

Queensland



Parliamentary Debates
[Hansard]

Legislative Assembly

MONDAY, 15 NOVEMBER 1897

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QUEENSLAND NATIONAL BANK.

REPORT OF COMMITTEE OF INVESTIGATION.

The PREMIER: I desire, by permission, to make a statement to the House with regard to the position we are in as regards the committee of investigation on the affairs of the Queensland National Bank, which I am happy to say I think is now, as far as the correspondence is concerned, at last drawing to a conclusion.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

The PREMIER: Hon. members have had laid before them an instalment of the correspondence, and the last letter contained in the preliminary paper laid before Parliament is dated the 14th September. Perhaps, as I have not been able to have the correspondence printed as yet, I had better go through the correspondence that has taken place since then, so as to make hon. members aware of what has transpired in the meantime. I do not think the correspondence need appear in *Hansard*, because when I have done I shall lay the papers on the table and ask to have them printed, and they will be circulated amongst hon. members to-morrow morning, if not sooner. [The right hon. gentleman here read the correspondence.] I think, therefore, it only remains for us, in order to get possession of this report, to pass the resolution which the committee desire, and which they have been advised by legal authorities—confirmed, I may say, by the Crown Law Officers—is necessary for their protection. The resolution to be submitted to the House has been prepared, and I shall read it to the House now. Properly speaking, I should give notice of it for to-morrow, but I think, under the circumstances, we are all desirous that the thing should be brought to a conclusion as soon as possible, and I shall ask the House to allow me to move it immediately as an urgent motion.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

The PREMIER: As hon. members may be startled by the phraseology of the resolution, which is peculiar and of a kind we are not used to in Parliament, I may say that it was not drafted by myself, but by our legal advisers. The resolution reads as follows:—

That this House do authorise the Honourable Edward Barrow Forrest, and Messieurs John Cameron, Edward Vincent Reid, and Edward Deshon, collectively or individually, to furnish a report or reports upon the affairs, business, or transactions of the Queensland National Bank, Limited, dealing with all such past or concurrent transactions of or with all or any of the past or present directors, officers, customers, clients, or agents of the bank, as they may deem fit; embodying therein all such name, dates, amounts, and other particulars or statements concerning all or any the business or transactions of the bank or connected or collateral or seemingly connected or collateral therewith or thereto, as they may deem fit; and that this House do authorise the said Honourable Edward Barrow Forrest, and Messieurs John Cameron, Edward Vincent Reid, and Edward Deshon, or any of them, in their or his report to specify or state or comment upon or criticise the conduct or transactions or act or acts of all or any past or present director, officer, customer, client, or agent of the bank, or of any person whomsoever having or having had any transaction, business, dealing, or connection whatsoever with the bank or with any director or officer thereof; and that this House do authorise the abovenamed Honourable Edward Barrow Forrest and Messieurs John Cameron, Edward Vincent Reid, and Edward Deshon, collectively and individually, to deliver such report or reports into the hands of the Honourable the Treasurer, with a view to such report or reports being forthwith laid upon the table of this House; and that this House do authorise the Treasurer upon the receipt of such report or reports, as aforesaid, to lay the same upon the table of this House.

First of all, I beg now to lay upon the table of the House "Further correspondence with the committee appointed to inquire into the affairs of the Queensland National Bank," and to move that the papers be printed.

Question put and passed.

MONDAY, 15 NOVEMBER, 1897.

The SPEAKER took the chair at 3 o'clock.

VICTORIA BRIDGE BILL.

THIRD READING.

On the motion of the SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS, this Bill was read a third time, passed, and ordered to be transmitted to the Legislative Council for their concurrence.

RESOLUTION OF INDEMNITY.

The PREMIER : I now ask the permission of the House to move, without notice, the resolution of indemnity to which I have referred.

The SPEAKER : Is it the pleasure of the House that the resolution be moved without notice ?

HONOURABLE MEMBERS : Hear, hear !

The PREMIER : I beg now, formally, to move the resolution which I have already read to the House.

Question put and passed, amid cheers.

ABORIGINES PROTECTION AND RESTRICTION OF THE SALE OF OPIUM BILL.

SECOND READING.

The HOME SECRETARY : In moving the second reading of this Bill, after the discussions we have had on the subject on the Estimates, it will not be necessary for me to preface it by attempting to prove the necessity for the Bill. I take it that everyone in this House is animated by the sentiment given expression to by one of the first Governors of Australia, and will admit that there is a duty owing by the white races to the black races. That duty has been performed in times past according to the means at the hand of the Government. In a pamphlet I have I notice that this observation was made by Governor Arthur—

Undoubtedly, the being reduced to the necessity of driving a simple but warlike, and, as it now appears, a noble-minded race from their native hunting grounds is a measure in itself so distressing that I am willing to make almost any prudent sacrifice that may tend to compensate for the injuries that Government is unwillingly and unavoidably the instrument of inflicting. That is the position that this House occupies. Whilst we recognise our duty, we are willing to perform it, and we are now providing the necessary machinery for that purpose. For years past well-intentioned efforts have been directed towards ameliorating the position of the blacks, and while we are now introducing legislation on the subject, I admit that that legislation is only tentative. The efforts of every Minister occupying the position I hold have been directed towards ameliorating the position of the aborigines, and I hope it will not be charged against me that this is in any way a fad of the Minister. I have been in office now for eight years, and I have during that time endeavoured always to follow the same course. But, as in everything else, organisation is better than disorganisation. This Bill endeavours to do as a charity organisation does : focus the assistance in some definite channel. When I look at the Estimates of years gone by I find a beginning was made towards assisting the aborigines by distributing blankets on the Queen's birthday, but it must not be forgotten that the community always does and always will answer to a certain extent to the call of charity in this as in other matters. Individuals throughout the colony are always helping one another when "pulling hard against the stream," and so it is with regard to the aborigines. Although there is a black page in the history of every country—and there is a black page in connection with this matter which I will not bring before the House—yet there are some brighter pages which are to be found in the individual efforts of kindly people towards these aborigines. But all the kindly efforts of individuals will never work permanent good unless the State comes in with its directing hand and says: "This should be the channel into which your assistance should be directed." Year by year we have put upon the Estimates sums of from £2,000 to £4,000, which have been placed in charge of the Minister, and distributed in the relief of the borigines. The distribution

of the blankets has always been conducted by the Treasury, and this year a larger number have been distributed than were ever given away before, 9,000 blankets having been distributed from 151 centres. I hope in many cases the blankets were kept by the recipients, but looking only at that phase of the question it is known that the blankets, in numerous instances, have been used by persons for whom they were not intended. In fact, there has been a large leakage, not only in the distribution of the blankets, but also in their delivery to the blacks. That was simply owing to the fact that the distribution was not organised. It was organised as far as possible by the Minister, but there was no provision, such as is now proposed to be made by this Bill, for dealing with persons who improperly use these blankets. I will just mention here that the relief of the aborigines has for some years past taken other forms. There are several mission stations devoting some time to religious instruction, although from practical experience I must say that that is not of very much value to the blacks. I have closely observed the well-intentioned efforts of the persons who conduct these missions, and, although some assert that religion has a civilising influence on the blacks, apart from the general instruction they receive, still, I could not advise the State to incur one single farthing of expense in anything but the secular education of the blacks, and in their assistance by way of food distribution.

Mr. DAWSON : What was the experience at Myora ?

The HOME SECRETARY : The instruction given there was purely secular. While on this subject I wish it to be understood that I do not say one word against the expenditure of many thousands of pounds by well-intentioned although somewhat inexperienced persons upon the religious education of the blacks, but having had many years experience I am bound to say that I have not seen much practical result from that expenditure. The balance-sheet of one mission station has been shown to me, and I find that £10,000 has been subscribed by a community outside of Queensland to assist in the work of christianising the aborigines, and I have seen very little result, either in the preservation of the race or in the better manners and customs of the aborigines of that particular district. The policy of the Government, however, has always been to deal kindly with these missions ; to let the Government work run side by side with theirs ; never to give any assistance to the missions in the way of encouraging them to carry on the civilisation of the blacks by religious means, but to show the sympathy of the Government in asking the missions to be the instruments for distributing food supplies to the aborigines. The Batavia River mission has had some practical results. Much good has resulted from its establishment, and the blacks in one or two instances have been of assistance in saving life. That mission has been, no doubt, an important factor in establishing good relations between the blacks and the whites. Another mission is at Marie Yaamba, near Mackay ; another near Cairns, at Trinity Bay ; another at Cape Bloomfield, and another at Cape Bedford, which is not assisted in any way by the State. We have one close to Brisbane, at Deebing Creek, which is more of a secular character. Being so close to Brisbane, I have observed the work which has been carried on, and I believe the public have received full value for the money which has been expended. At that station they take charge of children who would otherwise be thrown upon our charitable institutions, and put them to work with good results. The vote last year was £3,300.

The idea of this Bill is that this expenditure shall be under some discipline. Certain modes have been suggested by which that may be done. In some of the other colonies they have aboriginal boards, but that is likely to be changed shortly. In New South Wales also the money has been expended by a board, but the result has not been satisfactory. In those colonies where the blacks are dying out, if we put them in one place, which on one side would appear in the nature of a home and on the other side in the nature of a prison, they may be able to manage with boards. But to ask unpaid boards to undertake the supervision of the care of the aborigines in a place where they are as scattered as they are in Queensland would be to court failure, and I have come to the conclusion that the best way to deal with a matter is to use an instrument which some years ago was regarded as their greatest enemy—the police. I want every policeman to be their protector, and I find from the experience of administration of the working of the police in the Northern districts, of which I have got a short summary, that where this system has been tried it has been successful. I have not been able to see the Commissioner of Police to-day, or I should have been able to get more information on the subject, and I have just scanned these papers. Sergeant Whiteford, than whom no man could be more capable of doing the work of a protector, reports—

That the blacks are now on very friendly terms, and that by the judicious distribution of tobacco, meat, tea, and flour, he has got the blacks to clear and repair the Coen-Musgrave road, also to look after the police horses; and in fact the blacks seem to be thoroughly under the sergeant's control.

Those are Myall blacks who, we have heard, speared cattle and destroyed the inhabitants; and that is the experience of them after twelve or eighteen months' kind treatment on the Musgrave. With regard to Mein—

Inspector Lamond reports that the system of establishing a friendly feeling with the blacks is progressing favourably; the giving of presents and food is much appreciated by the blacks, and they fully understand that so long as they do not molest settlers and stock, etc., the police will protect them. The police have been greatly assisted by Mr. O'Sullivan, of the telegraph office; no depredations have been committed since these gifts have been given.

With reference to Moreton it is reported that—

Gifts of flour and beef and a stick of tobacco to each blackboy and gin have been distributed, and the blacks have been made to understand that so long as they conduct themselves the police would occasionally visit them and continue supplies.

As to the Coen the report is that—

Beef and tobacco have been distributed among the blacks on the Balchutha River, also among the blacks on the Massey and Rocky Rivers; they all appeared to be in a healthy condition, and greatly pleased with the beef and tobacco.

The officer at Highbury reports that—

The first attempt at establishing friendly relations with the blacks was made by Constable R. Murray, who after some trouble managed to get hold of one or two blackfellows and after distributing some tobacco managed to make them understand the intentions of the Government, and told them to spread the information among the rest of the tribe who were too frightened to appear; they appeared to be friendly, and promised to do what was asked.

And more recent returns show that in every instance where inspectors have told the blacks what the feeling of the community is with regard to them, and where the inspectors have been directed to take an active part with regard to the matter, excellent results have followed. The number of blacks in this colony, according to the very best information I can get on the subject, is about 600 to each degree. In the country comprised within 5 degrees from the southern boundary I should say we have from 3,000 to

to 4,000 aborigines, and that estimate is confirmed by the number of blankets distributed. I propose to deal with them in a somewhat different manner from that in which I shall deal with the blacks in the tropics—that is to say, with the blacks north of the Tropic of Capricorn. Among the blacks in the Southern part of the colony tribal differences and tribal relations seem to have disappeared, and we find them living here and there in camps, sometimes having a few cats and fowls, and sometimes wandering about having no home. Those persons, right from the South Australian border to the coast, I have no certain means of dealing with; all that we do for them at the present moment is to give them a few blankets, and where one or two well-intentioned persons ask for a little help the State comes in and assists them. There are very few distributing centres in that portion of the colony. I have a map in the room outside showing the exact position of the distributing centres for blankets, and that will be available to hon. members for reference. Very little is done by the way of distributing food to those aborigines. With regard to the blacks above the Tropic of Capricorn, the method of dealing with them as proposed in the Bill is somewhat different. Most of those, for a time at any rate, will be required to be weaned from the vices they have contracted from the whites. Many of them suffer at the present moment from opium smoking; all of them have suffered from the vice of drinking to excess when they can get it.

An HONOURABLE MEMBER: How are you going to stop that?

