

Queensland



Parliamentary Debates
[Hansard]

Legislative Assembly

TUESDAY, 6 SEPTEMBER 1932

Electronic reproduction of original hardcopy

TUESDAY, 6 SEPTEMBER, 1932.

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

LIQUOR ACTS AMENDMENT BILL.

ASSENT.

Mr. SPEAKER announced the receipt of
a message from His Excellency the Deputy
Governor, conveying His Excellency's assent
to this Bill.

QUESTIONS.

GOVERNMENT EMPLOYEES PAID FROM CONSOLI-
DATED REVENUE, TRUST, AND LOAN FUNDS.

Mr. DANIEL (*Keppel*) asked the Premier—

“What were the numbers of Govern-
ment employees on 30th June last paid
from Consolidated Revenue, Trust, and
Loan Funds, respectively; the answer to
be in the form contained in the last issue
of the ‘A B C of Queensland Statistics’?”

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS PREMIER (Hon. W. Forgan Smith, (Hon. P. Pease, *Herbert*), for the *Mackay*), replied—

Department.	Number of Officers as at 30th June, 1932.			
	Consolidated Revenue Fund.	Trust Funds	Loan Fund.	Total.
Executive and Legislative	41	..	..	41
Premier and Chief Secretary	162	..	..	162
Home Secretary	2,515	..	..	2,515
Public Works (including Construction Branch Employees) ..	183	69	101	353
Labour and Industry (including State Enterprises)	171	152	..	323
Justice	367	184	..	551
Treasury (including Bureau of Central Sugar Mills)	1,155	596	..	1,751
Public Lands (including Prickly-pear Commission and Public Estate Improvement Branch Wages Hands; Irrigation and Water Supply Department)	542	204	107	853
Agriculture and Stock	270	269	..	539
Public Instruction	5,136	..	..	5,136
Mines (including Mining Operations)	101	420	..	521
Main Roads Commission .. .. .	..	793	..	793
Railways (including Refreshment Rooms)	14,714	..	721	15,435
Total	25,357	2,687	929	28,973

PRICE OF BREAD, BRISBANE AND AUGATHELLA.

Mr. SPARKES (*Dalby*) asked the Secretary for Labour and Industry—

“Is the price of bread fixed at Brisbane and Augathella; if so, at what amounts per 2-lb. (a) in May, 1932; (b) at present?”

The SECRETARY FOR LABOUR AND INDUSTRY (Hon. M. P. Hynes, *Townsville*) replied—

“(a) The fixed price of bread, in Brisbane, in May, 1932, was 5d. per 2-lb. loaf, cash at bakehouse, shop, or delivered; (b) the present fixed price is 5d. per 2-lb. loaf, cash at bakehouse, shop, or delivered. The price of bread at Augathella is not fixed on account of of the small output.”

AVERAGE ANNUAL PAY OF RAILWAY EMPLOYEES AT MAIN DEPOTS.

Mr. MAXWELL (*Toowoong*), for Mr. COSTELLO (*Carnarvon*): I desire to ask the Minister for Transport whether he has an answer to the following question which was addressed to him by the hon. member for Carnarvon on 1st September:—

“What were the average wages per annum actually paid at the main depots last financial year to locomotive drivers, firemen, cleaners, guards, shunters, porters, tradesmen, and labourers.”

The MINISTER FOR TRANSPORT (Hon. J. Dash, *Mundingburra*) replied—

Depot.	Drivers.	Firemen.	Cleaners.	Guards.	Shunters.	Porters.	Labourers.	Tradesmen.
Brisbane	£ 226	£ 175	£ 161	£ 229	£ 212	£ 175	£ 183	£ 232
Gympie	215	173	170	198	206	171	165	234
Toowoomba	230	181	176	209	207	175	183	225
Warwick	226	179	172	218	207	181	176	227
Roma	253	194	204	243	224	212	213	256
Maryborough	203	163	165	192	193	181	179	214
Bundaberg	205	176	177	211	203	184	183	249
Rockhampton	227	177	162	201	207	171	166	197
Emerald	267	209	190	217	225	206	203	256
Mackay	250	190	167	193	221	182	193	231
Townsville	293	206	206	228	214	200	*204	*250
Cairns	309	236	205	288	229	217	196	217
Bowen	275	209	202	248	229	228	207	262
Charters Towers	308	218	214	250	226	213	182	264
Hughenden	322	255	256	318	270	252	242	297
Cloncurry	329	280	225	296	257	255	271	313
							188	218

* Does not embrace Townsville Workshops, figures for which are

DAIRY PRODUCE ACT AMENDMENT
BILL.

INITIATION IN COMMITTEE.

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

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE
(Hon. F. W. Bulcock, *Barcoo*) [10.43 a.m.]:
I beg to move —

“That it is desirable that a Bill be introduced to amend ‘The Dairy Produce Act of 1920’ in certain particulars.”

This Bill does not amend any existing sections, but introduces two new sections. While there may be some diversity of opinion amongst individuals with respect to the desirability of the new sections that it is proposed to introduce, this Bill is very definitely based on the considered opinion of the people most concerned. From time to time I have met deputations, as also did my predecessor, and these deputations have reiterated the desire of the dairy people for the amendments embodied in this Bill.

The production of butter and cheese in the State has reached tremendous proportions; but obviously it has not reached the limit of our capacity to produce. When the original Act was passed in 1904 the production of butter was 17,500,000 lb., and of cheese 2,600,000 lb. Although there was a tremendous amount of opposition to that Act, in 1931 the production of butter and cheese had increased to 97,500,000 lb. and 12,250,000 lb. respectively, proving that, in conjunction with the natural resources of our State, the Dairy Produce Act had been very beneficial in its operation, not only in stimulating production but also in maintaining and improving qualities, and so finding markets for these products.

There are two new principles involved in the Bill. The first provides that all factories shall pay for raw material in the same manner, but not necessarily at the same figure. That means that a uniform system of bookkeeping will be introduced. This uniform system of bookkeeping will enable the producer to determine more accurately than he can at the present time the relative merits of the various factories. As everybody is aware, at the present time factories have different methods of bookkeeping, with the result that different prices are obtained from time to time by the farmer. With his limited knowledge of bookkeeping, he is unable to determine the relative merits of the payments made by two factories to either of which he may send his cream. Some factories adopt the principle of paying a little higher in winter, when supplies are low, reducing the amount they pay in the summer, so that over the whole twelve months there is not any great variation in the price; but it is desirable that the farmer may have a basis of comparison, and may definitely assure himself that his factory is being conducted along the same efficient lines as others, and that the same system of bookkeeping is operating in respect of every factory in the State. When this is done the farmer will have a standard of comparison that will be an adequate safeguard for him, and he will be able to know definitely and conclusively whether he is receiving a fair and satisfactory return for his commodity.

There is another principle that is introduced in this Bill, and that is the prohibition of freight payments by butter factories. This is of very great concern to the dairying

[*Hon. F. W. Bulcock.*

industry. When it was originally introduced it was never contemplated that it would meet with the opposition it has encountered. The position at the present moment is that the dairy factories have entered into serious competition with each other, and are violently competing, and very frequently they adopt different systems of bookkeeping, so that the producer thinks that by sending his cream to another factory he is actually getting better value. If you reduce the equation so far as bookkeeping is concerned to common terms, the farmer will be able to form a true opinion regarding the relative merits of the various factories. In order to attract supplies to various factories, a system of freight payments has been embarked upon, with the result that cream is being taken past several factories to a factory that is not the logical factory for the treatment of that cream. Owing to the fact that that cream is dragged over long distances, cream that would ordinarily make up first grade butter—a suitable export butter—is only capable of making a borderline butter, and in many instances less than a borderline butter. If we are going to maintain our export trade, it is very obvious that we have to give the people who are going to consume our dairy products overseas the best quality that we can give them; and, if we are going to continue a system whereby cream is allowed to travel halfway across the State, then obviously we are not laying down a method that will enable first-class butter to be made.

Mr. BRAND: Why not adopt the zoning system?

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: The zoning system might possibly interfere with the liberty of the subject. Hon. members opposite have from time to time spoken very feelingly about interference with the liberty of the subject. Under this Bill it is not proposed to limit the factory to which the individual may send his cream. If an individual in the Toowoomba district, for instance, desires to send his cream to a factory at Gympie, he may indulge his whim; but it will be at his expense, and not at the expense of the people who are supplying cream to the Gympie factory. It is obviously unfair that the producers in one area supplying a particular factory should be compelled to make a contribution towards the conveyance of cream from districts very far removed from the scene of operations of the factory. I do not desire at the present juncture to introduce a zoning system, although I frankly admit that, if we could overcome some of the difficulties associated with the zoning of cream, it would be the proper thing to do; and I anticipate that the time will come when the butter factories will be prepared to form a federation of factories operating on a unified basis, when it will be opportune for the zoning of the supplies to be put into operation; and we shall further materially promote the quality of our butter and our cheese by the adoption of that system.

Mr. BRAND: Railage is a direct charge on the cost of production.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: If railage be a legitimate charge on the cost of production, then it must follow that that legitimate charge shall be levied on the person who produces the cream. While I am not in any way limiting the destination of the cream, quite obviously the producer, if he desires to indulge a whim and send cream

on a long journey, should pay for that himself.

Those are the only two principles associated with this Bill, which I commend to the consideration of the Committee.

Mr. WALKER (*Coooroo*) [10.52 a.m.]: While I recognise that the time is not altogether opportune for discussing various matters relating to this subject on account of certain happenings, I am firmly of opinion that this Bill should not be brought forward at present, because there are happenings which have taken place which are going to put the whole industry on an entirely new footing.

One phase of the question on which I can be quite fair without getting over the mark is with reference to new factory buildings. During the last few months we have had competition between various districts and associations with regard to where those factories should be put. After what we have learned during the last six months, I am firmly of opinion that all factories should be licensed and approved of by the Secretary for Agriculture after he has made an investigation into the resources and requirements of the districts concerned to enable him to determine whether a factory should be built or not. It is not a question only of economy and management; it is also a question of the factory manufacturing the product at an economic loss. I would mention that I intend to move the deletion of the words "in certain particulars," because I think that anything of importance to the industry should be included in the proposed amendment of the Act. It will give the Minister some idea of the matter by referring to the Pomona, Cooroy, and Eumundi factories. Within ten miles there are three factories operating. This is simply due to competition between the business interests of the respective centres, and has nothing at all to do with the farmers.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: Why should the farmers be the victims of that sort of thing?

Mr. WALKER: That is the point. The Government should step in and require factories to be licensed after approval by the department. Recently at Wondai there was a scramble to get a factory built. It was believed—and I certainly intended it—that a Bill was going to be brought in by me at that time. Then take the great Tableland district in the North—one of the finest dairying districts in the world. If the advice of the Director of Dairying, Mr. Graham, had been acted on, the factories on the Atherton Tableland would have been built on a scientific geographical basis, so that the dairyman would have had his cream manufactured in the most economical way. The result is that he cannot produce except at a very high cost.

One of the amendments proposed by the Minister I favour very much. I refer to the question of uniform bookkeeping. When I was Minister, I appointed a committee to go into the question; and I understand that the report has been laid before the present Minister, and that he is adopting the recommendations made by the committee. There is a lot in the contention that uniform bookkeeping will assist; but it by no means gets over the whole difficulty of uniform prices, which has nothing to do at all with bookkeeping. There are one hundred and one other factors which should

be taken into consideration by the various companies or associations to overcome what may appear to be a little lack of management.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: It will help a little.

Mr. WALKER: It will; but there are many other things to be attended to; and, if a greater amount of interest were displayed in the direction, for instance, of seeing that the factories comply with the law with respect to the overrun, and also the proper compilation of balance-sheets so that nothing will be hidden, a lot of the trouble which at the present time disturbs the minds of dairymen would be obviated. The hon. gentleman knows perfectly well that there are factories which paid prices on a certain basis in order to create a certain belief, although the prices, when they came to be worked out later by the Department of Agriculture and Stock, were found not to be different. It was all a matter of paper calculations to try to make the farmer believe that he was getting a higher price for his cream than somebody else.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: That is the value of this amendment.

Mr. WALKER: It will help, but it is not going to overcome the whole of the difficulty.

Then we come to the other question—the right of the farmer to pay railway freight on his cream to any factory he wishes. It seems to me that this is purely a matter for the factories. If they get together and make a recommendation to the Minister, he should allow them to carry out any agreement they may arrive at, otherwise you are putting a burden on the department that it ought not to have to carry. It will probably only be another pinprick, and mean the appointment of more inspectors to do work which should be done by the respective factories. In any event, the payment of railway freights is not the trouble. The trouble is the subsidising of cream coaches; and this amendment does not deal with that. Not only do factories subsidise cream coaches, but they are also endeavouring to get back loading for the trucks to induce cream producers to pass other factories. The hon. gentleman knows that factories on the Downs go out for cream as far as the electorate of the hon. member for Dalby, and, in the other direction, run into the Burnett and Wide Bay districts. That is a thing that should be stopped; and it is not a matter for the department, but for the various associations. My amendment is the result of my experience of twenty-five years in connection with dairy factories. The proposal of the Minister as to bookkeeping is quite all right. With regard to railway freights, I say leave it to the factories, or you will create a greater anomaly than exists at present, without bringing any salve to the minds of the dairymen. When all is said and done, what the farmer wants is to see that he beats the other fellow; he wants to think that his cheque from his factory is better than the cheque from the other factory. The main point is the adoption of the recommendation with regard to the licensing of factories, with which the Minister must be conversant. I, therefore, beg to move the following amendment:—

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

Mr. Walker.]

This matter is of extreme importance, not only to the farmers, but also to the whole of the districts concerned. It should be the duty of the Minister to appoint an officer of the department to investigate the economic possibilities consequent upon the establishment of factories in certain areas. Action in this direction would aid considerably in alleviating the agitation at present pervading the dairying community. It will then be possible to indicate to the disappointed applicants why the economic possibilities preclude the establishment of a factory in a certain location.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE (Hon. F. W. Bulcock, *Barcoo*) [11.1 a.m.]: I do not propose to accept the amendment. The matters referred to by the hon. member for Cooroora require the urgent attention of the whole of the dairying industry. They aim at the protection both of the producer and of the consumer. I have no desire to be personal in this matter; but it is rather significant that the late Secretary for Agriculture should now recognise the imperative necessity for doing these things at this juncture whilst he had an opportunity for three years to accomplish those things which he now asks, but failed to do so.

Mr. WALKER: It took three years to clean up fourteen years of mess.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: The hon. gentleman knows that there was no mess. I have been busily engaged in my own department in cleaning up the residuè of the previous Administration. However, that apart, representations were made to the hon. member for Cooroora as Secretary for Agriculture and Stock along the lines laid down in the Bill. The Bill is not only a measure for the producer, but it is also a measure for the consumer. If we are to maintain the quality of our butter and our reputation as butter producers in the face of ever-increasing competition overseas, then it is very obvious that we must export butter approximating the highest quality that the State can produce. I am convinced that the only way to achieve that end is by having the cream treated at the nearest possible factory, thereby eliminating the manufacture of borderline butter, most of which is consequent upon the conveyance of cream over long distances.

The licensing of factories opens up an entirely different question. The hon. member for Cooroora must know that the inquiries with respect to this matter are by no means completed. It must also be a matter of knowledge to him that before long it may be necessary to introduce a further amendment to the Act.

Mr. WALKER: Why not do it now?

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: I am not going to be swung off my feet and introduce amendments to do things until I am perfectly satisfied that the object I am attempting to achieve will be accomplished.

The question of licensing butter factories opens up a very wide field of investigation, and that field must be satisfactorily exploited before any decision can be come to by this Chamber. I am satisfied at this juncture that these fields have not been satisfactorily exploited. I require further information, and I take this opportunity to assure the hon. member and the Committee generally that the information is being obtained. When it has been completed and I feel that it is

desirable to do as the hon. gentleman suggests, then I will certainly do it.

There is another matter to which I wish to refer. Although it does not particularly impinge upon the two amendments involved in the Bill, still the question does revolve round that of quality.

Mr. WALKER: Of the whole quantity of butter manufactured in this State 88.8 per cent. is graded first-class.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: That does not say that the industry has attained the maximum which we are capable of attaining. Every industry must endeavour to establish not only progressive grades but new records in the establishment of higher grades. That is essential.

We have recently entered into an agreement arising out of the Ottawa Conference, details of which we are not yet fully conversant with; but, in the final analysis, the consumer will determine whether the results of the Ottawa Conference are successful or otherwise. People cannot be compelled by legislative enactment to consume a commodity which is not up to the required standard. We might have a greater opportunity than ever before as the result of the Ottawa Conference to market our butter in England more advantageously than in the past; but it must be apparent that we can only maintain the results of that agreement—which I believe will operate satisfactorily so far as this State is concerned—provided we give the quality required by the people overseas. Therefore, we have two angles from which to view this question—the angle of the producer and the angle of the consumer. Everyone knows that no commodity is more susceptible to deterioration by transport than cream.

This brings me to the controversy which has been carried on during the past few days—the controversy regarding the prohibition of the use of Queensland hoop pine for the manufacture of butter boxes. This subject is not entirely relevant to the matter under discussion, although it has a bearing upon it, as it is associated with the major question of the maintenance of the quality of our butter. I crave the indulgence of the Committee to make a statement on this important matter. I had intended to make a statement at an earlier stage of these proceedings, but, unfortunately, my papers were not then available. On the 3rd instant an intimation reached the Chief Secretary's Department to the effect that the Federal dairying branch intended to prohibit the use of Queensland hoop pine in the manufacture of butter boxes. The Attorney-General, as Acting Premier, thereupon despatched the following telegram to the Prime Minister at Canberra:—

“Referring previous correspondence respecting use Queensland pine for butter boxes complaints made Commonwealth butter grader here rejecting considerable numbers Queensland pine butter boxes and states he is recommending prohibition discontinuing use this timber. As result millers discontinuing cutting causing serious unemployment. In present condition industry this matter will have serious repercussion. Queensland pine has been used for butter boxes since inception dairying industry proposition to discontinue unwarranted. Would ask you to issue instruction that no action be taken

[Mr. Walker.

prohibit, also to consider economic position with view instructing grader reconsider his rejections. Loss to timber industry probably greater than loss through taint which occurs in all timbers."

At the same time I caused a lettergram to be sent to Dr. Rivett, of the Council for Scientific and Industrial Research, protesting against precipitate action being taken by the Commonwealth Government. I pointed out that Mr. Boas had furnished valuable information which was finding corroboration in laboratory and storage tests. Mr. Boas has evolved a scheme whereby the spraying of the butter boxes appears to be an adequate and satisfactory preventive of wood-tainted butter.

Mr. WALKER: Why put the farmers to the expense of another 1d. per lb. when there is no occasion for it?

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: I am satisfied that there is occasion for it. If the Federal Government are allowed to handicap another of our primary industries, then it is the obvious duty of the Secretary for Agriculture and the Cabinet to make protests in order that our industries shall not be injured. Such protests were lodged by the Acting Premier and by myself. I also got in touch with the hon. member for Albert and with Mr. Sheehy, the secretary of the Queensland Butter Board, and a concerted protest was made to the Federal Government in respect of this matter. The merits of the case are understood by everybody. There is no evidence that wood taint in butter is any more pronounced when butter is packed in Queensland pine boxes than when packed in boxes made from any other pine. As a matter of fact, only this morning I received information that butter that was packed in New Zealand pine and held for storage purposes was degraded two points on account of wood taint in that particular butter; so the argument that New Zealand pine does not taint butter is absolutely absurd, because it was a Commonwealth grader who degraded that butter on account of the incidence of taint. However, this morning I received a lettergram from Dr. Rivett; and, as it is of some importance to the industry and should be made public as early as possible, and as one should endeavour to make announcements of such importance in Parliament rather than that they should be made known first through the press, I propose to read that lettergram. Perhaps it might be wise for me to read my own lettergram to Dr. Rivett too, so that the sequence of argument may be followed. My lettergram reads—

"Dr. Rivett,

"C.S.I.R.,

"Albert street,

"Melbourne.

"Am greatly perturbed as result of Federal Dairy Branch's intention impose prohibition use Queensland pine for butter-box purposes Stop In view successful methods control and elimination wood taint discovered as result investigation of causes wood taint by Dr. Boas and other scientists it is clearly evident prohibition use Queensland pine is without justification Stop I would appreciate your urgently bringing whole matter wood taint under immediate notice Minister for Markets so that Federal Dairy Branch's intention to prohibit use

Queensland pine might be nullified Stop Federal Dairy Branch's action is so contrary to opinions scientific investigations that I assume report from your council upon matter of wood taint has not been perused by them.

