation should be taken to be the capital value. Now, it frequently happened that the local authority's valuation was really below what the property was worth. In some instances it was above the value, but very often much below the capital value of the property. So that, in placing the net value of the local authorities at £310, he thought they were doing a fair thing.

Clause, as amended, put and passed.

On clause 9—"Occasional short absences"—

Mr. COYNE noticed that on line 4 reference was made to the fact that continuous residence could not be deemed to have been interrupted unless the absence exceeded three months in any one year.

The HOME SECRETARY: Read on.

Mr. COYNE:

nor in case of longer absence in any one year if the claimant proves that his home was in Queensland or that he was absent for a mere temporary purpose and intended on leaving and during all his absence to return to Queensland as soon as the object of his absence was accomplished.

He could foresee a danger in the case of a great number of people who had for a number of years been going from this State into the other States. They might be unmarried men who could not claim that they had a home in Queensland, and there might have been one year in which they had spent something over three months in another State.

Hon. R. PHILP: That is provided for in subclause (4).

Mr. COYNE: No; he submitted it was not. There must be continuous residence for a certain time, and continuous residence meant that a man could be absent only three months

in any one year. A number of men who followed the occupation of shearing often went to the Southern States.

Mr. LENNON: Subsection (4) protects them.

Mr. COYNE: He could assure hon. members that it did not. He had looked over it very carefully, and could not see where it protected them. Hon. members could not be reading the clause aright. It was only a few years since old age pensions had been established in any of the other States, so that if those men were in those States in any year prior to the establishment of old age pensions they would be debarred from coming under the Act. He would read subclause (4) to convince hon. members that they were wrong. It said—

(4.) Residence in any other Australian State in which provision is made for granting old age pensions shall count as residence in Queensland if—

(*a*) The claimant has during the ten years immediately preceding the date when he establishes his claim continuously resided in Queensland; and

(*b*) The Minister certifies to the registrar that provision has been made by agreement with the Government of such other State as hereinafter mentioned.

They could not make an arrangement with any State except during the time old age pensions were established in Queensland. New South Wales had been paying old age pensions for a number of years, but certainly not for ten years. Suppose, then, that eleven years ago a shearer went across from Queensland to New South Wales, and remained there for five months, that he was an unmarried man, and that he had no land or house which he could call his home——

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: You might find his home under a gum-tree.

Mr. COYNE: That was so; but if the man was told that he must prove that he had a settled home in Queensland during that year, and that he intended to come back, how could he prove that? He wished to obviate any such difficulty occurring by providing that a man might be absent from the State six months instead of three months.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: That difficulty never happens.

Mr. COYNE: Then, what harm could happen by accepting the amendment? Unless some such safeguard were adopted, a great number of our aged men, some of whom were amongst our oldest pioneers, would be debarred from getting a pension.

The HOME SECRETARY thought the hon. member had got an imaginary grievance, because the matter he was referring to was provided for in another part of the clause. In order to get on the roll a man must have a home in Queensland, or must, at all events, reside for a certain time in a particular place. If a man leaving the State intended to be absent only temporarily, even if that absence were longer than three months, and he could prove that he had a home in Queensland, he would be entitled under this clause to receive a pension.

Mr. COYNE: If what the Home Secretary said was correct, what was the good of inserting the words "three months"? Why not make it three weeks, or three days, or three hours, or three minutes? He proposed the insertion of the words "six months" for the purpose of safeguarding the taxpayers of Queensland against paying pensions to persons who were not entitled to pensions. A man did not require a home in order to get on the roll in Queensland. There were men who had their letters sent to an hotel or a bordinghouse where they had got a meal, but where they had never slept a night, and yet they were on the roll.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: Are you going to raise the question as to whether those men have any right to be on the roll?

Mr. COYNE: He was not going to raise any such question. A man was not enrolled because he had a home, but because he was a man.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: The only qualification is residence.

Mr. COYNE: Yes; and a man might reside in one part of a paddock to-night and in another part of the same paddock another night.

The PREMIER: Then that paddock would be his home.

Mr. COYNE: No man had a permanent residence except a dead man. He asked the Minister to study this provision more carefully, and see whether it was not desirable to amend it in the way he had suggested.

The PREMIER: As a matter of fact, the 1st subsection of the clause was inserted for the very purpose of safeguarding the rights of men who had to go away with stock, or who had to leave the State for some similar purpose. The provision was inserted for the purpose of ensuring that continuous residence in Queensland should not be deemed to have been interrupted by an occasional absence from the State. If the period of absence did not exceed three months in any one year a person's residence would be deemed to be continuous, and even if he were absent for a longer period in any one year, and he proved that his home was in Queensland, or that he was absent for a mere temporary purpose, he would still be entitled to claim a pension.

Mr. COYNE: Will you take his oath for that?

The PREMIER: That provision was inserted in order to prevent a man being excluded from a pension because he had been temporarily absent from Queensland

Hon. R. PHILP: A very liberal provision.

The PREMIER: It was a very liberal provision, and, as a matter of fact, if that provision were not in the clause, the very danger the hon. member for Warrego complained of would exist.

Mr. BOWMAN: While he quite appreciated the contention of the hon. member for Warrego, he thought the explanation of the Premier was satisfactory, because from that it was evident that if a claimant could prove that his home was in Queensland, or that he had been absent merely for a temporary purpose, even though that absence exceeded three months in any one year, he would still be entitled to a pension.

Clause put and passed.

Clauses 10 to 13, inclusive, put and passed.

On clause 14—"Commissioner to investigate"—

Mr. MULLAN took exception to the words on lines 16 and 17—"unless for any reason the commissioner deems it necessary to sit in open court." The clause provided that claims for old age pensions should generally be heard in private, but that the commissioner might at his discretion hear them in open court. He thought it was undesirable to hear these cases in open court, if it could be avoided, and would

like to hear from the Minister whether there was any good reason for inserting that provision in the Bill.

The HOME SECRETARY: In New Zealand these applications were heard in open court, but they wanted to avoid that in Queensland. Still, hon. members would see that there might be circumstances in which it would be desirable that a man should produce his witnesses and have his claim heard in open court. That was the reason why the provision had been inserted, giving discretionary power to the commissioner.

Mr. MULLAN did not see why the Commissioner could not insist upon a claimant substantiating his claim at a private hearing as well as in open court. If claims were to be heard in open court a certain odour would attach to a man applying for a pension, and some persons might in consequence hesitate to put in applications for old age pensions. So long as the commissioner had power to require an applicant to prove his claim, the Government would be amply safeguarded, and he thought they should delete the words referring to a hearing in open court, so that applicants would have no fear that their character for twenty years would be raked up against them.

The HOME SECRETARY could not see his way to accept the amendment. They had gone a very long way beyond the other [7 p.m.] States, where claims were heard in open court. The claims would only be heard in open court when the commissioner thought it advisable.

Clause 14 put and passed.

Clauses 15 to 18, inclusive, put and passed.

On clause 19—" Where pension payable"—

Mr. MULLAN said that old people did not care about calling at the police station; and, as there was a Government Savings Bank in every town of importance, where most of the claims would be paid, it would facilitate business if the payments were to be made at the Government Savings Bank.

The HOME SECRETARY thought the best plan would be to leave it as it was, and not specify any place. They would do what they considered best in the interests both of the pensioners and of the department.

Clause put and passed.

Mr. PAGET moved the insertion of a new clause, to follow clause 19, making provision for the giving of notice by the registrar to relatives, for relatives to be summoned to show cause, for an order by the court against relatives, for the enforcement of the order against such relatives, and for cases to be heard in private if the court thought fit. The clause was taken from the Bill introduced last session. He did not desire to take away old age pensions from anybody who was entitled to receive one; but the best old age pension that any mother or father could have was to have dutiful sons and daughters to keep them in their old age. If children were in a position to maintain their parents in comfort in their latter days, those children should be compelled to maintain their parents.

The HOME SECRETARY could not see his way to accept the clause.

GOVERNMENT AND LABOUR MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

The HOME SECRETARY: The clause was in the Bill of last year. It was fully discussed, and the general feeling appeared to be against it.

GOVERNMENT AND LABOUR MEMBERS: Hear, hear!)

The HOME SECRETARY: Of the three States which had old age pensions, Victoria was the only one where the liability of relatives was recognised. New South Wales and New Zealand omitted any reference to the subject; and he thought it would be better to keep in line with the majority of the States.

Mr. MULCAHY was very glad the Minister would not accept the clause. It was fully discussed last year, and he was surprised to see such an amendment coming from the hon. member for Mackay. It frequently happened, when applications were made for the indigence allowance, that one of the reasons alleged why the allowance should not be granted was that the applicants had sons or daughters in a position to keep them. In many cases, when the police made inquiries, the children promised to do something for the old people, but that was all they ever did.

Mr. PAGET: That is the unfortunate part of it.

Mr. MULCAHY: And the old people had to suffer for it. It stood between them and the getting of the dole or indigence allowance. It frequently happened that a son or daughter might be in fair employment in one year, and receive sufficient income to keep their old people, but in a year's time they might be out of employment. The old people could never feel sure that they had anything regular to depend on. Then, again, if sons and daughters were compelled to keep their aged parents, they would find a way of getting out of that liability. If a son or daughter was in a position to keep their parents, unless they were actuated by a sense of duty to do so, then no enactment that they could place on the statute-book would compel them to do so. They would never do it unless it was their natural inclination to do so. The New Zealand Act was on all-fours with this Bill, and it was the same in New South Wales. Unless they passed the Bill in its present form it would be of very little use to the old people, as old men and women, rather than take any action to compel their sons or daughters to keep them, would do without. They did not like to take action against their own people, and it was not natural that they should do so. The officers of the State were also slow to do it, and it would be expensive and difficult if they had to do it, and the result would be bad all round. He hoped the Bill would be passed as it was, as, if they altered it in the direction proposed by the hon. member for Mackay, it would make the Bill almost unworkable for the most deserving cases, because it frequently happened that people who did not care about applying for old age pensions or indigence allowance were really the most deserving. He hoped the good sense of the Committee would give the amendment the fate it deserved, and that was to wipe it out.

Mr. W. H. BARNES thought the hon. member for Mackay was quite right in moving the new clause, and he (Mr. Barnes) also thought he was quite right in the interjection which he made last year on this question—that there was a good deal of difference of opinion on the subject. There was a good deal of difference of opinion that was quite legitimate. He was also right in saying that the leader of the Labour party thought that the people who were able to contribute to the support of their aged parents should do so. Just to show that the hon. member for Mackay was not taking

an unfair advantage, he would read a quotation from a speech made by the leader of the Labour party last year. On page 1312 of *Hansard* Mr. Bowman said—

There are many who will not come under the provisions of this Bill. There are some who should not come under its provisions, particularly if they have enough money to keep themselves. There are men who have sons and daughters in good positions. One clause in the Bill that I appreciate is that which makes provision for compelling such sons and daughters to help a father or a mother.

Mr. PAGET: If they are in a position to do so.

Mr. W. H. BARNES: No one would say that the leader of the Labour party meant to do anything unfair by the people who wanted to get the pension. On that occasion he, Mr. Barnes, went on the same lines as the hon. member for Gympie had done, because of his experience of the indigence allowance, and it was analogous with what they were now discussing. He believed that very frequently in connection with the indigence allowance the most worthy people did not get the allowance at all, while those who were very successful in dodging did get it. He agreed with the hon. member for Kennedy that in connection with the old age allowance and pensions they should be available for everybody. There should be no line drawn whatever, as it might create a great deal of friction in a family. Perhaps the husband might be agreeable and the wife not, or *vice versâ*, and it would create a great deal of feeling. He thought the Government should be commended for leaving out the particular clause which tried to make people provide for their old parents.

The PREMIER: There is no money in it.

Mr. W. H. BARNES: The children who felt that they ought to support their parents would do it whether it was in the Bill or not.

Mr. PAGET: What about those who think they should not contribute?

Mr. W. H. BARNES: He agreed with the hon. member to an extent, but for the money there was in it it was better to take the Bill as it was, and leave that amendment out.

Mr. PAGET: It is a question of principle.

Mr. W. H. BARNES: He knew the hon. member for Mackay was just as sincere in this matter as he was himself. It was a non-party measure, and they would have to do the best they could with this Bill. They wanted to make the Bill the best they could, and he hoped the amendment would not be carried.