The HOME SECRETARY: The hon. member will see that by the Bill; the only thing we can do is to make an effort to try to stop it. A great many others suffer from other things in respect of which they may be brought under the curative influence of the whites. In dealing with those three things it will be absolutely necessary for a time to establish reserves. The principle which has been laid down from time immemorial is that there is only one way to do that, and that is to bring them all together on one reserve, where they will be entirely out of the influence of the whites. But I am of a practical turn of mind, and I cannot see my way to advise the colony to establish reserves, and turn them on to those reserves, where, seeing that the aborigines are by nature hunters, they would feel as if they were imprisoned. I do not propose to deal with them in that way. But I propose to establish reserves, and those reserves in the Southern portion of the colony I hope to make as attractive to them as possible, not to bring force or pressure to bear upon them to compel them to remain there, but to show them such kindness and consideration as will induce them to go back there when they have no chance of getting such work as they choose for themselves. I desire that the aborigines shall have the same freedom of life and action as they had before the whites came here. I think it better to place them in such a condition that they can go hunting as they used to do, and work under favourable conditions, rather than to gather the whole 3,000, with their tribal differences, and place them in a reserve, and attempt to keep them there without even a fence around it. I do not propose anything of the kind, where satisfactory provision can be made for them. In some places satisfactory provision has been made. There are some stations where they work for wages and are well looked after, and where they are with kindly-disposed people and the blacks are satisfied. I do not think the State should interfere. But I am sorry to say there are not many such places. The blacks wander into town where they get drink, and when they go back in many instances they want medical care. One of

these reserves has already been started. Many persons are under the idea that some system of force was used in starting the reserve on Fraser Island. Nothing of the kind! With the exception of Deebing Creek settlement—which is quite outside the State—the settlement on Fraser Island is the only one in the Southern portion of the colony. The origination of that settlement was due to the following cause:—About forty-six blacks were found in the large towns in a deplorable condition—particularly in Maryborough, where most of them were born. I do not say their condition was abnormal. It was only the condition in which a race with no settled habitation, which is here today and there to-morrow, is bound to be found. I leave to the imagination of hon. members what the picture really was like. Repeated complaints were made to me that these blacks were a nuisance to the white residents in the towns. Mr. Meston, who has had considerable experience with aborigines, was sent to Maryborough to let them know that the Government were desirous of establishing them on a reserve set apart for them on Fraser Island, and that food and clothes would be supplied until they were able to maintain themselves. They willingly accepted the proposal. I am sorry to say that while there were 102 of these aborigines the year before, only forty-six remained when the settlement was established, so that hon. members will see a great many died in the course of one year. Since then, though many of them were suffering from disease when taken to Fraser Island, not a single death has occurred, and at a very small expense to the State they have been made useful, and have erected comfortable homes for themselves. Not only that, but under the new régime the number of those in the settlement has increased by a number of others voluntarily joining the settlement. There is no law to keep them there at present; they are kept there by the help and advice of the Government, and by the distribution of a little food. The aborigines in this colony are a kindly dispositioned race; my experience of them is that if you are kind to them, and get at them through their stomachs, you can do something with them. On Fraser Island they are now engaged in tree-planting, in connection with the scheme of afforestation. They mostly gain their own food. Fish is abundant, and a little assistance was given them in the way of providing them with a boat and nets. No liquor has been supplied, except the little which was taken to the island by a man whose connection with the establishment was unfortunate. In connection with every new enterprise, until you succeed in perfecting it, you are certain to meet with reverses, but they will have no effect on me, except to stimulate me to go on further. I had nothing to do with the appointment of this man. His appointment was made with good intentions, but it was a mistake, and resulted in a *fracas*, of which the public have heard one side. The aborigines showed their gratefulness to the Government and the community which supplied them with food, because, while they drank the liquor which the Government did not supply, as soon as they recovered from its effects they starved for three days sooner than touch the food which had been supplied by the Government. That incident has passed over, and nothing has since occurred to cause the slightest anxiety.

Mr. SMITH: Has disease disappeared?

The HOME SECRETARY: Disease has almost disappeared, and the appearance of the aborigines is in marked contrast to the appearance they presented when they went to the island. The best evidence of their improved physique is that the only complaint I have

received was that they were too athletic. Some of them were going to compete in a race in Maryborough, and the whites complained of the superior capabilities of the blacks at Fraser Island, and asked me to stop them competing with the whites.

Mr. ANNEAR: Who told you that?

The HOME SECRETARY: I received a communication from someone the other day asking me to stop them competing in a race which was to take place the next day. However, I thought I would wait and see the result of the race before making any general rule applicable to them. It is proposed to establish a similar reserve at Durundur, where there is a reserve of about 3,000 acres, admirably situated for the purpose. This proposal has led to a perfect ants' nest. The hon. member for Moreton will, no doubt, have something to say on that subject. The impression appeared to be that the Government proposed placing the whole 3,000 aborigines in the Southern portion of the colony on this reserve higgledy-piggledy in the midst of the settlers. No such idea was ever propounded by any sane man.

Mr. BATTERSBY: Meston said it was to be done.

The HOME SECRETARY: It was proposed to place the blacks who live in the district on the reserve. Some years ago the sum of £60 was raised for that purpose, and the money still stands to the credit of the reserve. We want to wean them away from their habit of opium smoking, and therefore we think it is necessary to gather them together in these reserves away from anyone else. Many of those who were taken to Maryborough were confirmed opium smokers, but they have seen the ill-effects of it and have abandoned it. This is merely explanatory of the course that administration has taken in the past. The course intended under this Bill is to ask power to gather these people into certain places, and I may point out that it is necessary in many cases to quarantine them first, in consequence of possible contagion between themselves, and between them and the whites, and therefore we ask power to proclaim reserves to be used in the interests of public health, and they will be kept there until we can certify that they are fit to go out amongst the others. On the second reading of the Bill I do not intend to go into details, but I put it forward as a well-intentioned effort, with the hope of getting the advice of men who have more knowledge of the subject than I have. I have received a great deal of advice from the experts employed by the Government, and have also received assistance from the literature which in times past has been given to us by many persons. The Government also sent Mr. Meston to the North, and since then to the West, and to Gayndah, where he has had opportunities of making himself acquainted with the real facts of the case. We can say that we have some 15,000 souls in our charge, and I think nobody will desire to repudiate that charge. Instead of distributing blankets, as we do now, at a cost of between £8,000 and £10,000 a year, directly and indirectly, I feel sure that that money can be put to much better use under the provisions of the Bill. I may say that I do not intend this Bill to be a medium for billets; if there are any people who have any idea that a large number of billets are going to be created they will find themselves mistaken. I intend to use, as far as possible, the powers now at the disposal of the Government in administering this Bill, and very little further expense will be required in that direction. We have given Mr. Meston a free hand in what he has done, and I am sure we have no reason to complain of the expense we have been put to in the past. The Bill proposes to deal with the subjects I have enumerated in three ways. It first

repeals one section of an act now in existence in regard to the supply of liquor to the blacks, and places it in this Bill so that it can be found under the heading of "aboriginals." It says clearly and definitely that it is the duty of everybody in the community to see that the law in this respect shall be carried out. Of course we do not say that if a black man or woman is in pain, liquor is not to be supplied under any circumstances, because people should be allowed to do what humanity calls upon them to do; but as a general rule it is made penal to supply liquor to blacks except for purely medicinal purposes. Then the laws regarding the supply of opium are amended so as to overcome what has been the great difficulty in the past—to catch the offender. You can always find the people and the opium, but you can never find them together. It has been very hard to get convictions, so that we propose to make more stringent rules in reference to this vice, which I may say is not altogether confined to aborigines and Chinese, but has extended itself to whites also. Although we propose to allow opium to be used for the purposes for which it is necessary, we do not propose to allow it to be used as it is at present; we are not going to allow people to obtain the assistance of these aborigines in working their properties, and then pay them in large supplies of opium. These two things form the leading ideas of the Bill; but there is another which should not be passed by. We must make some better provision for the use of this grant of £8,000 or £10,000 a year that is now spent on blankets, etc., and with that view we propose to make it penal for any person to have wrongfully in his possession any blanket issued to an aboriginal, with the Government stamp upon it. Having dealt with these three matters, we have to make provision for protecting these blacks and securing them in some suitable employment. Of course they are not suitable for all kinds of employment, and we do not intend to bring them into conflict with the whites in that respect. Although we must regulate their employment in some way, we do not intend to make such regulations as we have in the case of other races, and provide for contracts being in black and white. I do not propose to have any such elaborate machinery as that, although I hope that in time the person who takes my place will make the system more perfect. For the present we intend to appoint their protectors, and I think if we make the police their protectors they will be much more inclined to do their duty, when they know they have a trust imposed upon them. That may be only a sentiment; but I think it will have a good effect. It will be the duty of the police to see that they do not get any liquor or opium, that they keep their blankets, and are not injured in regard to their children and their wives. If they keep them out of town they will protect the women from many of those vices which unfortunately are causing nearly all the trouble between the whites and the blacks. They will have to see that none of these contracts are made with these women for immoral purposes. We know that black women are brought into stations nominally as servants; but their service is the service of immorality. That service leads to a row; the manager reports that so-and-so kicked up a row, and in some instances a blackfellow has been shot when the only thing he did was the duty he owed to nature and to his wife, and that was to protect her from the ravages of white men. This Bill provides that there shall be some protection in regard to the hiring of these people. Districts will be proclaimed and protectors appointed, and when a man wants the services of aborigines the protector will explain to them the agreement under which they are going to work. There

will not be a single word in it attempting to interfere with the rate of wages, or dictating whether they are to be paid in gold, silver, or copper. I would prefer that whatever is agreed to be paid is *bond fide* paid in whatever form may be most suitable for the aboriginal. Sometimes it may be clothing, sometimes food; but whatever the arrangement may be, the protector will see that they understand it, and that they get everything for which they contract. But they are of nomadic habits, and nature necessitates that this House should not allow anybody to impose upon them any servitude of too long duration. In the gaols, my experience is that imprisonment for three years is as harassing to a blackfellow as imprisonment for ten years is to a white man; and in some of the recent despatches sent out by the English Government to the various Governors, the rule has been that for all tribal offences punishable by imprisonment the term should not exceed three years. This Bill provides that whatever arrangement may be made with regard to the employment of aborigines the term of their servitude shall be not longer than twelve months. At first I intended to make it six months, but in some instances that would be too short. It would be difficult to draw a Bill that would be sufficiently elastic to deal with all the conditions applicable to this race, and a great many matters are necessarily left to be dealt with by regulation. There is a difficulty in all states of society in keeping order, and some punishment for offences against the rules is necessary. Even in Dunwich, where we provide beneficially for the people who are there, something has to be done to maintain order, but there is nothing in the way of punishment, except deprivation of food; and the maximum punishment I am able to advise for aborigines on account of insubordination, no matter how gross, is imprisonment for three calendar months, on the order of two magistrates. But it will be necessary to place in the hands of superintendents and protectors a minor power of punishment, the term not to exceed one calendar month. If a person will not conform to the rules, I think the superintendent should be empowered to say, "Go to your room." That has been accidentally omitted from the Bill, but I propose to supply the omission. That is all it means. Many suggestions have been made to me that it is absolutely necessary to administer corporal punishment in some cases, but anything of that kind has not my approval. Though it may be wise at times, the abuse of it would bring back all those evils which corporal punishment for crimes of violence have in the past brought upon the whole community. The Bill makes provision, in conclusion, for regulations dealing with the thousand and one matters which must arise, but which I could not prophesy or narrate. The Bill is open; there is not one clause which, if argument and experience are brought before me, I shall not be prepared to modify on receiving substantial proof that the views advanced are better than those of the experts who have advised me. The matter is one in which everybody is interested. I desire most pointedly to say that I take no special credit in connection with the treatment of the aborigines. Every other man who has occupied the office has probably done more. The only thing is the accident of my position; having been probably longer in the office than any of my predecessors, I have been able to build up day by day on their experience, and this work, which I hope will be consummated by you in the shape of legislative enactment, is the work of those well-intentioned persons who laid the foundation, on which I have only laid, as it were, the roof. And I hope the result of this legislation will be to show the civilised world that

however black may be the page of history in Queensland on account of the past, there is a bright page to be written, and that bright page will be written by the legislature in a determined effort to ameliorate the condition of the aborigines.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS : Hear, hear !

Mr. JACKSON : It is quite evident from the manner in which the Home Secretary's remarks were received that there will be no opposition to this Bill—on the main principles at any rate. I am quite in sympathy with his object in regard to providing reserves for the aborigines, regulating their employment, and restricting the sale of alcoholic liquor and opium. As to opium, I may draw attention to one fact which perhaps some hon. members may not quite understand, and that is that this Bill absolutely prohibits the sale of opium by anyone except chemists. That is to say, the ordinary storekeeper, who has been in the habit of selling opium will be debarred under this Bill from the sale of that article. I would point out that the Government at present receive £24,000 per annum from the sale of opium—the duty being, at the rate of £1 per lb. avoirdupois imported, and if the Bill passes as it stands it will operate towards the restriction of the importation of opium. However, as I have no sympathy with those who chiefly use opium in the colony, the Chinese, I shall not enter my protest on that point, because I think the prevention of the consumption of opium would be beneficial, whether amongst whites, Chinamen, or aborigines. I do not quite agree with what the Home Secretary said with regard to what past Governments have done in connection with the aborigines of Queensland. I do not think they have done their duty. The hon. gentleman said they had done what they could, according to their pecuniary means. I deny that. During the last ten or twelve years we have received, I suppose, £500,000 per annum net by way of territorial revenue. Out of that what have we spent in ameliorating the lot of the aborigines? About £3,000 per annum in the way of relief—and that goes partly towards the mission stations that have been established by private associations—and in addition to that there is an annual sum on the Estimates of £7,000 or £8,000 for blankets. But the latter item is included among contingencies and stores, so that it is impossible to ascertain what is the actual amount spent on blankets for aborigines. But even supposing the whole £7,000 went in blankets—which is not the case—that would only amount to some £10,000 per annum spent on the aborigines of the colony; and when we consider that we are receiving more than £500,000 per annum of territorial revenue from a country which really belongs to them, it is a disgrace to the Parliament of Queensland that it has not taken action before this. However, "it is better late than never," and I personally welcome this attempt to do something for them. I quite agree with the Home Secretary that it would not be a suitable plan to work this Act by boards owing to the extent of the country and the scattered nature of the population. With regard to what the Home Secretary said about religious teaching at mission stations, I scarcely think the hon. gentleman has authority for making that statement. At any rate, if we take the reports of Mr. Meston and Mr. Parry-Okeden we find ample testimony to the good effect the religious bodies who control those stations have had upon the aborigines.