"BULCOCK,

"Minister Agriculture."

That was the only possible conclusion one could reach. This morning as I was leaving my office for Parliament House, I received this very satisfactory reply from Dr. Rivett:—

"Hon. F. Bulcock,

"Minister for Agriculture,

"Brisbane.

"Your lettergram regarding hoop pine for butter-boxes have immediately consulted with Secretary Department Commerce who gives assurance no intention of prohibiting use Queensland pine Stop Says inspectors are only rejecting boxes showing evidence of taint which is quite different matter Stop Regarding stage of our investigations we are awaiting information last experimental shipment London before publication of full statement Stop Boas quite anticipates success Stop Department Commerce is kept fully informed our work.

"RIVETT."

The position now is that certain millers have indicated their intention of not buying Queensland pine for boxes, and, as a result, the operations in the Forestry Department and the operations of certain millers have been handicapped, which obviously must lead to a big volume of unemployment; but, in view of the assurance that Dr. Rivett has now given me and the assurance that I am able to give to hon. members that it is not proposed at the present juncture to prosecute this matter any further, I think a satisfactory solution, for the time being at least, has been found; and there should now be no reason why millers should refrain from operating Queensland logs as required. I thank you, Mr. Hanson, for your indulgence in allowing me to make this statement, but I think the circumstances justify it.

I am sorry that I cannot accept the amendment moved by the hon. member for Cooroola.

Mr. GODFREY MORGAN (*Murilla*) [11.14 a.m.]: I do not know whether the Minister in charge of this Bill has consulted with the Minister for Transport; but I feel sure that, if this Bill becomes law, it will cause a considerable loss of revenue to the Railway Department by reason of increased motor transport. So far as I can see at present—I do not yet know the full contents of the Bill—the Bill may mean that the factory companies will be able to hire their own motor lorries for the conveyance of cream from one place to another without charge to the farmers, or else they may subsidise the motor transport of cream. It would appear, therefore, that the Minister is not going to prevent a butter company from paying the freight on cream from a particular centre if it desires to do so. I think that is an important point. If the Minister has not made provision for that, then he ought to insert a provision whereby factories shall not be allowed to subsidise motor lorries to compete with the railways, or to run their own motor lorries and make no charge to the producer of the cream. If the factories

Mr. Morgan.]

do that, then the Bill is going to be of no use whatever, because, instead of the cream being conveyed by the railways, as a great deal of it is to-day, it is going to be conveyed by motor lorries. This will mean that many thousands of pounds will go out of Australia in payment for petrol, and Queensland coal will not be used. The Bill will only injure the Railway Department and serve no good purpose. We have a right to see that as much freight as possible is conveyed by the railways. A Bill of this description is going to injure the Railway Department if it prohibits the payment of freight on cream conveyed by the Railway Department from certain areas, but does not prohibit the paying of freight on cream conveyed by motor lorry. That is going to injure the Queensland workers. We should try to get business for the Railway Department instead of taking it away; and this Bill deliberately is taking freight away from the Railway Department. Suppose cream is sent at the present time from a certain area to a certain butter factory beyond another factory, and the factory is paying freight on that cream, immediately the Bill comes into operation that will stop. But, in order to get that cream, the factory will say, "Very well, we will run a motor lorry." How are you going to get over that?

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: If they run a motor lorry, are they not paying freight on the cream?

Mr. MOORE: How can you prove it?

Mr. GODFREY MORGAN: I want to know whether the Bill is watertight? Is it going to treat motor lorries in exactly the same way as it does the Railway Department?

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: You will find that it will be all right.

Mr. GODFREY MORGAN: If that is so, then I have no further objection to offer.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: There will be no loss of revenue to the Railway Department under the Bill. I can assure you of that.

Mr. GODFREY MORGAN: I do not think the hon. gentleman can give me that assurance; and, if he cannot give me that assurance, all he is going to do is to transfer a certain amount of revenue that Queensland industries receive at present to a foreign industry that is at present ruining Australia to a great extent because we are sending millions out of Australia each year for petrol.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: Would you be in favour of all cream being transferred to the factories by the railways?

Mr. GODFREY MORGAN: That could not be put into effect. What I want to know is whether this Bill is going to do an injury to the Railway Department, and whether it is going to assist foreign competition that at the present time is draining the lifeblood out of Australia.

Mr. KENNY (*Cook*) [11.20 a.m.]: I would like to ask the Minister whether the Bill provides for a uniform system of keeping accounts and uniform balance-sheets, or just for uniform balance-sheets?

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: A uniform system right through.

Mr. KENNY: There is a difference between a uniform system of keeping

accounts and uniform balance-sheets, and I would like to be assured by the Minister that the Bill provides for both.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: It provides for both.

Mr. BRAND (*Isis*) [11.21 a.m.]: In seeking leave to introduce this Bill the Minister is endeavouring in certain ways to help the dairy farmer in Queensland. I understand that a deputation waited upon him with respect more particularly to freight charges, and asked that a factory should not pay the freight on cream supplied to the factory. We are fortunate in the knowledge that the whole of the dairying industry in Queensland is practically on a co-operative basis; but, where a dairy factory is owned by proprietary interests, I am afraid that the Minister will be asked by them to make it compulsory for freight to be charged to the factory as a legitimate cost of the production of the factory, for the reason that no factory can be successful unless it has a cream supply, and the cream from the producer furthest away is of as much value to the factory as the cream supplied by the nearest farmer to the factory. I contend that freight is a legitimate charge upon the factory; and that is where it should remain. I interjected whilst the Minister was speaking, asking why we should not institute a zoning system. There cannot be any serious objection to a zoning system in Queensland. Factories are so situated throughout the State that a zoning system can be applied. If such a system was applied, there would be no need to bring in a Bill making it compulsory for factories not to pay for the carriage of cream.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: You apparently have not realised that the zoning system is bristling with difficulties.

Mr. BRAND: I recognise that there are difficulties; but what the Minister is seeking to do in this Bill itself is to bring about the zoning system.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: Such a definite zoning system as you are advocating will not overcome the difficulties we are encountering.

Mr. BRAND: If we had a zoning system, we would require to have a uniform system of payments; and there are many dairy farmers in Queensland who believe that there should be a uniform system of payments similar to those which exist in the sugar industry. Some factories pay less than others; and there should be a uniform price based on a given test, similar to the procedure under our cane prices legislation whereby all mills have to pay a similar price based on given c.c.s. contents.

Mr. MOORE: Irrespective of the efficiency of the mills.

Mr. BRAND: Certainly. There are quite a number of dairy producers in Queensland who believe that that system should be adopted. I consider that freight should always be a charge on the factory and not on the farmer, as the cream of the farmer who is further out is just as essential to the factory as that of the farmer next door. According to the Minister, this Bill will place the man who is far out in an unfavourable position compared with the farmer in close proximity to the factory.

[*Mr. Morgan.*]

Mr. DEACON (*Cunningham*) [11.24 a.m.]: The Minister might very well accept the amendment. This is not a party Bill. We are all concerned in making it the best possible measure in the interests of the industry, and it is not quite clear whether the Minister has dealt with everything that should be dealt with, or whether the methods he proposes in respect of the questions he does deal with are the best possible. A method which might, after debate, be shown to be better than his may be shut out if he does not accept the amendment of the hon. member for Cooroora.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: You had three years in which to do it.

Mr. DEACON: If the hon. gentleman does as much in three years as the last Minister, he will have reason to be proud of his achievement. One cannot do everything even in twenty years.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: You expect us to do it in three months.

Mr. DEACON: We have experts on this side, many of whom have spent a lifetime in the industry, and they approach the question in no party spirit, but from the point of view of the good of the industry. I do not agree with the Minister that the cream should always go to the nearest factory. It is not always a question of distance; it is sometimes a question of convenience. Trains may not always suit, or the supplier may have business connections with the town to which he wishes to send his cream, although another factory may be nearer. We ought to leave it quite open; and the Minister will be well advised to accept the amendment so that the Bill may be amended as it may appear necessary. There will be no factious opposition from hon. members on this side. Anything we suggest will be worthy of consideration; and, if we can show that it will not damage the Bill or the object we all desire, it should be adopted.

Mr. PLUNKETT (*Albert*) [11.27 a.m.]: I shall have something to say later on; and at present I propose to say only a little with regard to the Bill and the proposed amendment. The question of cream freights has been dealt with by the various associations. This matter has been investigated for a long time; but there are often things in which individuals cannot help themselves, and we arrive at a position where somebody who has more authority has to intervene. The Bill will have that effect. I know that for many years the industry has asked for a system of uniform bookkeeping. I look forward to the time when not only will our bookkeeping system lay down the first principles of a desirable uniformity in regard to the cost of manufacturing the product, but it will also provide us with a basis on which we shall be able to amalgamate many of our factories. I am, therefore, pleased that that amendment is to be made.

Perhaps the Minister will yet see his way to widen the scope of the Bill to make provision for the supervision of the erection of new factories. Something on these lines would be in the interests of the industry. There are factories which have cost a great deal of money, whereas, in the light of later information than we had when they were built a few years ago, we would be justified in concluding that they are not necessary or that smaller factories should be built. We must have our factories economically

situated as well as efficiently managed. If any section in a community can work up an agitation for a new factory—and we realise that a butter factory is one of the best assets a district can have—and simply for that reason a factory of a certain capacity is built, the result may be uneconomic. The time has arrived when we should make some effort to prevent factories springing up all over the country; but I do not suggest that the Government should assume the responsibility of saying where factories should be built. That would be very foolish. The Government could create a board of responsible independent officers, without any interest in the district concerned, to investigate the matter and advise the Government whether a factory was necessary, or whether the district warranted the building of a factory on the proposed or a smaller scale.

I appreciate the action of the Minister in introducing a Bill to deal with some of the vexed questions of the past. Still, I hold the view that an investigatory board should be created to decide upon the economic prospects and possibilities of new factories, because I feel that such a tribunal could be of wonderful assistance to the industry. I do not favour the Government being given the power to decide these economic possibilities. At the same time, I am very pleased that the Bill has been introduced, because I believe that nothing but good can come from it.

Mr. EDWARDS (*Nanango*) [11.30 a.m.]: I advise the Minister to proceed very cautiously in this matter. Whilst it is admitted that to a very large extent the factories have been established upon a co-operative basis, it has to be borne in mind that the competition between the various factories for cream supplies has gone to extremes. I have always held the view that the less governmental interference there is in these matters the better for all concerned. A butter factory might have been established in a district by shareholders who were prepared to struggle through the pioneering days. Later it might be decided to erect another factory in close proximity to the first. The shareholders of the first factory might still be responsible for certain financial liabilities in respect of their venture, and, being loyal to their factory, naturally desire to remain as suppliers to it. The Minister will have to proceed cautiously lest his legislative action penalise the shareholders of the first factory. I agree also with the hon. member for Murilla that great care should be taken to see that further cream traffic is not diverted from the railways to the motor system of transport.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: Clause 5 of the Bill deals with that.

Mr. EDWARDS: I have not yet seen the Bill. Already we are too heavily indebted to the United States of America in relation to the production of the primary products of this State; and our aim should be to overcome this handicap as much as possible. I freely admit that grave difficulties have arisen consequent upon the very keen competition at present existing between the factories; and it is with regret that I have to admit that in some cases the spirit of co-operation which should exist has been thrown to the four winds in an attempt to secure cream from neighbouring factories. I suggest to the Minister that he submit

Mr. Edwards.]

his proposal for the consideration of representatives from the different butter factories.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: Would you like me to read a resolution that was carried at their last annual meeting?

Mr. EDWARDS: Do they require this legislation? Has this Bill been submitted to them?

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: No.

Mr. EDWARDS: Have the contents of the Bill been discussed by and approved by the dairying interests?

Mr. WALKER: They are not unanimous.

Mr. EDWARDS: Many of these factories were constructed with the aid of struggling settlers in the early days of the butter industry; and it will be recognised that difficulties will inevitably arise if legislative interference with the spirit of co-operation which makes the establishment of these institutions possible and successful is permitted.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: A number of factories have themselves undermined the co-operative movement.

Mr. EDWARDS: I will not admit that. It must be admitted that the spirit of co-operation still exists, notwithstanding the different methods of working various co-operative factories, especially in the selling of the product. The competition for cream is one result of too many factories having been constructed, which, especially in a dry season such as is now existing, permits competition for the cream supply, resulting in cream wagons conveying cream from the Darling Downs as far as the Burnett factories. It would be a good idea for the Minister to convene a conference of all dairying co-operative concerns with a view to arriving at some understanding in regard to a zoning system.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: I have already had those interests brought together, and I placed the zoning system before them, but they would not adopt it.

Mr. EDWARDS: I am satisfied that the hon. gentleman did not convene a meeting of the representatives of co-operative factories, as the ex-Premier did when he convened that wonderful conference in the Lands Department.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: We are not talking about those things.

Mr. EDWARDS: That conference was one of the finest representative gatherings of the dairying industry that I have ever seen. I admit that the conference of dairying interests which was called together prior to the construction of the Hamilton cold stores was also a very representative one; but the Government of the day paid no heed to the wishes of the conference. Those works show how careful one must be about introducing party politics into a subject. I trust the Minister will take no action which will injure the dairying industry.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: I am endeavouring to develop it.

Mr. EDWARDS: The industry, especially at the present juncture, deserves the greatest consideration that can be given it.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE (Hon. F. W. Bulcock, *Barcoo*) [11.38 a.m.]: The hon. member who has just resumed his

[*Mr. Edwards.*

seat appears to be under the impression that this Bill is designed as a blow to the co-operative dairying movement.

Mr. EDWARDS: I never said that.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: It may be interesting to him and the hon. members with whom he is associated if I read the terms of the resolution which was carried by the Queensland Co-operative Dairy Companies' Association as far back as 18th November, 1930. It will be admitted that this association is a representative body, capable of speaking on behalf of the co-operative butter factories in Queensland. The resolution reads—

“That this association protests against any subsidies being paid to cream carters by any co-operative dairy association, and that this resolution be conveyed to the Minister of Agriculture.”

It will be seen, therefore, that the Queensland Co-operative Dairy Companies' Association has asked for the amendment that some hon. members appear to regard with suspicion. The next influential body associated with the dairying industry is obviously the Butter Board. On 8th July, 1932, I received a letter from the Council of Agriculture asking if I would meet its members in deputation. Obviously I desired to know the object of that deputation. In the course of a letter written to me, the Council of Agriculture said—

“It is proposed that the Queensland Butter Board should place before you a request that you have the Dairy Produce Act amended to provide for the keeping of a uniform factory account, as far as concerns butter manufactured, profit and loss, and appropriation; also that a uniform balance-sheet be adopted by all factories.”

That answers the question of the hon. member for Cook—

“It is further proposed that the Act should be amended to permit of the audit now conducted by the departmental inspector being extended to sales transactions of the companies and also the selling agents of the companies. . . the representatives of the Co-operative Dairy Companies Association and the Council of Agriculture propose to place before you a request that action be taken by you with a view to providing for the payment of cream at factory siding . . .”

These two organisations, it will be admitted, represent the considered opinion of the dairying industry. I was not entirely guided by the representations they made. I listened to their representations, and made very careful investigation to discover if some of the statements they had made were borne out by the actual test of hard fact. I discovered that they were.

There is another angle from which to consider this question, and that is the angle of the consumer—who has a right to the highest quality butter that he can get. If the consumer is making a contribution towards the solvency of the dairying industry, as he is at the present time, then he certainly has a claim for the highest efficiency to be maintained in the industry; so that I see the question, not only from the point of view of the producer, but also from the point of view of the consumer; and I

believe the producer's interests are safeguarded with respect to uniform bookkeeping and the regulations dealing with the transit of cream that are proposed to be promulgated under this measure.

While no association obviously has seen a copy of the Bill, yet I notified them that I was sympathetically inclined to give them legislation along the lines they desired. I think my predecessor also had overtures made by these people, and promised to give the questions raised in these two matters favourable consideration.

Another matter has been raised by the hon. member for Murilla—namely, the question of railway freights. I said at the outset that this Bill would probably stimulate the railway carriage of cream rather than have the effect that the hon. member predicts. Hon. members are not in possession of a copy of the Bill; but, when they are and give their attention to clause 5, they will discover that the results predicted by the hon. member as likely to happen will not materialise if that clause is put into effect; and I can assure hon. members that it will be put into effect.

Mr. WALKER (*Cooroora*) [11.42 a.m.]: Does the hon. gentleman not think that we have sufficient evidence before us on which we could proceed to license butter factories so that in future we shall have some say as to where factories shall be built?

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE (Hon. F. Bulcock, *Barcoo*) [11.43 a.m.]: Once we license butter factories we are going to have a hue and cry from people who think they have a claim for a butter factory in their locality if that claim is not corroborated by a board that is set up. I want to be in a position to weigh definitely the merits of the case before I come along with legislation. I have not made up my mind in that direction; and I think the hon. member, in common with other hon. members, always has an aversion to legislation being rushed through Parliament. I am not prepared at the present time to introduce a Bill to decide legislatively where dairy factories shall be situated. There is much merit in the suggestion which comes from the hon. member; but it is only fair to the interests and to the individuals concerned that this question should receive the fullest possible investigation before any line of action is determined on.

Mr. SPARKES (*Dalby*) [11.44 a.m.]: As my electorate is greatly concerned in the cartage of cream, I would like the Minister to say whether there is any intention in the Bill to force people to convey their cream by rail. At the present time most of the cream in my electorate is conveyed by motor transport because it is more convenient to the producer, and also in some instances because it is carted in a cooler condition, thereby arriving at the factory in a more suitable condition for making better butter. I desire to be assured that there is no intention to force people to convey their cream by rail when it does not suit them to do so.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE (Hon. F. W. Bulcock, *Barcoo*) [11.45 a.m.]: The intention of the Bill is to cause cream to arrive at the factory in the best possible condition, and, if there is a way of getting the cream to the factory in a better condition by road than by rail, then obviously, if we insist on rail transit entirely, we shall

defeat the objects of the Bill. There is no intention of forcing a man to send his cream to any one factory or to prescribe the method of sending it to the factory; but it is obvious that the Railway Department will gain some revenue by additional transit when the incentive to send cream over long journeys is removed.

Mr. G. P. BARNES (*Warwick*) [11.46 a.m.]: This Bill cannot be regarded as a party measure, as all hon. members are out to do everything possible to help the dairying industry, which has grown into great prominence, and I shall not be surprised if, in the days to come, it is our greatest primary industry. We must all agree that the adoption of a uniform system of bookkeeping is the right attitude to adopt so long as it is not made too complex. It is not possible to compare the results of one factory with those of another factory unless you have a uniform system of bookkeeping. One can only approve of the introduction of a measure that is going to bring that about. Until the Minister spoke just now, I was somewhat concerned as to whether dairymen would be forced to direct their cream to one particular factory. If that were brought about, it would have a most injurious effect, in one direction in particular.

There are factories that are assisting in the development of the industry by supplying dairy stock. I have in my mind where such a thing has been done, but one factory may decline to provide dairy stock to help a man along, while a more distant factory may do so. If the dairyman is to be forced to send his cream to the nearest factory, it can readily be understood that it will strike a very severe blow at the industry, which we hope to see grow in importance. I am glad, therefore, to know that we have no need for fear in that direction. Seeing that hon. members on this side more truly represent the great dairying industry than hon. members opposite, and seeing that we are out to foster production, I can imagine that amendments will be moved from this side that will be helpful to the great dairying industry of Queensland.

Mr. TOZER (*Gympie*) [11.50 a.m.]: In considering the introduction of this Bill dealing with the dairying industry, Opposition members are under a great disability in not knowing definitely the object of the Bill. I know that it is the practice to debate a Bill in its initiatory stage without knowing what the details of the measure are; but, even if it involves an alteration of the Standing Orders, it would certainly be in the interests of Parliament and all concerned if we could have a Bill in our hands from the first so that we could definitely know what it is about and consider it thoroughly.

We are told by the Minister that there are only two principles in the Bill; but we are also told that certain matters will be dealt with by regulation. We find in connection with many measures that the regulations are much more voluminous, and deal more definitely with matters, than the Bills themselves, and the regulations do not come before us for debate. If we had the regulations before us, it would be more satisfactory, as we afterwards find that they contain provisions with which, perhaps, we would never have agreed.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: Parliament has power to reject the regulations.