Mr. JACKSON: It was quite true that the commission appointed by the Federal Government to inquire into the question of old age pensions made a recommendation that relatives should be made liable for the support of these old people. In New Zealand, Mr. Seddon was always against it, and they had never been able to get this clause introduced into the New Zealand Act nor in New South Wales. In Victoria they had it in the Act, but anyone who took the trouble to read the debates in the Victorian *Hansard* would be convinced that it was not a right thing, nor a good thing, to introduce that principle into old age pensions. They would see there evidence which was the result of experience in Victoria, where working men and working women had been dragged up before the courts to compel them to support their aged fathers and mothers, and they were not in a position scarcely to support their own family.

Mr. PAGET: Then they were not in a position to support their parents.



Mr. JACKSON: Then very often the police magistrate was not sympathetic, and would give a verdict against men and women who were scarcely in a position to pay for the support of their own children. The adoption of a provision of this sort would be really penalising the best citizens in the community—that was, the married men and married women. Under the working of the indigence allowance they all knew that when a man applied for that allowance the allowance was refused until inquiries were made into the financial circumstances of the sons and daughters, and very often the allowance was refused simply because the board or the commissioner who worked the allowance considered that the son or daughter should contribute something. If a man was not married and had no sons or daughters he would get the indigence allowance as a matter of course. That was a discrimination in favour of the unmarried man, and he (Mr. Jackson) objected to it. A provision of that sort would operate mostly against the working men, because it was not often that a wealthy man would refuse to support his father and mother.

Mr. PAGET: We have heard several cases cited by Labour members in this House.

Mr. JACKSON: They heard some civil servant mentioned, and that was the only case he heard. If this clause were inserted, they would find that dozens and dozens of working men would be hauled up to the court under it for not supporting their fathers and mothers. It would work against the working class and the middle class. To adopt that clause they would have to adopt a living wage of, say, £3 a week. Even then it would be difficult to operate, because one man might have six children and another man might have only one child to keep.

Mr. PAGET: Another man might have none.

Mr. JACKSON: It could not operate fairly, and they could not make any rule on the subject. All kinds of positions would result under it. The police magistrate at Charters Towers would decide that a man with one son should be supported by his son, and the police magistrate at Hughenden might have another view. It was impossible to carry out a provision of that sort satisfactorily, fairly, and equal to all, and there would be all kinds of inconsistencies. Perhaps they might make men or women in receipt of an income of over £200 a year subsidise the State allowance of 10s. a week. That might not be an unreasonable provision. It would not be unreasonable to ask a man getting £3 a week to contribute something towards the support of his parents in addition to the 10s. a week allowed by the State. He thought it would be better to leave the Bill as it was. The Premier told them there was not much money in it, and they could trust the Premier when it was a question of money, as he looked after the finances of the State very well. The Home Secretary had just reminded him that in the experience of the working of Dunwich and the indigence allowance it was very difficult to get money from relatives.

Mr. BOWMAN: I can show that many applicants for indigence allowance did not get it because their sons and daughters could pay.

Mr. JACKSON: He knew that the allowance had been refused on that score in many cases. He knew of cases, too, in [7.30 p.m.] which the relatives had not been able to contribute. On the whole he thought it would be better to leave the Bill as it stood. They should go on the same lines

as New Zealand, which had had a very large experience in old age pensions, and on the same lines as those adopted in New South Wales. He hoped the Committee would not accept the amendment.

Mr. BOWMAN: Last year when the measure was before the House he was of opinion —and he was of the same opinion now—that where a son or daughter could maintain their father or mother the State should not be called upon to pay a pension. They had had experience of cases in connection with the present indigence allowance in which men had been offered the alternative of going to Dunwich because their sons or daughters, who could maintain them, did not do so. He remembered a case of a prominent civil servant, whose name he would not mention, a man receiving £400 a year, whose father and mother came to him to fill in the indigence allowance forms. Would any hon. member say that that man should not be compelled to support his father and mother?

Mr. PAGET: Surely not!

Mr. BOWMAN: His opinion was that any son in that position, capable of supporting his parents, who would not do so, should not be kept for a day in the public service.

Mr. JACKSON: You would put the screw on.

The PREMIER: You want to take the screw off.

Mr. BOWMAN: He wanted to teach any man or woman in that position a lesson if they so far forgot their father or mother. It was time they were called upon not to forget.

The PREMIER: It is time the screw was taken off.

Mr. BOWMAN: It was time they suffered a little of the inconvenience their fathers or mothers were called upon to undergo. The hon. member for Kennedy seemed very much gratified the other night that he, Mr. Bowman, was converted to the principle contained in the Bill, but he admitted that there might be a provision introduced compelling a son to contribute towards the support of his parents although an allowance might be made by the State to the parents.

Mr. JACKSON: Subsidise the 10s.

Mr. BOWMAN: Which was the same as what they were asking for in a modified form.

Hon. R. PHILP: The same principle.

Mr. JACKSON: No; quite different.

Mr. BOWMAN: He thought, in dealing with the question of indigence allowance as they had had it for some years in Queensland, too much had been expected of sons and daughters who were receiving small wages. (Hear, hear!) He thought there should be a power of discrimination given to those administering the measure, and that where sons or daughters had families of their own, and were only in irregular work, they should not be forced to contribute to the support of their parents.

Mr. PAGET: Only those who are able.

Mr. BOWMAN: He and other members knew that there were inmates in Dunwich today whose children in this city were well able to support them. Did any hon. gentleman contend that those unfortunate creatures should be allowed to remain in Dunwich while sons and daughters could keep them? He, for one, objected to it; and his vote would go in the direction of compelling sons and daughters who were in a position to maintain their fathers and mothers to do so.

Mr. J. M. HUNTER (*Maranoa*) quite agreed that when a son or daughter—particularly a son—was in receipt of a salary, the State should certainly not be called upon to support the old people. The right of discrimination should certainly be in the hands of the Minister who administered the Bill. But it seemed to him that when children began to forget their duty towards their parents, it was time the State forced them to recognise it. In some cases he admitted that there was a difficulty in doing anything of the sort, because it reacted on the parents. He wished to quote an instance that he knew of personally. He knew of a man, between eighty-three and eighty-four years of age, who had been endeavouring to get the indigence allowance for three or four years, and who had not succeeded because he happened to have two sons who were considered capable of supporting him. When the police called upon one of them he stated he was willing to contribute; but, as a matter of fact, neither of the sons were able to do anything of the sort.

Mr. COWAP: They often say they will because they do not like it thought that they cannot.

Mr. J. M. HUNTER: Just so. As a matter of fact, the Government had frequently been keeping the other son. As a consequence, that poor old man had been deprived of the indigence allowance, although he was given the opportunity of going to Dunwich. Now, as a matter of fact, an old man, who might have a family round him who were willing to do a fair thing, might have little needs that the family could not supply, and he contended that a colonist who had spent fifty-five years in the State, as this man had, and who had been a good citizen, should not be deprived of a pension at the age of eighty-five because he happened to have sons and daughters who were able to support him. He would only support an amendment in the direction indicated if provision were made that the sons or daughters, as the case might be, should be allowed up to a certain limited income themselves before action was taken against them. He recognised that there was need for something being done, because there were men and women in Dunwich, or receiving the indigence allowance, who should not be there, or who should not be receiving the allowance if the sons and daughters did their duty.

HON. R. PHILP considered that sons and daughters should be compelled by law, if able, to support their parents. That was the law at the present time in Victoria, although last year only some £4,000 was received back from the children. There was nothing more disgraceful or more discreditable than that the man who could afford to support his mother or father did not do so and allowed them to become a burden upon the State. In such cases he would not block the payment of the pension, but if it was found that the children could afford to pay, then they should be made to pay—make them do their duty whether they liked it or not. (Hear, hear!) They allowed the amendment before the Committee to go through last year. A similar provision was in the Victorian Act, and he saw no reason why compulsion should not, in certain cases, be put upon sons and daughters. The hon. member for Fortitude Valley had mentioned the case of a man receiving £400 a year whose father was in Dunwich. He had seen people in Dunwich who had no right to be there, and if the Bill went through without amendment hundreds of people who could afford to keep their parents would put them on the State to save

their own pockets. There was nothing, in his opinion, more disgraceful than that people well able to keep their parents should shunt them on to the State.

The PREMIER thought there was some danger in the amendment of confusing two things—confusing the proposal to pay a pension with the giving of charity.

Mr. LESINA: The pension should be paid as a matter of right.

The PREMIER wanted hon. members to understand that the presumption underlying the Old Age Pensions Bill was not that they were going to pay 10s. a week as a matter of charity, but that the State recognised it was wise to pay pensions to the old soldiers of industry just as they would pay pensions to old military men. He had never been able to see, himself, why a man who dug postholes for forty years was not just as good a servant to the State as the man who fought battles for forty years. At any rate, whether that idea was right or wrong, that was the principle of old age pensions. The hon. member for Fortitude Valley confused the thing when he spoke about a civil servant with £400 a year permitting his father and mother to apply for charity. He thought it was quite right to compel the relatives of people who were in receipt of charity to support them. If it was going to be simply a matter of charity, the relatives should support the persons in receipt of charity. After a man's mother or father had kept him for years, surely the man should not forget the obligation he owed to his parents. That was the view he took.

Mr. KEOGH: Your father kept you long enough.

The PREMIER: If he would not do it voluntarily it was quite proper that the State should make him do it. It was a defect in our law that old people who were broken down and in destitute circumstances should have to come on the State, whilst some of their children, whom they had educated and brought up, were without any filial feeling, and let those aged people become a charge on the general community, doing nothing at all for them. A man ought to be ashamed to allow his parents to come on the State when he had the means to maintain his parents himself, and where such a man was not ashamed of his conduct he ought to be made ashamed of it. (Hear, hear!) Our law in regard to this matter should be amended, and made much more drastic than it was. But he wanted hon. members to understand that that was a different matter entirely from the paying of old age pensions. (Hear, hear!) The idea underlying old age pensions was that the pension was the stored up fruits of the citizen's own industry. The Germans recognised that, and required each citizen to pay a certain amount, and he was not very sure that it would not be a good thing here that each person when working should pay a certain amount towards his pensions, because that would create the feeling that the money he received he had assisted to provide.

Mr. LESINA: That is all right in a highly organised country like Germany.

The PREMIER: He recognised that in a country with a scattered population like Queensland it would be difficult to carry that out in practice, and he only mentioned the matter because if such a system were enforced here it would intensify the feeling that the money got in the form of a pension was not charity, but was the accumulated result of the man's own work in the State. That was the purpose underlying this Bill, and it would be regrettable——

Hon. R. PHILP: You did not say that last year.

The PREMIER: Oh, yes, he always said it; he said it a long time before last year.

Mr. PAGET: It was in your Bill.

The PREMIER: That might be so. There were a good many other things in the Bill which were not quite in accordance with his ideas, but they were trying to pass a measure which was really in accordance with the modern idea of paying State pensions to old citizens. Hon. members did not seem to be able to get away from the notion that they were providing charity for the indigent members of the community, but that was not the idea underlying the principle of old age pensions. He would much rather amend this Bill by making a charge per head on the citizens to provide for old age pensions——

Mr. JENKINSON: A poll tax?

The PREMIER: Yes; a poll tax. He would rather amend the measure in that way than he would amend it in a way which would make it in no essential respect different from other forms of charitable relief. He hoped the Committee would not seriously consider putting this blemish in the Bill.

HON. R. PHILP: If this was an Old Age Pensions Bill under which everybody could get a pension, the argument of the hon. gentleman would be all right, but it was not; it was a measure—as would be seen from clause 8—providing for the payment of pensions under certain conditions. A man must have not more than a certain amount of property, and must not be able to maintain himself, before he was entitled to a pension. If this was a measure providing for the payment of old age pensions to everyone in Queensland of a certain age, he would not cavil at the hon. gentleman's argument. But the pension was only payable to a certain number of people sixty-five years of age, who were not able to maintain themselves.

The PREMIER: Who had not got enough dividends previously.

HON. R. PHILP: Quite so; but it would be a blot on the Bill if it were not provided that, where aged people had relatives who could afford to maintain them, they should be compelled to contribute to their support. If they gave old age pensions to everybody, it would be all right to omit such a provision.