The HOME SECRETARY : Not in the matter of religion.

Mr. JACKSON : Perhaps not directly, but seeing that the aborigines are in a primitive

condition of civilisation, religious teaching may have a good effect upon them in the course of time. However, that is by the way. I do not anticipate any great difficulty in putting this Bill into operation. Queensland, like many other countries, has its aboriginal coloured race to deal with as well as its alien coloured race, but the difficulty we have to face is a comparatively small one compared with what it is in countries like the United States and South Africa. Our aboriginal population is very limited in numbers, and the difficulty is one that will not require any very large expenditure of time or money on the part of the Government to enable it to deal with it properly.

The HOME SECRETARY : It cost £1,500,000 in the United States last year.

Mr. JACKSON : Yes, it is a great question there. They have not only the North American Indians to deal with, but the descendants of the African blacks, and it is about the biggest problem the United States or any other country in the world has to deal with. I need not occupy time now in criticising the details of the Bill. I have pointed out one important clause—clause 22—which seems to me rather drastic. I am sure there will be some protest from storekeepers, and particularly from Chinese storekeepers, in the Northern part of the colony if that clause goes through as it is. Also the restricting the quantity of opium to 2lb. that any chemist may have in his possession at places like Hughenden or Cairns will be looked upon as rather drastic. However, those are matters we can thrash out in committee. I should like to have seen something of this sort introduced earlier, but, as I said before, better late than never, and I wish the Government success in putting the Act into operation.

Mr. BROWNE : I do not think there is a member of the House who will not support legislation of this kind, more especially as most of us have over and over again urged that the country should do its duty to the aborigines. We have all heard a great deal about the cruel way in which aborigines are treated. As an old Northerner, and one who has knocked about a good deal amongst the blacks, I may say I do not believe in many of the stories we are sometimes regaled with about the horrible way the aborigines are treated. A great deal more has been made of it than is actually the case. The men in the North and in outlying places have not been the inhuman brutes that some persons have tried to make them out to be. At the same time I thoroughly agree that the colony has never done its duty to the blacks, and I hope this attempt on the part of the Home Secretary will be a success. I intend to support the Bill, especially the clauses referred to by the hon. member for Kennedy restricting the sale of opium. In my opinion those clauses could not possibly be made too stringent; if anything, the penalties are hardly severe enough. We know all about Chinese selling opium to white men. But there is another fact to be borne in mind. It is well known that station owners—highly respectable men in the community—are in the habit of giving opium to the blacks. I know of one or two cases where those persons, on being remonstrated with, have excused themselves on the plea of necessity. They say, "What can I do? So-and-so gives his boys opium, and if I refuse to give it to them they will clear out, and I shall not get a boy to work for me." This sort of thing wants stopping, and I think the blacks may be gradually weaned from the opium habit and brought to look more like human beings than many of them in the closely settled districts look now. With regard to the protectors, I would like to know whether the Bill is to be administered directly by the Home Secretary or through the Police Department?

The HOME SECRETARY: By the Home Secretary.

Mr. BROWNE: I am very glad to hear that. These protectors will be placed in a very responsible position, and they should be responsible directly to the head of the department. As to reserves, there are of course ways of dealing with the matter in the extreme North which cannot be adopted in the South. With reference to Butcher's Hill in the Cook district, I may say that some three years since Mr. Earle, the owner of the station, got a reserve made at Boggy Creek. The hon. member for Cook was away at the time, and Mr. Earle wrote to me on the subject and I waited on the department about it. Mr. Earle has, through the troopers and other civilised blacks, made the myalls understand that the piece of country reserved is their own, and the cattle running on it are their property. Since then Mr. Earle has had no trouble with them in the matter of having his cattle and horses speared, while for years when I was residing close to Butcher's Hill scarcely a day passed without the station losing cattle or horses, and the lives of the people about the station were always in danger. I notice that in the clauses referring to penalties no minimum is mentioned; I think there should be a minimum penalty mentioned in every case.

The HOME SECRETARY: There is in the Justices Act.

Mr. BROWNE: I am very glad to hear that. In the matter of agreements and wages paid to the blacks, though the hon. gentleman said he had no idea of interfering in the matter of wages, I think we should see that these men do get wages. With all the cry against coloured labour, I do not think there is a white man in the colony who would offer any objection to the employment of the aborigines. They have a right to be employed; a right to the first show to get a living, and if an aboriginal does a day's work on a station, a farm, or anywhere else he is entitled to a fair wage the same as a white man or anyone else. I do not think it is good enough to say that it is all right if these men get a bit of beef or 'bacca, or an old shirt or anything of that kind. If they are employed to work they should get a comfortable means of subsistence. The Bill leaves it permissive with the protectors to sanction agreements made with the blacks, but it should be stated in the Act that coloured aliens should not be allowed to employ the aborigines at all.

An HONOURABLE MEMBER: Why?

Mr. SIM: Because they have no right to be here themselves.

Mr. BROWNE: That is only one reason, but I may say that there is a good deal of agitation at the present time on Thursday Island, and the *Torres Straits Pilot* is speaking out straight on the subject—against the employment of aborigines by kanakas, Manilla men, and others who are bigger savages than the aborigines themselves, but who, being employed in the industry for a little time themselves, know the ropes, and are allowed to take the aborigines away with them on the boats. The unfortunate aborigines from the mainland are taken away by these aliens in the bêche-de-mer and pearl-shelling boats and treated as they should not be.

Mr. HAMILTON: By the whites, too.

Mr. BROWNE: I am willing to admit that, but the hon. member is always ready to let us know that the white man is worse than the coloured alien.

Mr. HAMILTON: Why let the white man off? Because he has got a vote and you are afraid of him.

Mr. BROWNE: I do not know why the coloured alien should be allowed to employ them

at all, or why the hon. member for Cook, who represents Thursday Island, should be willing to allow it. If the fisheries were carried on by white men only, the employment of aboriginal labour could be better looked after than if it is left also to kanakas, New Guinea men, and others. I have often spoken strongly in this House and outside of it about the way in which white men have treated the aborigines in these boats. The hon. member for Cook knows that they have been treated badly and that some of the white men have been wiped out after it, and I told them that would be their fate. But because the white man does a thing the kanaka is held up as an angel in comparison. The protectors under this Bill will have some chance of controlling and looking after the white men engaged in the bêche-de-mer and pearl-shell industry, and I am pointing out that though the Bill leaves it to the protectors to allow or not to allow of the signing of agreements with aborigines, it should provide that no agreement should be allowed to be signed between aborigines and coloured aliens engaged in that or any other industry in this colony. It is bad enough to see a lot of men knocking about the North coast, and inland in the North, who are used to doing nothing else but employing aborigines, but it is much worse to see a lot of aborigines taken in charge by semi-savages of other islands of the Pacific and made slaves to them. We may be able to bring the white man to book, but it is harder to deal with the others. Though it may be said that it is in the hands of the protectors to refuse to sanction any agreement, they may not care to draw a distinct line unless it is provided for in the Bill. I think when these people enter into agreements their wages should be protected. We know of stations 6,000 or 7,000 square miles in area which are worked by a couple of white men and a crowd of aborigines. I thoroughly agree that those men should be allowed to work, if they are able to do so, but they should be both paid and fed. There are one or two matters which I hope to see amended in committee, but I shall strongly support the second reading of the Bill.

Mr. PETRIE: As a native of Brisbane, I am glad to know that the Government have at last awakened to their responsibilities, and are going to look after the aborigines. I congratulate the Home Secretary and the Government on the introduction of this Bill, and I must say that it has been a disgrace to past Governments that action of this sort has not been taken sooner. On account of the methods which have been pursued the more these people become civilised the worse they become, and if this Bill will be the means of ameliorating their condition no one will be more pleased than I shall. I have always felt that our aborigines have been very badly treated: that while we have come here and taken their land we have allowed them to mix with the whites and adopt all their vices and evil habits. The blackfellows, if managed properly, would not, I am convinced, have committed half the crimes for which many of them have been punished. Some of my relatives have been able to speak several dialects of the blacks' language, they have had those people working side by side with them, and no outrages were ever committed. I, in my humble way, also have come into close contact with the blacks, and have taken some of them with me on numerous trips that I have made to Moreton Bay, and I am convinced that if they are guided properly they are a most faithful people. The fact is that they fear the white man because there has been so much treachery in the past, and the blackfellow has sometimes protected himself by taking the first opportunity to do so. The result has been that many crimes have been committed

through fear of the white man more than anything else. I hope this Bill will pass, that reserves will be established in various parts of the colony, and that proper men will be appointed to look after them. The aborigines are a sort of gypsy people who are not content to remain in one spot for any length of time, but I believe that with properly appointed and attractive reserves they may be induced to settle down, and their physical and moral condition will be improved. It is rather late in the day to take this action; there are many of these people who, in their own words, have gone to "the happy hunting ground," but "it is never too late to mend." It is something to congratulate the Government upon that they are taking these poor people in hand and trying to make their last days as peaceful as possible. There are some people who think it is far better that the aborigines should be allowed to die out. I do not agree with them. Although they are blackfellows they have souls. Hon. members know how prone the blacks are to adopt all the evil habits of the whites and ignore the virtues, and the consequence of that is that they have fallen ready victims to the opium and drink curses, in addition to which their females have been molested by the whites, and other evils have arisen from that. I hope this measure will be the means of preserving the remnant of this race, and that by the aid of moral training they will be kept free from vice and sin. I shall strongly support the Government in endeavouring to pass the Bill.

Mr. BATTERSBY: It is amusing to hear the speech which has just been delivered coming from a native, who is about forty or fifty years of age, and only finds out now that when his father came here he came to steal what belongs to the blackfellow.

Mr. PETRIE: My father never came here to steal anything.

Mr. BATTERSBY: I make that statement without any fear of denial. I had intended to have a good deal to say on this Bill, but a few words that fell from the Home Secretary have stopped me. As the hon. gentleman said has stated that it is not his intention to dump any other blackfellows on the Durundur reserve, in the Moreton district, but to keep that reserve for those in the district and invite them to make their home there, I shall support the Bill. We are perfectly willing that the blacks in the Moreton district, or the Wide Bay and Burnett district, shall be put on that reserve, but we object to blackfellows being mustered at Cunnamulla, Charleville, and other places, as you would muster a lot of sheep, and dumped on the Durundur reserve. I have accompanied one or two deputations to the Home Secretary on this subject, and the hon. gentleman knows my opinions on the matter.

The HOME SECRETARY: If I got a hundred blacks at the places you mention I should certainly put them on the Durundur reserve.

Mr. BATTERSBY: The hon. gentleman might just as well try to stop the tide from ebbing and flowing, or the sun from rising and setting, as to keep the niggers there. When the Bill goes into committee I shall suggest a few amendments. With regard to the blacks at Fraser Island, for the past six weeks or two months it has been all turmoil among them. If you mix up the tribes they will fight like fun.

The HOME SECRETARY: There has been no more turmoil or fighting among the blacks at Fraser Island than there has been in this House, unless it was through whisky.

Mr. BATTERSBY: What took place at Fraser Island a few weeks ago?

Mr. HAMILTON: It was whisky.

Mr. BATTERSBY: That may be so, and whisky is a very good thing in its place. Under this Bill you can give blacks whisky as a medicine, but it all depends upon how much medicine they want how they will be affected. If you want to make them cranky, of course you have to give them plenty. If you take blackfellows from Cunnamulla or Charleville, and put them on the Durundur reserve, or on Fraser Island, you will have to erect a very high fence to keep them there, and one that they cannot get through; rabbit netting will not stop them from going away. With reference to the Durundur reserve, I think it is only fair that this House should know the history of that reserve. About twenty years ago a gentleman named—

The SPEAKER: I do not think the hon. member will be in order in giving the history of that particular reserve on the second reading of this Bill.

Mr. BATTERSBY: The Home Secretary referred to the matter in his speech, and it was for his information that I was going to tell the House the history of the reserve.

The HOME SECRETARY: Tell me outside.

Mr. BATTERSBY: The hon. gentleman is very fond of hearing things outside, and then comes in here and says he did not hear them. But as the hon. gentleman said that I shall be able to refer to the matter in committee, and the Chairman of Committees is present and has heard that statement, I am perfectly satisfied. I shall support the second reading of the Bill, and when in committee I shall suggest certain amendments, which I hope will be adopted.

Mr. ANNEAR: Unlike the hon. member for Moreton, I had not intended to say anything on the second reading of the Bill, but after the speech made by the Home Secretary I think I should be failing in my duty to my constituents if I did not refer to some remarks made by the hon. gentleman. I may say at the outset that I thoroughly approve of the Bill; I welcome it as a measure in the right direction, and agree with the hon. member for Toombul that it is a wonder that such a Bill was not introduced a long time ago. But "it is never too late to mend," and the Home Secretary has acted on that principle in introducing this Bill. We have a duty to perform in protecting the aborigines, and I believe this measure will effect that object. The Home Secretary has had a great deal to say about the reserve at Fraser Island, not only this afternoon, but on previous occasions this session. I make this statement—that none of the trouble at Fraser Island would have occurred but for the indiscretion of the expert to whom the hon. gentleman has referred; and I believe that the experience the hon. gentleman has gained will prevent a similar occurrence in the future. The Maryborough people have been blamed.

The HOME SECRETARY: Not by me.