M. Tozer.]

Mr. TOZER: But the regulations are never debated, so that we do not get the chance to know what they really are, and ascertain how far they affect the Bill or to debate them.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: If it will give the hon. member any satisfaction, there is no dragnet regulation clause.

Mr. TOZER: I am pleased to hear that. The Minister has told us that there are only two principles in the Bill, one of which is uniform bookkeeping and balance-sheets, with which I agree. I only hope that the system is made as simple as possible. Any complicated system of bookkeeping does not appeal to the man on the land. He cannot understand it, and balance-sheets are usually drawn in such a way that an ordinary person cannot understand the details. They want to have full particulars included in the balance-sheets in a way that they can understand them. A uniform system of bookkeeping and balance-sheets will be of benefit to the industry.

So far as freight and cartage are concerned, I hope there is nothing in the Bill which will stop any factory from paying the railway freight from any particular place.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: The individual has to be responsible for the freight on his cream.

Mr. TOZER: In every case?

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: Yes.

Mr. TOZER: Then I do not approve of that part of the Bill. That is a matter for the internal management of the factories, and we should not interfere with that at all. I intend to oppose the Bill if that is the intention.

Mr. MOORE (*Aubigny*) [11.53 a.m.]: I do not object to the uniform system of bookkeeping; but, if the Minister thinks that will lead to uniform prices, he will be deceived, because there are many things entering into the question besides a uniform system of bookkeeping. One factory, for instance, will have five or six branches, while in another case there is only the one factory. That is why it pays to send cream from the other side of Toowoomba to Kingston, because the Kingston factory is efficiently managed, and has everything under the one roof. If a factory has a different system of bookkeeping from another factory, it does not make the slightest difference in the amount of money it has to pay out to suppliers—whether it pays it out in one way or in another. In a co-operative company the money which is earned by the factory is paid out to the suppliers, and the system of bookkeeping does not make any difference as to the amount the supplier receives or as to whether one factory is paying more than another.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: It has something to do with it.

Mr. MOORE: It has a little to do with it, but not a great deal; and it does not make the slightest difference in the amount of money the suppliers to the factory get in the end.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: It is suggested by the industry.

Mr. MOORE: The industry may put forward all sorts of suggestions. If the Wheat Board pays the freight on wheat received

from every farmer, why should not a co-operative butter factory pay the freight on cream from every farmer, whether it is a long way to bring it or not? If the principle is right so far as the Wheat Board is concerned—and the Government of the day thought it was, because it was provided for when the first Wheat Pool Bill was introduced—why is it not right in the case of a dairy factory? Why should a man who is a long way from a factory be penalised? If the factory likes to work on a true co-operative basis and pay the freight on the raw product to the factory, I see nothing against it. It is for the shareholders to say whether they believe in that system or not—not the Government. All sorts of considerations enter into the problem. The Minister for Transport has at his disposal an Act which enables him to say that no motor-car shall operate on the roads anywhere. He can say that a person transporting cream by motor-car or private lorry must work only five hours a day, or that he must not work on Saturday or Sunday. He can, in short, impose any restriction or prohibition he likes, so that I do not think we need worry ourselves from that point of view; but the suggestion that uniform bookkeeping is going to do away with competition is absurd.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: It will not; but it will affect the basis on which prices are paid.

Mr. MOORE: It will not make all factories pay the same price. If it is to be applied to cheese factories, it will have nothing whatever to do with it. There will still be the question whether cows giving the same test will give the same yield from the milk. There may be factories 10 miles apart; and cows supplying one factory may yield 1 lb. 3 oz. to the gallon of milk, whereas cows supplying the other factory will give only 14 or 15 oz. to the gallon, although both sets of cows give the same test. It depends entirely on the nature of the pasture or other feed the cows get. Again, if you get an overrun in a cheese factory, that factory can pay more than if it gets an under-run. The system of bookkeeping will not make any difference in that respect.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: It will provide that the basis shall be clearly stated.

Mr. MOORE: The fact of clearly stating the basis will not alter the fact that two sets of cows, both testing 3.7, will not give the same yield of cheese, although theoretically they ought to do so, because the constituents of the milk vary according to the feed. The fact of stopping some factories faking their books in order to make it appear that they are paying more than others will not make the slightest difference in the price paid to the people who are supplying them. They can only pay out what they get in; and the system of bookkeeping is not going to bring in any more money, or make things any clearer to the suppliers. I do not object to the proposal if it is going to make it clearer, but I cannot see that it does. I am not particularly keen that the Government should say to a co-operative factory that is managing its own business, "You shall not pay freights to your factory, although you may wish to do so." It is entirely for it to say whether it wants to do so or not, provided it is not doing anything objectionable to the public and it does not

[*Mr. Tozer.*]

make the slightest difference to the public. The question whether the individual farmer, whether he be near to or far from a factory, or whether the farmers as a whole, shall pay the freight does not make the slightest difference to the public. Where the hon. gentleman has to look, and where these questions mostly arise, is where suppliers are a long way from railways and bring in their cream by car and motor lorry. This proposal is not going to alter that. The public are not interested in the way a co-operative butter factory manages its business, and, in particular, as to whether or not it pays the freight of the farmers. It is not going to alter the quality.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: It may prevent them sending cream halfway round the State.

Mr. MOORE: It is purely a question of price. If a dairy farmer can consign his cream, say, from Wyreema to Kingston rather than send it to a factory on the Downs and thereby receive an additional 1d. per lb., he will do so. Why should action be taken to prevent him doing this? He is entitled to an increased price if the factory to which the cream is supplied is able to pay a higher price because of the reduced overhead cost as a result of the large quantity treated under the one roof. The farmer milks his cows and otherwise carries out his job, and he should be entitled to any additional price that he may secure.

I do not favour the zoning system, because I feel that a farmer is entitled to sell his product in the highest market. The evils referred to will not be remedied by a uniform system of bookkeeping, and the position will not be remedied merely by imposing a prohibitory condition on the factory in the matter of paying the freight, but it will result in the farmer at the greatest distance from a factory being placed at a disadvantage in comparison with the dairy farmer in close proximity to a factory. The present system does not mean that the consumer is placed at a disadvantage. The alteration will not mean any advantage for him, nor will it mean improved conditions for the factories. It will merely impose restrictions upon the farmers, who endeavour to conduct their co-operative enterprise in the way that they consider best. If it is right that the Wheat Board should pay the freight, then why is it wrong in the case of butter factories? Why should a factory not be permitted to pay a higher price if it can do so by assuming the freight liability?

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: It might be necessary to give some attention to the freight question when the new Wheat Bill is under consideration.

Mr. MOORE: The wheatgrowers are quite competent to run their own business, and, if they think it advisable in the interests of all concerned that freight should be paid by the board on the wheat conveyed from Roma in the same way as freight would be paid on wheat conveyed from a farm 5 miles outside of Toowoomba, then they should be permitted to insist that the board responsible shall be allowed to pay this charge. Do the dairy farmers require this measure, or is it required by some of the directors of certain factories who are anxious to avoid competition? This is not a question for the Government

to answer, but one for the factory and its shareholders. If each man is in receipt of the same price in accordance with the test, then why should not the shareholders of a factory be permitted to carry the freight charge in furtherance of the spirit of co-operation? It should be for them to say whether or not they are prepared to pay the freight; and the Government certainly should not have the right to say that they shall not bear this charge. I have no serious objection to the Bill; but I should prefer that the matter be held over until we have had an opportunity of further considering the contents of the measure. No doubt there are matters that could quite easily be omitted.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: There are three or four matters that have been left out now. I am inquiring into them at the present time.

Mr. MOORE: The Minister should be prepared to accept the amendment to omit the words "in certain particulars," so that hon. members will have an opportunity of submitting proposals which they deem to be in the best interests of the dairying industry. I do not intend to object to the Bill at this stage.

Mr. C. TAYLOR (*Windsor*) [12.4 p.m.]: I cannot claim to be a dairy expert, but, in common with other hon. members, I claim to have some knowledge of the dairying industry. I fear that the objective that the Minister is striving to obtain will be considerably vitiated by the disadvantages that will ensue. The hon. gentleman laid particular stress upon the absolute necessity for maintaining the quality of our butter, and pointed out that the conveyance of cream over long distances reacted detrimentally upon quality. The ex-Secretary for Agriculture informed this Committee that the proportion of first grade manufactured in Queensland represented 88.8 per cent. of the total production, which is a record for Australia in so far as quality is concerned. The object of the Minister in introducing this Bill is to prohibit dairy factories from paying freight on cream which is sent past the factory situated in the district wherein it is produced.

Mr. GODFREY MORGAN: So far as I can gather, that is only in connection with railway freight.

Mr. C. TAYLOR: I believe that the idea at the back of the mind of the Minister is that dairy factories shall not pay freight on any cream sent out of the district wherein it is produced. It has been stated quite correctly that a considerable quantity of cream produced in certain districts is despatched to factories far removed from those districts. There must be some reason why a dairy farmer will send his cream to a factory 150 miles away from his farm instead of to the nearest factory, which might be only 20 or 30 miles distant. It is inconceivable that he would do so unless there was some resultant benefit to himself. This Bill will penalise the initiative of dairy farmers who believe that, by producing cream of a high grade, they will obtain a better price by sending it to a factory that is not situated within their district. A good many hon. members can cast their minds back twenty or thirty years ago when there was no motor transport to convey cream from the producing centres to the factories or railing stations, and when it was carted by

Mr. C. Taylor.]

the dairy farmer himself or by the owner of a horse vehicle, who collected and transported it to the factory. That was the best mode available at that time for transporting the cream to the factory. With the adoption of improved methods of handling cream, we have reached a state of efficiency and the quality of our first-grade butter is higher than in any other State in Australia.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: That does not say that it is the ultimate quality which can be obtained.

Mr. C. TAYLOR: I do not say that 88.8 per cent. of first-grade butter should be our only object; but it is a wonderful testimony to the improvement that has taken place in the manufacture of butter in Queensland in the last fifteen or twenty years. We have in this State more efficiently equipped and managed butter factories than can be found in any other State in Australia. While the Minister may have an earnest desire to assist the industry, nevertheless legislation of this kind is going to put the clock back and injure it. We do not want Government interference with the industry, particularly with co-operative concerns.

Mr. O'KEEFE: They are asking for it.

Mr. C. TAYLOR: They are not. The farmers who produce the cream, and not the factory, should have the right to say where they should send their cream. The Government should not interfere with existing conditions; and, as the Leader of the Opposition said, neither the bookkeeping system nor action to prevent factories paying freight on cream will improve the quality of butter one iota. Differences of opinion exist between men engaged in the industry and even in this Chamber as to what is the best thing to do. Very often in such cases the outsider is best able to see what is equitable. I am an outsider in so far as the dairying industry is concerned. No interference such as the Minister suggests will have a beneficial effect on the industry. There is no justification whatever for any Government interference with co-operative concerns, especially in the matter of paying the freight on cream.

Mr. DANIEL (*Keppel*) [12.10 p.m.]: This Bill appears to be another step in the direction of restricting industry. Too many restrictions exist at present; and, if the Government would spend as much time in relieving industry of harassing restrictions as they devote to imposing restrictions, the country would be far better off than it is to-day. If we are to make any progress, it will be essential for all Governments to remove at least 90 per cent. of the restrictions imposed on industry to-day. If I were a farmer and I wished to send my cream 100 miles away, then, if that cream arrived in perfect condition, it would be my concern, and not that of the Government. The hon. member for Cairns interjected a moment ago that the Government had been asked by outsiders to pass this Bill. To that I would answer: Who are the legislators of this country—the people outside or hon. members here? The trouble with the Labour Party is that they take all their orders from the Trades Hall. I ask the Minister to reconsider this measure.

Mr. GLEDSON (*Ipswich*) [12.12 p.m.]: It is amusing to hear hon. members opposite objecting to this measure in view of their oft-repeated claim that they represent the dairy farmers. What have the dairy farmers

themselves to say about this matter? At a recent State conference held in Brisbane, the Queensland Producers' Association dealt with the two matters involved in this Bill. This motion was moved by Mr. Brabiner, the Wide Bay delegate, and carried—

"That this conference advocates the adoption of a uniform system of bookkeeping to enable the issuing of uniform balance-sheets by all Queensland co-operative dairy associations."

Mr. DANIEL: No one objects to that.

Mr. GLEDSON: Then what does the hon. member object to? A few moments ago the Leader of the Opposition said, in effect, "I do not object to uniform bookkeeping; but what good is it going to do? It will not reduce the price of butter, nor will it increase the return to the dairymen." This amendment is being made at the special request of the primary producers, who also passed a resolution at their annual conference to this effect—

"That conference favours the elimination by legislation of payment of cream freights and subsidies on cartage of cream by dairy associations."

Mr. DANIEL: That is what we object to.

Mr. GLEDSON: Yet hon. members opposite claim to represent the dairymen, who have unanimously asked the Government to deal with that matter.

Mr. GODFREY MORGAN: This will do a great deal of injury to the railwaymen whom you represent.

Mr. GLEDSON: The hon. member for Murilla does not understand the position. The Bill deals with two principles—one concerning a uniform system of bookkeeping, and the other stipulating that the individual dairymen shall be responsible for the payment of the cartage of his cream.

Mr. GODFREY MORGAN: On the railways only.

Mr. GLEDSON: Not on the railways only. Evidently the hon. member for Murilla did not take any notice of the explanation given by the Minister. At a conference of the Queensland producers this resolution, which was moved by Mr. W. L. Osborne, of the South Burnett district, was carried; yet we find the hon. member for that district opposing the measure.

Mr. EDWARDS: That is not true. Tell the truth!

Mr. GLEDSON: I am quoting from the "Queensland Producer."

Mr. EDWARDS: I say that I did not oppose the measure. Tell the truth!

Mr. GLEDSON: The hon. member for the district got up here and objected to this provision.

Mr. EDWARDS: I did nothing of the sort.

OPPOSITION MEMBERS: You were asleep.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I must ask the hon. member to address the Chair.

Mr. GLEDSON: I want to point out what the dairy people think of this provision. Hon. members on the other side say they are opposed to the provision that the dairy factories shall not pay freight on cream. Mr. Bateman, as reported in the "Queensland Producer," said—

"Owing to the long cartage the standard and grade of their butter were suffering on the London market. Another

[*Mr. C. Taylor.*]

name for subsidising was an excuse to bring cream past other factories. To my mind it is bribery pure and simple. The word 'subsidy' covers a lot, but it is an inducement for cream suppliers to send past their factory because they get it carried for nothing. Those who send by rail get a concession, and on top of that the directors give them a little more, and they deduct from the suppliers who send cream by road and pay 4d. or 5d. per gallon to help pay for those who have to pay 10d. The thing, in his opinion, was ridiculous, and why the dairymen stood for it he did not know."

Hon. members say they represent the dairy farmers; yet they are opposing a resolution carried by members of their own association.

Mr. GODFREY MORGAN (*Murilla*) [12.18 p.m.]: Evidently the hon. member for Ipswich has not read the Bill. The Minister has not informed us that the Bill contains a provision whereby a factory will not be able to run its own motor lorry to a given district and convey the cream from that district to the factory without charge. That is one way in which the Railway Department will lose revenue, and one way by which the factory manager will get over the provisions of this Bill.

THE SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: Wait till you see the Bill.

Mr. GODFREY MORGAN: The hon. gentleman did not explain that. The factory manager will say, "We will not pay freight on your cream, but we have our own motor lorry, and will not charge you anything for the conveyance of your cream." If they do not run their own motor lorry, they may say to the owner of a motor lorry, "You convey this cream that goes by rail. We will not pay any of the cost, but we will subsidise you"; and that is the same thing. Unless this Bill is so watertight that it will not allow a factory to run its own lorries and convey cream for nothing, nor allow it to subsidise owners of motor lorries to convey it, then this Bill is going to do an injury to the Railway Department. Hon. members opposite should see that the Bill is made as watertight with respect to motor transport as it is with regard to railway transport.

Mr. SPARKES (*Dalby*) [12.21]: I would like to know from the Minister why it is that people take their cream to a factory a distance of 80 miles away instead of taking it to the nearest factory.

Amendment (*Mr. Walker*) negatived.

Question—"That the resolution (*Mr. Bulcock's motion*) be agreed to"—put and passed.

The House resumed.

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

Resolution agreed to.

FIRST READING.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE (Hon. F. W. Bulcock, *Barcoo*) presented the Bill, and moved—

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

Question put and passed.

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

ABATTOIRS FURTHER AGREEMENT RATIFICATION AND MEAT INDUSTRY BILL.

SECOND READING.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE (Hon. F. W. Bulcock, *Barcoo*) [12.24 p.m.]: In moving the second reading of this Bill there is little to be added to what I originally stated when we constituted the Committee to consider of the desirableness of introducing the Bill.

It might be desirable to enunciate the principles underlying the agreement that we propose to ratify. The abattoirs cost £13,892 more than the 1931 agreement provided for. The ex-Premier, the present Leader of the Opposition, authorised the Swift Australian Company Limited to go ahead and make the necessary additions, and volunteered to ratify the agreement by Act of Parliament, so the work was put in hand. It is now necessary that the amount of money which was spent for this additional work should be ratified by Parliament. There is an amount of £8,671 for additions and alterations to the works, and a sum of £5,221 for alterations and additions to the saleyards. The debentures that are now proposed to be issued under the agreement, when it is ratified, are not negotiable for five years. The original debentures are only going to be issued in connection with the meatworks proper, and do not apply to the saleyards; but the two forms of debentures are of equal value and security. The Meat Industry Board is to give the Treasurer a bill of mortgage over the freehold land and a bill of sale over its remaining assets, in order to secure the Treasurer against any payment he may make by reason of the State guarantee. If the agreement is not ratified by Parliament before 1st November, 1932, the agreement is void. In that event the Meat Board will issue the debentures for the amounts of £490,000 and the £42,000, and the balance of the debentures also will be issued, but in the latter case there will be no provision that the Treasurer shall get a bill of mortgage and bill of sale, the company merely having right of recovery against the board. All debentures are guaranteed, of course, by the Government of Queensland. There is no new principle in the Bill, and the whole of the circumstances concerning the operations of the abattoirs are well known to hon. members. This Bill merely ratifies an agreement which we are in honour bound to recognise. I beg to move—

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

Question put and passed.

COMMITTEE.

(*Mr. W. T. King, Maree, one of the panel of Temporary Chairmen, in the chair.*)

Clause 1—"Short title and construction" agreed to.

Clause 2—"Ratification of agreement"—agreed to.

Schedule—"Agreement"—

Mr. WIENHOLT (*Fassifern*) [12.28 p.m.]: There is one point I would like to draw attention to here. In clause 9 of the schedule it is agreed that—

"The Government will use its utmost endeavours to procure the passing . . ."

Mr. Wienholt.]

of an Act ratifying the agreement. That seems to be very much better than the corresponding clause in the original Bill we had before us, in the agreement to which it was provided that the Government "will procure" the passing of the Act. I objected very strongly to that. I do not think it is a statement which should appear in such an agreement.

Apart from that, this agreement provides that, if it is not ratified by 1st November next, it makes little difference; but we find further on that, even if it is not ratified, the debentures are issued just the same and—this is the vital point—guaranteed by the Treasurer.

Mr. MOORE: The original agreement would stand. This is an extra amount.

Mr. WIENHOLT: The debentures are to be guaranteed by the Treasurer.

Mr. MOORE: They are all the time; but the company does not get the extra amount of money.

Mr. WIENHOLT: The question of a guarantee by the Treasurer does not come before Parliament at all. I presume that that matter is dealt with under the Local Bodies' Loans Guarantee Act. It would appear that an outside body can commit Parliament. That seems to me to be unsound, and I take this opportunity of protesting against another body having the power to sign a guarantee which this Parliament and this State might be called upon to honour. In this case a comparatively small sum is involved, but the principle might be applied to a very much larger sum. Where does the Loan Council come in in this matter? In this case an outside body issues debentures—guaranteed by the State—not Parliament. The Loan Council is charged with the responsibility of guaranteeing the public debts of the various States. Where does the Loan Council come in in the question of issuing State-guaranteed debentures that may eventually be placed upon the market, and may have to be made good by the State. This is a matter that requires some little thought.

Mr. R. M. KING (*Logan*) [12.33 p.m.]: The schedule relates to an agreement between Swift Australian Company Limited, the Queensland Meat Industry Board, and the Hon. Arthur Edward Moore. Clause 12 of the schedule provides—

"Nothing herein shall be deemed to impose any personal obligation or liability on the said the Hon. Arthur Edward Moore."