The PREMIER: It will come to that all right. This is the first step.

HON. R. PHILP: No; this was not the first step. Sir Horace Tozer, a gentleman who had been much maligned in the State, was the first man to introduce the indigence allowance or old age pensions. This Bill was a step in advance, but there should be no discrimination as to the persons entitled to a pension, unless with that discrimination they made persons—sons or daughters, husbands or wives—who were in a position to maintain their aged relatives contribute towards their support.

Mr. LESINA had listened very carefully to the reasons advanced by the hon. member for Mackay, the leader of the Opposition, and the hon. member for Bulimba in favour of the amendment, but he was compelled to admit that he was not convinced by their arguments. The Premier had put the position in a much stronger light than it was put when the Bill was last before the House. This was not a

Bill to confer charity on aged men and women, but to pay pensions to certain deserving citizens and also to undeserving citizens who complied with the conditions laid down in the Bill. Those conditions were that a person must have resided in the State for twenty years, must for five years before making application have been a man of fairly decent character, and must have only property of a certain amount.

Mr. PAGET: Therefore, everybody cannot get a pension.

Mr. LESINA: They did not propose to pay pensions to rich people. The Estimates showed that there were already too many pensions paid to rich people. Poor people had received no pensions, but were given a certain dole of charity, and they had almost to go down on their hands and knees before they could secure that dole from the department. This measure would save an enormous amount of trouble and worry to members, who were besieged by all kinds of persons, men and women, in the street, at their homes, and in their offices, asking them to assist the applicants to get the paltry 5s. a week indigence allowance. Though the Bill did not go as far as he would like it to go, yet it went a great deal further than the Bill of last session, and further than the Old Age Pensions Acts of some other parts of Australia. He had no objection to people who were in a position to keep their parents being compelled to do so, but that should be done at the right time and in the proper form. One of the chief blots on the Victorian Old Age Pensions Act was the provision under which poor people had been dragged into court day after day, and had been compelled to disclose their scanty incomes, in order that the magistrate might adjudicate on their case, and compel them from their scanty earnings to contribute to the maintenance of their relatives. This kind of thing had resulted in much injustice, discontent, and heartburning, and the number of persons enjoying old age pensions in Victoria was decreasing every year as a consequence. If a public servant receiving £400 a year had an aged father who was in indigent circumstances it might be a proper thing to require that person to assist in maintaining his parent; but that servant might be a married man, who had to keep up a certain appearance, and he would like to know whether the Government would be prepared to pay public servants so situated a higher wage than is paid to single men? Of course, they would not do so; they did not hire men on those terms, but because they were able to do their work. What the men did with their money was their own business. They might gamble it at the "Creek," spend it over the bar, or invest it in stocks, but that was no business of the Government. There were thousands of homes in Queensland where aged people were living with their sons and daughters and receiving no pension, and those sons and daughters would obtain some little advantage from the passing of this Old Age Pensions Bill. That was an advantage which was lost sight of in their attempt to hunt down the man with £400 a year. The Premier had hit the nail right on the head. He believed that steps should be taken in the distribution of charity to procure from the sons and daughters of parents who were in receipt of public contributions some measure of assistance. That could be done in its proper time and way; but that was not in connection with an old age pension, which they were going to give as a matter of right to those who had earned it. To do that would be to degrade the principle of the pension. The farther apart they could keep charity from the payment of a pension as a right, the better they would be able to judge of the merits of the question. Another aspect of the question occurred to him. The hon. member for Kennedy stated that in the debates in the Victorian Assembly member after member testified to the unjust way in which this provision operated in the police courts. He did not want to do an injustice to anybody. The principle of the Bill was to do justice. The amendment was outside the scope of the Bill; and, although he would support the proposition to make those children who were in a position to keep their aged relatives do so, this was not the time or place.

[8 p.m.]

Mr. JENKINSON: Your principle is not recognised in the Bill.

Mr. LESINA: They were getting a big step. He would like to see it go further, but he totally disagreed with the remark of the Premier—although he did not think the hon. gentleman spoke seriously—that citizens should pay out of their salaries so much per week.

The PREMIER: We will just do the same now, whether we earmark it for this purpose or not.

Mr. LESINA: This would really be a poll tax to which every taxpayer would contribute.

The PREMIER: But it would create in a more marked way the feeling that this was a man's own.

Mr. LESINA: The Premier's parallel to the old soldier was a good one, because is was essentially just. The pioneer squatter, the pioneer farmer, the pioneer tank-sinker, fencer, shearer, and goldminer, who needed State assistance when they were no longer able to assist themselves, were to be told that they were to be assisted if they fulfilled certain conditions. The Premier compared them to old soldiers who were unable to help themselves. The parallel wanted to be pushed a little further, to show how ineffective was the proposition of the hon. member for Mackay. Would it not be considered absurd if an old soldier who had fought in the Crimea or the Indian Mutiny was asked, before his pension was paid, whether he had any sons or daughters, and if they were compelled to keep that old soldier?

Mr. JENKINSON: The positions are not analogous at all.

Mr. LESINA: They were. The men who fought the battle of industry on the Western plains did just as much to forward civilisation as the man who carried a gun. Both served their country in different ways. He did not wish to extol or depreciate one at the expense of the other. The man who shifted out the alignment pegs of the Empire did no greater duty to his country than the man who cleared the track of civilisation. Both equally deserved pensions when they were no longer able to help themselves. To make it a charity in the one case was as unjust and as reprehensible as in the other. In bringing it down to the test of first principles the Premier had practically settled all support that the hon. member for Mackay was likely to get.

Mr. JENKINSON intended to support the amendment. He wished to dissipate the principle that had been laid down by the Premier that there was no distinction between the man who fought for his country and the pioneer of industry or civilisation. The soldier had to serve a certain apprenticeship, during which he was confined to barracks. He had

none of the social enjoyments of the ordinary citizen. He was subjected to the most rigid discipline. When he became a soldier of the line, he could not marry without the consent of his superior officer. He could not enjoy the same home comforts as an ordinary man. He could not get his own property together. He must be at the beck and call of his commanding officer, and, when called upon to move, he had to go at a few hours' notice. He had no home life in time of peace. But in time of war he had to go to the front, with no chance of taking his family with him, while he ran the risk of losing limb or life.

Mr. SUMNER: People do that every day far more than on the battlefield.

Mr. JENKINSON: That was not so. The number of people who were killed through accidents was not as great as the losses in battle. If they were going to take the number of people who died, the most dangerous thing that any individual could do was to go to bed, because more people died in bed than died out of it. Then there was the question of pay. A soldier got about 1s. 1d. a day, whereas the man outside got a good wage.

The PREMIER: A bloated millionaire all the time.

Mr. JENKINSON: The man who got his £1 15s., £2, or £2 10s. a week was a bloated capitalist compared with the man who only received 6s. 6d. a week. The hon. member for Clermont referred to the pioneers of civilisation. If they studied the history of any country, they would find that in ninety-nine cases out of one hundrerd the pioneer had nobody dependent upon him; and in all probability in the solitary instance when he had a family he had left them to the support of the State in the towns, while he was gallivanting about the bush. Mr. Brenan had a good deal to say about that in his report. The man who blazed the track of civilisation was not likely to come under the amendment of the hon. member for Mackay, because he had no relatives. He endorsed the principle laid down by the Premier, but that principle was not adopted in the Bill.

The PREMIER: The beginnings of it are there.

Mr. JENKINSON: There were restrictions upon it. If this were an old age pension for everyone who had attained the age of sixty-five years, the argument of the Premier would be sound. His (Mr. Jenkinson's) idea of an old age pension was that every individual from the Chief Justice downwards should be entitled to the amount provided by the Bill, without discrimination as to income or position. Why should not their friend, Mr. Bernays, be entitled to it the same as anybody else, if they were going to recognise the principle? He agreed with the argument of the hon. member for Mackay and the leader of the Opposition that if they were not adopting that principle it was only fair to say to the people, who were that mean and contemptible that they would allow their relatives to become a burden on the State, "You are not doing your duty to your parents, and it is imperative that you should remove the stigma from those who brought you into the world and looked after you well in your early life; you should remove the stigma from them by paying towards their keep in their old age." That was the right attitude to take up, and any hon. member who was not wilfully blind must support the amendment.

Mr. KEOGH: There were many cases where people who were in a position to keep their parents would not do so. He knew of an ex-member of the House who actually allowed his mother and sister to live on charity, and he knew another ex-hon. member for South Brisbane, but for whom those parties would have actually starved, and when the son was asked to contribute something towards the keep of his mother and sister he gave 2s.; that was all the money they could get out of him. He knew men in the employ of the Railway Department to-day who were in good circumstances, and whose parents were down at Dunwich, and yet they were not called upon to pay anything. It was infamous that children should be so inhuman that they would let their parents be kept by the State. They were told that this was not a charity but a right, but it was nothing but charity.

Mr. MAXWELL interjected.

Mr. KEOGH: He had more charity in his little finger than the hon. member for Burke had in his whole carcass. (Laughter.)

The CHAIRMAN: Order!

Mr. KEOGH: He was prepared to give the names to the Home Secretary of the persons employed by the State whose parents were down at Dunwich. He knew the case of a man worth thousands of pounds who allowed his brother to go to Dunwich, and when his brother died there he actually paid £25 for a coffin to bring the body to Ipswich to be buried, and yet he never contributed one halfpenny towards his brother's support for years. The amendment was a good one. The hon. member for Clermont had an aged parent with him, and he could speak feelingly on this subject. He considered the hon. member was one of the best young men in the State for the work he was doing in that respect. He considered that State servants earning good salaries should be made to support their parents.

Mr. SUMNER hoped the amendment would not be carried, not because he did not sympathise with it, as he considered that men and women who would not support their aged parents were not worth calling men and women. But there were difficulties in the way. He knew an old man eighty years of age whom he took to the Home Secretary to get the indigence allowance of 5s. per week. Inquiries were made about him, and it was found that he had three sons and two daughters who were willing to keep him. The old man said that his children could not afford to keep him, as they had families of their own to keep, and if they did their duty to their children they could not keep him.

Mr. WHITE: He preferred to let the State keep him.

Mr. SUMNER: That man was now earning his own living. He was getting 4s. a week and his keep, and was working away, although he was over eighty years of age.

Mr. JENKINSON: That is much better than leaning on the State.

Hon. R. PHILP: More power to him.

Mr. SUMNER: He knew another man over eighty years of age who preferred to work until he was at his last gasp rather than ask for assistance from anyone. The danger under this new clause was that men and women who were apparently in affluent circumstances would be hauled up before the court, and they would have to reveal the condition of affairs with regard to their income, and some endeavour

would be made to make them pay towards the support of their parents. He was opposed to the amendment. He hoped the day would come when everyone would be able to take the pension when they got to a certain age, whether they were rich or poor, just the same as the military pension. He thought that the old age pensions should be taken over by the Commonwealth, and some vote ear-marked for the purpose, so that everyone in the Commonwealth would contribute to it.

Hon. R. Philp: They will do it next year.

Mr. SUMNER: It was easy to talk about old age pensions when they had plenty of money and good times, but just as they had years of plenty so they would have lean years, and that was why he thought it would be better for the Commonwealth to take it over.

Mr. MITCHELL thought the amendment would be a serious blot on the Bill. It would be an impossible thing for any commissioner to determine whether men in certain circumstances were in a position to contribute towards the support of their aged people or not. At the present time if a man was earning £3 a week he was supposed to be in a position to contribute towards the indigence allowance of his parents, but £3 a week was scarcely sufficient to keep the homes of a good many people. They knew there were plenty of people getting £400 a year who found it was as hard to live on that as others found it to live on £2 a week. Another thing was that they should keep it free from anything like a charitable donation, and make it as near as possible a donation for services rendered. There were many people who had the pension who had not had an opportunity of saving. As the hon. member for Fassifern pointed out, Mr. Brenan, in his report, said that many men left their families at home and went out into the fields to work. How many of these men who were the pioneers of Queensland had an opportunity to save enough money to make them independent in their old age? There was not one in a hundred. He hoped the Home Secretary would refuse to accept the amendment and leave the Bill as it was at the present time. He noticed when the Premier was speaking that he was against the principle of people being compelled to pay for the [8.30 p.m.] pensions of their aged parents, and he made the remark that he would sooner adopt the principle of compelling individuals to pay a certain amount in order to secure their pensions. He (Mr. Mitchell) just thought how quickly members on the Opposition benches recognised an old friend when they interjected, "That would be a poll tax." He hoped the Home Secretary would adhere to the Bill as it stood.