Mr. ANNEAR: The people of Maryborough requested the Government to remove many of the blacks who were a nuisance to the town, and in removing them the Government did good work; but in making that request the Maryborough people never imagined that a police force was going to be formed out of the blacks to prevent white men landing at White Cliffs, where they have landed ever since Queensland has been a colony, or to be assaulted with nulla-nullas and other weapons. No greater insult could be offered to white men than that. The Home Secretary claims that the settlement has saved the colony money. He referred to the removal of the buildings from White Cliffs to Bogimbah Creek as having been done by the blacks. It is true that the three buildings at White Cliffs were taken down by the blacks, but a case was tried in the Maryborough court, where a man

sued for £16 wages in connection with those buildings, and here is his evidence on oath :—“There was not sufficient timber to make a good job of the buildings at Bogimbah, as you let the blacks spoil and smash the timber so that there was not enough left out of the three buildings to build one decent house.” The verdict was for the plaintiff—£8 4s. ; costs, 5s. 6d. ; professional costs, £1 1s. ; witnesses’ costs, 10s. ; mileage, 4s. 6d. ; total, £10 4s. 6d. The plaintiff admitted receiving a certain sum, which I believe made up the £16. I was very glad to hear the Home Secretary say that the Act will be administered by his department, as I believe he will administer it faithfully, but I would advise him to have as his chief officers men who have a knowledge of things in general ; and men who, at any rate, can undertake the pulling down and re-erection of buildings. I hope that proper officers will be appointed so that the Act will be administered in the spirit in which this House desires it to be administered. The hon. gentleman said that when the forty-six blacks went to Fraser Island they were all suffering from a disease, but there was not a man to be found in Maryborough now willing to enter into a foot-race with them.

The HOME SECRETARY : I did not say that.

Mr. ANNEAR : I understood the hon. gentleman to say that a blackfellow had been sent up to Maryborough from Fraser Island to compete in a race, and a request was made to him—I suppose by some persons in Maryborough—to send this man back to Fraser Island, as there was not a man in Maryborough to compete with him. I do not believe that, and I would like to know the source from which the hon. gentleman got that information.

The HOME SECRETARY : I got a telegram asking me to stop the blacks competing in a foot-race.

Mr. ANNEAR : The hon. gentleman knows a great deal about Maryborough. I saw by the *Courier* that the hon. gentleman witnessed a regatta last Saturday week in the Milton Reach, in which four young men—four lads I might call them—from Maryborough rowed the best crews that could be put against them in Brisbane, and came off with flying colours. That was not the first time that Maryborough youths beat the Brisbane men.

The SPEAKER : Order ! The hon. member is now wandering from the subject.

Mr. ANNEAR : I think I shall be in order in referring to what the Home Secretary said this afternoon. There are hundreds of young men in Maryborough who are equal to any aboriginal that these experts may have in training in any part of the colony. I shall support the Bill.

Mr. SMITH : The Home Secretary deserves not only the thanks of hon. members of this House but the thanks of the people of this colony for the manner in which he has undertaken the work of protecting the aborigines. Ever since I have had the honour of a seat in this House I have taken an interest in protecting the aborigines, but I found it a forlorn hope until the Home Secretary took the matter in hand. This Bill is the first attempt to formulate a system of protection. Of course, the Government has presented the blacks with blankets for many years, and latterly, through the good-will of the Home Secretary, some of them have had food found for them as well. As the Home Secretary said, it is a system that is wanted in dealing with the blacks, and we have not attempted anything like that up to the present. In order to deal adequately with them we must focus our assistance, and this Bill will provide a means for doing so. It is very satisfactory to know that the small experiment being

tried at Fraser Island is turning out well. The fact that the numbers were reduced from 102 to forty-six in one year gives us to understand what condition they were in and with what rapidity disease was carrying them off ; but it is satisfactory to know that the forty-six are in good health. I do not think there is any man in the colony who knows more about the blacks and their habits than Mr. Meston, and the Home Secretary is lucky to have had his assistance. No doubt the manner in which he has performed his duties will reflect credit upon himself and the department. I am glad also to learn that the Home Secretary’s Department is working well and sympathetically with the mission stations which are already established. These stations have done a great deal of good ; they have done more to make them understand the intentions of the white man towards them than anything else. I am also in favour of making the police act as protectors. If there is one thing we can do more than another to establish this system upon a firm footing, and to do most benefit to the aborigines, it is by having protectors in every part of the colony. It would be impossible for the Government to appoint all the protectors that would be necessary, and as the police are in positions of responsibility at present, they are the best people to appoint to these very important positions. Of course, we know that drink, opium, and disease have been the great means of almost effacing the aborigines from the colony, and when the history of Queensland comes to be written the one black spot in it will be the manner in which the blacks have been dealt with in years past. I am glad that that time has now come to an end, and that under this Bill stringent measures will be adopted where required. There is no denying that stringent measures are required, and I do not think any penalty is too severe to be inflicted upon those who are guilty of supplying these things to the blacks. It is a difficult charge to prove, and for that reason the penalty should be more severe. At present, in ninety-nine cases out of a hundred, the culprit escapes, but under this Bill if he is once caught he is bound to be punished, and this is one of the brightest features of the Bill. It is impossible to deal with the blacks as we do with the whites, because they are of a roving disposition ; they would feel as in a prison if they were forced to remain upon reserves, and I was glad to know from the speech of the Home Secretary that it is not intended that they shall be so kept. The idea is that they are to go on the reserves voluntarily, and therefore it will be necessary to make the reserves as attractive as possible. We must make them attractive to get them there and also to keep them there, and I think that good food, and plenty of it, with a little tobacco and other comforts, will have the desired effect. I have always advocated that the greatest possible assistance should be given to the race from whom we have taken this territory, and to whom we owe a great debt of gratitude for the splendid possession we have. The least we can do is to make their time here, which will not be a very long time, as pleasant as possible, and their departure as gentle as circumstances will permit. I believe in the provisions of the Bill, and shall support its second reading.

The HON. G. THORN : I think the Home Secretary is to be congratulated in regard to his general treatment of the blacks throughout the colony, and regret that such treatment was not accorded to them in the early days, even before we were a separate colony. From a youngster, I may say, I have always defended the blacks, and am glad to have been the means of getting rid of the native police in the Moreton district. I remember when these

miserable blacks were shot down for sport from the veranda of Fassifern station, and was on the jury that tried to bring in a verdict of wilful murder against Wheeler and two others. The verdict did not prevail in one sense, but it did prevail in getting rid of the native police. A great many of the murders said to have been committed by the blacks were not committed by the blacks at all. In my district there was not a single murder committed by them. On the Logan and on the border of New South Wales two dreadful murders were committed—those of Mr. Stapylton and Mr. Logan—and though it was said that they were committed by blacks, the fact is that they were committed by white people who were assigned servants. Then with regard to the great blackfellows' haunt, known as Blackfellows' Creek, at the foot of the Range, to which place a number of soldiers were sent, no murders were committed by the blacks there. They only went in for bullock, damper, and tobacco; and because they committed those depredations they were shot down. The great king of the blacks in the Southern part of the colony was Moppy, who was shot down with his wife and two children. That man always protected the whites. With him there was a white person from Port Macquarie who may have been the means of tutoring Moppy and preventing murders. Look at the man, Murrell, who was with the blacks in the Bowen district for thirteen or fourteen years! I remember the day Moppy brought in Baker. There is no doubt that whites who have been with the blacks have assisted to keep the peace and prevent murders being committed. Now we are to have stations and protectors without fee or reward. That is a good idea, and the Home Secretary will be able to appoint those who have the interests of the blacks at heart. I approve of the proposal that the blacks should have a certain quantity of food given to them, especially the old blacks and the females, and that the blacks should be allowed to work where they can get work. There may be some exception taken to the increased expenditure at the Deebing Creek Station; but that was chiefly on account of a lot of preliminary work that will not occur again. And, after all, that expenditure is nothing to the debt we owe to the aborigines, after taking away their hunting grounds and waterholes, and shooting them down in the early days. In addition to blankets, I think they should be given clothes twice a year, the same as in New South Wales. I am thoroughly in accord with all the hon. gentleman proposes to do at the different mission stations in the extreme north. I do not think it will do much good to teach the adults religion. It is like converting a Mahometan, who can be converted for a time by means of money, but not permanently. They only want food and tobacco. I might talk a good deal on this Bill, but I do not want to do so now. In committee there may be some alterations made, but very few indeed. The proposal, on the whole, receives my approval; and I am very glad that hon. members are almost unanimously in accord with the Home Secretary at the eleventh hour in affording some relief to the aborigines. There were 400 or 500 blacks on Fraser Island twenty years ago, but they have decreased to such an extent that there are now only forty or fifty. I believe it will be a good thing to bring the blacks from the interior to stations on the coast, where their natural food is more plentiful, where the blacks are stronger and the tribes are larger than in the Western districts.

Mr. FINNEY: After hearing the tale told by the hon. member for Fassifern of the brutal way blacks have been murdered in this country, I feel that there is a slur on Queensland that will

remain for ever. No matter what we do we can never wipe out that slur, and to know that white men behaved in such a cruel, brutal, murdering manner towards a lot of poor wretches that had no opportunity of protecting themselves makes one feel ashamed. It was a cowardly thing to do, and I feel ashamed of them. I am very pleased that the Home Secretary has brought this Bill in. I listened to his speech with great interest, and I feel proud that even at this late period a law is, as I fervently trust, to be placed on the statute-book which will protect those unfortunate blacks who are left. They are only a small remnant, but it will enable them to have some little enjoyment in their lives. It will restore them to sound physical health if they are kept away from the whites, whose vices they are unable to protect themselves from. I have seen those blacks about Maryborough, time after time, the most miserable-looking objects I ever beheld, diseased, and altogether in a wretched state. I have since had an opportunity of seeing them at Fraser Island, where they are now camped, and I could scarcely believe they were the same miserable lot who used to haunt the streets of Maryborough begging for pennies. They were fine strapping men and women, and seemed quite happy and contented. Mr. Meston and his son were there, and I noticed that the blacks had the greatest confidence in them. I observed very closely what was going on, and I noticed that Mr. Meston treated them with the greatest respect; he was as polite to them as if he was speaking to a lady or gentleman in his own house. That is the way he has gained their confidence. As I said, the change in their physical appearance was marvellous, and now that they are to be settled in reserves all over the colony there is every probability that they will begin to increase in numbers, and we may again have a fine race of aborigines who will be able to turn their work to some account in the bush, for I agree with the hon. member who said they were entitled to be given work to do. Perhaps they will not settle down to do a hard day's work year in and year out, like men who have been accustomed to work all their lives; they cannot at once change the methods to which they have been accustomed for generations; but in time they may not only be able to support themselves in comfort, but do a great deal in the way of reclamation and improvement of land throughout the colony that will be of great advantage to Queensland. I need not say anything further. It is some comfort to know that at last an attempt is to be made to ameliorate the lot of the blacks after the long period of persecution they have had to endure.

Mr. HAMILTON: It must be quite refreshing to the Home Secretary to listen to the congratulations that have been showered upon him from all sides—congratulations which I am sure are earnestly meant—and to know that the colony also will, with equal sincerity, applaud the action of the Government in holding out the open hand of assistance, as proposed in this Bill, to the comparatively few remaining original possessors of the soil. The Bill when it becomes law will be peculiarly fortunate in its administrators. The Home Secretary has shown his feeling in his past actions and in the speech he has just delivered. We all recognise in the kind-hearted Mr. Parry-Okeden the man of all others who will see that the police will act as protectors of the blacks, and who will be only too delighted to encourage them to do so. Mr. Meston is heart and soul in the work, and the success of the experiment at Fraser Island, which he has supervised, is a happy augury of what we may expect from the other settlements which will be set on foot in

different parts of the colony. In this connection I may say the colony owes a debt of gratitude to Dr. Roth for his most interesting and instructive work on the aborigines of the Cloncurry district. Dr. Roth gave up the practice of a lucrative profession from his love of inquiring into their manners, customs, languages, and private lives and feelings. This knowledge will be of great use in our treatment of the aborigines; and his book must induce all who read it to give their warmest support to any measure tending to ameliorate their lot. The policy contained in this Bill is good both from a financial and from a humanitarian point of view. From a financial point of view it will pay the colony better to give our blackfellows bread and beef than pay a large force of black troopers to down them with powder and lead. From a humanitarian point of view we must recognise that these blacks have a claim on us which it is our duty to liquidate.

Mr. ANNEAR: They tried to kill some white men not long ago at Fraser Island.

Mr. HAMILTON: It was very miserable conduct on the part of the whites. We have taken the entire colony away from the blackfellows, and here is Fraser Island, seventy miles away from civilisation, and out of its large area we have only given them four or five square miles as a place of refuge; and the whites must go to that very spot and consider themselves badly treated because they were not allowed to monopolise it! If the Government had given them the whole island it would have been far too little. The hon. member for Fassifern says the whole scheme of the Bill will not cost more than £10,000 to carry out. This is a mere bagatelle, and I am sure that if the Home Secretary requires a much larger sum to carry it out it will be most willingly voted. My experience among the blacks—and I have had a great deal—is that you can do anything with them by kindness, and that they are faithful and affectionate if treated properly. Look at the case of Kennedy, the explorer, who set out from Rockingham Bay to Cape York, and died before reaching his destination. Kennedy had to leave five or six men in one place and one or two in another; they could not follow him, and the sole companion who accompanied him at last was an aboriginal blackfellow. This faithful black servant received Kennedy's dying words, buried him, planted all his valuables, took the news to Port Albany, led a party back to the spot, unearthed the valuables, then conducted the party to where the white men had been left, and thus saved the lives of two. The others had died. Most Northern members will recollect Christie Palmerston, one of the best explorers of Northern Queensland, who lately died in Batavia. He told me the most faithful and affectionate servant he ever had was a Queensland aboriginal boy named Pompo. Christie Palmerston told me that on one occasion, when this boy and he were travelling through scrub, Pompo was in front cutting the scrub, and Palmerston, thinking he was rather lazy, attempted to strike him with the flat of his scrub knife. The knife catching in a vine, he unfortunately cut the boy on the neck, severing a bloodvessel. Palmerston expressed his sorrow, and tried to staunch the blood, but could not do it. Both thought Pompo was going to die, and as the white men were coming up Pompo said, "Never mind, Christie, me tell me do it myself." Christie said, "No," but the boy insisted that he had done it himself. Then look at what Hann, the leader of the Northern Expedition Party, has to say on the subject. After speaking of the monotony of the journey he pays a tribute to the whites with him, and he says—

In one respect, however, there was throughout perfect harmony and unanimity in the party, who one and all did their utmost in carrying out the objects of the

expedition, and in their endeavour to promote its success; and though all deserve due credit and my best thanks for that, I would especially refer to the native boy Jerry, who, unsustained by the same inducements, was faithful and obedient in every difficulty, and staunch in every danger.