During the recent election campaign a number of people were led to believe that there was something sinister in that clause, and that there was something to hide. Those who know anything about these matters know that that is a usual clause in cases where a person enters into an agreement and it is not intended that he should incur any personal liability.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: A reputation clause.

Mr. R. M. KING: Absolute rubbish! If a person enters into an agreement as agent for and on behalf of a principal and wishes to protect himself from personal liability, the agreement must contain a protecting clause to that effect. That was done in this case. The Leader of the late Government did not propose to undertake any personal

liability in the matter. There was no reason why he should, so this clause was embodied in the agreement. Many people do not seem to know that they make themselves personally liable under a covenant in a mortgage. The mortgagee might refuse to have anything to do with the security. He might decline to realise on the security, and decide to proceed according to his rights contained in the personal covenant. He would have the right to sell anything in the lawful possession of the mortgagor provided a judgment was obtained. I repeat that this clause was inserted to relieve the agent concerned of any personal liability. I merely mention the matter because many ignorant people believed during the election campaign that there was something sinister behind it. Not only that, but they went so far as to impute dishonest motives to the Leader of the late Government.

Mr. MOORE (*Aubigny*) [12.34 p.m.]: In order to set the mind of the hon. member for Fassifern at rest, I should like to point out that the position would not be the same if the Bill were not passed. If the Bill is not passed, then the "B" series of debentures are not issued at all, and resort is had to the "A" series, which relates to a sum of £13,000 less than that set out in the Bill. The Swift Australian Company Limited, would then be entitled to have recourse to its ordinary legal right to secure to it the amount of indebtedness on the part of the Queensland Meat Industry Board, quite apart from the passing of any measure. The debentures were guaranteed in the last Bill which went through this Chamber. There is no difference from that point of view. When the abattoirs were constructed, most careful investigations were made by the Department of Public Works; and a man was detailed from that department to oversee the whole of the alterations that were being made. Investigations subsequently made by the department disclosed that the improvements which have to do with this Bill would reduce the cost of operations. The increase in the size of the refrigerator resulted in the more economical working of that side of the business. Subsequently, when the work had been passed, after a conference was held to consider the recommendations made, the Government found that it would be advantageous to the public and the Meat Board if the alterations were made. The reasons for enlarging and improving the saleyards are similar. Suggestions were made by the selling agents and people working in the yards for certain improvements after the original plans had been definitely agreed to. That necessitated the issue of what are called "B" debentures. Even if this Bill were not passed, that would not mean that these debentures would not be paid.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: They have to be paid whether this Bill becomes law or not.

Mr. MOORE: That is so. Probably the Secretary for Agriculture knows that the abattoirs in their first year of operations, not only met the whole of their financial obligations, but were able to establish a substantial reserve fund as well. Proof positive of the efficiency of the abattoirs is also shown in the fact that representatives of those connected with abattoirs in Melbourne, Sydney, and Newcastle have visited Brisbane to inspect the works and ascertain the method of management, and they have had

[*Mr. Wienholt.*]

nothing but praise for the manner in which the abattoirs are being conducted. One of the New South Wales Cabinet Ministers recently paid a special visit to Brisbane to see how the abattoirs were being run, and in a subsequent interview with the press, which extended over a column and a-half, he was most laudatory in his remarks on their efficiency.

This Bill is merely a finalisation of an agreement that was made with Swifts, who, even if this Bill is not passed, will still have the right to secure the money necessary to carry out these improvements. The improvements made were of no interest to Swifts. Swifts simply lent the money to carry out the improvements on certain terms and conditions. The abattoirs have now the finest sale yards in the southern hemisphere. After lending the money, Swifts voluntarily agreed to reduce the rate of interest, which no hon. member would cavil at.

Mr. WIENHOLT (*Passifern*) [12.38 p.m.]: I do not want to create the impression that I was worrying about the financial stability of the Meat Industry Board, because that is not questioned. Altogether, the Meat Industry Board has given debentures something like £538,000 in order to finance the abattoirs. Although the board, being a taxing authority, can also make its own financial arrangements—it is a good thing that it should balance its budget—it must be remembered that this tremendous amount of capital is to be met by the producers or consumers, or probably by both. I do hope that this will be the last expenditure necessary on the works, and that we have made a job of it now. One may, perhaps, expect extensions in the future, as the volume of trade grows. That is natural; but I hope that there will not be recurring capital expenditure.

Schedule agreed to.

The House resumed.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN reported the Bill without amendment.

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

QUEENSLAND MEAT INSPECTION AGREEMENT BILL.

SECOND READING.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE (Hon. F. W. Bulcock, *Barcoo*) [12.40 p.m.]: This Bill, like its predecessor, is to ratify an agreement that was entered into by the late Government with the Commonwealth authorities, and is a measure with which all hon. members will agree. I see no possible room for any contention in connection with this Bill, which provides for the transfer of authority to the Commonwealth Government, through its officers, for the inspection of meat. It was possible under the old system to have two staffs operating, one dealing with the export trade and the other dealing with the Queensland and Commonwealth trade. Obviously that imposed a charge which, in the final analysis, was paid by the consumer. An agreement was completed with the Federal Government whereby certain officers engaged in the State service were transferred to the Federal service, with all accrued rights and privileges. In return for that, the Queensland Government undertook to appoint certain Com-

monwealth officers as meat inspectors under the State Slaughtering Act; so that all meat that is killed at the abattoir, whether it be for domestic consumption, interstate trade, or overseas export, is now examined by the one set of officers. It was agreed that the Commonwealth Government would take over five of our officers. As a matter of fact, only four were available, and these officers are giving excellent services at the abattoir. The whole meaning of the Bill is that, instead of having two sets of men each doing one type of work, one set of men is now doing both types of work.

The only reason in favour of the Commonwealth doing this work is a very real one. Obviously a Commonwealth brand has more value overseas than a State brand, because the Commonwealth prescribes unified standards, which are well and favourably known overseas. From every viewpoint the agreement is an eminently desirable one. I beg to move, therefore—

“That the Bill be now read a second time.”

Question put and passed.

COMMITTEE.

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

Clauses 1, 2, and 3 agreed to.

“The Schedule—Agreement”—

Mr. WALKER (*Cooroora*) [12.45 p.m.]: This agreement was first mooted during my control of the Department of Agriculture. Always there had been a certain amount of friction between the Federal inspectors and the State inspectors regarding certain arrangements, and it was wise to make an agreement with the Federal Government in regard to the grading of meat. Prior to that meat for export had always been inspected by State officials who, for the time being, were made Federal officers. It is only fair to say that this agreement was made by the late Government, but time would not permit of them having it ratified, as Parliament was not sitting at the time.

I would like to see a similar agreement made in other directions, but excluding butter. I hope the Minister will never agree to the Federal Government taking control of butter grading, as that is purely a matter for the State. This agreement will help the abattoirs, which have been successful in more ways than one as they are dealing with meat for export as well as for local consumption. What is more, during the last twelve months, owing to the action of the late Government in regard to experiments in pig feeding, last season the abattoirs exported 100,000 carcasses of pork, showing that there is a big opening in that direction. To a certain extent credit is due to the Federal Government for the export of that meat, as the grading at that time was done by Federal officers. This arrangement will result in economy, and it will give greater confidence to the consuming public to have one set of officers carrying out the inspection of meat both for local consumption and for export. The public of Queensland as well as the consumers overseas can be assured that all meat that passes the inspection is 100 per cent. sound. That proves conclusively that this arrangement is a good one, and one that will give the people a confidence that they never had before.

Schedule agreed to.

Mr. Walker.]

The House resumed.

The CHAIRMAN reported the Bill without amendment.

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

PRICKLY-PEAR LAND AND FORESTRY ADMINISTRATION BILL.

SECOND READING—RESUMPTION OF DEBATE.

Mr. KENNY (*Cook*) [12.50 p.m.]: When the Minister made his second reading speech, I asked if he would give the House a little more information than he gave on the initiatory stage of the Bill, and the Minister for Transport interjected and asked how much more information we required. The only information we got was a tirade of abuse for having criticised the Minister. The first speech of the Minister consisted of a tirade against the press, and an effort to explain away some of his own statements; but hon. members here and the people outside got no information from him as to the benefit which will result from this measure.

The hon. gentleman has not told us how we are going to get the business management he spoke of, or how efficiency is going to be increased by placing these two departments under the control of the Land Administration Board. He has not told us how settlement in Queensland is going to be increased, or how the settlers on the lands are going to receive greater benefit or easier conditions. All he has told us with regard to suggested economies is that there are going to be some people sacked. He has not told us who are going to be sacked. He has not told us whether any members of the Prickly-pear Land Commission or of the Forestry Board are going to be put on the Land Administration Board to look after the interests of those departments. I admit that, from the point of view of land settlement, there is a desire for a reorganisation of the Department of Public Lands, and I think the Minister will agree with me in that regard. Anyone who has visited the different settlements throughout Queensland feels the necessity for that reorganisation, and for the reorganisation also of the Land Administration Board. We can see that land settlement has not been carried out satisfactorily throughout Queensland, which proves that a wrong policy has been adopted in the past. Lands have been opened for settlement that should never have been thrown open? Settlers have taken up those lands, and sacrificed years of their life in trying to make a living on them. The Agricultural Bank also has advanced money to the settlers to improve their properties; but a number of settlers have had to walk off their properties and pass them over to the Agricultural Bank. That has been brought about by maladministration in the past, not only of one Government but by all Governments in the history of Queensland.

The Minister has not shown us up to the present stage how efficiency is going to be improved. We see settlers striving to make a living on these different areas to-day with practically no means of transportation. That fact has not been taken into consideration in the past. Settlers are to-day burdened with local authority rates. These troubles are not going to be overcome by this measure. The Minister said that settle-

ment is retarded by the Forestry Board. The action proposed will not overcome this.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: I did not say that.

Mr. KENNY: If the Minister did not say it in so many words, he evidently meant that; as a matter of fact, it was very hard to know really what he did mean. We see a lack of settlement throughout Queensland, and a lot of land which has been taken up has not been improved. It is affirmed that this measure has been introduced by the Government to overcome this difficulty; but all the difficulty has been brought about by the administration of the Department of Public Lands in the past.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: During the last three years.

Mr. KENNY: Not during the last three years, but during many years past. These difficulties have arisen in spite of the Department of Public Lands and the Lands Administration Board. I am one who does not believe that efficiency can be increased in regard to forestry simply by passing over the control of that department to the Land Administration Board—I do not believe in boards. The Minister should be prepared to take the responsibility of his own office. A board is all right for a weak Minister to shelter behind; but no board should be allowed to take responsibility and control out of the hands of Parliament. That is the function of the Minister himself. I do not think efficiency can be increased by handing over control to the Land Administration Board. We have in charge of that board the chairman, Mr. Payne; and I am of opinion that it would be better to abolish the board and have a director of land settlement, who would be directly responsible to the Minister, and would have to justify his existence to the Minister. The Minister would then have no board to shelter behind, and we would have greater efficiency by having the responsibility on one pair of shoulders and not on the shoulders of the board. In conjunction with that officer we should have a council of land utilisation, with representatives on it from the Departments of Public Lands, Railways, Agriculture, Mines, Main Roads, and Forestry, with an independent chairman versed in science and economics to meet when necessary.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: What would that be but a board?

Mr. KENNY: It would not be a board. It would be a council whose functions would be to deal with the virgin lands of Queensland, deciding first what they were suitable for in each case—whether, for instance, for agriculture or forestry. If a given area were regarded as being most suitable for agriculture, it would be passed over to the Director of Land Settlement, who, under the control of the Minister, would be responsible for making that settlement a success. The same council would investigate the question of the expenditure which each department would have to bear in making the settlement satisfactory. We would thus avoid the anomalies we have seen in the past of the whole responsibility for supplying means of transport being thrown on the shoulders of the local authorities. The council would decide what amount of expenditure each department ought to bear in providing facilities, not only roads, but also bridges

[*Mr. Kenny.*]

and railways—which local authorities cannot find. We would then have a definite policy of land settlement. We would not have lands opened for settlement that are unfit for that purpose. We would avoid the anomaly of the Agricultural Bank financing such areas. We would also avoid the opening of lands which the Agricultural Bank would refuse to finance. I have in mind a case where a selector took up land opened by the Lands Department and went to the bank for an advance. The bank told him he could not get it unless he had a certain amount of that land excised from his selection. He went back to the Lands Department, and asked it to excise that portion to enable him to get the advance; but the department told him that it had been decided that the inferior land must be taken with the better class of land, and it would not agree to its excision. That man is forced to try to work a selection which the Agricultural Bank says cannot be worked with advantage or else he must throw it up, when it would revert to the Crown. Is the Land Administration Board going to open that land again, leading another man to make a failure there? That instance shows that efficiency is not increased by handing over the administration of these other departments to the Land Administration Board.

I agree that the Forestry Department will conflict with the Land Administration Board. These two branches have opposite views. The council I suggest would determine what lands should be utilised for land settlement, and what lands should be reserved for forestry purposes, the latter areas to be placed under the jurisdiction of a director of forests. If these two phases of primary production are controlled by one department, then inevitably there must be conflict in administration, the Department of Public Lands desiring the land for settlement purposes and the Forestry Branch being insistent upon the land being withheld from settlement for timber purposes. In view of this possible conflict in administration, it is essential that forestry reserves be set aside to be placed under the control of a director of forests, who must have entire managerial control over the whole of his department and staff, aided in this direction by statutory authority. The Forestry Department must be permitted to enjoy a permanency of land tenure to enable it to develop the timber asset to the maximum; and for this purpose a trained staff is necessary. The Bill aims at the removal of this necessary efficient control, with the object of placing forestry under the control of a board that cannot possibly have any knowledge of forestry matters. It is necessary that forestry reserves be set aside in definite areas, and in areas large enough to permit of permanent settlement and development. This will permit of natural reforestation after the removal of the original timber stands. This planned system will enable a cycle of timber-felling and regeneration or reforestation. Timber will be removed from one portion of the settlement whilst replanting proceeds apace in another part of the area. This will enable permanent townships to develop, the inhabitants of which will depend upon timber and timber products for their livelihood, whether in the sawmilling industry, in the cutting, or in the hauling. The Forestry Department must be given full control and not be subject to dual control if the full advantage is to be secured.

I have differed with forestry experts on many aspects of their reforestation programme, and I have also contended that certain forestry reserves should not have been set aside as such. I have voiced my objections in this House on more than one occasion; and I still continue to voice my objections against certain phases of forestry activity. My objections are, in the main, directed against the administrative action responsible for the settlement of areas that have been too small to enable the ordinary obligations of the district to be carried on with any degree of comfort. The land made available did not comfortably accommodate a sufficient number of settlers to enable them to provide the necessary roads, bridges, and other means of transport; consequently their developmental efforts were accompanied with extreme hardships altogether too heavy to bear.

It is now necessary for the whole problem to be tackled again. It will be found that a number of reserves held for forestry purposes should be made available for land settlement. In this way the asset of the settlers will be built up. It will also enable a greater number of settlers to go upon the land, and thus share the burden of taxation, both local government and otherwise. To bring this about a reclassification of all our lands is necessary. That principle has been recognised by past Governments, who have carried out investigations to that end.

The history of the Forestry Department discloses that at all times it has been compelled to fight for the reservation of areas for reforestation purposes. That is not desirable. If Governments of the past had done their duty, they would have seen that definite areas in districts where settlement had taken place were set aside for reforestation. There is plenty of room in Queensland for both forestry and agriculture. All that is required is for the classification of our lands to be tackled, and for the setting aside of areas for reforestation. In the past the Forestry Department, in endeavouring to maintain control of areas set aside for reforestation, has been compelled to spend small amounts of money in given areas, which has meant the neglect of other areas. The result has been that the timber in the neglected areas has been left in its virgin state. No attempt has been made to develop those areas and create townships, or to build up again settlements which have been vacated. What action does the Minister propose to take in this direction? Does he intend to place the whole control of forestry matters in the Land Administration Board, and leave to that body the work of developing the assets I have referred to? If he does so, the tendency will be for the Land Administration Board to neglect reforestation and not devote time to the building up of that asset.

The Minister in his second reading speech said that he intended to introduce business methods of management into his department. What does he mean by that? He told us in that speech that he condemned the forestry policy up to 1914. Up to 1914 the control of the Forestry Department was in the Lands Department; and that was the time that the Minister condemned the policy of reforestation.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Yes, but Tory Governments were in power then.

Mr. Kenny.]

Mr. KENNY: It is useless for the Minister to make that observation, because the fact remains that up to that year forestry was under the control of the Lands Department. The hon. gentleman also praised the forestry policy that was adopted after 1918; but he must remember that this was due to the work carried out by the Forestry Department, which then had control of forestry matters. Although the Minister condemned the management of forestry when it was under the control of the Lands Department and praised the policy when it was under the control of the Forestry Board, he now proposes to hand the control of forestry matters back again to the Lands Department. In doing so will he bring about the desired efficiency and the elimination of friction at which he aims? On quite a number of occasions throughout his second reading speech the Minister declared that he did not desire friction. There must always be friction where there is dual or triple control. There must always be friction where you have highly technical men coming into conflict with the views of inefficient management. The forestry officials must be trained to their job. I would like to hear from the Minister how he proposes to secure efficient management when he proposes to take away from highly technical men the control of one of the best assets of the State, which they are well able to control.

I need only quote the remarks of the Minister himself to indicate what chance there is of removing the friction existing between these departments. The hon. gentleman said that many Bills were before the Lands Department but were not accepted. Up to the present time, he continued, no forestry measure that had been brought before the Lands Department had been accepted and introduced in Parliament. Why were these Bills not brought before Parliament? Simply because the Lands Department could not agree with the opinions of the Forestry Department. Conflicting views operated when one department looked at the matter from the point of view of land settlement, and the other department from the point of view of the necessity for building up the forestry assets of the State. It is necessary that these departments should work under separate control in order that the most efficient work may be done in their respective spheres.

The Minister also read extracts from a supposed Forestry Bill; but he did not tell us the date of that Bill, or the Government to whom it was submitted. Perhaps it was submitted to the Labour Administration of 1919. At any rate, the hon. gentleman would not tell the House, because he knew that the information would work against his own arguments. Later he endeavoured to justify his reading from the supposed Forestry Bill; but he did not tell us if he proposes to bring in such a measure after he has changed the management as he suggests.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Didn't you hear that wonderful letter from the Hon. W. H. Barnes?

Mr. KENNY: I anticipated that interjection. I object to the attitude adopted by the Treasury that, so far as forestry is concerned, the policy should be one of revenue at all costs, and that no regard should be had to the building up of Crown assets. I have always opposed such a short-sighted

policy. We on this side of the House condemn that policy, and urge that the revenues derived from timber should be made available to develop further the timber industry of the State. Under the revenue at all costs policy our timber trade has languished; so much so that sawmills have been closed and timber workers have been placed on the unemployed market. A continuation of such a policy will not relieve the position; rather will it intensify it. If that is not the policy of the Minister, why did he condemn the ex-Treasurer?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: I did not condemn him.

Mr. KENNY: The hon. gentleman condemned the ex-Treasurer because he did not take the advice of his Under Secretary; and it is no good his trying to get away now from the definite statement he made at an earlier stage of this debate. Surely we have not reached the stage in the administrative life of the State where a Minister is purely a rubber stamp! If the Secretary for Public Lands is satisfied to be merely a rubber stamp, he is not acting in the best interests of Queensland. That is a position that we did not desire when we were on the Government side of the House. If he maintains that the Minister of any department should carry out the recommendations of his officers, why has the Minister not taken the advice of the chairman of the Forestry Board, who is his trained officer? If it was good enough for the late Treasurer to accept the advice of his officers, why did not the Minister take the advice of his own forestry officers, who are specially trained in that regard?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Because he does not want to be a rubber stamp.

Mr. KENNY: The hon. gentleman cannot have it both ways. He admits on the one hand that the late Treasurer should have taken the advice of his officers, and on the other hand he says, "No, we are going to disregard the advice of the forestry officials." These people have done their job.