Question—That the proposed new clause (*Mr. Paget's*) stand part of the Bill—put; and the Committee divided:—

Ayes, 19.

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|---|---|
| Mr. Appel | Mr. Paget |
| ,, Bowman | ,, Petrie |
| ,, Campbell | ,, Philp |
| ,, Denham | ,, Somerset |
| ,, Forrest | ,, Stodart |
| ,, Fox | ,, Swayne |
| ,, Gunn | ,, Thorn |
| ,, Hauran | ,, Walker |
| ,, Jenkinson | ,, White |
| ,, Keogh | |

*Tellers*: Mr. Paget and Mr. Keogh.

Noes, 46.

| | |
|---|---|
| Mr. Airey | Mr. Kenna |
| ,, Barber | ,, Kerr |
| ,, Barnes, G. P. | ,, Kidston |
| ,, Barnes, W. H. | ,, Land |
| ,, Barton | ,, Lennon |
| ,, Bell | ,, Lesina |
| ,, Blair | ,, Mackintosh |
| ,, Brennan | ,, Mann |
| ,, Cottell | ,, Maxwell |
| ,, Cowap | ,, May |
| ,, Coyne | ,, McLachlan |
| ,, Douglas | ,, Mitchell |
| ,, Grant | ,, Mulcahy |
| ,, Grayson | ,, Mullan |
| ,, Hamilton | ,, Murphy |
| ,, Hardacre | ,, Nevitt |
| ,, Hawthorn | ,, Rankin |
| ,, Herbertson | ,, Redwood |
| ,, Hunter, D. | ,, Roberts |
| ,, Hunter, J. M. | ,, Ryland |
| ,, Huxham | ,, Sumner |
| ,, Jackson | ,, Winstanley |
| ,, Jones | ,, Woods |

*Tellers*: Mr. Winstanley and Mr. Douglas.

Resolved in the negative.

Clauses 20 to 26, inclusive, put and passed.

Clause 27—"Forfeiture of instalments for certain offences"—

Mr. LENNON: That clause seemed to him particularly unfair. It read—

When a pensioner is in any court convicted of drunkenness or any simple offence, then, in addition to any other punishment imposed, the court may, by order, forfeit any one or more of the instalments falling due after the date of the conviction.

That was imposing two punishments for the one offence.

The Premier: No; it is not for that purpose at all. It is to prevent the public becoming enraged against the system of old age pensions

Mr. LENNON: He called attention to the fact because it appeared to him like dealing out two punishments for one offence. It did not commend itself to his judgment as being much like Australian justice. He trusted the Minister would be able to say whether it commended itself to his Australian mind as Australian justice.

The HOME SECRETARY did not think the clause unreasonable. It appeared in the other Australian Acts, and they could not do better than profit by the experience of the other States.

Clause 27 put and passed.

On clause 28—"Power to cancel pension for drunken habits"—

Mr. LESINA did not object to the cancellation of a pension for drunken habits in cases where pensioners became chronic inebriates, but it appeared to him that, in conjunction with the Act, it would be advisable for the Government to establish, at convenient centres, inebriate institutions into which those persons who became chronic inebriates could be put.

The Premier: We need such institutions for a great many people besides old age pensioners.

Mr. LESINA: Quite so. There might be a number of persons, otherwise qualified for pensions, who had the unfortunate habit of lapsing into inebriety, and persons in receipt of pensions might occasionally meet old friends, and might be induced to imbibe somewhat freely. That might occur once or twice in twelve months, and for that offence they could be struck off the list. In such cases there was nothing for the old people to do except go to gaol or Dunwich, or—a better alternative still—to go into an inebriate asylum. He would ask whether the Government intended to take up that question in order to meet what might be a serious difficulty

The HOME SECRETARY: He might tell the hon. member that the Government recognised the necessity of something of the sort, and the matter was under consideration. As soon as the session was over, the whole matter would be gone into.

Clause 28 put and passed.

Clause 29—"Payment of pensions out of moneys appropriated"—put and passed.

On clause 30—"Annual statement to be laid before Parliament"—

Mr. JENKINSON asked the Minister to define "simple offence."

The HOME SECRETARY replied that the term was defined in the Justices Act.

Clause put and passed.

Clauses 31 to 33, inclusive, put and passed.

The schedule was passed with a verbal amendment.

The House resumed, and the CHAIRMAN reported the Bill with amendments.

The Bill, as amended, was taken into consideration, and its third reading was made an Order of the Day for to-morrow.

## LAND ACTS AMENDMENT BILL.

### COMMITTEE.

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

On clause 2—"Amendment of sections 30, 39, and 52"—

Mr. HARDACRE said he had no particularly strong objection to the provision prohibiting the members of either House of Parliament from appearing before the Land Court. At the same time, he considered that if ever there was any justification for the provision, that justification was gone, as he did not know of any member of Parliament who habitually appeared before the Land Court in the capacity of counsel or agent. But, in any case, he did not think members should be prevented from appearing in a case if their services were required.

Clause put and passed.

Clauses 3 and 4 put and passed.

On clause 5—"Amendment of section 92"—

Mr. HARDACRE: The amendment proposed in this clause made the whole amount of survey fee in connection with the selection of prickly pear country payable upon application, and he thought that amendment was necessary in order to prevent persons obtaining such land at a nominal rental for five years, and then forfeiting it.

Clause 5 put and passed.

On clause 6—"Amendment of section 100"—

Mr. HARDACRE said this clause dealt with the tender system. He had admitted that there had been abuses in connection with the ballot system, under which a number of applications were often made by the same person for the purpose of getting a special advantage.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: This clause merely deals with one aspect of the question.

Mr. HARDACRE: That was so; it amended section 100 of the principal Act.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Do you know in what way?

Mr. HARDACRE: Yes; it proposed that selections should be proclaimed open at an upset rent, and that they should be allotted on the tender system, but that if only one person tendered for a selection at the proclaimed upset rent his tender should be accepted. He thought that was a very fair thing. Dealing with the abuses of the ballot system, he would point out that it often worked in this way: A small number of grazing selections were proclaimed open to selection, a number of persons put in applications for those selections, and some used the names of other persons as applicants in order to increase their chances of success, and then the successful applicant sold out or transferred his grazing selection to someone else at an enhanced price.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS pointed out that the hon. member's observations ought to be confined to the merits [9 p.m.] or demerits of this particular amendment of section 100 of the principal Act, which related to the tender system. The amendment did not raise the whole question of the tender system. If the hon. member meant to raise that question, the proper way would be to circulate an amendment a day or two before they discussed it in Committee. It was not quite the right thing to raise the whole principle of tendering at the present time.

Mr. HAMILTON: He believed the clause related to grazing homesteads. There were some law cases some time ago as to whether, when there was only one applicant for a grazing homestead, the proclaimed price or the price tendered by the applicant should be the rent; and the court held the proclaimed price was to be the rent.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: Yes; it also applies to grazing farms when there is only one applicant. This will make the tender price, and not the proclaimed price, the rent.

Hon. D. F. DENHAM: Quite right, too.

Mr. HARDACRE agreed with the Minister that, if they were going to endeavour to make an amendment, it would be better to have the amendment circulated beforehand. He understood that it was the desire of hon. members not to prolong the discussion, and all he desired to do was to get the sense of the Committee upon the question and, possibly, a promise from the Minister that he would either deal with it now or in another Bill.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: If you will be good enough to let me have your views in writing, I shall be very pleased to look into the matter.

Mr. HARDACRE wished to point out briefly the abuses of the ballot system. That system had its advantage, but experience showed that it was liable to abuse.

Mr. HAMILTON: It created blackmailers.

Mr. HARDACRE: A grazing selection was in great demand at a certain proclaimed rent. It was possible for the successful applicant to transfer the selection, and it was a valuable advantage to him. The *bonâ fide* selector who eventually secured the selection had to pay as high a rent as he would pay under the tender system, the only difference being that the increased rent went to the blackmailer instead of to the Treasury. There were also evils under the tender system. It practically gave the rich man a considerable advantage over the selector who could not afford to tender at so high a price. A grazing selection might be thrown open on a certain leasehold or adjacent to that leasehold. It might have a water frontage, and shut off all the back country from water. It might, therefore, be of greater value to the pastoral lessee than to any other person, and it would be to his advantage to pay a higher price than anybody else to get hold of the area. Thereby he ex-

cluded *bonâ fide* applicants for grazing selections. There was a great outcry in the country against the tender system. When Mr. Foxton introduced the tender system he was favourably inclined towards an alternative suggested by him (Mr. Hardacre), and he said he would accept the suggestion if he (Mr. Hardacre) would vote for the tender system. He refused to do that, and the tender system was carried by one vote. If he had agreed to support Mr. Foxton's proposal, and his amendment had been inserted, it would have been the law to-day instead of the unlimited tender system. His idea was that selections should be thrown open, and that a maximum as well as a minimum rent should be fixed. Tenderers should be allowed to offer any amount between the minimum and maximum upset prices. Those who did not desire to pay more than the minimum would be weeded out, and those who tendered up to the maximum would go to the ballot. It was the tender system shorn of its disadvantages and possibilities of abuse.

Hon. R. PHILP: You cannot get that into the Bill. You are only wearying the Committee.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: If the hon. member were reasonable—and he believed he was—he would put it to him that they were considering the clauses of the Bill as they passed the second reading. The hon. member was embarking on a learned and interesting dissertation upon various forms of tender, and he suggested some extensive amendments that might be carried out in the system. But it was quite obvious that the hon. member had not got his suggestions in a sufficiently concrete state to expect them to be embodied in the Bill. He assured the hon. member in the most amiable way that it would be far better if he were to reduce his views to writing, and give him (Mr. Bell) the opportunity of reading them; and if he were in charge of the next Land Bill the hon. member's views would receive very full and dispassionate consideration. Whatever merit there was in them, it was utterly impossible for them to find a place in this Bill.

Mr. HARDACRE did not intend to press the matter, but the hon. gentleman would remember there was a considerable discussion upon it on the second reading. A number of members expressed their objection to the tender system, and he wanted to suggest a way out of the difficulty. He wished to put another concrete case. Here was a grazing selection proclaimed open at 2d. per acre. Under the system he suggested, a maximum rent of, say, 4d. an acre would also be proclaimed. If there were two or more applications at 4d. an acre, those would go to the ballot.

Mr. LAND understood the clause only dealt with one particular phase of the tender system in reference to the proclaimed price. He thought the Minister's proposal was a good one—that he would be prepared to receive from any member any suggestions which he wished to make as amendments in the land laws. He particularly wished to make some suggestions in connection with the tender system. They had got the promise of the Minister that when he was preparing another Land Act Amendment Bill he would favourably consider the suggestions sent in by members.

Mr. LESINA did not altogether agree with those hon. members who were inclined to accept the suggestion of the Minister that they should sit down and write out their suggestions for the amendments they wished to propose in the land laws.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: That is an opportunity that would not suit you.

Mr. LESINA: It was departing from the traditional parliamentary practice, which allowed members to come here and state their views and have them recorded in *Hansard*. What were members elected for if it was not to make use of their opportunities in Parliament and have their speeches recorded? If they did, then the Minister would be able to take that interesting volume in his hand and carefully study the gems of wisdom that fell from the lips of members on occasions like this. The Minister could take up the speech of the hon. member for Leichhardt, for instance, and carefully peruse it at his leisure. He could also submit it to his Under Secretary, and between them they could go carefully into the matter and have their views ready for the Land Act Amendment Bill which would be introduced next session. They must have their annual Land Bill next session, as they had an average of more than one for every session now. Why, no laymen knew what our land laws were now. Why, even experts like the Minister were involved at times in attempting to find out how these clauses applied in this Bill or in that Bill.

Hon. R. PHILP: Would you not go to a lawyer for your information?