My district offers a very fine field for the treatment of blackfellows, simply because very few of the blacks there are contaminated by the vices of civilisation. The Home Secretary referred to the honesty of the blacks, and I have noticed it myself. When digging where there were hundreds of blackfellows I always left the door of my humpy wide open, and I never lost a thing. It is the same at the Rocky, in my electorate, and the white men there explained to me lately that, though the blacks had carried the diggers' necessaries, tobacco, and other things from the coast to the diggings for two years, they had never lost a single thing. It is quite true that when blackfellows in that district are hungry they may eat a white man occasionally, if a Chinaman is not available, but they prefer the Chinaman, and as the Home Secretary is going to provide them with beef and flour they will have no further inducement. The member for Croydon, who one would imagine represented Thursday Island, for he certainly speaks more about Thursday Island than about his own electorate, gave us information we are all acquainted with, with regard to Polynesians. He states that aliens in that district are in the habit of kidnapping natives from the mainland, but that is not confined to aliens, as white men have done this also. If the hon. member had taken the trouble to inquire, he would have found that instead of, like him, speaking on the subject now, I acted in this matter a year ago, and that the Government in consequence, in the Bill dealing with the pearl-shell fisheries, which was ready last year, and which would have been introduced last year but for the interminable talking of hon. members opposite, proposed to deal with the matter in two clauses providing that aborigines must be engaged in the presence of a shipping master and the agreement must be registered, and also providing a fine of £25 for every native labourer found not to have been so engaged on any vessel entering port. I shall not follow the example of some hon. members in going into details, as at this stage we are dealing with the principle, which has the hearty approval of all, though we may not all agree as to the details when the Bill gets into committee.

Mr. SIM: The Home Secretary and myself differ very materially on many points of policy; at the same time I will say, and my statement will be concurred in by every member on this side, that no one has ever administered the office he holds with more sympathy for sickness and suffering than the hon. gentleman who has introduced this Bill. I am glad, rising on the Opposition side of the House, to be able to say that, and in regard to the aborigines he has been far in advance of any of his predecessors. I represent in this House not only one or two Cabinet Ministers and members of Parliament, but a large number of aborigines, who I am sorry to say, on the authority of Mr. Parry-Okedon, one of the greatest experts upon this question in the colony, are classed as amongst the most unhappy and suffering of any to be found in the confines of Queensland.

An HONOURABLE MEMBER: Have you got a mandate from them?

Mr. SIM: I have a mandate from them to thank the Home Secretary for bringing in this Bill. I have a mandate from all suffering humanity in my constituency to thank any Minister or any member of this House who raises his voice in the cause of humanity.

An HONOURABLE MEMBER: You should have a referendum.

Mr. SIM : There is no referendum wanted on this question but to the great heart of humanity in Queensland, and it is fully represented in this House. The hon. member for Kennedy referred to the efforts made in other countries, notably in the Cape of Good Hope, Canada, and the North American States, to deal with the question of the coloured races. I should like to point out that in those countries the question differs materially from the question in Australia. The natives of those countries occupy in the scale of humanity a much higher position than the natives of Australia, and it is, therefore, much easier to deal with them, and they are much more easily brought within the pale of civilisation as members of the human family worthy of association with the whites who surround them. The Home Secretary, then, in introducing this Bill, has many difficulties to contend with that do not exist in the countries to which the hon. member for Kennedy referred. I congratulate the hon. gentleman upon having adopted the term "protector"—a term in common use in the colony of Natal, for example, where I have seen hundreds of natives seated round the office of the "protector" morning after morning waiting to see him as children wait to see their father. I believe that with the exercise of care in the selection of the agents of the Government to deal with our aborigines we may before long see a similarly happy set of circumstances. The important question raised by the hon. member for Croydon deserves more consideration than it is likely to receive from the hon. member for Cook—the question as to whether coloured aliens residing on Thursday Island, carrying on their business in opposition to the will, at any rate, of a large number of the inhabitants of this colony, shall be permitted to kidnap and use for the vilest purposes the aboriginal natives of Queensland? I join with the hon. member for Croydon in raising my protest against coloured aliens being allowed to continue to exercise a lordship over the aboriginal inhabitants of the colony, and the hon. member in charge of the Bill will act in accordance with the wishes of a large majority of the people if he will introduce a clause which will prohibit the continuance of that practice. The hon. member for Cook indulged in a very ungenerous sneer towards the hon. member for Croydon for referring to matters in connection with Thursday Island, and said he apparently knew more about Thursday Island than he did about his own electorate. No man in this House deserves more the thanks of his constituents for his constant and assiduous attention of their wants than the hon. member for Croydon, and the hon. member for Cook in making the statement he did relied upon his imagination for his facts. I will now read from the *Torres Straits Pilot* of 16th October an article which should awaken the attention of the people of Queensland to the serious evil which has been pointed out by the hon. member for Croydon, and which has been apologised for by the hon. member for Cook. After referring to a case in which a coloured man was fined for having an unregistered native labourer in his boat, and the intention of the bench to enforce higher penalties for this offence, the editor says—

This brings to mind a letter in the *Queenslander* of 15th June last, in which "Thisbe Trux" writes that the employment by white men of aborigines for pearl-shelling and bêche-de-mer fishing has almost entirely ceased. "And it should be made to cease as regards the employment of aborigines by coloured men." This expression will strike a chord of sympathy within the minds of those who know anything about the business; and the custom of permitting coloured men to employ native labour would in all probability have received its doom long ere this if the powers that be were not so remote from us, and understood, or listened to those who knew, the vicious circumstances surrounding the question.

This writer goes on to point out that the only remedies for existing evils are: Prohibiting coloured men from recruiting natives in Cape York Peninsula; from employing them under any conditions; from buying or renting native women, or compelling them under any pretext to remain when they do not choose to do so; making it penal for any coloured man to carry firearms without a permit from the police magistrate, and that turtle-shell procured by the natives should be purchased by the police magistrate or collector of customs only, and be paid for in anything save money, spirits, or firearms. I am sure that that article will commend itself to the sense, judgment, and heart of every white man in the colony, and the Government will be wise if they adopt the suggestion of the hon. member for Croydon and prohibit coloured men from employing native labourers. The hon. member for Cook also read an extract from a Bill which would have been introduced last session but for the exuberance of verbosity, as he said, of those sitting on this side. I am very sorry that so good a measure should have been wrecked by so poor a cause, and I can only say that I doubt whether the real reason has been stated by the member for Cook. The Government, I believe, were awaiting the report of the Royal Commission upon the pearl-shelling industry, and were not obstructed by the verbosity on this side. It is right, therefore, that these matters should be stated, and that no false reasons should be given for the action of the Government. They complain of being misrepresented enough already, and I am very sorry that the misrepresentation should come from the "whip" of the Government party.

Mr. HAMILTON : It is true, nevertheless.

Mr. SIM : The hon. member is contradicted by a member of the commission who informs me of the real reason.

Mr. HAMILTON : He is on the other side.

Mr. SIM : There is one serious matter to which I would refer—that is, that these Manilla men and others have coasted along the shores of the Northern portion of the colony continually, before the white people settled there in large numbers, and that they have been and are in the habit of kidnapping the blacks. The innocent aboriginal is, at the present moment, the victim of one of the vilest conspiracies ever hatched.

Mr. HAMILTON : The Government know that. They introduced a Bill a year ago to remedy it.

Mr. SIM : If the hon. member admits that this is going on in British waters by coloured aliens, who owe no allegiance to our Sovereign, then I ask him if there is not reasonable and legitimate grounds for an appeal to the Home Secretary on the matter.

Mr. HAMILTON : Why don't you attack the white men also? Is it because they have got votes?

Mr. SIM : During the hon. member's absence I read an extract from the *Torres Straits Pilot* which shows that it is not being carried on by white men. If the hon. member likes to defame the white man let him do so. I have too much respect for the white man of the North to defame him.

Mr. HAMILTON : You are afraid of the votes.

Mr. SIM : I have lived amongst these poor aborigines for years, I have seen their condition, and I am heartily glad that this Bill has been introduced. I trust that what has been said by the hon. member for Croydon, and re-echoed by myself, will so impress the Home Secretary, that he will take some action with a view of suppressing the evils which have been pointed out. With reference to the quotation made from an Act of Parliament by the hon. member for

Cook, whereby, according to his contention, provision was made for preventing the employment of aboriginal natives by coloured aliens, I find that the section referred to contains no such provision; but that it is within the province of any coloured alien at Thursday Island at the present time to employ aborigines in the same way as any subject of Her Majesty. I have no doubt that now the attention of the Home Secretary has been drawn to this fact the hon. gentleman will take some steps to put coloured aliens on a different footing in this respect. There is another matter which I shall take an opportunity of bringing before the Home Secretary privately, as it raises a question of very great magnitude in dealing with aborigines in distant portions of the colony, such as the North-west territory. I allude to the dual species of control which at present exists with regard to aborigines. I do not think there is a clear and definite understanding on the part of the authorities as to who shall be entrusted with the duty of carrying out the laws or the regulations of the hon. gentleman's department, in reference to the management of blacks as at present conducted. A few days ago I asked the question whether the regulations of his department were to be carried out by the police, or justices of the peace, or Civil servants, or other authorities; and I merely mention the matter now so that it may receive consideration, because it appears to me that unless it is made clear whose duty it is to carry out the law there is likely to be some conflict of authority, which will be very detrimental to the carrying out of the provisions of this very excellent Bill. Another matter to which I should like to draw attention is the position in which persons are placed in the more remote parts of the colony where myall blacks are found. Some time ago the manager of a station, with whom I happened to be acquainted in the North-western part of the colony, was speared by the blacks, and I read that they were pursued by inhabitants of the station with the view of inflicting summary punishment upon them. There is no doubt that the conditions of such places are very different from those which prevail in the Southern portions of the colony, and there may be difficulties in carrying out this scheme in its entirety on the broad grounds of humanitarianism. I believe that every hon. member will agree with the hon. gentleman that the aborigines in this matter, like the natives of every country with which I am acquainted, are amenable to kindness. I have seen hundreds and thousands of blacks in the vicinity of Normanton and Croydon, where they have been well and kindly treated by the white inhabitants, who will vie with the people in any other places in their efforts to promote the good of the aborigines on purely humanitarian grounds. The diggers on goldfields, although a rough class of men, have very good hearts, and I do not recollect a single instance coming under my notice in the course of a good many years' experience of the maltreatment—that is, cruel treatment—of blacks by diggers on goldfields. The same kindness is extended to the blacks by the pastoralists, many of whom employ them largely and feed them well. Taking all the conditions into consideration, I think that with the assistance of the hon. gentleman the difficulties in that portion of the country will be very easily dealt with. But this one fact remains, that there are natives of a more or less wild character who at the present moment are acting in defiance of authority, and who regard the white man as an enemy to be exterminated. We shall have difficulties with those, but I think that by pursuing the policy the Minister intends to pursue the difficulties with regard to them will be met. I

cannot altogether agree with the hon. gentleman when he says that he believes that religious teaching of aborigines is practically valueless.

The HOME SECRETARY: I did not say that. I said it might be of value for religious purposes, but that it does not civilise them.

Mr. SIM: I am glad to hear that. Of course we know that we are dealing with a race that occupies a very low position in the scale of humanity, but at the same time we must not forget that at one period in our own history our ancestors lived under very similar conditions, and in some respects very much worse conditions, than those under which the blacks of this country live, and that our race is the product of a process of civilisation which has extended over a period of very nearly 2,000 years. The efforts of those men and women who impart religious instruction to these people will not be in the future, and have not been in the past, absolutely without effect, and I believe that acting with the officers of the Home Secretary's Department, and following the policy of giving food to the starving, their efforts will be enhanced in value and productive of larger and better results than has been the case hitherto. I again congratulate the hon. gentleman on having introduced this Bill, which I am sure will command the sympathy of every member of this House and every inhabitant of the country. Personally I should like to see more measures of this kind introduced, in order that the conciliatory spirit which prevails with regard to it might prevail more frequently than it does.

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

The committal of the Bill was made an Order of the Day for to-morrow.

MARSUPIAL BOARDS BILL.

COMMITTEE.

Clauses 1 and 2 put and passed.