The Minister said he is acting on the recommendation of the Public Service Commissioner. When introducing the Bill, the Minister said he must be guided by the advice of that official. I am not concerned with the Public Service Commissioner, who is not in a position to advise the Minister in this regard. He has no knowledge of the industry he is interfering with. We know quite well that a number of years ago it was considered necessary that the Forestry Department should be taken away from the control of the Public Service Commissioner so that we might get efficient management. To-day the Forestry Department is not handicapped by the Public Service Commissioner. In looking after his own job it is quite natural that the Public Service Commissioner should say, "Yes, put them all under one head! Bring them back under my control again!" Is that desirable? I maintain that it is not. If you are going to put those officers, who are specially trained for their jobs, back under the control of the Public Service Commissioner, we are going to do away with that efficient control that is necessary for the building up of the assets of the State. All the Minister says is that he is going to effect economy by sacking highly paid officials. He is going to sack men who are specially trained for their job. If he does that, where are we

[Mr. Kenny.]

likely to get? It must lead us along the road of inefficiency; and, if we get inefficiency in the Forestry Department, what will become of the forestry assets of Queensland? Again those assets are to be sacrificed as a result of the dispute between the two departments; and the people of Queensland will not get the benefit of our national assets. Are we not going to look after the interests of those people who are taxed to carry on the affairs of the State? Their future is mortgaged. Those men who are highly trained are building up the assets of this State; and, if they are retained in their jobs, instead of having to mortgage the future of our people we shall be building up an asset that will relieve them of the great burdens placed upon their shoulders to-day. I would like to ask what crime these highly paid officials have committed. Where is the Minister going to get efficiency if he sacks them? He has not told us that they are inefficient. He has not told us of any crime that they have committed for which they deserve the sack.

Mr. RUSSELL: They have increased the staff.

Mr. KENNY: That shows definitely that the Minister has nothing against these men.

Mr. O'KEEFE: Then why make a song about it?

Mr. KENNY: I ask the hon. member for Cairns why he is not making a song about it. Why is he standing behind the Minister who is going to sack these men without asking what they have done wrong, and without asking how the Minister is going to improve the position when he takes control out of their hands?

In another breath the hon. member referred to a commission which he had appointed to advise on the timber proposition. He mentioned a valuable report which he had received from that commission; and I might remind the Committee that that commission includes one of the men whom the Minister said he is going to "sack"—one of the men who have given the valuable advice he spoke about the other day. If these men can give him good advice, why does he say he is going to sacrifice them? He says he is going to "sack" them. If the department is not efficiently managed and is not directed in ways in which it is going to be of the most benefit to the State, it is going to be a poor lookout for the lower-paid officials of the Forestry Department, because they allegedly must lose their jobs, and other men who are depending on this industry will also lose theirs.

The Minister should state definitely where the administration to-day is inefficient, where it can be improved, and to what extent he intends to improve it; but he cannot do so. He does not make any suggestion of improvement. He does not make any suggestion about improving the efficiency, nor does he state what economies are going to take place—only that he is going to "sack" the highly-paid officials, who have been trained for the job. Queensland has spent many thousands of pounds in educating men in the Forestry Department. A great deal of money has been spent in the past in experimental work in the department. Is the whole of that money going to be sacrificed because of the whim of a Minister, who is acting on the recommendation of the Public Service Commissioner, according

to his own statement? Are we to sacrifice the whole of the money which has been expended and lose the whole of the knowledge that has been gained? If the Minister and hon. members opposite are content to adopt that attitude, then, no doubt, they will support this measure; but I ask them seriously to consider their steps, and decide whether, in the best interests of Queensland, it is not desirable to wipe out all connection between the Forestry Board and the Land Administration Board. If the Government wish to do the job properly and to preserve the interests of this State, let them bring forward the Forestry Bill they have promised, and give the Forestry Board complete control over forestry matters. They will then be doing a great service to Queensland.

The Minister talks about correspondence between the departments. Is it necessary to wipe out the whole of the department, or to dispense with officials because they write letters to each other? He can act on his own initiative and issue instructions. The Minister's statements are only an excuse. The fact remains that he seeks to grasp at a straw as an argument in favour of the action he is taking to-day. It shows the fallacy of putting a man in control of the lands of the State who knows nothing about them. If the Minister reads up matters during the next few days, he may see his way to introduce an amendment at the Committee stage to wipe out every clause in the Bill affecting the Forestry Department. The Forestry Department has been subject to more inquiries during the last three years than ever before in the history of the department. When I sat on the opposite side of the House under the last Government, I condemned the forestry administration on the same lines as I condemn it to-day; but we are not going to improve the position by the action of the Minister. If the Minister would take advantage of the inquiries that have been made from time to time, and go over the same ground that was covered by those who conducted them, he would be able to sum up the position for himself and see the advantages of giving this department its own control, rather than risk the advantages of dual or triple control. The Forestry Department at present controls an asset worth from £10,000,000 to £20,000,000, and that asset has not only to be maintained, but also increased. In order to do that, we must put in control men who are qualified for the work.

On the introductory stage of the Bill I dealt with another phase of the work of the department, and asked the Minister and hon. members sitting behind him to visit the forest products showroom in George street. I said that, if they were not convinced of the good work which had been carried out by that branch in putting Queensland timbers on the market to take the place of timbers that were being imported so recently as 1930, I did not know what to make of them. I quoted a number of instances where timbers which were being imported as recently as 1930 had been replaced by local timbers, thanks to the investigations of the Forestry Department. From such timber we are manufacturing commodities, not only for Queensland, but also for Australia. We have even arrived at the stage at which we are exporting to America and the United Kingdom. All this investigation has cost Queensland a large

Mr. Kenny.]

sum of money; but to-day we are reaping the benefit, and in the future we stand to reap a greater benefit if the Minister does not sacrifice this management to a department which is not interested in the work. If he persists in doing so, we cannot develop as we should. We shall fall into a state of inefficiency, and be importing timbers once again rather than exporting them.

Another phase of the work of the Forestry Department is the utilisation of our secondary timbers, of which it is estimated we have 1,000,000,000 superficial feet in North Queensland that could be put on the market if it were kiln-dried. The department conducted an experiment with 40,000 superficial feet at Stratford in North Queensland, and it proved so successful as to justify the Government in going further. I am hoping that the Minister will have at least £10,000 placed on the Estimates to experiment with secondary timbers in North Queensland, and thus open up an avenue for the utilisation of another of Queensland's assets. It has possibilities; but, if the experience gained by the men in control to-day is sacrificed, we shall be sacrificing also a future which can be built up if efficient lines are followed. I ask the Minister to look at the question from that point of view, because it is worthy of his consideration, as it is capable of employing a large number of men, if he is only big enough to look at the question clearly and aim at development rather than adopt the attitude of sacrificing the higher officials. In sacrificing them he must sacrifice the information of years and knowledge gained by the expenditure of thousands of pounds. If the Minister hands over the whole of the control to the Land Administration Board, we are not going to get the experimental work that we have had in the past. Although the Minister may condemn the department, he must not forget that it has been a revenue collector in the past. Over a period of ten years the Forestry Department has obtained £1,900,000 for the consolidated revenue. The natural timber assets were taken from the land; but no revenue was re-employed in the reforestation of the areas denuded of their natural timbers, although loan money has been employed to some extent. We have been content to denude the land of its natural asset and to mortgage the future of our people, but we should now decide to earmark a proportion of revenue obtained from the sale of natural timbers with a view to restoring the asset for the benefit of future generations.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! The hon. member has exhausted the time allowed him under the Standing Orders.

Mr. CLAYTON (*Wide Bay*) [2.31 p.m.]: The measure before the House is a very important one. It is pleasing to note that the Minister has decided to drop that clause of the Bill which is tantamount to repudiation. I feel that the exposure of that matter in this House by the Leader of the Opposition and the fact that the Premier has cracked the whip over the Secretary for Public Lands contributed largely to the omission of this clause.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Do you wish to have it reinserted?

Mr. CLAYTON: The hon. gentleman cannot reinsert the clause, because his leader has commanded that it be taken out. The

[Mr. Kenny.

Premier stated in his policy speech that forestry activities would be combined with the activities of the Department of Agriculture; but there has been a complete change of policy in that regard. It is only one of the many changes from the policy enunciated in the Premier's manifesto that will occur from time to time.

I have always advocated that there should be greater co-operation between the Department of Public Lands and the Forestry Department. I believe that, with greater co-operation providing for the administration of forestry, land, and prickly-pear matters under one statute, much satisfaction would accrue to the State as a whole. I do not hold the view that the co-ordination of all the relevant sub-departments under the control of the Land Administration Board will be to the detriment of the activities concerned. I intend to give the Bill a measure of support in that direction. We know that the position that existed in the Forestry Department and the Department of Public Lands for many years has not been satisfactory. The late Premier was not satisfied with the progress of land settlement and reforestation. He deemed it necessary to appoint a Royal Commission to go into the question, and to take evidence in North Queensland. Dealing with the appointment of this royal commission, a Brisbane newspaper said—

"The Premier, Hon. A. E. Moore, announced to-day that a royal commission had been appointed by the Government to ascertain fully and definitely a way in which the progress and development of the tropical north could be encouraged, and the means by which a definite land settlement policy could be evolved."

The late Premier appreciated the necessity for a programme which would assist both land settlement and reforestation. Evidence was given before the royal commission, and I am inclined to think that the report of that commission has prompted this Bill. So dissatisfied were the late Government on forestry matters that a Parliamentary Committee was appointed from the then Government side of the House to investigate the matter. I was one of the members of that committee, and so, too, was the hon. member for Cook. The committee was appointed to inquire into the question of reforestation. Our reports were submitted to the Minister, but I do not know what action was taken upon them. It is true that prior to 1929 the Labour Government used our forests for revenue-producing purposes. It will be the duty of the Governments of the future to see that a proportion of the revenue derived from timber sales is set aside to carry out a policy of reforestation.

Let us see the revenues which have been exacted from our forests by the various Governments of the day. In 1908 the Government took from our forests in royalties £25,847; in 1918 the revenue from royalties was £49,000; and in 1928-29 it was £201,000. This money went into the consolidated revenue. During that period the average amount of loan money spent on reforestation was £35,000 per annum. I trust that, after the passage of this measure, this position will be somewhat altered and that more money will be devoted to reforestation. We should go thoroughly into the matter of the reclassification and survey of our lands. This will enable us to allocate certain areas

for reafforestation, and other areas for land settlement. These lands should be administered under one Act of Parliament. Provision should also be made for the allocation of a certain proportion of the revenue derived from forests to reafforestation. If this is done, forestry will make a decided advance—much more than has been evident in the past. The maximum revenue from our forests was obtained in the financial year 1923-1929, when, mainly by increased royalties, it amounted to £201,000. Such an increase amounted to the use of our forests for the purpose of producing revenue for the Government of the day; and I will show what influence these increased royalties had on the timber industry. In 1930-31 our revenue from forests was £92,950. Coincident with the increase in timber royalties was the increase in the quantities of timbers imported from overseas. These importations increased each year. The Moore Government saw the necessity for reducing the royalties in order to get those engaged in the timber industry back to work, and thus utilise those timbers in our forests which had for some years past been allowed to decay. High royalties brought about an enormous increase in the importation of timber from overseas. In the year 1925-1925, 500,000,000 superficial feet of timber were imported into Australia; and of this amount 304,000,000 superficial feet came from the United States of America. The value of this timber was £5,249,000. That was a tremendous amount of money to send out of the country when we possessed valuable timber which was permitted to decay in our scrubs. It is satisfactory to know that, since the reduction in the royalties, the importations have decreased, and that our timber industry has, to a certain extent, benefited accordingly. The increased timber importations were brought about largely by the high timber royalties operating in Queensland; and we had the unfortunate spectacle of money leaving the State, the railways losing revenue, large payments being made under the unemployment insurance scheme, companies paying no income tax, and thousands of mill and bush workers unemployed. I trust that the matter will be taken in hand much more satisfactorily in future, and that, by reducing the royalties, we shall be able to produce a cheaper type of timber than at present.

Another trouble has been the tremendous increase in the substitutes for soft timber. Where pine was used very considerably years ago, cheaper substitutes are being used; and I am inclined to think that substitutes for timber will take the place of a lot of our softwoods. It would be in the interests of Queensland if those controlling our forestry policy gave greater consideration to the production of hardwoods, for which there will always be a world-wide demand. Moreover, the process of regeneration of hardwood is a cheap one, one forestry report estimating the cost at 12s. 6d. per acre. Were more money spent from revenue on the regeneration of the hardwood forests, greater good would accrue to the State. No fire will interfere to any extent with that process; nor will it interfere with the use of the land for grazing purposes. Indeed, I think we must look to our hardwoods for the future of the timber industry in Queensland.

I have always been opposed to the shutting up of rich agricultural lands adjacent

to existing railways and main roads. That is why I ask for a reclassification of these lands. For instance, in the Gympie and other districts of the Wide Bay electorate there is much land set aside for reafforestation that could be put to better use if settled by young men engaged in agricultural pursuits. A great deal of that land is suitable for the purpose. The ex-Secretary for Public Lands promised that he would open up certain areas of land in the Gympie district, and I trust that his successor, the present Minister, will honour that promise. If that is done, it will make for greater development in the district, and will be the means of settling many persons who are now unemployed.

We have isolated areas of timber forests and reserves in the Wide Bay district. In one scrub area between Murgon and Goomeri an area of 2,000 acres of land is suitable for agricultural production, and I cannot understand any department holding that land for reafforestation purposes, particularly as my own experience and information convince me that the land is not suitable for the growth of soft woods. There we have 2,000 acres of good agricultural land with very little natural growth of timber; and the farmers settled around that area suffer from marsupials and other pests; but, if you go to the Forestry Department for assistance to fence the land with marsupial netting, you are told they have no funds for that purpose. The same thing happens when you go to the Department of Public Lands. If we had greater co-ordination between those two departments, some of the revenue derived from the sale of timber could be devoted to assist the settlers there.

I do not want to speak at any great length in connection with this Bill. It is a measure that requires very serious consideration. If forestry were placed under a sub-department and administered properly, it would not be to the detriment of either forestry or agriculture in Queensland.

Mr. SPARKES (*Dalby*) [2.46 p.m.]: I do not wish to take up the time of the House with a lengthy speech in regard to forestry or land settlement. The position I take up is this: Any Bill which will cheapen the administration of the Government will always receive my support; and, if this Bill is designed for that purpose and will not impair efficiency, then it will have my support. The thing that worries me is the speech of the Secretary for Public Lands, where he said, "Any economy effected will be at the top, and then we shall probably be able to give something more to the men at the bottom." That is one of the chief objections I have to the remarks of the Secretary for Public Lands, who said that he was going to take from the brainy part of the business and give to the man at the bottom.

Mr. GAIR: All the brains are not at the top.

Mr. SPARKES: Quite so; but many of them are. I am not at all concerned either with the man at the top or the man at the bottom, but I will support anything that will cheapen administration. To-day the whole of Australia is suffering because of the high cost of government; and, if this Bill will cheapen the administration of the Lands Department and the Forestry Department, then I shall support it.

Mr. Sparkes.]

Mr. TOZER (*Gympie*) [2.48 p.m.]: This Bill is entitled, "The Prickly-pear Land and Forestry Administration Bill," which I think is a misnomer. I think it was meant to be a "Prickly-pear Land and Forestry Repudiation Bill." There are five parts in the Bill. Part I. is preliminary; Part II. deals with the Prickly-pear Land Commission; Part III. with the Forestry Board; Part IV. comprises amendments of the Land Acts; and Part V. is general. The Bill proposes to do away with both the Prickly-pear Land Commission and the Forestry Board. The Prickly-pear Land Commission is constituted under an Act of Parliament, and members of that commission are given the same powers and privileges as are enjoyed by judges of the Supreme Court. They were given those powers because it was thought inadvisable to put them in a position in which they could be influenced in any of their decisions.

For the same reason the Forestry Board should have a permanency of appointment. The members of the Prickly-pear Land Commission were appointed for a term of ten years under an Act of Parliament passed by the then Labour Government. This Bill practically takes their positions away from these people, as it provides that they shall go out of office. We are not told that they are going to be given office under any other Bill, or what is going to become of them. Their services are to be dispensed with. We have a certain amount of reason for thinking that some of them are going to be dispensed with, because the Minister stated that the Government were going to sack some of those at the head, and utilise the money paid to them in paying lower paid officers; and he made quite a song about it. He stated that there were ten officials in the Department of Public Lands who were receiving more by £500 a year than the ten Ministers on the Government benches. Of course, anyone who has gone through a certain training and worked himself to the top of the tree in any profession at all commands a fairly high salary. Cabinet Ministers have not specialised in any particular subject, and have not served any particular time at their profession or worked themselves up so as to be entitled to anything out of the way in remuneration. The taking away of office from members of the Prickly-pear Land Commission is absolute repudiation. The Forestry Board has also been appointed for a definite term; and to bring in a Bill after its members have served on the board for a certain time and put them out of office is also an act of repudiation.

The Government must know that they are doing something wrong in bringing in this measure, because clause 15 is a drag-net provision providing that no action can be taken in consequence of any steps taken under this Bill. I am pleased that the Minister is not proceeding with that clause, and that consequently any members of the boards concerned will have a right of action.

The Bill deals with prickly-pear land and also with forestry. Forestry is a very large undertaking to administer; and it is of such value that there should be some individual specially appointed to deal with it. I have previously attacked the Forestry Board in Parliament because it had done certain things which I did not consider right, and had not shown tact. If the board had shown a reasonable attitude in its dealings, it would have done much better

[*Mr. Tozer.*

than it has done. The board always appeared to be out to fight, and presumed that, if a person spoke against what they considered to be the interests of forestry, he was up against the board; but that does not follow at all. I have not been opposed absolutely to the Forestry Board; but at different times I have had to fight it, and to try to get certain things from it, because I am of opinion that some lands in Queensland could be more profitably employed in land settlement than in being set aside for forestry.

In the Premier's policy speech it is stated—

"The forestry resources of the State will engage the Labour Party's earnest attention. The serious depletion of our forest resources demands a sound policy of reforestation as well as the conservation and wise utilisation of existing resources. An up-to-date Forestry Bill will be introduced, and this industry generally placed upon a sound basis whilst paying due regard to the needs of settlers.

"An efficient survey of the forest and timber reserves of the State will be made with a view to determining finally what lands are required for forestry, and the lands that can be more economically made available for successful settlement. The control of this phase of activity will be transferred from the Department of Lands and placed under the authority of the Department of Agriculture."

If the Premier and the Secretary for Public Lands carry out that policy to the letter, much cannot be said against it, because it is practically the same policy as that under which the Moore Government were working, and that is all that we have been asking for. We have been asking for a reclassification of the land of this State, so that lands suitable for reforestation can be used for that purpose, and land that can be more beneficially utilised for land settlement can be devoted to that purpose. The point, however, is that throughout the world the best agricultural lands have not been taken for reforestation purposes. The authorities see if they cannot utilise the waste lands of the country for that purpose. These remarks apply to New Zealand, the nearest country to Australia, where lands like the Burnham plains, lands around Lake Rotorua, and North of Auckland have been set apart for this purpose. I submit that should be the policy of the Government here, because we have a considerable amount of what are waste lands, and we ought to find out what they can be used for. We know that good land can be used for agriculture and dairying; and, if we can utilise waste lands for reforestation, we should do so. We have an instance at Beerburum, where I understand land used as a soldiers' settlement was a failure. Later on it was planted with pine trees, and I believe the experiment is more or less a success so far as it has gone. I have no objection to that land being utilised for that purpose, because it was of no use for the other purpose. Then we have many other places. There is Fraser Island, where Mr. Grenning reports there are 300,000 acres available for reforestation. Another report says there are 391,500 acres that are good, and the Queensland Forestry book

says that 392,138 acres can be used for re-forestation. The Forestry Department discovered that natural timbers—such as hoop pine, Kauri pine, and hardwood—were doing exceptionally well there, and they started a nursery. The timber grown shows a wonderful growth.

That island is not utilised for any other purpose at all, and is eminently suitable for reforestation. In addition, we have the scrub lands of Ccoololah, between Double Island Point and Tewantin. These lands are not utilised for any other purpose, and they form the natural habitat of hoop and kauri pine. These lands cannot be utilised for any other purpose. Again, we have the scrub lands round Tin Can Bay, which can be utilised for forestry purposes. We have an area of over 420,000,000 acres in Queensland; so surely we have sufficient land for reforestation and for agriculture and dairying! The Forestry Board claims that 6,000,000 acres are required for reforestation, and to provide that area it is necessary to set aside 8,000,000 acres, the balance being required for roads, fire-broaks, nurseries, and forestry work. That means that 8,000,000 acres of our best land—land along the coast with a good rainfall and served with a railway—is not being utilised to its economic capacity. There are over 320,000 acres of land tied up in the Gympie land agent's district, and only last week an additional 9,700 acres were set aside for forestry purposes. An area of 20,903 acres was reserved for forestry purposes, of which 9,700 acres are located in the Gympie land agent's district. Presumably that makes a total of 329,700 acres of land tied up in the southern part of Queensland for forestry purposes. This land is in comparatively close proximity to the city of Brisbane, and is good scrub land with a railway right into it. The Imbil line runs into the area and right up the Mary Valley. There are good roads, and the land is well watered and eminently suitable for cultivation. This land would be taken up if it were made available. There are 5,164 persons employed in farming in the Gympie petty sessions district, and in the adjoining petty sessions district of Wienholt there are 4,395 persons employed in farming. Right up against these districts is an area of 329,000 acres, which has been acquired for forestry purposes. Just imagine the number of prosperous and contented settlers that could be placed upon that land if it were made available. At one time the town of Gympie was right in the heart of these forests.