Mr. LESINA: No, he would not. When he wanted any information in connection with the land laws, he went to the courteous officers of the Lands Department, who knew their business. He did not think any lawyer understood the land laws like the officers of the department. He did not think members ought to take upon themselves the burden of responsibility which the Minister had very kindly suggested they should do, and sit down and write essays as to how they thought their land laws should be brought out. It would simply add to the worries of members. Fancy seventy-one essays being sent to the Minister!

Clause 6 put and passed.

On clause 7—"Amendment of section 122"—

Mr. HARDACRE: At the present time if a grazing homesteader took up a grazing homestead and he afterwards opened another grazing homestead contiguous to his selection, he had to perform the conditions of residence on his first homestead, and that would do for the adjacent selection as well. That was a fair thing. The Minister proposed, under this clause, to prevent the homesteader from doing that. He could quite understand that there might be some objection, for the homesteader took up a grazing homestead here, there, and somewhere else, and somewhere else again, but where the selections were contiguous and actually adjacent to one another, he did not see why the selector should perform the conditions of residence on his own selection as well as on the one contiguous to it. Why should not a small selector get his area enlarged as his stock grew, if he felt so inclined? Whilst they were preventing the grazing homesteader from doing that they did not prevent the grazing farm selector from doing it. The grazing farm selector could perform his conditions of residence by a bailiff on one selection or on both of them. But they were still restricting the grazing homesteader. If they were going to do it with the one they should do it with the other. At present he did not see why they should do it with either where the areas were contiguous.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: The Committee would remember that a grazing homestead was a grazing farm on which the successful applicant had undertaken to personally reside for the first five years of the lease, and in virtue of that undertaking, he had priority over all other applicants who would not give such an assurance. Hon. members would admit, when

they considered the matter, that, when a man received priority over a number of selectors for a piece of land in virtue of the fact that he undertook to personally live upon it for the first five years of the lease, that that undertaking should be carried out. (Hear, hear!) And he ought to live on it. (Hear, hear!) And, if he took another farm, there was no reason why he should not perform all the conditions in virtue of which he had priority over a dozen or more selectors. (Hear, hear!)

Mr. HAMILTON could not support the Minister in his contention, as it was penalising the homesteaders, and it was the homesteaders that they wanted to encourage. If the homesteader took up another area, so long as it was within the maximum area allowed by the Act, and so long as he personally resided on one selection and not on the two selections, it should be sufficient—so long as the two selections were within the limits prescribed in the proclamation. The grazing farmer need never live near his place, but could have bailiffs there.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: The grazing farmer cannot take it up if the grazing homesteader comes along.

Mr. HAMILTON: And a man could not take up another block if a grazing homesteader came along.

THE SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: He can if he tenders more rent.

Mr. HAMILTON: He did not think it was a fair amendment. If it was fair to allow one selector to take up a contiguous selection without residence conditions, it was fair to allow another. He knew one grazing lessee who had over 600,000 acres of grazing farms.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: He is only dummying.

Mr. HAMILTON: He had no bailiffs or anyone else on it. They should give every encouragement to the grazing homesteader, but, in this amendment, the Minister was penalising them, and it was not a fair thing.

Clause 7 put and passed.

Clause 8 put and passed.

On clause 9—"Perpetual lease selections similar to agricultural farms"—

Mr. HARDACRE: This was an important clause, and he was not quite satisfied with it. For one thing the rent was far to high. During the first ten years the annual rent was to be £2 10s. per centum of the proclaimed purchasing price of the land. As he pointed out on the second reading, a selector was asked to pay exactly the same rent that he would have to pay as part of his purchasing money if he were ultimately going to get his freehold. Surely they were not going to ask the selector to pay as much for his lease as they asked others to pay to get their freehold!

Mr. PAGET: You say that freehold is a bad thing.

Mr. HARDACRE: It was a bad thing for the State.

Mr. PAGET: You say it is bad for the selector.

Mr. HARDACRE: No; not for the selector. When the selector got a freehold, he was getting something which he could sell afterwards, and it would be more advantageous to him from that point of view than to get the mere lease. It was because of the disadvantage to the State that he took objection to it. The Minister would see that it was not a reasonable proposition. They were now throwing open agricultural farm selections at various prices of 10s., 15s., and £1 an acre.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: You know that a man can sell his interest in a lease.

Mr. HARDACRE: But that was not as valuable as a freehold. When agricultural farms were thrown open, it was provided that the rent should be one-fortieth part of the purchase price. If the land was thrown open at 10s. per acre, one-fortieth of that would be 3d. per acre. The 2½ per cent. mentioned in this clause also came to 3d. per acre. If the agricultural farm was thrown open under the present law at £1 per acre, one-fortieth of that was 6d. per acre, and ultimately the selector got his freehold. Under this clause, land thrown open to perpetual lease at £1 per acre would mean that the selector would have to pay a rent of 6d. per acre, which was exactly the same price as the purchasing price under the existing laws. If it were going to be carried out in that way, then the perpetual lease was doomed to failure. No one would go in for a perpetual lease just for the sake of having a lease, when they could get the freehold for the same money.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: You say that some people prefer the lease?

Mr. HARDACRE: Not at the same rate as was charged for the purchasing price. They should reduce the rent for the first ten years to £1 5s. per cent., and he moved the omission of the words "two pounds ten shillings per centum" in line 47 with the view of inserting "one pound five shillings per centum."

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS had listened attentively to the hon. member for Leichhardt, and he was prepared to come down half per cent. The hon. member [9.30 p.m.] might not think that a very generous offer, but he would refer him to the condition of things which prevailed under very similar tenure in New Zealand. There they had what was called a perpetual lease. It was a lease for a term of sixty-six years, with the right of perpetual renewal, and the annual rent was 4 per cent. of the actual value as determined by the Land Board.

Mr. D. HUNTER: But the first ten years may be free.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: He should like to hear that provision read. When the renewal lease terminated at the end of sixty-six years a further lease could be granted for another sixty-six years on the same conditions as the original lease.

Mr. D. HUNTER: Clause 21 of the New Zealand Act of 1907 read as follows:—

A renewable lease of any such land shall contain a provision that no rent shall be payable thereunder during such period as the board, with the consent of the Minister, shall determine, not exceeding ten years after the commencement of the first term of sixty-six years.

That was giving the settler a grand chance of becoming settled on the country before he began to pay rent at all. It was proposed now to start a system here about which they knew very little, and did not know whether it would work well or not. It was a system which had never been tried in any other part of the world. They had an opportunity of making it a success if they wished to do so, and with that object in view he approved of a reduction of the rent by at least one-half. The New Zealand provision gave the Minister power to approve in all cases where rent was not charged; but in the case before them the Minister would not have any power of approval at all, and would simply have to say, "There is the rent you will have to pay from the very jump." He hoped they would discuss the clause well, and not ruin a system that was, perhaps, fraught with great possibilities.

Mr. HARDACRE did not wish to appear ungrateful for the concession offered, but he thought the Minister would see that the adoption of his suggestion to make the rent 2 per cent. would prevent that new system of tenure being a success. Very few persons would apply for an agricultural farm and pay 2d. per acre rent. They would prefer to go in for freehold instead. He would remind hon. members that the rent was only for the first ten years, and after that the Crown got the advantage of an increased rent. If they were going to make the system effective at all, they must come down with the rent in the earlier years. The Victorian Act provided that perpetual leases of certain lands might be granted, and that the rent of a perpetual lease outside of the proclaimed lands should be 1½ per cent. on the unimproved value. That was all he proposed to make it here. He thought, without any further argument, the Minister might come down more than he had done.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: In reference to the remarks of the hon. member for Woolloongabba, he had received confirmation of what he had conjectured was the case in New Zealand. The Minister would, of course, give a remission of rent for the first ten years in the case of land which was distinctly inferior—

Land which in the opinion of the board is not likely to be immediately reproductive.

Lest anyone should imagine that the New Zealand Legislature was conspicuously generous in its land arrangements, let him remind the Committee that he had power under the Land Acts which had been in operation a number of years to open land of a similar character as that in New Zealand for nothing at all for the first ten years. He referred to scrub selections.

Hon. R. PHILP: And prickly pear selections.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Yes; but there were rather onerous conditions imposed there, except that a prickly pear selection need not necessarily have pear upon it. He merely wished to remind the Committee that New Zealand was not singular in the matter of liberality, and that he could practically do the same thing as was done in New Zealand. He did not want to protract the discussion. He was always anxious to meet the hon. member for Leichhardt, but he would remind the hon. member that he had been instrumental in introducing perpetual leases and some other provisions advocated by the hon. member, and had never had a single acknowledgment of his efforts. However, he would endeavour to heap coals of fire upon the hon. member's head by accepting the suggestion of 1½ per cent. (Hear, hear!)

Mr. SUMNER was glad to hear the Minister's explanation, and that he was prepared to compromise. He wished to say that the Queensland conditions of settlement were far more liberal than the New Zealand conditions. If they desired to establish perpetual leaseholds, they must make the rent about half of what it was under the freehold system.

Mr. HARDACRE had always endeavoured to assist the Minister in every possible way. He had always been most conciliatory and courteous, and recognised the courteous characteristics of the Secretary for Public Lands. He would withdraw his amendment.

Amendment, by leave, withdrawn.

Mr. HARDACRE moved the omission of the words "two pounds," in line 28, with the view of inserting "one pound."

Amendment put and passed.

Mr. RYLAND considered that ten years was too short a period for the revaluations. It should be at least twenty-one years. In New Zealand it was considered that fifty years was too short a period.

Mr. SUMNER: Look at the evil that it has given rise to there!

Mr. RYLAND: When the 1884 Act was passed the period was considered to be too short, and it was found to their advantage to increase the length of the lease. If they were going to reappraise the rents every few years, it would cost a good bit of money. This tenure would also come into competition with freehold country, which the selectors were to get at a low price, and with no revaluation at all. They wanted to put this scheme in a position where it would live alongside the other tenure. There were a good many who wanted a monopoly. In New Zealand they wanted ninety-nine years, and some wanted 999 years. If they wanted to make this a popular tenure, they should give a fair time between the revaluations. Of course, if they wanted to kill the Bill, and make it an unpopular tenure, they could have a revaluation every twelve months.

Mr. BARNES: Be satisfied with a fair thing.

Mr. RYLAND: Twenty-one years was a fair thing. They wanted a tenure that would induce people to settle on the land, and settle to their advantage. They wanted a better tenure than a freehold tenure. Of course, there would be a reduction in the rent if the land had not increased in value. They would be quite liable to a reduction as well as an increase in the rent. They knew that men had taken up land and lost all the money they had; they lost fortunes and the result of years of toil.

Mr. SUMNER: Land at 3d. an acre in six months went up to 1s. 6d. an acre in the market.

Mr. RYLAND moved that the word "ten," in line 31, be omitted, with the view of inserting the word "twenty."

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: He hardly thought that even the most timid believer in perpetual leases could really consider the success of the system was likely to be in danger by having a revision of the rents every ten years. The reason ten years was put in this Bill was that ten years was the adopted statutory period in Queensland for a revision of rents. They had the pastoral leases and grazing farms and others in which the rents were reappraised every ten years. The hon. member was taking an alarmist's view if he considered the perpetual lease system was going to be in danger by having a revision every ten years.

Mr. HARDACRE pointed out that if the amendment were carried it would mean that there would only be a reappraisement of rent every twenty years. He would like to see the first reappraisement after twenty years and subsequent reappraisements every ten years.

HON. R. PHILP pointed out that in the case of grazing farms the lease was for twenty, thirty, or forty years, and their rents were reappraised every ten years. They had no perpetual leases, and they were just as desirable colonists as were likely to come here. Why should one class of people be given a big advantage over those who

were now paying large sums into the Treasury every year—the grazing farmers and pastoralists?

Amendment (*Mr. Ryland's*) put and negatived.

Mr. HAMILTON thought they should offer every inducement to people to take up land under this new tenure, so that it might become as popular as possible. Subsection (iv.) provided that the Governor in Council "may" proclaim land open for perpetual lease selection in priority to agricultural farm selection. He thought they should make it imperative that persons willing to take up land under the perpetual lease system should have priority over all other applicants, and he moved that the word "may," on line 3 of subsection (iv.), be omitted, with the view of inserting the word "shall."