On clause 3—"Interpretation of terms"—

Mr. STORY had an amendment to move on the clause, but before doing so he wished to state that a meeting of pastoralists had been held at St. George, which had passed a series of resolutions. He was quite in accord with the resolutions, and he was going to move them as amendments on the Bill. The amendment he had to move in this clause defined as noxious animals and noxious birds animals and birds which were considered such in any district. A district might be invaded by crows or eagle-hawks, for instance, which would do a tremendous amount of damage to the young lambs. In a case of that kind it would be only reasonable to give the people in the district the right to apply to the Governor in Council to proclaim them noxious birds. In one part of his district there was getting to be a perfect plague of wild pigs. On one station over 5,000 had been killed during the last few months. Anyone who had been in New Zealand thirty years ago would recollect the ravages committed there by wild pigs and the stringent measures which the pastoralists had to take to get rid of them. It would be absurd to wait until they became a danger to the pastoralists before taking steps to destroy them. He asked the Home Secretary to accept the amendment for the reasons he had given. There could be no objection to accepting it, seeing it proposed that the proclamation should only apply to the particular district which asked for it. He therefore moved the insertion of the following definitions after the definition of "marsupial":—

"Noxious animal"—Any animal other than a marsupial or dingo which causes injury to or destroys stock or pasture, and which is for the time being declared by the Governor in Council, upon the petition of a board of a district or special district, to be a noxious animal in such district or special district for the purposes of this Act.

"Noxious bird"—Any bird which causes injury to or destroys stock or pasture, and which is for the time being declared by the Governor in Council, upon the petition of a board of a district or special district, to be a noxious bird in such district or special district for the purposes of this Act.

The HOME SECRETARY : There were several sheafs of amendments, and he would be prepared to deal with each on its merits. He would be glad to accept several of them, but the one the hon. member proposed was outside the scope of the Bill, which was "A Bill to encourage the destruction of marsupials and dingoes." The basis of the Bill—at all events so far as marsupials were concerned—was that pastoralists should join together to provide a common fund to destroy animals which destroyed their grass. When the Marsupials Act was being passed the pastoralists managed to get the dingo included, which was clearly an error in form. He did not see why the pastoralists should have to bear the burden of destroying all noxious animals, which would be the effect of the amendment, because the Governor in Council might declare flying foxes to be noxious birds, and it would not be fair that the pastoralists should bear the cost of their destruction. He could not follow the hon. member in the idea of a petition from a district, because the districts were created by the Governor in Council. There were two classes of districts—special districts and pastoral districts—and he had no doubt the boards would object to be joined together for any purpose other than that of preserving the grass for the whole country. They would certainly object to be joined together for the purpose of destroying all noxious animals.

Mr. STORY : Only animals that destroy stock and pasture.

The HOME SECRETARY said the definition in the proposed amendment was very large, and he was perfectly certain that the Bill would not carry it under the leave he had obtained. Besides that, he was opposed to the principle. Eaglehawks might be included under it, although some persons thought they were useful for destroying marsupials, but there was a great difference of opinion about it. The matter was one which might be dealt with in the Local Government Bill, or in a Bill dealing with pests generally. He proposed to limit the Bill to the purposes for which it had been brought in, and was fortified in the conclusion he had come to by the fact that copies of the Bill had been sent to all the marsupial boards in the colony, and not one of them had made the proposal the hon. member now made.

Mr. STORY : This proposal comes directly from St. George. It is their own proposal altogether.

The HOME SECRETARY : He had a list of all the amendments suggested, and nothing like this had come before him.

Mr. STORY : I beg your pardon. I handed you a letter from the St. George Board containing this suggestion.

The HOME SECRETARY : He had all the suggestions which had been made, and up to the 30th September no such amendment had been suggested, and he remembered nothing about it. He had had nothing to do with the department since May, so how could the hon. member say he had handed this letter to him?

Mr. STORY : The resolution referred to came to him just after the Bill had been read a second time, and the first thing he did was to hand it to the Home Secretary, who handed it back to him after some two or three weeks, so that he had not got it now. The hon. member must have forgotten the circumstance.

The HOME SECRETARY : He remembered the matter now, but he did not pay much atten-

tion to it at the time because it was not in his department. He had submitted the suggestion to the Department of Agriculture. Of course it passed away from him then because it was not contemplated that he should put the Bill through; but it was clear that it had been before the Minister, because a very long reply to the letter had been received from Mr. R. C. Lethbridge, chairman of the Booringa Divisional Board, a man of many years' experience, who did his best to refute the hon. gentleman's arguments. In that letter Mr. Lethbridge pointed out, amongst other things, that dingoes, eagle-hawks, and crows killed a great many marsupials; that dingoes, by killing so many marsupials, assisted to preserve the grass for the cattle, and that it would therefore be hard for cattle-owners to have to contribute towards the destruction of dingoes.

Mr. BELL : In all marsupial legislation there must be a compromise between the cattle men and the sheep men. He intended to support the amendment because it represented the views of both parties—in sheep districts the boards could petition for the inclusion of eagle-hawks and in cattle districts the boards could be quiescent. The hon. gentleman had given one instance where a board did not desire the inclusion of eagle-hawks. He (Mr. Bell) had received a communication from the Northern Downs Marsupial Board in favour of eagle-hawks being included in the Bill. The country represented by that board was sheep country, and eagle-hawks destroyed lambs. The country where Mr. Lethbridge lived was cattle country; and cattle men did not care to expend the finances of their boards in exterminating animals that did them no direct injury. If the amendment was not carried he hoped the Bill would be postponed for another session, and brought in in a more complete form.

The HOME SECRETARY : It was a question for consideration whether the amendment was in order or not. On the order of reference, the Committee had to deal with the Bill that had been read a second time, which was a Bill to encourage the destruction of marsupials and dingoes, and he thought it was not within the province of the Committee to make provision also for the destruction of noxious animals and noxious birds.

Mr. STORY : He need only say, speaking to the point of order, that when they were going to pass a Bill of this kind, it was far more reasonable to include noxious animals and noxious birds than to bring in another Bill for that purpose a few months afterwards and so confuse legislation. The Bill was intended to last, and they might as well make it comprehensive.

Mr. DAWSON : Before the Chairman gave his ruling on the point of order he might reasonably ask the Home Secretary to show wherein the amendment differed from the order of leave to introduce the Bill.

The HOME SECRETARY : The order of leave was clear. It was an order for leave "to introduce a Bill to encourage the destruction of marsupials and dingoes." By reading the Bill a second time the House had affirmed its principle, and it could not now extend those two things—marsupials and dingoes—to noxious animals and noxious birds.

Mr. BELL : He would point out that when the Act now in force was going through Committee an amendment was moved to include eagle-hawks. That amendment was allowed by the Chairman, was debated at length, and, he believed, was defeated on a division. The present measure was one dealing with pastoral pests, and he did not think it could seriously be maintained that noxious animals and noxious birds were outside the scope of the Bill.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION : He should certainly be surprised if the Chairman ruled that an eaglehawk was either a marsupial or a dingo.

Mr. STORY : When he was getting his amendments drafted it was pointed out to him that the title of the Bill only included marsupials and dingoes ; but it seemed only reasonable to include other animals injurious to stock and pasture.

The HOME SECRETARY : The point was raised on the last occasion on an amendment to admit the words "bandicoot and kangaroo rat," and upheld so successfully that the amendment was withdrawn.

The CHAIRMAN : This is a Bill "to encourage the destruction of marsupials and dingoes." Standing Order 252 provides that—

Any other amendment may be proposed to such question, provided that the amendment is strictly relevant to the Bill.

I think the hon. member should have moved for an instruction to the Committee to have amendments included, which are, in my opinion outside the scope of the Bill. "May," on page 453, says—

The object of an instruction is, therefore, to endow a committee with power whereby the committee can perfect and complete the legislation defined by the contents of the Bill, or extend the provisions of the Bill to cognate objects.

And lower down, on the same page—

Accordingly an instruction can be moved that authorises the introduction of amendments into a Bill which extends its provisions to objects not contained therein, if those objects are relevant to the subject-matter thereof.

I am clearly of opinion that there must be a special instruction to the Committee before the amendment can be put.

Mr. STORY could only say he deeply regretted the Chairman's ruling. The Home Secretary, on the second reading, particularly invited members who had practical knowledge of the matter to lay their ideas before him so as to make the Bill as good a measure as possible.

The HOME SECRETARY : Within the scope of the Bill,

Mr. STORY : If he had been informed earlier that his amendments would be out of order he might have taken steps to carry out the wishes of his constituents, who would suffer greatly for the want of that amendment.

Mr. BELL regretted that the Government were not in possession of the common knowledge that nearly all the marsupial boards in sheep districts wished to have eaglehawks included in the measure. But the Home Secretary appeared to ignore their wishes.

The HOME SECRETARY : It was a pity the hon. member changed his mind so quickly. He found that on the 27th November, 1895, the hon. gentleman moved the insertion of eaglehawks, and Mr. Allan, then member for Cunningham, pointed out that in New South Wales the eaglehawk was looked upon as a protection against the rabbit, and a great danger especially to advancing colonies of young rabbits. Mr. Bell, in reply, said that Mr. Allan in conversation with him had told him that in New South Wales, where they used to destroy the eaglehawk, they now penalised anyone who killed that bird. Upon that the hon. member withdrew his amendment and admitted that after what he had heard he was not disposed to persevere with it. No other hon. member, with the exception of the hon. member for Balonne, had brought under his notice the suggestion that it was a wise thing to include eaglehawks, and after reading the statement of the hon. member for Dalby he did not think it was a wise thing.

Mr. BELL : He was then, as now, of opinion that eaglehawks should be included, but he with-

drew his proposal at that time on the urgent representations of the then hon. member for Cunningham that it would be absolutely unacceptable in districts where rabbits were found. Ever since then, despite the arguments then used, the marsupial board with which he was connected had urged the inclusion of the eaglehawk. He reminded the Home Secretary that in 1895 the proposal if carried would have been of universal application, whereas under this Bill it would only apply to districts which had specially petitioned for the inclusion of eaglehawks. The destruction of eaglehawks in the Northern Downs district would in no way affect the rabbit districts in the South-west ; the rabbit districts could preserve the eaglehawk as much as they liked.

The CHAIRMAN : I wish hon. members to understand that the amendment of the hon. member for Balonne has been finally dealt with, and the question now before the Committee is that clause 3 stand part of the Bill.

Mr. McDONALD suggested that though the latter portion of the amendment was not in order it might be very desirable to deal with the other portion.

Mr. STORY understood that the whole of the first amendment was ruled out of order, and he left it with great regret. He now moved, on line 23, the omission of "Scalp—a portion of the skin of the head of a marsupial to which both ears are attached," with the view of inserting the following :—

The term "Scalp"—

(a) With respect to marsupials, means a portion of the skin of the head of a marsupial (including the skin to the tip of the nose) to which both ears are attached;

(b) With respect to dingoes, means and includes a portion of the skin of the head of a dingo, to which both ears are attached, and a strip of the skin down the back and the tail;

This was necessary to prevent the possibility of tame dogs being palmed off on the boards as dingoes.

The HOME SECRETARY thought the amendment a practical one, and would accept it.

Amendment agreed to ; and clause, as amended, put and passed.

On clause 4—"Continuation of existing districts, etc., subject to the provisions of this Act"—

Mr. COLLINS pointed out that a map had been prepared showing that about two-thirds of the colony was included in the marsupial districts. He mentioned that fact, so that hon. members might have some idea of the scope of the Bill.

Clause put and passed.

On clause 5—"Governor in Council may constitute, unite, divide, or abolish districts or special districts"—

Mr. COLLINS moved an addition to the clause, after line 53, providing that the Governor in Council might, on petition from two-thirds of the sheep-owners and two-thirds of the cattle-owners of any district, abolish a district or special district, and that no part of Queensland not included in a district or special district should be so included, unless a petition was presented to the Governor in Council in that behalf by the owners of one-third of the sheep and one-third of the cattle in the area proposed to be constituted a district or special district. His reason for proposing the amendment was that the only justification for the Bill was that it was taken for granted that marsupials and dingoes ought to be destroyed everywhere. He did not think that was reasonable in every place. As had been pointed out already, in many parts of the country dingoes were not looked upon as an evil, but as conferring a benefit upon people through keeping down marsupials. In one-third of the whole of Queensland there were very few marsupials, with the

exception of a few rock wallabies and red kangaroos, and they were rather an ornament than an evil. They did no harm whatever, and if they went on destroying marsupials on the present scale the time would come when they would have to introduce a Native Animals Protection Bill. It was only fair that those who had to pay the taxation should have some voice in saying whether the measure should be made applicable to their district. In a great many parts of the country people looked upon the imposition of this taxation as a great hardship and quite unnecessary, more especially on the Western plains and in the cattle country nearer the coast.

The HOME SECRETARY: It was impossible for him to accept the principle of the amendment. It did not even go so far as to make the application of its provisions optional, but provided that upon the presentation of a petition to the Governor in Council signed by the owners of two-thirds of the sheep and two-thirds of the cattle in any district praying that such district might be abolished, the Minister "shall" publish a notice of the receipt thereof, and that the district should be abolished accordingly. The 2nd paragraph was even worse than the 1st, because it provided that the Governor in Council should not move at all until petitioned to do so by the owners of one-third of the sheep and one-third of the cattle in any area proposed to be constituted a marsupial district. People as a rule did not petition to tax themselves, and up to the present there had been the greatest difficulty in getting any expression of opinion at all from the people concerned; all the boards which had been constituted had been constituted by the department without any request from the districts concerned. The marsupials were not, like the rabbits, a national danger; they were more local in their habits, and the idea of the Bill was to constitute districts in which marsupials existed, and then leave the pastoralists to manage their own affairs. It was not said that they should tax themselves, and they need not do so unless they liked. The Bill was entirely permissive. As to the proposal that a majority of two-thirds of the cattle and sheep owners should have power to wipe out a district, there was a much easier way of doing that, and that was by making no assessment. It might be necessary in the interest of a board which was trying to exterminate marsupials to incorporate with its district the adjoining district, because reasonable efforts were not being made there to destroy the pest, but it was only in such cases that it was proposed the Governor in Council should interfere.