One has only to take the fact that Imbil, Dagon, Kandanga, Amamoor, Brooloo, and other towns have sprung up in that district, which were formerly the centre of forest reserves. If the Government of the day had not alienated certain of these forest reserves and opened them to closer settlement, the forests would have still have been standing there. What use would they have been? I would point out that our forest revenue is the largest of any State in Australia. During the last fifteen years our forests have yielded to the Treasury £2,055,000. The wood-working industry of this State is already responsible for an annual production of £3,000,000. Queensland is noted for its supplies of softwoods and cabinet timbers, in addition to its timber for veneer and plywood purposes. We have also in this State 400 varieties of timbers, which makes it one of the greatest timber

producers in Australasia. These facts show that forestry is an industry which we should encourage, and one which, if properly administered, will be a great asset to the State.

The Minister stated that this Bill is designed to co-ordinate the work of the Land Administration Board and the Forestry Department; but it is recognised that it will bring the Forestry Department under the control of the Land Administration Board. The Land Administration Board has a tremendous amount of work to do at the present time, and, in my opinion, it has its hands full. It has to do with the issuing of all leases. We have not looked eye to eye with its policy in regard to the issue of those leases. If we bring the Forestry Department under the control of the Land Administration Board, it does not appear that the arrangement will work smoothly. In my opinion, it will bring about more friction. I cannot see how this Bill will bring about the desired co-ordination or be a benefit to the State. In my opinion the Forestry Department and the Land Administration Board should be kept separate, then they would watch the actions of each other, and would necessarily come to some arrangement in regard to the lands best suited for agriculture and reforestation.

It is estimated that 24,500,000 acres of land in Australia have been reserved for forestry purposes, and of this total 8,000,000 have been reserved in New South Wales, 5,500,000 in Victoria, 6,000,000 in Queensland, 500,000 in South Australia, 3,000,000 in Western Australia, and 1,500,000 in Tasmania. Statistics show that the value of timber importations is much greater than the value of our timber exports. That is wrong, and should not be. We should be able to supply all our needs in respect of timber, and export the surplus. The figures for last year show that the value of our timber imports was £4,346,000, and the value of our exports £1,125,000. The imports from the United States of America represented 51 per cent. of the total quantity imported. I understand from one of our forestry officials who has returned from America that that continent could be divided into two parts so far as forestry is concerned. That is to say, on the eastern side the supplies of timber are being conserved, while on the western side the timber supplies are inclined to be sacrificed. This official said that there was so much timber there that the peak of the industry would not be reached for the next ten years; but after that period and for the next ten years the industry would be at a standstill, and in the following ten years there would be a decrease. That is running into a period of thirty years for America alone; but we are importing not only from America, but also from Norway, Sweden, and Russia. If our own timbers were utilised, there would be no necessity for these importations. What has been responsible for the importations? During the Labour regime, of the 130,000 acres tied up for reforestation in the Gympie land agent's district, something like 30,000 acres were released, but the timber released was from timber reserves, and not from forests. Hon. members will understand, of course, that, so far as a timber reserve is concerned, the Minister has power to deal with the matter, but that, in the case of a forest reserve, Parliament only has the

Mr. Tozer.]

power. All the time the forestry authorities have been increasing their activities. If they could plant at a price at which they would be able to sell the timber and stop these importations, it would be good business. But let us consider this aspect: At Wengabel, for example, a plantation of hoop pine was showing an increase of 5,000 superficial feet per acre per annum. In fifty years that would amount to 250,000 superficial feet; and, if you had 1,000 acres of that, it would produce 250,000,000 superficial feet per annum. In another report, if we take the growth as stated at 80,000 superficial feet, in fifty years it would mean that 5,000 acres planted would produce 4,000,000,000 superficial feet yearly. In 1928 the total timber requirements of Queensland were 87,000,000 superficial feet, and in 1929 95,000,000 superficial feet. In those circumstances, what is the use of trying to reafforest anything like 6,000,000 acres? The production of timber would be so great that there would be no demand for it.

Then consider the cost of planting. The report of Mr. Grenning sets down the figure at £13 per acre, which, at 6 per cent. per annum compound interest for fifty years, would make the cost £324 for each acre dealt with. There is a stand of timber at Imbil which is an exceptionally good stand, and that was valued at the present high royalty at £250 per acre. On those figures there would be considerable loss in respect of our plantings in Queensland.

In 1914-15 the royalty on timber was from 1s. to 2s. per 100 superficial feet. That royalty has gone up to 23s. per 100 superficial feet; and even at that rate it does not pay to grow timber. If these royalties come down, and we have to compete with the other States, I cannot see that reafforestation is going to be a good asset to Queensland. It appears to me that the taxpayers will have to pay a considerable amount in taxes to grow timber that they do not require. I think it was in 1920 that the then Minister stated that a timber famine was upon us, and that it was increasing daily, and that soon we would have no timber at all. The peculiar thing is that the amount of timber available from time to time is more than the quantity required by the State, and we cannot export timber because it costs more at the stump than the price at which we can land timber in Queensland from America. If that is so, what is the value of planting these big areas under forests? We have softwood reserves and hardwood reserves; and I am inclined to think that hardwood is a better class of timber for reafforestation purposes, and that it will bring better prices later on than softwood. At the present time the softwoods are more in favour, but the hardwoods will grow on inferior land, whereas the softwoods require good land; therefore, the department will be well advised to push ahead with the hardwood forests in preference to pine forests. If that were done, the people would soon reap some benefit.

Some years ago the Mooloo forest lands, situated in the Gympie land agent's district, were thrown open for selection. The total area was 3,500 acres, which originally was all scrub. As a result of the throwing open of that land to settlement, in twenty years thirty-two families were settled on that block, and at present there are ninety-four children there under fourteen years of age and seventeen over fourteen years of age,

[Mr. Tozer.

and there are seventy-one men employed on that area of 3,500 acres. Mooloo lies between Schacht's Creek and Harry's Creek; and the people of Gympie are trying to get Schacht's Creek and Harry's Creek land thrown open for selection.

The Brooloo forest reserve is a very large area, consisting of 41,000 acres. It is under forestry conditions, and there are only thirty-six men employed. That the settlement of land for dairying purposes is more advantageous than forestry is shown by the fact that there are seventy-one men employed on 3,500 acres used for dairying as against thirty-six men outside of relief workers on the 41,000 acres retained for forestry purposes. When we have instances like that, it appears advisable to have a reclassification of land, and to throw open such lands as are not required for reafforestation.

Personally, I have nothing to say against the Forestry Board, and would like to see it kept in existence and push ahead with forestry work. I understand that it is proposed to replant pine forests to the extent of something like 5,000 acres a year; but the Forestry Department has never yet planted more than 2,000 acres per annum. There is plenty of pine timber in the scrubs at the present time. Take, for instance, the 41,000 acres of scrub in the Brooloo reserve. If the department cannot get more than 2,000 acres planted in a year, what is the use of having anything like 6,000,000 acres of land tied up? If the department would concentrate on particular areas, it would be of some use. The Brooloo forest reserve of 41,000 acres contains timber which has been standing there since the beginning of Australia, and all the other scrubs are in the same position. There is no rent collected from them, while certain expenditure has to be incurred in connection with them. While there is a certain amount of timber in these big scrubs, we must not run away with the idea that they are full of pine trees closely packed. You may get a good belt of timber in one place, while in others there will not be six good pine trees to the acre. There is a lot of useless timber and undergrowth in the scrubs, and wherever they are opened up lantana begins to grow. These lands are standing idle; but we want to see them reproductive and bringing in some revenue. If these lands were opened up to selection, there would be rent payable in advance the first year and also survey fees. The local authorities would receive rates every year, and there would be an annual return from the land in other directions. Is it not better to have a return from the land every year than to have it lying idle, with money being spent on it year after year? I quite agree with timber being marketed where possible and revenue being obtained from it, and that we should not sacrifice the timber.

The early pioneers have been accused of wasting or sacrificing timber; but we must remember that they had to fall the scrub and cultivate the land. They used the best part of the timber for fences, houses, out-houses, and other buildings; but, if the timber which was of no value at the time because it could not be sold was burnt, where is the destruction about that? We are looking at it from the point of view that, if we had that timber now and had a buyer for it, it was a considerable waste to burn it years before. But where does the waste

come in in clearing the land and putting it into use? I do not think any person would deliberately waste timber. If we can sell the timber on any of the land that is wanted at the present time, we should do so. If you are going to replant, how long will it be before the young timber is of any use? The department has given different periods. First of all it said one hundred years; then eighty; then sixty. Now it has come down to thirty; but I do not believe that, because anyone of us almost has experienced how much a tree will grow, say, in twenty years. Many persons have watched the growth of trees for fifty years, and it has not been remarkable. Foresters, of course, say that it depends entirely on the soil and conditions. Mr. Petrie said that, at Fraser Island, in a period of eleven years one group of trees showed a growth of 38 inches, and another group of similar trees a growth of only 6 inches. He said that there must be some difference in the soil to account for it. Nobody knows, for example, how long the trees in our scrubs have taken to grow. The Forestry Department will tell us that it takes longer for a tree to grow in its natural state than if it is planted under reforestation conditions; but, even assuming that that is a fact, we have to wait from twenty to fifty years for the timber to be of any use. For the next thirty years, we know, America can send us timber more cheaply than we can produce it here; so what is the use of planting an excessive area? We cannot use what we have at present. The other States do not want it; and shall we ever be able to sell our timber on the other side of the world at all profitably? I cannot see any chance of our competing on the other side of the world under existing conditions in Queensland. On the other hand, everybody can see that other substances are taking the place of softwoods in building. I hope that now that the Minister has taken the matter in hand and is endeavouring to bring about co-ordination, he will take all these things into consideration. We have had fourteen years' experience of a Labour Government, and no Forestry Bill was brought forward. The Moore Government were in power for only three years, but had a Forestry Bill prepared. Owing to the fact that it was near the end of the session, it was not brought forward.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: That was not the reason.

Mr. TOZER: I was on the Forestry Committee of the party; and we were anxious to get the Bill through, because we had been promised that certain lands would be thrown open for settlement, and the only way to get that was to pass the Bill. We were pushing all we knew to get it through. We had talked it over in committee, and we approached the Premier towards the end of the session, but we were told that we had no chance of getting it passed that session. So I say honestly and straightforwardly that that was the reason.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! The hon. member has exhausted the time allowed him under the Standing Orders.

Mr. RUSSELL (*Hamilton*) [3.30 p.m.]: I can understand that, perhaps, some country members do not care to take a very keen interest in reforestation. On the other hand, I have taken a keen interest in the subject; and from that fact and the fact that there are no forest lands in my electorate I

can perhaps speak without prejudice as to the merits or demerits of this Bill.

The Minister has treated us to two very remarkable speeches, and, on reading those speeches in "Hansard," one is struck with the fact that no constructive idea was enunciated by him in regard to the whole matter. He said that the real motive behind the present agitation is to bring about co-ordination, as he is pleased to term it, in the Department of Public Lands. He referred to the action of the previous Government in practically abolishing the Irrigation and Water Supply Commission and in creating the Land Administration Board to be that commission. There is no analogy whatever between that position and the one in the Bill with regard to forestry, because the question of water supply is a necessary adjunct to closer settlement, whereas forestry is an activity that has little in common with land settlement. As a matter of fact, conflict has been going on for many years between forestry and land settlement; and the two things are divergent. Certainly, there is some justification for the inclusion of the Prickly-pear Land Commission within the ambit of the Land Administration Board, for the Prickly-pear Land Commission was created for the special purpose of dealing with the eradication of prickly-pear, and its work is practically completed; consequently, there is not the same necessity for the continuation of its service as a special commission as there has been in the past. That part of the Bill which brings about the inclusion of that commission within the sphere of action of the Land Administration Board is quite feasible, and I do not think anybody can disagree with it, except, of course, that I take it the commissioners will be allowed to carry on until the expiry of their term of office.

When we come to the matter of forestry—as the Minister himself admitted—there is a conflict between that department and the Department of Public Lands, and naturally so, because, while the Land Administration Board is keenly interested in closer settlement, the Forestry Board is anxious to resist the encroachment of land settlement on our forests. We know that in every part of Queensland to-day there is a demand for a good deal of the land which is in a state of virgin scrub. I can quite understand the advocacy of country members of the delimitation of the powers of the Forestry Board so as to bring about the more rapid development of much of the land to-day controlled by the Forestry Board. I have not seen eye to eye with the Forestry Board, and I have been fairly strong in my criticism of its administration. At the same time, I hope that the House will hesitate before it agrees to the absolute submergence of this board by placing it under the domination of the Land Administration Board. The Minister spoke of co-ordination. The very term infers the interweaving of equal powers. I can quite understand the various departments controlled by the Minister being called to act together in carrying out a common policy. That is co-ordination; but what is proposed in this Bill is not co-ordination at all; it is the subordination of one department to another department.

The Land Administration Board deals with the settlement of the land. The function of the Forestry Board, to use its own words, is, in accordance with the powers conferred

Mr. Russell.]

on them by Parliament, to safeguard and to manage State forest assets. We know that throughout the whole of its career it has had a very precarious existence. During its six and a-half years existence, it has seen portions of forestry reserves whittled away in response to the clamour of land seekers. The claim of land settlement must be predominant over forestry; but at the same time, one must be sympathetic with this board struggling under such circumstances, with very few friends, and receiving very little assistance from any Government. To-day it is openly asserted that its administration of the forests has been a failure, and that it must go by the board. I cannot understand the change of opinion of our friends opposite, because in 1924 they appointed a Forestry Board and conferred certain powers on it. They felt then that it was necessary to create an independent tribunal which would be vested with powers by Parliament to preserve our forest assets and resist encroachments made year by year in order that our forestry reserves should be held by the Crown in perpetuity for the purpose of supplying Queensland, not only now but in the future, with softwoods and hardwoods. To-day, we find that a good deal of the forest areas have been filched from the board. I agree with some hon. members on this side that it was a mistake to hold on to certain small areas in the Mary Valley and elsewhere when they were required for settlement purposes. It would have been better had the operations on the Forestry Board been confined to large areas, because then it could have carried on the work of reforestation more economically. Instead, the board has been holding on to small blocks constituting some of the finest agricultural land in Queensland. In releasing these lands for settlement we are robbing the people of their heritage. If we did our duty, we would year by year plant a fair percentage of our principal soft woods in order to leave to the generations of the future a legacy in compensation for what we are taking away from them in the State assets.

The difficulty is as to what areas should be set aside for forestry. I have always contended, particularly in times of stress such as these that the needs of the future must give way to the needs of the present; and if there is a legitimate demand by legitimate farmers and would-be settlers for this land, principally alluvial land well watered by rivers and creeks, we should give way to this demand, and, in order to satisfy our forestry conscience—which I am sorry to say very few of us have—we should see that a certain area is set aside for forestry operations. Time after time the Forestry Board has objected in its reports to the idea that we should leave for its operations all the mountainous country and ravines that are unsuited for agricultural purposes. It naturally wants the best lands. Its procedure is to clear the scrub off these lands and replant year after year; but, if there is a legitimate demand for these good lands, then the claim for land settlement should take precedence. The future is obscure. We do not know whether in fifty years there will be a demand for softwoods such as there is to-day. We do not know whether the older countries in the world which have such prolific crops of softwoods will be able to supply our requirements. We know that in Sweden and Norway their plantings

[Mr. Russell.

of softwoods exceeds present demands. In British Columbia the Douglas fir regenerates itself. No labour is required in replanting. The fir springs up naturally, and the only labour necessary is in order to thin out some of the second growth. We must recognise, therefore, that in those countries the forests in fifty years may be as big as they are to-day. Similarly with the forests in Manchuria, which is practically a *terra incognita* in regard to its forest resources. Taking these factors into consideration, we have to be careful that we are not spending too much by way of reforestation of softwoods. Greater attention should be paid to the regeneration of our hardwoods. Australia is par excellence the home of some of the finest hardwoods in the world. These hardwoods grow on poor country, and do not require much attention. Our policy should be to see that our hardwood reserves are kept clean. As a matter of fact, the would-be settler is not very anxious about making a home in hardwood country. We should make some preparation for seeing that we have sufficient reserves of softwood to fall back upon, especially in times of emergency.

In considering this question, we should preserve a fair balance between forestry and land settlement. We are all apt to talk about our huge potential resources, and about what a wonderfully fertile country this is; but, after all, the good country in Australia is just on the seaboard and a few miles inland, there being an enormous area inland where habitations are few, and where, under present conditions, the population will apparently be very sparse for many years to come. Our good land is restricted to a small area; and I honestly believe that we have not the area of arable land that we think we have; consequently, when there are claims from legitimate settlers for land, those claims should be given preference over those of forestry. At the same time, the claims of forestry should not be overlooked. I can see no necessity for the radical change outlined in this Bill. During the life of the Forestry Board surpluses amounting to £1,156,254 have been contributed to the Treasury—a very fine record indeed, and a very fine adjunct to needy Treasurers from the sale of Crown assets. Against that we have made little reparation. I have always contended that the money derived from our forests should not be looked upon in the same category as consolidated revenue. It was our duty to see that the greater part of that money was handed back for replanting purposes, because standing timber is not the possession of one generation but the possession of all generations.

Having established this board, which had a very humble beginning, but now has a staff of over 100—

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Why was it established?

Mr. RUSSELL: In order to resist the encroachments on our Crown lands by land seekers and to safeguard our forest assets. I say that the board has fulfilled its functions absolutely. While we admit it has raked in every penny possible out of the pockets of the consumers, still that has been done at the dictates of the Government, and in doing that the Forestry Board has only done its duty.

In Mr. Swain every Government has had a most painstaking and zealous officer, and

no blame is attachable to him for his policy. He has built up a most elaborate organisation. I certainly disagree with the building up of this huge department. To my mind, there is no necessity for such a huge staff. Under Mr. Swain's management the old method of selling at the stump was abolished, and now practically all sales are made on the ramp. This means that labour for felling and hauling had to be engaged by the Forestry Department, and therefore we have seen the growth of a huge army of public servants, when the whole business could have been managed more simply. But, apart from that, there is no justification for abolishing the board and placing forestry under the control of the Land Administration Board. We suspect that one of the motives behind this is the effect that the report of the North Queensland Development Commission has had. We know that there is a strong agitation in North Queensland for the alienation of nearly all those valuable scrub lands on the two tablelands; and naturally the Forestry Department has fought consistently against any further alienation of those lands. I do not agree with the board altogether, because I do think that lands handy to roads and railways should be opened to settlement; but I am not an advocate for the destruction of timber. The timber should be sold at the best possible price; but, rather than hold it for a high price, I would advocate that the standing timber should be sold for immediate removal, even though it only brought a price that would cover the cost of getting it. There is a good trade to be done in those valuable Northern woods. In fact, a good deal of trade has been lost by the stupid policy of boosting up the royalties. The only way to settle those lands is by getting rid of the timber, and all those lands easy of access should be opened to selection. One thing that must strike every visitor who goes to the Tableland is the fact that on all sides he sees areas of land that have been cleared of timber only growing rubbish to-day. When I was up there some months ago, I noticed that many of the selections that had been cleared of valuable timbers are simply growing a lot of undergrowth which is of no value. We do not want to see a perpetuation of that. We want to be satisfied that the demand for this land is bona fide; and we should see to it that the land jobbers and land speculators are kept out of it.