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: In this Bill they were placing on the statute-book for the first time the principle of perpetual lease. The hon. member had made a stride forward in getting that principle on the statute-book; and he thought that the hon. member and those who agreed with him with regard to the merit of that particular tenure were asking too much when, in addition to having the principle put on the statute-book, they wanted it to override the popular and, on the whole, the successful system of tenure of agricultural farms, which had hitherto been a distinguished feature of our close settlement. He hoped the hon. member would not press the amendment.

Mr. HAMILTON: The chances were that land might not be proclaimed open for perpetual lease selection in priority to agricultural farm selection, and he wanted to make it imperative, so that people might be encouraged to take up land on the perpetual lease system.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Why not leave discretion with the Minister.

Mr. HAMILTON: It might be that land would only be proclaimed open for such selection on the Moonie, or on the Georgina, or in some other out-of-the-way place, and he was of opinion that land should be proclaimed open to both forms of tender, priority being given to applicants for perpetual leases.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: The matter was entirely in the discretion of the Minister, and there was no reason whatever, if the circumstances seemed to justify it, why the Minister should not open the land to selection and give priority to applicants for perpetual leases. What the hon. member was doing was asking the Committee to put into the Bill a provision to the effect that there should be no discretion in the hands of the Minister, but that in all cases land should be proclaimed open to both forms of tender, and that applicants for perpetual leases should have priority.

Mr. HARDACRE: The Governor in Council would have discretion to proclaim land open for perpetual lease selection in priority to agricultural farm selection, or he might give priority to agricultural farm selections. Priority must be given to one form of tenure or the other, because applicants for the two different forms of selection could not go to ballot for the same land. He believed that the Minister would give the perpetual lease tenure a fair trial.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: I assure you that I will do that.

Mr. HARDACRE: That being so, they could amend the provision later on if necessary.

[*Hon. R. Philp.*

Question—That the word proposed to be omitted (*Mr. Hamilton's amendment*) stand part of the clause—put; and the Committee divided:—

AYES, 36.

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|---|---|
| Mr. Airey | Mr. Hunter, D. |
| ,, Appel | ,, Jackson |
| ,, Barnes, G. P. | ,, Kenna |
| ,, Barnes, W. H. | ,, Kerr |
| ,, Barton | ,, Kidston |
| ,, Bell | ,, Mackintosh |
| ,, Blair | ,, Mann |
| ,, Brennan | ,, Maxwell |
| ,, Campbell | ,, Murphy |
| ,, Cottell | ,, Paget |
| ,, Cowap | ,, Petrie |
| ,, Denham | ,, Philp |
| ,, Douglas | ,, Rankin |
| ,, Grant | ,, Somerset |
| ,, Grayson | ,, Stodart |
| ,, Hanran | ,, Swayne |
| ,, Hawthorn | ,, Thorn |
| ,, Herbertson | ,, White |

*Tellers*: Mr. Grayson and Mr. Swayne.

NOES, 22.

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|---|---|
| Mr. Barber | Mr. May |
| ,, Bowman | ,, McLachlan |
| ,, Coyne | ,, Mitchell |
| ,, Hamilton | ,, Mulcahy |
| ,, Hardacre | ,, Mullan |
| ,, Hunter, J. M. | ,, Nevitt |
| ,, Huxham | ,, Roberts |
| ,, Jones | ,, Ryland |
| ,, Land | ,, Sumner |
| ,, Lennon | ,, Winstanley |
| ,, Lesina | ,, Woods |

*Tellers*: Mr. Hamilton and Mr. McLachlan.

Resolved in the affirmative.

Clause, as amended, put and passed.

On clause 10—"Free homesteads"—

Mr. PAGET asked whether the area of the free homesteads would be 160 acres or a smaller area? He presumed the free homesteaders would not be asked to go upon [10 p.m.] other than really good land—land upon which they would have every chance of making a living—more especially as they were to spend 10s. per acre on improvements before they could get their leases. The provision for spending 10s. per acre on improvements applied in the homestead provisions of the present Act to the best farming land which was selected at £1 an acre.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: This was one of those questions that could not be answered off-hand. There were parts of the State where a man had a far better chance of doing well on 80 acres than in other places, not far remote, on 160 or 320 acres. His disposition would be, whenever he had an estate to open for selection, to give the maximum area of 160 acres. When he departed from that there would be very good reason, indeed, with regard to the quality and situation of the land.

Mr. BOWMAN: As leader of the Labour party, he desired to enter the protest of the party against land being alienated at all. One of the principles they advocated was that leasehold should supersede freehold, because they believed that in every country freeholds had led to the curse of landlordism. If they supported that clause, they would be doing something contrary to their platform. Speaking on behalf of the party, he desired to say they could not support any measure which involved the alienation of land. They did not propose to take up any time in discussing the question, but merely entered their protest; and they intended to vote against the clause because it involved the principle they did not believe in.

Mr. APPEL (*Albert*): The remark which had fallen from the leader of the Labour party as an expression of principle was somewhat inconsistent with what they knew was actually the case in connection with the countries of the old world. He admitted that, so far as the alienation of large areas was concerned, the matter of landlordism in connection with the claims of poorer persons who desired to have small areas might arise. But what did they find to day? That in all the countries of the world the cry was that the poorer man wanted to get the freehold of his land.

LABOUR MEMBERS: No, no!

Mr. APPEL: What had been the cry in Ireland for years, but that poor peasants desired to get the freehold of their land.

LABOUR MEMBERS: No, no!

Mr. BOWMAN: Landlordism is the curse of Ireland.

Mr. APPEL: And the small men were continually crying out for the freehold.

The PREMIER: Do you approve of this clause?

Mr. APPEL: Yes, he did approve of it. He approved of the principle of free homesteads, and had advocated it upon every occasion when he had an opportunity of doing so. He took it that the principle was to give the man with no capital a chance of going on the land, but they were going to hamper him when they insisted that he must expend the sum of 10s. an acre before he could even get a lease of that homestead. In doing that they were defeating the very object for which he assumed it was proposed to place this measure upon the statute-book. If it were extended over the period of the lease it would be reasonable.

Mr. PAGET: So it is extended over the period of the lease.

Mr. APPEL: Then it was retrospective?

Mr. PAGET: Yes.

Mr. APPEL: One other matter he drew attention to was that where a native Queenslander applied for such a homestead his application should have priority. There were numbers of young Queenslanders who were anxious to go on the land and they should receive priority.

Mr. MAXWELL: What about the men who came here thirty years ago? Have they not as much right as the native Queenslander?

Mr. APPEL: As a native Queenslander, he advocated the right of native Queenslanders wishing to go on the land—that they should receive a certain amount of consideration from the State.

The PREMIER: Not a right—a privilege.

Mr. PAGET: If their fathers had not come here, there would not have been any native Queenslanders.

Mr. APPEL: This was their native land, and they should receive priority. In many cases they had been debarred from obtaining a piece of land, and he hoped the Minister would consider the possibility of amending the Bill to give priority to these natives. If that were done, a large number of young Queenslanders who were now congregating in the centres would be able to go out and settle on the land.

Mr. COYNE agreed with the hon. member for Albert that priority should be given in these matters to young Queenslanders. Then, when the Queenslanders were served, they should give it next to the Australians outside Queenslanders, and if there was any left the outsiders could have it. (Laughter.) He agreed with the hon. member for Albert in that, but he did not care for his advocacy of freeholds as against leaseholds. In order to settle these people on the land they would have to expend 10s. an acre on the free homesteads. If this 10s. per acre were extended over a period of 120 years it would be at the rate of 1d. per acre per year, and it would be better for the selector, and the State would hold on to the fee-simple of the land. Every student of economics knew that they had no right to dispose of this land. It was not their land to give away, and someone in twenty years' time—more advanced people—would rise up and repudiate what they were now doing. If they continued to give their land away, then the bloodshed which had been brought about under similar circumstances in other countries would be brought about again. Although the peasantry of Ireland were asking for their land in fee-simple, if they got it, in twenty years there would be as big a curse of landlordism as there was now.

The PREMIER: If you do not ask more people to come here you will not hold that land at all.

Mr. MCLACHLAN: He thinks there will be a foreign invasion.

Mr. COYNE: If they had a proper land system they would get more people to come here. When there was a curse of landlordism existing in the country they were in at the present time they would not be likely to leave it to come to encounter the same curse in Queensland.

Mr. COWAP: The Irish peasants will not come out here if they can get the fee-simple in their own country.

Mr. COYNE: Would he prefer landlordism

Mr. COWAP: He would prefer a freehold.

Mr. COYNE: If that was a sample of the logic of the hon. member for Fitzroy, he pitied him. Michael Davitt said he would not alienate any land in small or large areas, and he had a better knowledge of the state of things in Ireland than the hon. member for Fitzroy. They had before them the experience of the old world centres, and it was perfectly certain that landlordism was the greatest curse the world had ever experienced. It was a greater curse than sectarianism, and had been the cause of as much, if not more, bloodshed. By the perpetual lease system they did not relinquish the fee-simple of the land. They had the right to reappraise when they thought fit. Under that provision in the Bill a person had the right to hold 320 acres acres in fee-simple, and in the course of ten years that land might be increased a hundredfold in value, yet the State had no way of getting at the unearned increment.

Mr. MURPHY: By a land tax.

Mr. COYNE: That was the kind of subterfuge which people indulged in when they wanted to alienate land.

An HONOURABLE MEMBER: The land can be resumed.

Mr. COYNE: They had made provision for resuming under the Agricultural Lands Purchase Act, but not for resuming land taken up in this way. It was no use quibbling over the question. There was one question, and one only, before them, and that was that the Bill made provision for alienating the public estate. It was a wrong system; it was a vile system, and he hoped the Secretary for Lands would think well over it before adopting it. Let him give 100 or 200 year leases.

Mr. LESINA: 999-year leases.

Mr. COYNE: He did not mind what the length of the lease was so long as they did not

say to any man, "This land is yours, and you can dispose of it in any way you think fit." They wanted the land put to its best uses, and if it was freehold it could not be put to its best uses. He would provide that a man could not lease, let, sell, or assign his land. Why, under the Bill they could have twenty dummies taking up adjoining land, and one man running stock over the whole of it. There was no provision in the section providing that he should not lease. Of course, the holder would not transfer his title, but he would let the land for depasturing purposes. He contended that they were going a long way towards establishing landlordism if they adopted the clause.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: They had listened to quite unexceptionable principles uttered by the hon. member for Warrego and the leader of the Labour party, and he confessed, although he had not the honour of belonging to that party, their arguments were not very far distant from his views on the great land question. The hon. member for Leichhardt interested him very much indeed, recently, by reading an extract from some remarks made by his (Mr. Bell's) father thirty-four years ago in that Chamber. It was something to find that thirty-four years ago there were men in that Chamber who held views not at all dissimilar to those which he and the Labour party held. But in their methods of land legislation there was a propriety and fitness of things—a way of doing things. He submitted that while not questioning for a moment the virtue of the principles which had been laid down, yet the Committee stage of the Bill now under discussion was not the occasion for enunciating such principles.

Mr. COYNE: What would be the proper time?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: The Bill was one for amending the Land Acts. Those Land Acts assumed alienation in various forms of tenure, and the most liberal form of alienation was the agricultural homestead at 2s. 6d. an acre. The Bill proposed to make that still more liberal, and to make that alienation free. It provided for free homesteads under certain conditions. He submitted in the most respectful way that their discussion on the question should be confined to a consideration of the question as to whether it was wise in the interests of the country to modify the agricultural homestead provisions by eliminating the charge of 2s. 6d., and giving the land away free. The hon. member for Warrego asked what was the proper time for a discussion on the general land question. Well, he submitted that on the Address in Reply it would be appropriate to discuss the question, or on the introduction of a Land Bill he should give notice of an amendment "that no Land Bill will receive the approval of this Chamber unless it contains sections putting an end to the principle of land alienation." That was the way in which he could obtain the sense of the House, but he submitted, with great respect, that to embark on a discussion of a general character on the Committee stage of the present Bill was absolutely out of order.