Mr. STORY: The existing Act was permissive, and under it they had spent some £460,000 in the destruction of marsupials and dingoes, with the result that they were now worse than they ever were. Was not that a proof of the utility of a permissive Act? If the Bill was not made compulsory there was not the slightest object in altering one word of the present law. The amendment might not be worded exactly as the hon. gentleman would have worded it, but it would prevent an injustice being done to pastoralists at a distance where dingoes did no particular harm, and where the country was nearly all occupied by cattle. It did not matter to people in the South-western part of the colony whether dingoes about Normanton, Croydon, and other places in the North were destroyed or not, and if the amendment were accepted it would prevent men from being taxed for the destruction of animals that did no harm in their district.

Mr. ARMSTRONG agreed that the Bill should be made compulsory, but did not approve of the amendment. In the West Moreton marsupial

district four cattle-owners could under the amendment prevent the Bill being brought into operation in the district because they owned two-thirds of the stock; and they could do that in spite of the other 2,600 settlers in the district. Did that not show the absurdity of the amendment? He should certainly vote against it.

The HOME SECRETARY: The point he had raised about the last amendment was that it was outside the scope of the Bill, but his objection to this one was that it would not be acceptable to the general community. He was sure that if the question were submitted to the pastoralists as a whole they would object to treating the question as a national one. The question the Government had had to decide was whether they should introduce legislation treating it as a national danger, or whether they should introduce no legislation at all. They were not prepared to adopt either of those courses, and so the alternative had been adopted of making it permissible, but without the weaknesses of the present Act. The argument of the hon. member that the Bill did not go far enough might be a good one, but he could not agree with him when he said that the present Act had been comparatively useless. Between 5,000,000 and 6,000,000 marsupials had been destroyed under it, and surely the state of the country would have been a great deal worse if that number of marsupials had been allowed to exist, and they had been as prolific as the remainder. In view of the immense amount of depression in the country, and the immense amount of direct taxation that had been thrown upon the pastoral industry, it would be hardly fair to make the Bill compulsory over the whole colony. The old Act had failed mainly through the boards thinking that they had power to fix a minimum bonus, and the present Bill proposed to fix a statutory minimum bonus, which should have a very salutary effect. If in the working of the Act it appeared to the Governor in Council that any board was frustrating the efforts of a conterminous board, some other action would be taken, but the Government thought that all difficulties would be overcome by fixing a minimum bonus.

Mr. DAWSON: There were a number of hon. members like himself who did not know much about the subject, and they were befogged by the different positions taken up by the hon. member for Albert and his supporters and the Home Secretary. To some extent he was inclined to agree with the hon. member for Albert, but he would like to know the meaning of the 2nd subsection. A petition had to be sent in to the Governor in Council by one-third of the cattle-owners and one-third of the sheep-owners. Now, it might happen that in a sheep district a man had three cows and a bull, and that those were the only cattle in the district. Was he right in interpreting the amendment to mean that in that case that one man, by his opposition, could render the amendment inoperative?

Mr. COLLINS: Mr. Dawson was afraid that the hon. member interpreted the subsection correctly. The fault was not his, but that of the draftsman. He had explained what he wanted to the draftsman, but he had framed the amendment in such a way that it did not express what was wanted. His idea was that a certain ratio should be established by which cattle could be taken as an equivalent in sheep, and vice versa, but his object could be attained by a consequential amendment.

Mr. DAWSON: He did not see how "cattle" could be taken to mean sheep, because in clause 3, which they had passed, "cattle" was defined as including horses, but nothing was said about sheep. If the draftsman had not succeeded in conveying the hon. member's meaning, the hon. member ought to be prepared to amend the

amendment in the right way. Surely he saw the necessity of fixing a minimum number of cattle and sheep in any district? He thought the amendment would be improved if altered in this direction.

Mr. COLLINS: His object was to have some protection against the Bill being made compulsory, and after the assurance of the Home Secretary that he would not accept any alteration in that direction, he would withdraw his amendment.

Amendment, by leave, withdrawn.

Clause put and passed.

On clause 6—"Boards to be constituted"—

Mr. STORY moved that the words "five members to" be omitted, with a few of inserting "so many members as may be from time to time prescribed by the Governor in Council, and such members shall." This was the first clause dealing with the mode of election, and he proposed to alter it so as to bring it into line with elections for rabbit boards and divisional boards. The matter did not seem very important, but still it required serious consideration. It was hardly reasonable to expect a man to travel 100 or 150 miles to vote at an election, because a journey like that meant at least four days travelling through heat and dust on a tired horse with very little food or water. He had been eight or nine years the secretary of a marsupial board, and knew that it was very seldom that anyone came to a township to vote, and the consequence was that the same members were reappointed by the Governor in Council every year. They had always had good men, but the principle was bad. Voting by post was allowed in other cases, and it was almost necessary in this, or else the boards would remain in the hands of a few small men about the towns, who would not have as much experience as those further out. The rest of the amendments were consequential upon this.

Mr. LEAHY was opposed to the principle contained in the amendment when it was introduced in the Rabbit Bill, and he was opposed to it now for the same reasons. In thinly-settled districts it was a very good thing that the settlers should meet together occasionally to talk over matters of common interest; but that advantage would be lost if voting by post were allowed. The hon. member admitted that the boards had worked very well up to the present, and he (Mr. Leahy) did not think the rabbit boards had been improved by the change to the method proposed by the amendment.

The HOME SECRETARY was opposed to the amendment. He did not think any advantage that might be gained would be worth the cumbrous machinery that would be necessary. He had had considerable experience with these boards, and the difficulty was to get men to act. For every one person elected the Governor in Council had appointed two. It would be most extraordinary to adopt this machinery for a permissive Bill—machinery included in the Rabbit Boards Act, where everything was compulsory. And after all this form had been gone through, and the board met, they might decide to have no taxation.

Mr. STORY: We can make further amendments.

The HOME SECRETARY: Did the hon. member propose to make it compulsory?

Mr. STORY: Decidedly.

The HOME SECRETARY: The compulsory principle was opposed to the principle of the Bill, and he was distinctly opposed to it. If the Bill were compulsory, the system of election proposed would be very proper, because the present mode was a rough-and-ready way of getting people to act. They simply rode across to a certain place and

selected the men from those who were present. If the subject were to be treated in a national manner, the fund raised should be in proportion to the whole number of cattle and sheep in Queensland. It would not be wise to deal with it by special taxation in particular districts.

Mr. STORY: It would be better to go at once to the crux of the matter and decide whether the Bill was to be compulsory or not. The hon. gentleman spoke of a number of men going to a certain place and electing themselves, and it could easily be understood that the men nearest at hand would be the ones present and consequently the men chosen. People looked upon the Act as permissive, and some people levied an assessment of $\frac{1}{4}$ d. as against other assessments of 2s. 6d. and 5s. This was just as compulsory and national a matter as the rabbit tax. It was just as great a danger, and was growing every day. He was convinced of the integrity of the men that had acted in the past on marsupial boards, still it would be better to have six members elected and two of them retire every year. He intended to do all he could to make the Bill compulsory. If they did not make it compulsory there would be no use in carrying the amendment providing for voting by post.

Mr. HARDACRE hoped the Home Secretary would accept the amendment. Every member representing a pastoral district, where there were great difficulties in getting to the voting centre, ought to be in favour of affording every possible facility to persons to record their votes. The hon. member for Bulloo said the present system was working very well. In his opinion it was working very badly, because for want of a provision of this kind all the power got into the hands of a few men round about the town, who taxed the outside people according to their own sweet will. The amendment would enable every man qualified to vote to have a say in an election and also in the rate to be struck.

The HOME SECRETARY: He could not see what object the hon. member had to gain in leaving the number of members of a board to be determined by the Governor in Council. If five members were not enough, make the number larger, but do not leave to the Governor in Council what could be done by legislation.

Mr. BATTERSBY: He would put the effect of the amendment in a concrete form. If the number was omitted, and left to be prescribed by the Governor in Council, there would be nothing to prevent the Governor in Council from making every adult male in the district a member of the board, which would be absurd.

Question—That the words proposed to be omitted stand part of the clause—put and negatived; and clause put and passed.

On clause 7—"Qualification of members and electors in districts"—

Mr. LEAHY: There seemed to be something wanting in the clause. It provided that every resident owner or manager of a holding possessing a certain number of cattle or sheep should be qualified to be a member of a board, and that if his stock were reduced below the specified number his qualification should cease, but he was still qualified to vote as an elector. Although a man left the station of which he had been owner or manager, and had no longer any interest in the district, there was nothing to prevent him from voting. He proposed inserting in line 28, after the word "aforesaid," the words "or has ceased to be such owner or manager," and, after the word "shall," in line 31, the words "so long as he retains such qualification." The qualification for a member of the board was higher than for a vote; yet a man might lose his qualification in one case and retain it in another.

The HOME SECRETARY: Does not the first sentence with the interpretation clause cover it —“every resident owner or manager”? If he ceases to be either, his qualification is gone.

Mr. LEAHY: Later on the Bill provided for certain returns being sent by the Auditor-General and Registrar-General, and the name “Tom Brown” might appear in the return as having three votes as manager, though in the meantime Tom Brown might have been replaced by William Smith, who would not be recorded as having any votes at all.

The HOME SECRETARY: You want to put it in again; I think it is covered already.

Mr. LEAHY: There was no provision for punishing a man if he voted without the qualification; the returning officer might be friendly towards him, and his name being on the return supplied by the Registrar-General he might allow him to vote. If the amendment to be proposed by the hon. member for Balonne was carried, it would be absolutely necessary to have some such provision as he suggested. He did not say the matter was wonderfully important, but one vote might turn an election.

Clause put and passed.

Clause 8 put and passed.

On clause 9—“Annual elections to be held”—

The HOME SECRETARY: There were some amendments to be moved on the clause, but before they were moved he would say at once that the department admitted that the 31st March was not a convenient time for the elections, as all the returns would not be in. He proposed, therefore, to provide that the elections should be held before the 30th June. That would answer all purposes.

Mr. ARMSTRONG moved the omission of the word “annual” in line 13, after the word “an,” with a view of inserting “biennial.” Ample reasons had been given in the previous discussion of the Bill to show that it was absurd to bring the same machinery into force every year for the election of those boards. Just as a board were getting into good working order—at the end of twelve months—they had to retire by effluxion of time. The twelve months had been proved in the working of the board he had some knowledge of to be too short. He hoped hon. members would see their way to accept the amendment. It would lead to the better working of the Bill.

The HOME SECRETARY suggested that the best way in which to move the amendment would be to leave out the word “annual” and insert “an election of members of every board shall be held before the 30th day of June in each alternate year.”

Mr. ARMSTRONG: All he wanted was to assert the principle of biennial election, and he would accept the Minister’s suggestion.

Amendment, by leave, withdrawn.

On the motion of the **HOME SECRETARY**, the word “annual” was omitted, together with the words “31st day of March,” and the words “30th day of June” inserted.

Mr. ARMSTRONG moved the omission of the word “each,” on line 14, and the insertion of “every alternate.”

The HOME SECRETARY: Some persons believed in an election every three years, and others every year. He thought the hon. member’s amendment was a fair compromise, and would avoid trouble.

Amendment agreed to.

Mr. STORY moved the omission of the clause, as amended, with a view of inserting a clause providing for the annual election of members. The schedule of which he had given notice would provide for the annual retirement of a certain number of members, as in the case of divisional boards. The matter was of such importance to his electorate that he should be obliged to call

for a division upon it. The amendment really raised the question of voting by post. He did not understand why the members of any body duly constituted should all retire at a certain time and all be re-elected at a certain time. He could understand that it might be desirable to introduce new blood, and if one-third of the members retired annually and were eligible for re-election that would meet all requirements. The clause in the Bill was very much more cumbersome than the method he proposed.

The HOME SECRETARY: hoped the Committee would not negative the amended clause. There was much to be said in favour of what the hon. member desired, but at present it would be highly inconvenient to import into the Bill the whole of the machinery that the hon. member proposed. Under the hon. member’s clause the marsupial would be treated as a common enemy.

Mr. STORY: It is a common enemy.

The HOME SECRETARY: That was not admitted. If it was to be treated as a common enemy, then the whole colony must come under the Bill. The drift of the hon. member’s argument was really that if there were a lot of marsupials in a district in the South, and they were not destroyed, they would increase to such an extent that in time they would extend to the Gulf country, and therefore the North should contribute towards the cost of their extermination. The result of such a policy would be that districts in which there were no marsupials would go on accumulating rates for which they had no use.

Mr. STORY: There need be no accumulation at all, because under clause 30, if the funds standing to the credit of a board were more than sufficient for the work of any one year, they could get exemption from assessment for that year, and if necessary for ten years, so that the evil would be limited to one year. But his amendment had nothing to do with the compulsory part of the Bill. It was merely a proposal to secure the election of the best men as boards-men.

Mr. LEAHY had stated that if the hon. member’s amendment on clause 6 were carried he would support the other amendments, because they all hinged on one another, but that amendment having been negatived he could not vote for the present proposal, which involved the adoption of the schedule. How were they going to divide five members into three parts?

Mr. STORY: Take the nearest multiple of three.

Mr. LEAHY: In that case they would have two members of the board going out and three remaining, and that would not be quite so symmetrical as the clause as amended.

The HOME SECRETARY: This Bill was sent to thirty marsupial boards on the 21st September, 1896, and replies were received from them up to August last, but not one of them had suggested any such proposal as that embodied in the amendment. The assessments levied last year by the various boards ranged from nothing by the Paroo, Cloncurry, and Diamantina Boards, to 9d. by the St. George Board, and 2s. 6d. by the Booringa Board. If the Bill were being made compulsory, there might be some more elaborate machinery adopted for voting at elections; but in a purely permissive measure he could not advise the Committee to adopt any such scheme as that proposed, more especially as the present machinery had worked without any difficulty.