Several speakers have pointed out that forestry demands control by men of experience, and in Mr. Swain we certainly have a first-class man. Whether he is a first-class business man or not I am not prepared to say, except that there is no doubt that, as a result of his administration, he has been able to get every penny that was in the business, and we must commend him for that. As to the proposal contained in this Bill, my own opinion is that, instead of placing the Forestry Board directly under the control of the Land Administration Board where it will be absolutely subordinated to land settlement, the identity of the board should be preserved in some way. It is for the Government to say whether the staff should be diminished; but there is no reason why it should not be under the direction and control of the Minister, and, if not under the control of the Secretary for Public Lands, then under some other Minister. In Victoria the control of forests is under the Department of Mines, as they recognised that it was wise to divorce the Department

of Lands from the Department of Forestry on account of their conflicting objects. Even at this late hour it would be wise for the Government to consider whether it would not be better to place the Forestry Department under another Minister, or, if not that, to keep the control directly under the Secretary for Public Lands.

The Bill proposes that Mr. Swain shall have Mr. Payne over him, and that Mr. Payne will have the Secretary for Public Lands over him. In order to preserve the acumen that has been displayed by the Forestry Board, in order to conserve the work that has been done and to encourage our officers to the fullest extent, I think that it would be unwise to place this department under the Lands Administration Board.

We have many experts in the department. Some men are engaged in the logging business—the commercial side of the department—while others are engaged in the technical or scientific side. It might be necessary even to divide those two activities into two separate sub-departments. I consider that Mr. Swain is one of the best silviculturists in Australia; and in that direction he has done monumental work. There is no forestry officer in Australia who has displayed so much interest in the purely silvicultural side of forestry as Mr. Swain; and I hope that nothing will be done to counteract or damp his enthusiasm and industry.

The other part of the department is the purely commercial side—the logging operations and the selling of logs. One of the biggest enterprises we have to-day in the way of a Government asset is the business undertaking in regard to timber; and the Department of Public Lands has never shown it possesses the requisite qualifications when it comes to the conduct of a business interest. It might be better if this side of the business was placed in charge of the Department of Labour and Industry or the Department of Public Works; but it would be a huge mistake to put it under the Department of Public Lands.

The Minister tried to point out that under Labour Administration great sympathy has been shown to forestry, but not so under the Moore Administration; and he gave some figures to show how much loan money was spent in certain years. As usual, he omitted to give us the main features of the financial situation regarding this department, and I would like to point them out for the edification of hon. members. I will take the last three years of Labour, when the surplus money derived by the Forestry Department over and above its overhead expenses and paid into revenue amounted to £628,000. The average, therefore, per annum was £209,000. I have gone into the figures for the first two years of the Moore Administration—1929-30 and 1930-31—I have not got last year's figures; but I understand the figures are down. The surplus derivable for the two years I have mentioned was £215,000, or an average of £105,000, so that on the average, the surplus revenue derived by the Moore Administration was over £100,000 less than that derived by the Labour Government.

Now we come to what was expended from loan. Under Labour, from 1926 to 1929, the average amount expended from loan compared with surplus revenue was only 16 per cent., whereas under the Moore Administration the amount expended from loan for the

Mr. Russell.]

two years amounted to over 30 per cent. I think that is a fair test of the sympathy the Moore Administration showed towards the Forestry Department. With a falling revenue, brought about by causes beyond our control, we showed our sympathy by spending a greater ratio of loan money on forestry as compared with our surplus revenue from that source than did the Labour Party; so that the Minister's figures were misleading.

A good deal has been said about the policy which the Forestry Department has been pursuing for some years. Queensland has been represented at the Empire forestry conferences at different times, and, in common with other parts of the British Empire, the declared policy laid down has been to bring into full bearing not less than 6,000,000 acres net and 8,000,000 acres gross of prime forest-producing soils. The gross reservations of State forests and timber reserves to 30th June, 1931, totalled only 5,245,000 acres, or an effective reservation of 3,605,000 acres. That figure includes 1,000,000 acres of waste lands; so that we have not carried out our agreement under our policy of reservations for the future. The total reservations to 30th June, 1931, were 5,505,000 acres, or 2,500,000 acres short, and the net reservations were 500,000 acres short. If the Land Administration Board is allowed to carry out its recommendations, judging by the report of the Commission on North Queensland, we may expect that there will be a restriction instead of an extension, and we shall certainly not fail to show a further shortage in the reservations of our softwoods and hardwoods. On page 22 of its report the Royal Commission on the Development of North Queensland said—

“Queensland needs no forestry science for present requirements. There is abundance and enough of timber for all. Business and common-sense management, and not science, is the first requisite. The productive wealth of the country at present suffers from the fact that there are too many rather than too few trees. That is why ringbarking campaigns are being organised. But forestry looks rightly to the future. How far, then, should statesmanship go in attempting to look ahead?”

That shows that we are not likely to achieve the objective of the Forestry Department. Further on it makes observations which show quite clearly that, when it comes to a question of administration, we are bound to see a big restriction in the area set aside in accordance with the declared policy of the Forestry Department. What is more important, however, is that I am afraid it will give in to the agitation from all sides to throw open our forest areas for settlement. As I said previously, all we want to do is to maintain a fair balance between forestry and land settlement. The Forestry Board, in its voluminous reports, has gone into the question carefully, and has, as a matter of State policy, endeavoured year by year to keep the reservations of forest and timber reserves up to a certain figure.

Before going in for a policy of co-ordination, the Government should go into the question of drafting an up-to-date Forestry Bill, in which the chief purpose should be to lay down a clear line of demarcation between the spheres of land settlement and forestry. What is required to-day is the

[Mr. Russell.

setting aside for control by forestry officials of an area necessary to produce our hardwood and softwood requirements in the years to come. If the Government would do that, it would be time enough to consider how the forestry reserves and timber reserves should be governed. The administration of forestry matters demands control by experts in the science of forestry, and particularly the application of business principles to the commercial side of this great Government enterprise. Naturally, the Forestry Board is very tenacious about the system it has built up. As I have said before, I have not been in accord with the board in regard to many of its methods. For instance, I hold that the putting up of timber to auction, that is, the offering of logs at railway sidings, is wrong, and that we should revert to the old system of selling at the stump, and allow the buyer to take delivery just as he pleases. A buyer should put in a tender for a given quantity of timber, the time of delivery should be stipulated, and certain pains and penalties inflicted for the non-observance of the contract. By enabling the contractor to take delivery at the stump we are saving a good deal of the expense and the time of the forestry officials in supervising the felling and hauling of the logs. That system was in vogue many years ago; but, when the Forestry Board was created by the Labour Government, there was built up an elaborate system of selling the logs on ramps; and, in my opinion, that system has not worked for the benefit of the timber industry. When I was up North some time ago, I saw hundreds of maple logs lying out in the sun at railway sidings. In accordance with forestry regulations, the logs were cut and removed to the railway sidings. There were no buyers, and the logs lay in the sun for months. They deteriorated, and were eventually sold as second-class timber. Under the stump-sale system the sawmiller could cut his timber and take delivery as he required. Owing to fluctuations in trade, very often brought about by climatic conditions, it is sometimes impossible for a sawmiller to take delivery of his logs for a few weeks. Under the present system he is sometimes loaded up with logs that he does not require, and at another time he is unable to get them, therefore, the old system of stump sales should be resorted to. I do not believe in the present system of selling at auction. Under that system it is quite possible for the big buyer to squeeze out the little buyer; and now the buyers put their heads together and permit one of their number to bid the upset price. The Forestry Board should intimate that it has a certain number of maple and silky oak logs for sale at a certain price, and invite tenders from respective buyers for their quantities. Each man would then receive his due supply according to the capacity of his mill. That would certainly do away with a good deal of the heart-burning and dissatisfaction which exists to-day.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Why did you not do that when your Government were in power?

Mr. RUSSELL: We certainly modified the system by instituting stump sales in many districts. I will give credit to Mr. Swain for being strong enough to see that the old system was carried out. It must be remembered that this system was brought into being during the Labour regime.

I do not intend to go into a lot of details, but I believe that the proposals under this measure are a retrograde step. I have had the opportunity of acting on a parliamentary sub-committee in connection with forestry matters and also on the Timber Advisory Council Committee. I devoted a good deal of time to arriving at some solution of the conflict which exists to-day between the Forestry Department and the Land Settlement Board. I have said quite openly that I am not in accord with many of the methods adopted by Mr. Swain; but I must give him credit for doing his duty conscientiously and well. He is one of the best officers in the public service, and I would be very sorry to see him subordinated to the Land Administration Board. That body has all its work cut out in dealing with land settlement matters. The Forestry Department is an important department, and is too big to be made a sub-department of another large department. I say quite seriously that Mr. Swain has been a good officer, and I do not want his activities in any way derogated by putting him in a position which will make him subservient to the chairman of the Land Administration Board. I want to see him continue his good work for forestry. The Government should lay down what country should be set aside for forestry, and what should be set aside for settlement; but, when there is a conflict between land settlement and forestry, the land settlers should get precedence over the desire to hold areas for forestry purposes.

Mr. EDWARDS (*Nanango*) [4.7 p.m.]: Forestry is an important question which has been very much debated during the last two or three years. More interest has been taken in forestry by the public and press, and more attention has been devoted to the reclassifications of our land, in order that some policy for land settlement and forestry purposes should be decided upon. There has also been much misunderstanding of this important question. For some time past any person who supports a request for the alienation of any of our forestry reserves for agricultural purposes has been branded by the press and others as opposed to any policy of reforestation. Hon. members on this side of the House particularly have been misunderstood on this question. They have never for one moment advocated such a policy. What they did advocate was a reclassification of our forest lands, and the setting aside of those portions which could be set apart for land settlement to greater advantage. We say that careful attention should be given to State forests alongside railways and main roads or in close proximity to closely settled areas with a view to deciding whether they could not be better utilised for closer settlement. Settlers on land adjacent to forest areas are beset with many difficulties at the present time. In some cases their selections are almost entirely surrounded by State forests, and the settlers are required to do the whole of the fencing. Furthermore, at a time like the present, all the fencing in the world will not keep marsupials out. It seems to me to be only fair that these fences should also be a charge upon the Forestry Department, seeing that the forests are held in the interests of the State as a whole, rather than that individual settlers should be penalised by being compelled to construct these fences at their own expense.

At no time did the members who were appointed on the Forestry Committee consti-

tuted by the Moore Government suggest that the whole of the forests should be cut up for settlement. Possibly the misunderstanding which arose was occasioned by the fact that there was an agitation for a certain portion of the land to be made available for selection. It was never suggested, however, that the whole of the forest areas in Queensland should be made available for closer settlement. What is suggested is a reclassification of the forest lands by a board entirely independent of political control. I am one of those who advocate that, if land is not required for a great number of years for reforestation purposes, and is not carrying heavy stands of timber, it should be made available for closer settlement. No difficulty would be experienced if that stand were taken, particularly as the Labour Government's policy of perpetual leasehold would enable the land to be resumed for reforestation if in later years such action was considered desirable. It must be remembered that there is a general demand for land for closer settlement. Everywhere the sons of farmers are looking for some on which to start on their own account. Sufficient land is not available, and in consequence many of these people are driven to the large centres of population, where, if they displace people who are at present employed, they accentuate the unemployment problem.

The Labour Government are not helping one iota by this legislation, because they know as well as I do that the Land Administration Board cannot cope with the work which it is asked to do at the present time. As a matter of fact, most important work is held up for weeks at a time. They are overburdened with work at the present time, and important questions are held over. This Bill is only confusing the issue, and making the position a great deal worse than it was before. It is not going to get over the difficulty in any shape or form, because, after all, the Forestry Department is to be retained under the jurisdiction of the Land Administration Board. That will mean that the Forestry Board will not be able to do anything definite without first consulting the Land Administration Board; and in that way important matters will be held up. After considering the position from every angle and making full inquiry, the past Government decided to set aside certain areas of land in different portions of the State—as a matter of fact, areas had been allocated in the Gympie district and in other districts—and then laid down definitely what was to be done in regard to reforestation. That was doing something definite. After making full inquiry into the question, we came to the conclusion that it was necessary to lay down a definite principle.

The Minister has not given us any information as to the principle under which reforestation is to be carried out. All we are told under this Bill is that the Land Administration Board is going to take over a certain amount of work; and it seems to me that, to some extent, this Bill has been brought in as a result of the quarrel that took place between the heads of the two departments and also as a result of the application in the Minister's own electorate. I go further and say that hon. members sitting behind the Government know nothing about the subject. They have not discussed it in caucus, otherwise they would have seen the necessity for bringing in a Bill laying

Mr. Edwards.]

down a definite principle as to how reforestation should be carried on in this State for many years to come. At the present time the people are looking for something definite. We want to decide which land is to be thrown open for selection, which land is to be kept for reforestation, and the area to be planted each year for a number of years to come. What I suggest would be a definite understanding of all the interests concerned, then we would know what was being done in the interests of this important industry; but this Bill will not take us one step further in regard to closer settlement or with regard to reforestation. It gives the people of Queensland no more security with regard to forestry than before. It is quite impossible for the Land Administration Board to administer forestry matters on account of the enormous amount of work which has been heaped, and is still being heaped, on it.

The way in which the members of the Forestry Board are to be disposed of is anything but honourable. They have been appointed for a number of years by specific legislation, and the Government now bring in a clause like this—

“The members of the Forestry Board in office prior to the commencement of this Act . . . shall on the commencement of this Act go out of office.”

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! The hon. member will not be in order in dealing with the Bill in detail.

Mr. EDWARDS: However, there is a big principle involved. There is no necessity for this Bill. If the Minister had brought in a Bill which gave us something definite in regard to forestry, giving necessary security, cutting out the everlasting bickering that has been going on between the Land Administration Board and the Forestry Department, and laying down the authority each was to exercise, it would have reflected credit on the Government; but this Bill will be of no advantage, because it may be said that under it the Forestry Board has to be kept for the purpose of advising the Land Administration Board; or, in other words, that the members of the Forestry Board, who are experts, have to advise the Land Administration Board, whose members know nothing about the subject.

The whole position is entirely wrong, and the Minister would be well advised to withdraw this Bill and bring in a reforestation Bill which will give the security required. Care should be taken to see that land which is not going to be kept locked up under timber for a number of years should be cut up for closer settlement, particularly where it is in close proximity to a railway. That would be one way of helping to alleviate some of the unemployment in the State. If people can be put upon scrub land to bring it into production, greater assistance will be given to the State from a revenue standpoint, and relief will be given to the unemployed.

It is to be regretted that in times past great quantities of timber have been felled in Queensland and carried over our railways at a loss; and no effort has been made to replant the timber, and our asset has been gradually diminishing. It would have been better if past Governments had definitely laid down the policy of building roads in the country with the money derived from the

sale of our timber, which had to be drawn over the roads, and cut them up a great deal. The taxpayers have had to pay for the repairing of the roads rendered necessary by the carriage of the timber over them; and the money from the sale of timber should have been utilised in the construction and maintenance of roads. If that had been done, development would have taken place a great deal more quickly than it has, and we would not be carrying the enormous load that rests upon us in the matter of building roads. I hope the Government will be big enough to bring in a reforestation Bill that will be in the interests of the whole of the people, and will definitely lay down a system on which we can develop the forests of the State for many years to come.

Mr. NIMMO (*Oxley*) [4.26 p.m.]: I hope the Minister will yet see the wisdom of withdrawing his proposal that the Land Administration Board shall take over the functions of the Forestry Board. The Forestry Board is a very necessary thing in a State like Queensland, where we have the most beautiful cabinet timbers in the world. We have heard a great deal of the huge areas of timber in Canada and Manchuria; but no country in the world has finer cabinet timbers than Queensland. I admit that in the past the Forestry Department may not have been all that could be desired. Possibly that was because the Labour Party did not start it on right lines. They tried to get everything out of the Forestry Department and make as much money as possible out of the workings of the board, with the result that it did not discharge the functions for which it was intended. I take it that, if the Forestry Department develops along the right lines, that experience will not be repeated. I believe that in Mr. Swain we have one of the finest forestry officers in Australia. The Minister who appointed him chose the very best man in Australia, one who has lived for his job, and whose every waking hour is devoted to the work of the department. He is one of the men we cannot afford to lose; and, if he is allowed to work on proper lines, I take it that he will see that our timber is well established in the markets overseas. In the Strand in London we have one of the best positions for making a very fine display, and we should have a huge show there of the timbers that can be produced here. A display such as that in George street would be better in London, with a very smart traveller to tell the people what our timbers can be used for. The Minister should endeavour, not to scrap the Forestry Department, but to allow it to work out its own destiny. Let the Forestry Department look after the valuable stock we have in Queensland. No man who had a very fine stock of silk, for instance, would let a greengrocer handle it. The timber stock we have is very valuable; and to put it away in an office which is not going to give it proper supervision is a very serious matter.

The Minister should have waited a little while before he rushed into this question. I honestly believe that, unless he accepts the advice of the Opposition and stays his hand a little, he will be sorry for what he is doing. He is comparatively new. He does not really know all the facts of the case; but somebody has been talking to him, and he is now convinced that he has to sacrifice the Forestry Department. As reported in

[*Mr. Edwards.*]

"Hansard" in a previous debate, he used words which it was not very nice to hear fall from the lips of a Cabinet Minister—

"If ever a Bill is justified, it is a Bill which is attempting to clean up a struggle in the public service. No responsible Minister could permit a struggle to continue in a department without attempting to do something to mitigate its results and consequences. So far as I am concerned, the taxpayer is not going to pay any further for struggles in the department that I have the honour to preside over."

Why should there be any struggle, and why should there be any antagonism between departments? Why can they not be kept separate and distinct, and a reclassification of forest lands carried out with a view to determining the demarcation of forestry activities in the interests of the State as a whole? In the Forestry Department there are officers specially trained in forestry matters. Are they to be scrapped? That would be a tragic mistake. The Minister cannot possibly have made himself thoroughly acquainted with all the details of this vexed question during his short period in office. The question has troubled the minds of those concerned for a considerable period of time.

The late Government endeavoured to grapple with the question. A royal commission was appointed to take evidence in North Queensland with a view to defining land settlement and forestry policies. The commission furnished a very fine report; but the report was killed by the petty spleen at the end. I think that every member in this House was disgusted with the conclusion of the report. Still, it was a good report, and dealt with many factors that were taken cognisance of by the Moore Government. Timber royalties were reduced. If the forestry policy of the Moore Government had been carried out in its entirety, and the Forestry Board had been allowed to function along right lines in the free exercise of its activities in the disposal of Queensland timber at world prices, thousands of men would have been engaged in the logging of timber for shipment overseas. There are no timbers in the world to compare with our beautiful silky oak, maple, walnut, and bean. It has been stated that the Queensland hoop pine is responsible for wood taint in butter; but I hold the view that the Canadian timbers and other oversea timbers do not equal our hoop pine in whiteness and beauty. It is now suggested that the whole of the forestry reserves should be placed under the control of the Land Administration Board, which inevitably must mean that a lot of our valuable timber will be scrapped and wasted. I well remember the condition of the Coolambunia scrub. I admit that there are lovely farms there to-day; but at what a price! There was no Forestry Department in existence at that time, and I well remember huge pine logs being rolled together to be ruthlessly destroyed by fire. That happened within a few miles of Brisbane. It did not pay to send the logs to market; in fact, there were no facilities for the marketing of the timber at the time. Pine Mountain, just outside Ipswich, grew some of the finest pine trees ever produced in Queensland; but to-day there is not one stick of timber on the area, and the land, unfortunately, is not very suitable for agriculture. The whole of the mountain is now bare. Had a

Forestry Department been in existence in the days when that timber was removed, the foothills would have been utilised for agriculture, and the mountain would have been reserved for forestry purposes. It was the intention of the Moore Government to reclassify the forest lands, so that the land suitable for forestry would be reserved for the purpose, and the land suitable for agriculture would be made available for settlement. The Forestry Department would then have been free to market our timbers in the best interests of the State. During his speech the other day the Minister adversely criticised the press; but his criticism was entirely uncalled for. The press has always consistently stood for a forestry policy in Queensland. Every country in the world has a forestry policy.

I hope that the Minister will reconsider this Bill, and withdraw the provisions affecting the Forestry Department. The proposal that the Land Administration Board should absorb the Prickly-pear Land Commission will not be seriously combated. The prickly-pear is a problem which still needs watching. We must pay a high tribute to the work of the commission. We are not yet out of the wood so far as the menace of prickly-pear is concerned; but I believe that, if the policy of the past few years is continued, this pest will be gradually overcome.