Mr. REDWOOD was very pleased to hear the hon. member for Albert speak as he did in regard to young Queenslanders. He had advocated similar views for years past, and he intended to move an amendment on [10.30 p.m.] the Bill in the direction indicated. Further, he was going to ask for a deletion of the charge of £1 provided for in the Bill. He thought clause 10 was an excellent one; it would add vastly to closer settlement, and he congratulated the Minister in bringing it in. It was a matter that he had for many years thought over, and it would be of great benefit to the poor people in getting a start in life. He did not agree with clause 148E, which provided—

> No person who holds or has held in his own right any estate or interest, whether of freehold or leasehold or otherwise howsoever, in any land within the State shall be competent to apply for or acquire in his own right a free homestead.

That was not a fair thing. A man through misfortune from flood, or some difficulty, through no fault of his own, might lose all the land he had been holding for many years, and become an insolvent, and this clause would practically prohibit him from taking up a free selection. He would like to see the words "has held" struck out.

Mr. BOWMAN: A squatter could take up land then.

Mr. REDWOOD: They never knew when misfortune might overtake any of them, and they would have to make a fresh start in life. Were they going to crush a man because he was poor? Were they going to make him an inmate of Dunwich?

An HONOURABLE MEMBER: It is all sentiment.

Mr. REDWOOD: There was no sentiment about it; it was a matter of giving every man a show if he had had misfortunes.

Mr. BOWMAN: Would you give him the same show with freehold?

Mr. REDWOOD: He believed in freehold, because, from what he had read, and from his own experience, he considered if a man owned his own block he became a better citizen.

Mr. RYLAND: And rents it to the other fellow.

Mr. REDWOOD: The principle of freehold tenure had been established since the State was a State, and it made a man more interested in his country and more patriotic.

Mr. RYLAND: Makes him want to join the Patriotic League.

Mr. REDWOOD: It would not make him join the Patriotic League because a man owning freehold was a patriot. What had made Europe? Simply the hearth and the boundary peg. Take Asia. The people there were wandering hordes. The Bill also provided that a man could only take up 160 acres, and he thoroughly endorsed that; but where a man had three sons, all able to take up land, he should have priority for each one of those sons up to 640 acres—no more. He moved that on page 4, lines from 27 to 30 be deleted with the view of substituting the following—

> Every native-born Queenslander who makes application for a free homestead shall be entitled to priority over every other person who makes application for the same homestead. If two or more native-born Queenslanders make application for the same homestead at the same time, the right of priority shall be determined by lot in the prescribed manner.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Those two things were not connected. Even if there was any special virtues in the words mentioned by the hon. member, there would be no particular reason why lines 27 to 30 should be omitted in order to make place for them. Those lines might be left in and the words proposed by the hon. member be inserted in a latter part of the clause.

Mr. REDWOOD: I want to eliminate the £1.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: The words proposed to be omitted provided that every application for a homestead should be accompanied by a fee of £1. Did the hon. member propose that when free homesteads were opened for selection, anyone could come

forward and apply for them without making a deposit? If land were thrown open for selection, they must attach some responsibility to the man who applied for it; they certainly must make him show some evidence of his *bona fides* at the initial stage of his application, and if it was said they were putting too great a financial impost upon him, by asking him to pay 20s. when he made application, all he (Mr. Bell) could say was, that he was not in a fit position, broadly speaking—there were exceptions to the rule—to select land. It presupposed, if they were going to get selectors, that they should possess not merely stout hearts and capacity, but, at all events, some silver. He certainly suggested that the words be left in, whatever might be done with the clause the hon. gentleman proposed to insert. Without casting any reflection on the hon. member, he (Mr. Bell) could say he was more of a Queenslander than the hon. member. He was born here, and he was the son and grandson of parents who had resided the greater part of their lives in what was now Queensland. He was as much a Queenslander as anyone they could find in the length and breadth of the State, and he had never been able to see that there was any particular virtue in being born here—they were not here as a result of any particular virtuous act of their own. (Laughter.) It was a mere accident of birth. It was the persons who came from oversea, and who deliberately determined to throw in their lot in this State, and make their homes here—if there was to be any discrimination between the two classes, he was not at all sure that those were not the people who ought to receive more consideration than the others. But, at all events, let it not be thought that there was any lack of sympathy on his part, or on the part of the Government with which he was connected, with Queenslanders. They were the first Administration there had been in this State which had deliberately formed groups for Queenslanders, and put Queensland groups on the land. Since he had been in office, he had been instrumental in putting more Queenslanders on the land than any of his predecessors, and there was no reason why they should introduce into our land laws the amendment of the hon. member for Drayton and Toowoomba.

Hon. R. PHILP: The Minister had brought in a very good Bill, and he hoped the hon. gentleman would accept no amendment on it. The land laws of Queensland had for many years been the most liberal land laws in Australia—in fact, he did not know of any other country in the world where the land laws were so liberal as they were in Queensland. The hon. member for Drayton and Toowoomba talked about free land, but he would remind the hon. member that over forty years ago people who came to the country and paid their own passages got a land order of the value of £18, and, after they had been here a certain time, another land order for £12. Afterwards they got a land order for £40, and later on they got land orders entitling them to take up 160 acres. Of those 160-acre land orders, 65,000 had reached the Lands Department; and land taken up with those land orders carried the condition of personal residence. In this Bill they were going further, and were offering free homesteads. He thought the conditions were liberal enough, and that the Minister should not liberalise them any more. Why should Queenslanders be given preference over men born in New South Wales, or Victoria, or in England, Ireland, or Scotland? The men who were born here could not help being born here, but the men who came from the old country had to travel 15,000 or 16,000 miles to come to Queensland. What they wanted to do was to encourage everybody possible to come and settle on our lands, and unless we made better efforts in that direction than we are doing, we should not effectively occupy the land. A person who was not satisfied with a lease in perpetuity or a freehold would not be satisfied with anything. As to the suggestion of the hon. member for Warrego, that they should permit men to take up 160 acres at 1d. per acre per annum, what good would a man be to the country who spent only 13s. 4d. a year on 160 acres? His experience was that men who took up land wanted to make it freehold as soon as possible. Ninety-nine men out of every hundred who took up land had that desire. Every State in Australia had adopted the freehold system, and it had worked with marked success. He hoped that the Committee would be satisfied with the Bill. They had a lot of work to do, but if they were going to discuss every clause in the way they had discussed this they would be there till Christmas.

The PREMIER hoped the Committee would not take the amendment seriously, or think for a moment of embodying it in the Bill. What they had to consider was how they could use the lands of Queensland to attract new settlers to the State. That should be their basic idea in dealing with the land laws. In this Bill they were trying to give every inducement to new settlers to come to Queensland. If they preferred to hold land on the leasehold system, they could come here and take up land on those terms. If they wanted a freehold, they could come here and get it. But to say that we would give our own people preference, and——

Mr. Coyne: Are Queenslanders not put in the background to let outsiders have a show?

The Secretary for Public Lands: No; I challenge you to prove that.

Mr. Coyne: It is publicly alleged so, at any rate.

The PREMIER: What was not publicly alleged? There was a lot that had been publicly alleged against the present Government. He hoped that the Committee would recognise that a restriction of the sort proposed would kill land settlement so far as getting people from Europe was concerned. With other countries competing for settlers from the older settled countries in Europe, for us to put this bar against them would be most unwise. It would be an advertisement which would be used against them, because other States which were wanting settlement would point out that, if people went to Queensland, they would have to stand back until all the Queenslanders were satisfied. The hon. member who moved the amendment said there was plenty of land for all.

Mr. Redwood: So there is.

The PREMIER: Then, why propose this restriction? Were hon. members simply playing to the gallery when they talked this way about Queenslanders? The Minister in charge of the Bill had pointed out that if there was any preference given it should be given to the men who came from a distance, for the one excellent business reason that Queenslanders were here already. They did not need to wheedle them to come here. Their business was to try to convince the man at the other side of the world that Queensland was the best place to come to, and it was their business to try to make that boast true. Every obstacle they placed in the way of men making homes for themselves was bad policy. He hoped hon. members would recognise the great obligation that was on them to do everything they could to facilitate settlement on the land and to bring new producers here. He was honestly persuaded that, although danger to Australia, and more particularly to Queensland, was years ahead, it

might not be many years ahead; and the obligation on this generation to see ahead, and to do their best to secure settlement and additional producers was almost their paramount duty. (Hear, hear!) The man who could see one generation ahead in the Pacific would not put fancy notions of this sort into a land law that was intended to attract a flow of desirable settlers to Queensland.

Mr. JONES was very pleased the Minister would not accept the amendment. The hon. member who moved it could not accuse the Minister of showing any preference for Queenslanders. He (Mr. Jones) had always held that their laws should give an equal opportunity to all. He represented one of the richest land districts in Queensland; and it would be just as ridiculous for him to advocate Burnett lands for the Burnett-born as it was for hon. members to advocate Queensland lands for Queensland-born. He intended to vote against the amendment.

Mr. RANKIN congratulated the Minister on having introduced the most liberal Land Bill that had ever been introduced in Queensland. He also congratulated the Premier on his most excellent speech in defence of the position they had taken up on that side. It was a significant fact that members who spoke so learnedly about the man on the land, and who desired to place obstacles in the way of getting land, did not contain many primary producers amongst their number. They could talk very learnedly about the crime of land alienation, and yet he believed there were among them men who were guilty of that crime themselves. (Laughter.) But that in itself was a small thing. There was no doubt that the man on the land was the man who produced everything, and on whom they all depended; consequently, if there was one section of the community which deserved consideration, it was those on the land. His own idea of land legislation was to make the land as free as possible to attract people to our shores. There was one significant statement made by the hon. member for Warrego, and that was that in the course of a few years we might have to shed a lot of blood over holding this land. They should be prepared for such a contingency. Did hon. members in the opposite corner think that they were going to compete successfully with other countries for settlers unless we offered equal facilities? President Roosevelt the other day cautioned them against the danger of an empty Australia, and anybody who had studied the question of the defence of our country, even from the most parochial standpoint, must be fully seized of the importance of increasing our numbers, if this country was to be held. He had every sympathy with the man on the land; in nine cases out of ten those people desired to make a home for themselves. It was the hope that they might acquire a freehold that inspired them to work with greater energy. Surely, as an enlightened people in this twentieth century, we were not going to make a retrograde movement that was likely to prove inimical to those who were their best settlers.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS rose to a point of order. He had just been reminded about the section in the Commonwealth Constitution which laid it down [11 p.m] that in State legislation there should be no discrimination between the people of one State as against the people of another. That being so, he asked whether the amendment was in order?

The CHAIRMAN: As I understand that the Federal legislation over-rides State legislation in regard to matters of this character——

Mr. COYNE: You have no evidence of that before you.

The CHAIRMAN: I can only rule the amendment of the hon. member for Toowoomba out of order. (Hear, hear!)

Mr. KENNA (speaking on the point of order): They had passed a Bill yesterday dealing with surveyors——

The PREMIER: You cannot discuss the Chairman's ruling.

Mr. REDWOOD: As that amendment was ruled out of order, he would move another. He moved that the following new paragraph be inserted after paragraph 148D:—

Provided that in any case where a qualified person has a son or sons of not less than sixteen years of age who are themselves qualified to apply for a free homestead, such qualified person may, in conjunction with all or any of such sons, not exceeding three, apply for and acquire, in priority to any other applicants any number of contiguous free homesteads not exceeding four.

A man and his three sons could then take up 160 acres each and work it together as one block. It would be far better to allow them to take it up in that form.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS hoped the words would not be inserted. If a man with one son, who might be a better man for the State, wished to take up contiguous blocks, he would be debarred under the wording of the amendment.

Mr. COYNE: Another man might have six daughters.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: He would certainly be an infinitely better man for the State. (Laughter.)

Question—That the words proposed to be inserted be so inserted (*Mr. Redwood's amendment*)—put; and the Committee divided:—

AYES, 9.

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| Mr. Appel | Mr. Rankin |
| ,, Douglas | ,, Redwood |
| ,, Grayson | ,, Sumner |
| ,, Herbertson | ,, Woods |
| ,, Petrie | |

*Tellers*: Mr. Redwood and Mr. Woods.