Mr. STORY should like to explain that the reason why the Paroo Marsupial Board had levied no assessment last year was that they had nearly £1,200 to their credit when the last Act

expired, and that being sufficient to carry them on for one year, they applied for exemption from assessment.

The HOME SECRETARY : That, unfortunately, is not the reason. While other boards paid for 62,000, and some of them for 120,000 scalps, the Paroo board only paid for 7,000 scalps.

Mr. STORY : Exactly, but what he said was true, as he happened to be the man who applied to the Treasury to repay the money that he had paid into the Treasury some two years ago. The Treasury asked him to get a voucher from the manager of the Queensland National Bank to show that the money had been deposited there, and after a considerable amount of correspondence he succeeded in convincing the Treasury that the money had never been paid into the Queensland National Bank, but that he had paid it into the Treasury, and that he held their receipt for it. As the correspondence went on for some considerable time the board had no money to pay for scalps. The St. George Board had only levied 6d., but hon. members might imagine the number of sheep in the district when he mentioned that the board had paid for 40,891 marsupial and 988 dingo scalps. The revenue of the board was over £1,000 from that small levy. Voting by post was the first step towards bringing about a better state of things, and preventing five or six men electing themselves and taking charge of the whole business.

Mr. DAWSON : The clause as it stood provided for biennial elections, the date of election, the last hour at which nominations could be lodged, the number of qualified voters required to sign nomination papers, and also for the appointment of the returning officer. The clause the hon. member had to propose provided for annual elections, for the appointment of the returning officer by the Governor in Council instead of by ten qualified voters, but it provided for none of the other things provided for in the clause as it stood.

Mr. STORY : Everything the hon. member mentioned was provided for in the first schedule which he had to propose in the event of his amendment being agreed to. The amendment distinctly referred to that schedule—the two had to be read in conjunction.

Question—That clause 9, as amended, stand part of the Bill—put; and the Committee divided :—

AYES, 26.

Sir H. M. Nelson, Sir H. Tozer, Messrs. Dalrymple, Leahy, Armstrong, W. Thorn, Curtis, Turley, Dawson, Collins, Groom, McGahan, Fogarty, Stunn, Grimes, McDonnell, Stodart, Browne, Newell, Smyth, Bell, Battersby, O'Connell, Bartholomew, Hamilton, and Bridges.

NOES, 11.

Messrs. Story, Corfield, Hardacre, Stewart, Hoolan, Kerr, Dunsford, King, Kidston, Castling, and McDonald.

PAIRS.

Ayes—Messrs. Dickson, Newell, and Smith.

Noes—Messrs. Jackson, Keogh, and Drake.

Resolved in the affirmative.

Clauses 10 to 14, inclusive, put and passed.

On clause 15—"Vacancies"—

On the motion of Mr. ARMSTRONG, the word "annual" was omitted from line 50.

Mr. ARMSTRONG moved that all the words after "provided" be omitted, with a view of inserting "an election shall be held for the purpose of electing a person to fill such vacancy, and the person so elected shall hold office until the expiration of the term for which the other members of the board hold office." This was an expression of the wish that when a vacancy occurred the new member should be elected by the ratepayers instead of nominated by the Governor in Council. The principle was generally accepted.

The HOME SECRETARY : The words proposed to be added did not fill up the gap, and he

would suggest that there be inserted "an election shall be held for the purpose of electing a person to fill such vacancy, but in case no person shall be elected the Governor in Council may appoint some fit and proper person to fill such vacancy." There was no need to retain the words "upon the recommendation of the board or otherwise."

Mr. ARMSTRONG admitted that his amendment did not provide for the event of no one being elected, and approved of the suggestion of the Home Secretary.

Mr. BATTERSBY thought the proposed amendment should be withdrawn. He had been on a board for nine years with a person who died recently, within three months of the time he would have had to retire, and it had been decided not to hold a fresh election to fill the vacancy. He hoped that principle would be extended to marsupial boards.

The CHAIRMAN : I think if the hon. member had been listening he would have found that the Home Secretary intends to do what he suggests. I feel sure the amendment will meet his wishes.

Mr. BATTERSBY : A vacancy might occur within three months of the time of the annual election, and some provision might be inserted to the effect that such vacancy need not be filled until the time of the annual election.

Mr. ARMSTRONG, by leave, withdrew his amendment.

The HOME SECRETARY moved the amendment he had suggested.

Mr. STORY : The omission of clause 15 was one of the amendments on his list, but after the division just taken there was no chance of altering the Bill in the way he desired. A member representing a large district could not do much when the interests of that district clashed with those of small districts. If there was no possibility of people going hundreds of miles to elect five people, where was the possibility of their going to elect one?

Mr. LEAHY thought clause 10 provided for the matter dealt with by the amendment before the Committee.

Mr. BATTERSBY wished to know whether the Home Secretary could not see his way to adopt a provision similar to that in the Local Government Act for avoiding the expense of an election to fill a vacancy occurring at any time within the three months preceding an annual election?

Amendment agreed to.

Mr. BATTERSBY repeated his question with regard to not filling a vacancy occurring shortly before the annual election until the time arrived for the annual election. His object was to save expense.

Mr. DAWSON considered the suggestion of the hon. member a valuable one. It was a provision they had been working under for many years, and he had yet to learn that it had been a hardship in the Local Government Act. The provision in that Act, that if a vacancy occurred within three months of the annual election it should not be filled until the annual election had been a very beneficial one, and he saw no reason why it should not be introduced into a Marsupial Boards Act.

Mr. LEAHY : They had now provided that there should be extraordinary elections to fill vacancies, but the only machinery provided in the Bill was for annual elections.

The HOME SECRETARY : He would deal with that when the time came, and his intention was to leave it to the boards themselves. In the meantime he moved the omission of the words "upon the recommendation of the board or otherwise."

Amendment agreed to.

The HOME SECRETARY moved the insertion of the words "and such election shall be held at such time and place, and shall be conducted in such manner as the board shall determine."

Mr. BATTERSBY: He should vote for the amendment, although he would have preferred seeing the provision of the Local Government Act inserted.

Mr. DAWSON had no objection to the amendment, but it did not meet the suggestion of the hon. member for Moreton, that in case a vacancy occurred within three months of the annual election it should not be filled until the annual election. Under the amendment the filling of a vacancy on a marsupial board was left to the board; but it was not left to the local authorities under their Local Government Acts; it was provided for in the Acts.

Amendment agreed to.

The HOME SECRETARY: There was a very good reason for the provision in the Local Government Act—because under that Act it was compulsory upon the officers of a local authority, in the case of a vacancy arising, to proceed to an election. The provision was put into the Act to save the local authority the cost of an election within three months of the annual election, but there was no such necessity under this Bill.

Mr. DAWSON: Yes, there is; you have just put in the words.

The HOME SECRETARY: No. They had provided that in the event of a vacancy an election should be held, but they did not say when. By the amendment just made they left the matter to be determined by the board; if under the special circumstances they thought it inadvisable to hold an election they would not hold one.

Mr. BATTERSBY objected to the Home Secretary trying to wander the Committee as to what he had suggested. All he argued was that if a vacancy occurred within three months of the annual election it should not be filled until the annual election.

Clause, as amended, put and passed.

On clause 16—"Members failing to perform duty may be removed"—

Mr. STORY moved the omission of the words "if in the opinion of the Governor in Council," with view of inserting "if the Governor in Council, on the representation of the chairman of another board or otherwise, is of opinion that." The clause was very vague as it stood. How was the Governor in Council to have any information as to whether members were performing their duty or not? The amendment was all the more necessary as voting by post had not been accepted. If a board was in favour of preserving dingoes, to the injury of its neighbours, it was only fair that the chairman of the board representing the district which was being injured should report the matter.

The HOME SECRETARY: The hon. member would gain nothing by the amendment, which contained a very objectionable principle. It threw the duty on the chairman of a neighbouring board of becoming a common informer. The hon. gentleman was really interfering with the administration of the measure. The Governor in Council would have plenty of means of acquiring the necessary information. Suppose a board refused to give permits under any circumstances, the Minister would ask them to report; if they refused to report, then the members could be removed. It would be a great mistake to set one board against another—to get them to turn informer one against the other. Under the circumstances the hon. member would be wise not to press his amendment.

Mr. STORY did not intend to press the amendment, but he would point out that it was

possible a board which had spent a lot of money in the destruction of dingoes might have as a neighbour a board which refused to do anything, and whose district was a breeding-ground for the vermin. How, under those circumstances, was the Governor in Council to become aware of the fact that the board was not doing its duty unless someone reported the fact?

Amendment put and negatived; and clause put and passed.

Clause 17 put and passed; clause 18 passed with a consequential amendment; clause 19 put and passed.

On clause 22—"Power to make by-laws"—

Mr. LEAHY thought it would be well that the amendment embodied in clause 18 should be included in this clause, so that the board might make by-laws regulating extraordinary elections—that all such elections should be conducted on a fixed principle. He therefore moved that the following words be inserted after paragraph 4: "(5) The election of a member to an extraordinary vacancy on the board."

Amendment agreed to; and clause, as amended, put and passed.

Clause 21 put and passed.

Clause 22—"Permits to destroy marsupials and dingoes"—

Mr. KERR wished to propose an amendment authorising a person to whom a permit had been granted to destroy marsupials or dingoes to use animals and vehicles while so employed, and to depasture such animals on the holding where they were employed. His reason for suggesting the amendment was that some lessees objected to scalpers going on their holdings. Scalpers generally had a couple of horses and a wagonette, which they used in their business, and they would do no harm in depasturing their horses on a run. Objection had been taken to the word "animals" in his amendment, as it was thought that it was intended to include dogs. That was not his intention, and he would alter the word "animals" to "horses," so as to meet the views of hon. members.

The HOME SECRETARY pointed out that the hon. member for Balonne had prepared an amendment which comprised all that the hon. member for Barcoo desired, and which was more acceptable to him than the clause in the Bill. If the hon. member for Balonne would insert in his clause the words "and horses" after "assistants" he would accept it.

Clause 22 put and negatived.

Mr. STORY thereupon moved a new clause empowering a board to cause notice to be served on the owner or manager of any holding requiring him to take effective measures for the destruction of marsupials or dingoes; in the event of a failure to comply with such notice, the board might issue a permit to any person or persons, with or without assistants and horses, to enter upon such holding and destroy marsupials or dingoes, reserving power to the board to revoke any permit; and further providing for a penalty not exceeding £20 in the event of any person obstructing the holder of a permit in entering upon a holding or destroying marsupials or dingoes. He found that the clause as printed in the Bill had more virtue in it than he had at first supposed, as shooters would be almost as able to give information as to the localities in which there were numbers of marsupials or dingoes as a rabbit inspector was able to report upon the presence of rabbits; and the boards would get information from people who would be anxious to destroy marsupials on any holding. He took it for granted that the board would have power to limit the number of horses any man would be allowed to take on to a holding. Permits had been issued by the Paroo and Bulloo boards to two shooters, who had over

160 kangaroo dogs in a camp adjoining a sheep station. That was not a desirable state of things; and it was very necessary that boards should have power to limit the number of horses.

Mr. KERR asked the Home Secretary to allow the words "and vehicles" to be inserted after "horses." A scalper required a vehicle to carry his rations, ammunition, and other necessities.

The HOME SECRETARY thought it better to leave that to the discretion of the boards. They knew exactly what was required to carry out the work of destruction, and if it was necessary that a man should have a vehicle a board would make no objection to it. Objection had been taken to the number of dogs or horses a man took on to a holding.

Mr. FITZGERALD did not see what objection there could be to inserting these words. It was perfectly discretionary with the board, who could make what reservations they liked, but at present there was no right to keep a vehicle on a run, and a station manager might order it to be taken away. The very same words were inserted in the Land Bill, and he did not see why there should be opposition in this case. He would not press the matter.

Mr. LEAHY pointed out that the board would be composed of pastoralists, and the Bill could not be worked unless they were given sufficient power. He did not think this clause would work at all, because the Bill give power to spend money on scalps only. There was no power given to employ men, and if they employed men who wiped out every marsupial in the district those men could not recover a penny.

The HOME SECRETARY suggested that the hon. member for Balonne should leave out the words "or may employ any person with or without assistants."

Mr. HARDACRE did not like the clause at all. It was altogether too drastic, and things were inserted in it that were not necessary.

The CHAIRMAN: I would remind the hon. member that there is an amendment before the Committee.

Mr. HARDACRE: The clause provided that if the owner or manager of a station neglected to take measures for the destruction of marsupials, the board might issue a permit. He did not see why the board should have to take the initiative.

Mr. STORY: The object was to prevent the waste of time which would ensue if a man had to go to the station manager first, and then to the board to complain afterwards.

Mr. HARDACRE did not see why persons wishing to destroy marsupials need go to the board at all. The old clause was simple, effective, and contained no threat.

Mr. STORY, with the permission of the Committee, substituted "horses" for "assistants" in his amendment.

Mr. COLLINS: The new clause was very much better than the old one. The old clause proposed that a permit might be granted only to the person who brought the information, and to no other person. He might be an informer, and a very objectionable person.

Question stated—That the new clause, as amended, stand part of the Bill.

Mr. HARDACRE: The hon. member for Balonne had proposed the omission of the word "assistants" with the view of inserting "horses," but that amendment had not been put to the Committee.

The CHAIRMAN: Clause 22 has been omitted with the view of inserting a new clause proposed by the hon. member for Balonne. That new clause has been amended with the consent

of the Committee, and the question now is that the new clause, as amended, stand part of the Bill.

New clause, as amended, put and passed.

Clause 23 put and passed.

The House resumed; the CHAIRMAN reported progress, and the Committee obtained leave to sit again to-morrow.

The House adjourned at nine minutes past 11 o'clock.