NOES, 44.

| | |
|---|---|
| Mr. Airey | Mr. Kerr |
| ,, Barber | ,, Kidston |
| ,, Barton | ,, Land |
| ,, Bell | ,, Lennon |
| ,, Blair | ,, Lesina |
| ,, Bowman | ,, Mackintosh |
| ,, Brennan | ,, Mann |
| ,, Campbell | ,, Maxwell |
| ,, Cottell | ,, May |
| ,, Cowap | ,, McLachlan |
| ,, Coyne | ,, Mitchell |
| ,, Denham | ,, Mulcahy |
| ,, Grant | ,, Mullan |
| ,, Gunn | ,, Murphy |
| ,, Hamilton | ,, Nevitt |
| ,, Hanran | ,, Paget |
| ,, Hardacre | ,, Philp |
| ,, Hawthorn | ,, Roberts |
| ,, Hunter, D. | ,, Ryland |
| ,, Hunter, J. M. | ,, Swayne |
| ,, Huxham | ,, Thorn |
| ,, Jackson | ,, Winstanley |

*Tellers*: Mr. Barber and Mr. Ryland.

Resolved in the negative.

At sixteen minutes past 11 o'clock,

The CHAIRMAN: Under Standing Order 171, I call upon the hon. member for Gregory, Mr. Hamilton, to relieve me in the chair.

Mr. HAMILTON took the chair accordingly.

Mr. REDWOOD moved on line 21, paragraph 148E, the omission of the words, "or has held." If a poor man had had the misfortune to lose his land through flood, fire, or any other cause, why should he not be allowed to acquire land under this section?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: He was prepared to accept the amendment.

Amendment agreed to.

Mr. HARDACRE thought this new form of tenure was going to be a failure, as every system of settlement in Queensland and Australia had been a failure, because it embodied the principle of freehold. The reason why many farmers had a difficulty in getting a freehold at the present day was that somebody else had already got the freehold and blocked other persons obtaining the land.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: This is not a question of freeholds. It is a question of free homesteads or making a charge for the land.

Mr. HARDACRE: No; it was a question of giving the freehold to the selector. They were now proposing a new system of conditional purchase, and he said it would be a failure because the principle of freehold was embodied in it. The conditional purchase tenure had proved a failure in all Australian land legislation of the past. Epps, in his "History of the Land Systems of Australia," said—

> Such results can hardly be regarded otherwise than as appalling. That the operations of the land systems of these three provinces for sixty-five years in one colony, and a little over fifty years in two others, should have resulted in 1,250 persons securing almost one-half the total alienated area, while 105,000 others between them possess only just about one-fourth of the total extent alienated, is a striking commentary on the methods adopted. The unquestionable verdict must be that the systems have failed to produce true settlement.

Mr. Coghlan, who was perhaps superior to the authority quoted, said—

> Whatever may have been the merits of the Act of 1861 (New South Wales) it conspicuously failed to encourage *bonâ fide* settlement, nor can it be said that the legislation of 1884 and 1889 succeeded where the original Act had failed, as the accumulation of land in large estates continued, while settlement, properly so called, proceeded very slowly.

Further on he said—

> In 1895 attention was again directed to the question of land legislation, as it was rightly contended that the Land Acts of 1884 and 1889 had failed to prevent the accumulation of enormous landed estates in the hands of a very limited number of proprietors, backed up by the great financial institutions of the country.

Later on he pointed out that the very system of conditional purchase embodied in this clause had been availed of to transfer small areas back again to the big landholders.

The ACTING CHAIRMAN: Order! I would like to call the attention of the hon. member to the fact that the principle of this form of freehold was accepted by the House on the second reading of the Bill. The clause before the Committee deals with the qualifications of persons who may take up land under this system.

Mr. HARDACRE: They passed the second reading of a heterogeneous measure which contained a number of provisions of various kinds, and they could now discuss, and if they chose knock out, any of those provisions. Coghlan, in his "Wealth and Progress of New South Wales, 1900-1," further said—

> An examination of the table reveals the fact that, since 1882, there have been 37,576,898 acres of conditional purchases transferred, as against 16,690,284 acres applied for.

As a matter of fact, the opening up of land in small areas on the conditional purchase system failed there, as it had failed everywhere else, and just as this proposed system of granting free homesteads and permitting the holders to make them freeholds, after residence on them for five years, would fail.

The ACTING CHAIRMAN: The speech of the hon. member is a little irregular, as it deals with abstract questions which should [11.30 p.m.] have been dealt with on the second reading of the Bill. This clause deals with the qualifications of those who apply for free homesteads.

Mr. WINSTANLEY thought it would be in order to discuss whether free homesteads were better than perpetual leases.

The ACTING CHAIRMAN: That would be discussing the principle.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: You will be in order in discussing whether free homesteads will be a good thing, but not in discussing the whole question of land alienation.

Mr. WINSTANLEY: His contention was that free homesteads would not be a good thing, and that perpetual leases would be infinitely better. He believed they all wanted to bring people into the country, and they recognised that the Government, and especially the Secretary for Public Lands, were trying to do something in that direction; but all the evidence before them went to show that they had not succeeded up to the present. Pamphlets had been printed for distribution in the old country to try to induce people to become farmers in Queensland, and one of the inducements offered was that people had paid £5 an acre for land which was now worth £35 an acre. If those men looked into the matter, they would be likely to come to the conclusion that, if they would have to pay anything like £35 an acre, there was a poor chance of them getting land here at all. In many instances freeholders had not taken up the land with a view to becoming permanent settlers and making a home for themselves. Many had taken up land as a speculation; and, as soon as they obtained their deeds, they sold the land. Instead of there being a large number of small farms, in many instances the farms had got into the hands of one man.

Mr. PAGET: Where?

Mr. WINSTANLEY: In North Queensland for one place. The hon. member for Oxley had stated at Atherton that the freeholders were blocking settlement, and that was perfectly true all over Queensland. If there was one class of people who blocked settlement it was freeholders, who often held the land to extort a profit from somebody else instead of using it themselves. Freeholds were one of the principal causes of the misery and poverty which existed in older countries. There was a small strip of country in the Malay Peninsula, which thirty years ago was inhabited by cannibals. It was a Crown colony, and all the land was leased. Out of their land revenue they had built about 1,500 miles of railway, made roads through the country; they had a police force and a military force of about 1,000 men; and, instead of having a public debt, they had money invested in the securities of other countries, and had practically no taxation at all. That showed what could be done under the leasehold system. One reason why so many Land Bills had been introduced in Queensland was because they had been building all the time on a wrong foundation; and, until they began to build on a foundation of justice and equity, they would never induce the settlement they all desired to see. He was confident that, if they leased even

their agricultural lands, things would be placed on a better footing. It was not correct to say that men would not spend money on leaseholds. There was more money spent on Charters Towers, which was all leasehold, than on any similar area in Queensland. With a system of leasehold they would have less difficulty in raising revenue.

Clause put and passed.

Clauses 11, 12, and 13 put and passed.

On clause 14—"Perpetual lease of town or suburban allotments"—

Mr. D. HUNTER wished to persuade the Minister to make the clause a little more liberal by making the annual rent for the first ten years 3 per cent. instead of 4 per cent.

Mr. RYLAND: Make it 2 per cent.

Mr. D. HUNTER: He would not go as far as that. Three per cent. was a fair thing for town and suburban allotments. At the same time he thought it was advisable to go lower than any other State had yet tried to go. In New South Wales, South Australia, and New Zealand the rent was 4 per cent., so they might try to fix it at 3 per cent. He would like to see the same conditions inserted as were in the New South Wales Act. He hoped there would be some building conditions inserted to prevent a man from making money out of it. A man might take up land in a suburban area where a railway was projected. He would pay his two years' rent in order to get a chance to sell it at the higher value when the railway came along. They should hedge it in with conditions like they had in New South Wales, so that the man who took it up would have to build on it. He would also like to see the Minister add a proviso giving the lessee power to borrow from the Government as from a building society.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS suggested that if the hon. member for Woolloongabba would give him time to think over it he would probably be able to get an amendment introduced in the Upper Chamber.

Mr. HARDACRE asked if the Minister was going to accept the suggestion made by the hon. member?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: He did not go so far as that, but he would like an opportunity to think it over; and, if it seemed to be desirable to get it in, they could put it in by an amendment in the other Chamber.

Mr. RYLAND would prefer to see the clause knocked out altogether rather than 4 per cent. inserted. He favoured reducing it to 2 per cent., which was equal to a tax of 5d. in the £1. That would leave a margain for another 2 per cent. for local government taxation, and he thought that was quite sufficient for the land to carry. Of course, if the land values improved owing to settlement, at the appraisement in ten years' time the occupier of the land would have to pay more rent; but, if things went down, it might be reduced. It would be scandalous to make it 4 per cent.; it would only frighten people out of the country. He was surprised at the Government wishing to impose 4 per cent., as that would only make the perpetual leasehold inoperative. They wanted to make the conditions so that a man could build himself a home, and settle down comfortably without having to go to borrow money at 7 and 8 per cent. interest, as he had to do at present. In New Zealand it was 4 per cent., with no revaluation at all. He thought that the hon. member for Woolloongabba had moved the omission of the word "four." As he had not done so, he (Mr. Ryland) would move the omission of "four" on line 34, with a view of inserting "two." The whole success of the scheme depended upon the rate of interest.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS thought that when the morning came and brought an opportunity for calm reflection on the part of the junior member for Gympie, he would regret the hot, strong, and irresponsible words he had used against the Government. When he told the hon. member that, in an amendment moved by the hon. member for Leichhardt in the Bill of 1905, the rent was fixed at the hon. member's own suggestion at 4 per cent., he should expect the junior member for Gympie to apologise.

Mr. MITCHELL: If the Minister wished that any land should be taken up under that tenure he would require to make the rate much lower. Four per cent. was a very high percentage for the rental value. There was still a strong desire in the minds of the people to hold the freehold of land simply because it afforded an opportunity for speculation. The idea of the Labour party was to try and do away with freeholds, and thus do away with speculative dealing in land. If they maintained that high rate, then those who wanted to get hold of the land would say that it would be better to borrow money and buy the land than lease it at 4 per cent. of the purchasing value. Although in the Bill there was a pretence at giving them something, it really would give them nothing at all. The amendment was a very desirable one, because it would induce people to take up land on the leasehold system. If he had any power in the matter he would not sell any land in townships, and in a very few years the Government would benefit by increased values in every town in Queensland. The rentals would continually increase, and swell the revenue. Half-acre blocks which now sold for £8 increased under the present system in a few years to £80 in value, the result being that the individual got all the benefit, and the Government got nothing. The Minister had expressed his sympathy with the leasehold principle, and the present was a splendid opportunity of giving proof of his sincerity.

Mr. WINSTANLEY thought the request of the junior member for Gympie was reasonable, and he hoped the Minister would see his way to accept it.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: If it would bring the discussion to a close, he would be perfectly prepared to make it 3 per cent.

Question—That the word proposed to be omitted stand part of the clause (*Mr. Ryland's amendment*)—put and negatived.

Mr. RYLAND: He now moved, instead of "two," the insertion of the word "three" in the blank created.

Mr. HARDACRE suggested that they should make the rate $2\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. for the first ten years, and $3\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. for the second period.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: We will fix it all at 3 per cent.

Amendment agreed to.

Mr. RYLAND moved that the word "four," on line 43, be omitted, with the view of inserting the word "three."

Amendment agreed to.

Mr. HARDACRE wished to point out that the phraseology with reference to the valuation of the land was extremely indefinite, [12 p.m.] and that what a selector would get would be the value, not of the land he had selected but of some other "of simila

quality in the same neighbourhood." He mentioned this matter so that the Minister might consider it, and if necessary get the phraseology amended in another place.

Clause 14, as amended, put and passed.

Clauses 15 to 21, inclusive, put and passed.

The House resumed. The ACTING CHAIRMAN reported the Bill with amendments.

The Bill, as amended, was taken into consideration, and its third reading made an Order of the Day for a later hour of the day.

## CONSTITUTION ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

### MESSAGE FROM COUNCIL.

The SPEAKER announced that he had received a message from the Council returning this Bill without amendment.

## TECHNICAL INSTRUCTION BILL.

### COMMITTEE.

The various clauses of the Bill and the preamble were passed without amendment or discussion.

The House resumed. The CHAIRMAN reported the Bill without amendment; and the third reading was made an Order of the Day for the next sitting of the House.

The House adjourned at fifteen minutes past 12 o'clock.