The position of the Forestry Board is different altogether. Every civilised country possesses a Forestry Board; and the press of Queensland is quite within its rights in contending that we should have a board to oversee our forestry interests. I give the press credit for its viewpoint. In my opinion, this Bill will put the clock back to 1918, so far as forestry is concerned. In that year some members in the Labour movement realised that it was necessary to protect our forests, and they resolved to institute the present Forestry Board. To-day we have the spectacle of a Minister, on taking office, evidently listening to representations placed before him by interested parties, and then resolving to bring down this Bill to scrap the Forestry Board and place it under the control of the Land Administration Board. That board will at the first opportunity, throw all our forestry lands open to settlement, regardless of whether they are growing walnut, silky oak, or any other valuable timber.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: You have a very poor opinion of the Land Administration Board. Your Government increased the salary of its chairman by £250 a year, and it is this man whom you are criticising.

Mr. NIMMO: That is quite beside the question. Personally, I would not have increased his salary by £250 a year.

If the Minister resolves at this eleventh hour to scrap the clause which will prevent the Forestry Department functioning as a separate department, I hope that he will have a re-classification of the forests lands under its supervision. I believe that many of our troubles of to-day will be cured by a vigorous policy of land settlement. I am particularly pleased to see that the Secretary for Agriculture has embarked on a scheme of small banana holdings to permit a number of our unemployed to go out into the country. If the Minister in charge of this Bill decides to persevere with it and to scrap the Forestry Board, then he will be making a

Mr. Nimmo.]

great mistake, for all the marketable timber will soon be cleared off our land, and irreparable damage done to the State. One of the many factors, and one of the gravest, that must be taken into consideration if our land is cleared of timber is the effect such action will have on our rainfall. Many countries, such as Germany and Belgium, permit timber areas to remain in the midst of agricultural areas not only to encourage forestry, but to regulate the rainfall. The functions of the Forestry Board should be limited to actual forestry requirements and the development overseas of a market for our timbers, but the Minister should not allow the board to be submerged by the Land Administration Board, as the two bodies will never function together.

Mr. DANIEL (*Keppel*) [4.40 p.m.]: I want to make my position quite clear in this matter. My opinion has not been asked by my leader or anyone else, so I shall make it available now. I will support any measure that any Government brings forward that will reduce the cost of government. In years gone by the trouble has been that all Governments have borrowed until we have reached the present intolerable position. Last session our Government effected co-ordination between the Lands Department and the Department of Irrigation and Water Supply. Since then I cannot find anything to show that the latter department has shown less efficiency; and, on that reasoning, I cannot believe that the Forestry Department will suffer in efficiency if merged with the Lands Department.

The Minister has stated that he will reduce expenditure in one direction, and will give the money made available to the lower paid employee. That is a fallacious attitude to adopt. It is not going to help matters if what the hon. gentleman saves on the one hand is to be expended on the other. Indeed, I hope that all Ministers in the Labour Government will reorganise every department with the object of reducing expenditure, because in that way we may be able to reduce the taxation burden on the working man. Let the Government do their best to reduce expenditure in order that they may reduce taxation.

Mr. MOORE (*Aubigny*) [4.42 p.m.]: I cannot allow this Bill to go through without saying something about it. It is a very important Bill, but all this talk about co-ordination is pure moonshine. I do not call it co-ordination; indeed, it is all very reminiscent of the old rhyme which went something like this—

“ There was a young lady of Riga
Who went out for a ride with a tiger;
They came back from the ride with
the lady inside,
And a smile on the face of the tiger.”

In the same way the Land Administration Board will swallow the Prickly-pear Land Commission and the Forestry Board.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: You gave the chairman of the Land Administration Board £250 per annum extra.

Mr. MOORE: It shows the extraordinary mentality of the hon. gentleman that he should introduce an entirely irrelevant matter in the course of this discussion. The Land Administration Board was appointed for the purpose of administering the lands of Queensland. The work of the Forestry Board was entirely different. The speeches

[*Mr. Nimmo.*

which the Minister has delivered on this matter have been a mixture of ignorance and arrogance such as I have never heard before in this Parliament. Neither of these characteristics is very valuable in a Minister. One would imagine that, when the hon. gentleman was submitting a measure of this kind, he would tell us exactly what was intended to be done.

The main feature to which I take exception, just as I took exception at the earlier stages of this measure, is the repudiatory action contemplated in this Bill. The fact of deleting clause 15 does not make the slightest difference. The repudiation is contained in the provision which states that, as soon as the Bill becomes operative, certain officers will be put out of office. Let us look at the position. In 1916 the Prickly-pear Land Commission was formed. Part of its duties were judicial. It was recognised by the Government that, as these men had judicial duties to perform, they should be placed in a position that would remove them from any risk of victimisation. It was recognised that they were there for a particular purpose, and this principle was agreed to by the Labour Government. These men have judicial functions to perform, and it is absolutely essential that they should be protected for the work they do, and that they shall not be got rid of because they do something which may displease a Government. They were appointed for ten years, and were not to be removed except for misbehaviour on a resolution by Parliament and on petition to the Governor. They are in exactly the same position as a Supreme Court judge. The repudiation comes in where the Bill says these men are to be put out of office. If we are going to permit that sort of thing in an Act of Parliament, then it strikes at the very roots of justice and at the very integrity of Parliament. If we want men to do a particular work on a future occasion, what will be the use of placing such a provision in an Act of Parliament if it can be repudiated by a Government later on? What is the use of saying to a man, “ You have important work to do, and we are going to protect you and see that you cannot be victimised or dismissed except for misbehaviour,” if that contract can be repudiated by the Government? The Parliament of Queensland deliberately set out in an Act of Parliament that those men were to be appointed for a specific number of years. They have special work to do, and protection was given to them. They accepted the position under an agreement with the Government of Queensland. Is it a fair thing, before that agreement expires, for the Government to come in and say, “ On the passing of this Act you are out of office ”?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Why did you abolish the Irrigation and Water Supply Department?

Mr. MOORE: I want to show the analogy that the Secretary for Public Lands endeavours to bring in. The Commissioner for Irrigation and Water Supply was appointed by the Government and held office at the pleasure of the Governor in Council. He could have been out of office yesterday, to-day, or at any time at all. The Irrigation and Water Supply Department was there as a branch of land settlement. The reason I am objecting to this Bill is because I am not so sure that it is going to effect economy, or whether it is going to be of

advantage to the State. As I said at the introductory stage, the main factor rests with the administration. If the technically trained men of the Forestry Department are going to be kept on and their advice is going to be taken, and they are to be allowed to carry out the forestry work as they think it should be carried out, it may be perfectly all right. What I object to is the repudiation clause. If the Government make a definite specific contract with an individual and set out in an Act of Parliament that he cannot be got rid of, and then the Government repudiate that contract, does it not place all officials who have special contracts in jeopardy? Does it not place the judges in the same position? Does it not place the Auditor-General in the same position? If it is right for that to be done, what is the use of cumbering an Act of Parliament by providing that individuals shall not be dismissed except by an address of Parliament? The Act specifically provides—

“ These members shall hold office during good behaviour and shall not be removed therefrom unless an address praying for such removal shall be presented to the Governor by the Legislative Assembly.”

Mr P. K. COPLEY: Is a contract not made with public servants on examination?

Mr. MOORE: The hon. member does not know that the Forestry Department and the Prickly-pear Land Commission are not members of the public service. The members of both bodies are outside the public service, and they were put outside for a specific purpose. The fact of a man being a public servant or being anything else in connection with the Government does not alter the position. The Government of the day brought in a specific Act of Parliament, and these men had a definite contract with the Government for a period of years, and the Act set out the method by which they should be got rid of. That is repudiated under this Bill. Clause 15, which protects the Government from being punishable for doing it, does not prevent it being repudiated; it only makes it worse. The Government recognised that they were doing something wrong, so they put in clause 15, and said, “ We shall not be liable; we will not allow anybody to prosecute us.” That is what they put in in order to protect them from doing what they knew was wrong. It is a most shabby thing; but the real thing I object to is that the Government of Queensland are going to place themselves in the position of having definitely broken an agreement with individuals who are specifically protected in an Act of Parliament.

Mr. HAYES: You can speak feelingly from experience.

Mr. MOORE: What?

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! Will the hon. gentleman address the chair and not invite interjections.

Mr. MOORE: When an hon. member opposite says that I speak from experience of having definitely repudiated an Act of Parliament, I want to know how. To me this is quite wrong. It is not a question of whether the Government of the day liked Mr. Swain or the other forestry officers. We considered the matter from every point of view. We considered that the Forestry Board was in

antagonism to the Land Administration Board, and we got exactly the same recommendations from the Public Service Commissioner which the present Minister has got; but we did not think it was possible for oil and water to mix; we knew there was personal animosity between the heads of the departments, so that it did not seem sensible to put them to work in the same department.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Yet you appointed Mr. Duffy.

Mr. MOORE: I would like to point out why. Up to that time the whole Forestry Board had been brought up with one particular point of view and trained with one objective. I have got nothing against it. I look upon Mr. Swain as one of the best officers we have in the service. No one questions his integrity, his honour, or his capacity; but he has been brought up entirely with one point of view, and can only see one point of view. He sees only the forestry point of view, and the highest price he can get for timber. He looks upon the matter—not from the purchaser's point of view, but purely from the forestry point of view. Mr. Grenning looks at it in the same way. In fact, every officer of the Forestry Department is a replica of Mr. Swain. He has got them all trained and looking at the matter from the same point of view as himself, and has continually advised Governments to keep the forestry assets intact and to carry on the Forestry Department just as he wants. After all, he has only been doing what he thought best; and he was paid to be the head of the Forestry Department.

But there is another point of view. When you are running a Forestry Department, it is essential to have somebody else on the board who has outside knowledge, and who recognises that something has to be done in regard to land settlement as well as forestry, and who is also interested in the fact that the public want to buy timber just as the Government want to sell it. Consequently, Mr. Duffy, having been engaged in timber work, and having an excellent knowledge of the business, as well as experience in land settlement, was recognised as a competent man. We thought that, if we put a man of that kind on the board, it would assist the board. I put that to Mr. Swain. He came to Cabinet meetings, and we had many discussions. When I said that the only thing I could see was to put on the board a man with a different point of view—the point of view of the outsider, or the point of view of the public, he said, “ That means that you do not trust the Forestry Board.” I said, “ That is not the question at all. It is not a question of trust. It is a question of your training and your point of view, which you cannot get away from, and a question of the other point of view being required to balance it.” I honestly think that is the best way to do what is desired. To put the Forestry Board under the Land Administration Board does not seem to me to be a way out of the difficulty at all. We all recognise that forestry is a very valuable asset to Queensland. We have contests going on all the time. I believe that in this matter the Minister is acting as he is to please the North Queensland Development League in his own electorate.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: That is all you think about.

Mr. Moore.]

Mr. MOORE: He has not had time to go thoroughly into the question. We know that the Palmerston Province Development League in his own electorate has asked the Government to do certain things. He is the member for the district, and he is Minister of the department; and the probability is that he will have to do what these people are pressing for without thorough investigation. We know that, when it came to a question of the veneering industry in North Queensland, the people who offered to buy the whole of the wood available up there would only do so on condition that the land was not thrown open at once, because they could see that under those conditions there would not be enough timber for them to operate on in the near future. The land was going to be got rid of under the most expensive conditions possible in order that it might be available for land settlement; but the men who were putting in expensive machinery for veneering, and who had built up a market in the United States of America and Great Britain, could see the end of it coming. They did not want the whole of the land thrown open and all the timber taken off at once when they could not utilise it, and they recognised the valuable nature of the asset. This is one of the things that has to be looked into. We all know that, on the one hand, we have one section of people who want the land at once. Anyone who goes up North and sees the large number of selections that have been taken up and the timber taken off, but nothing being done to utilise it, with nothing but wild tobacco and sarsaparilla growing on the land—

Mr. O'KEEFE: Quite correct!

Mr. MOORE: Anybody who sees that must hesitate before he places in the hands of any board the power to have similar land denuded of its timber. No matter what vendetta has been going on or what personal animosity exists between the Forestry Board and the Land Administration Board, it should not be allowed to go on.

A GOVERNMENT MEMBER: How are you going to stop it?

Mr. MOORE: I do not know how you are going to stop it. At any rate, I do not think you are going to stop it by putting the two men in one room and giving one man charge and saying to the other, "You have to carry out what this first man says."

Mr. P. K. COPLEY: If there are three men, the third man will be able to say what is right.

Mr. MOORE: We have three members on the Land Administration Board—Mr. Payne, Mr. Melville, and Mr. Harvey, all imbued with the one idea of land settlement. That is their job. They will say to the Forestry Board, "This is right" or "This is wrong." They are prejudiced beforehand. I cannot see anything in the Minister's suggestion. I quite admit that forestry and land settlement are two of the most difficult problems we have to face. Every Government for years past has had to face it. On the one hand, you have the clamour that the land shall be thrown open for selection, and, on the other hand, you have the interest of the people of Queensland in the preservation of the forests. You have the people in the district who want to know why they should carry the burden of the

forests; you have the farmers, who want land thrown open for their sons; you have also the view of the public that you shall not take all the assets of the State now and leave nothing for the future. All these things call for a great deal of thought.

Why find fault with the late Government for not carrying out the recommendations of the Public Service Commissioner? The Public Service Commissioner is there to make his recommendations, but it is not for the Minister to accept them *holus bolus*. It is not right that he should merely say, "I will put your recommendations into operation straight away." He has to consider them.

The Minister pointed out that the Public Service Commissioner had made recommendations which our Government had not carried out. He pointed out that the Forestry Board had made recommendations which we had not carried out. He said, "You talk about political interference. Is that not political interference?" It is not political interference at all. It is the duty of a Minister to manage his own department, to weigh whatever advice is tendered to him by the different sections, and to do what he considers to be right—not to carry out what every individual head of a department puts up to him. That was what we were doing with the Forestry Bill. We were looking into the matter and trying to reconcile the various interests.

The Minister stated that we were handing over to the Forestry Board the right to lease and to let land contrary to the wishes of the Department of Public Lands. We were not doing anything more than the Forestry Board is allowed by Act of Parliament to do. It was allowed to lease or to let lands under its control. It was allowed to deal with the State forests, and it has always had the power to let or to lease the grazing rights of those lands. The board has drawn up the terms and conditions under which certain growers are permitted to grow bananas on the various blocks over a period of years, and nothing more. That is nothing new. That has been going on all the time, and it is only right that the Board should do that. These lands are under the control of the Forestry Board, and have nothing whatever to do with the ordinary lands of the State which are administered by the Land Administration Board. The two are quite distinct. The Forestry Board did not interfere, and there was no overlapping. It had regard only to the land placed under its control by the Parliament of Queensland—land that cannot be taken from its control except by the Parliament of Queensland.

The Government of which I was the Premier did not deal with anything other than that. Several suggestions contained in the Forestry Bill submitted to me were quite impossible. No one would agree that the power set out in that Bill should be handed over to the Forestry Board or to anybody else. The Minister must take the responsibility for that. The only way to obtain a satisfactory Bill is to obtain the views of the Forestry Board, the views of the Land Administration Board, and the views of any other responsible officer. It is then for the Minister and the Cabinet to decide what should be done in respect of each section and in the best interests of all. I certainly feel that we are not going to obtain the best solution under this Bill. The solution will

[Mr. Moore.

be found in a well-balanced board, constituted of members holding the correct respective views, and not only regarding the question from one point of view. The Land Administration Board has been set up for a specific purpose; and it is now to have control of the Forestry Board which was created for an entirely different purpose. That is not right, and I do not think it will be an advantage. It may be, but that depends a great deal upon the administration. I am not opposing this Bill merely because it is proposed to do that; but I do oppose the Bill because of the act of the Government in doing what they considered to be wrong, and, in addition, in drafting a clause to protect themselves from the consequence of their wrongdoing. That principle is entirely wrong. The Government secured a man with capacity and training to undertake certain work. His position was guaranteed by an Act of Parliament. He was told that he was to be appointed for a term of years, and that appointment was made by the Governor in Council under the great seal of the State. The individual was given to understand that he would hold office for the term stated, and he is entitled to remain in his position until the expiry of that time. There is no excuse for departing from that solemn arrangement. Any departure hits at the very basis of democratic government. If Parliament definitely provides that a person shall hold office for a number of years upon the terms and conditions stipulated in an Act of Parliament, and the holder of that office feels that he cannot trust a future Government that might abrogate the agreement, then we are hitting at the very basis of democratic government. The integrity of Parliament should be sacrosanct. I do not think anybody would stand for the abrogation of such a solemn agreement. It would not be tolerated in private life, and it is a much more serious matter when it involves a private individual and a Government.

It seems to me that we are getting to an extraordinary position when this is done. If it were done in ignorance, it would not be so bad; but it was not done in ignorance. The Government knew that by inserting this clause they were doing a wrong, and might be mulcted in damages; so they inserted a saving clause. They now assert that they have resolved to wipe out the saving clause, and in doing so contend that they are doing away with any act of repudiation. They are not doing anything of the sort. It is a serious doctrine for any Parliament to consider, and one which we should all think over very seriously before subscribing to it. The Secretary for Public Works jumped into this discussion with some elation, just like an angel walking in.

THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: How much timber did you offer to Mr. Lahey?

MR. MOORE: I would like to point out exactly what the position was in regard to the Kirrama timber land referred to by the Secretary for Public Works. No road could be discovered which would open up these timber lands and permit of the timber being shipped from a point near Cardwell. A suggestion was first made by two men in the North, Messrs. Kenny and Tanner, to find a trafficable road from the bottom of the range to the Kirrama timber area which would enable this timber to be marketed. The Main Roads Board was asked to go into the question, and its report stated that it

would cost at least £100,000 to construct a road from Cardwell to the Kirrama area. My Government received repeated requests to provide road access between these two points. An agreement was drawn up by the Forestry Department. That agreement was discussed with Messrs. Kenny and Tanner, who endeavoured to have it altered sufficiently to suit them; but they ultimately gave up any notion of proceeding with the proposition. The proposition was then advertised. Mr. Lahey then came along, and said that he was prepared to go into the question. My Government did not draw up the agreement. The Forestry Department did so. The amount of timber stated in the agreement was 60,000,000 superficial feet, and the price was fixed at a rate that would enable Mr. Lahey's principals to be compensated for the cost of constructing the road.

THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: Mr. Lahey was to have control of the road for a term of years.

MR. MOORE: That is not so. The Government agreed not to sell any timber to any other person or persons at the same rate as set out in the agreement with Mr. Lahey unless Mr. Lahey was paid a royalty on the timber that was hauled over the road.

THE SPEAKER: Order! I think the hon. member might connect his remarks with the principles contained in this Bill.

MR. MOORE: The question of forestry is involved in this Bill. At the introductory stage the Secretary for Public Works referred to the question of getting this timber from the Kirrama forestry reserve, and I am pointing out that it was not a question of coming to a definite arrangement for that timber, but a matter of providing road access to a district which was otherwise inaccessible. The late Government did not have the money to provide that access, and it was their duty to find a way for getting that timber to market.

There are only two principles in this Bill, one of which is absorption of the Prickly-pear Land Commission and the Forestry Department by the Land Administration Board. That is the part I object to. The absorption of the Prickly-pear Land Commission will affect only one man, but in the case of the Forestry Department it will affect three men who are all doing good work.

THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: They were appointed by an illegal act on the part of your dying Government.

MR. MOORE: If an illegal act was committed by the late Government, then it is quite easy for this Government to have it declared ultra vires in the proper way, and not by bringing down a Bill such as this. If that action is taken and our action is declared illegal, the Opposition will have nothing to say.

THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: It was immoral for a dying Government to make appointments.

MR. MOORE: Now we have it that it was immoral—not illegal.

THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: It was both illegal and immoral.

MR. MOORE: I cannot agree with its being illegal. The reason why the Forestry Board was appointed for a term of years

Mr. Moore.]

should be obvious to anybody—to ensure continuity of policy.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: An act by a dying Government.

Mr. MOORE: It is no different from what it was before. The idea is to ensure continuity of policy.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: You told the Public Service Commissioner that you were going to appoint them for a year, and then you appointed them for five years.

Mr. MOORE: I never told the Public Service Commissioner anything of the sort.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: I have some papers here—

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! The Minister will have forty minutes in which to reply. I hope he will not exhaust the time of the Leader of the Opposition.

Mr. MOORE: Nobody has a greater respect for the Public Service Commissioner than I have. I know no more useful officer in the public service than Mr. Story, who undertakes any job he is given, and who does it well; but I do not say that, because we have a high regard for him, every thing he submits should be accepted willy nilly and put it into force. It was not a question for the Public Service Commissioner to decide whether the Forestry Board should be re-appointed for one year, three years, or five years.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: You discussed it with him.

Mr. MOORE: I discussed it with him, just as I discussed it with the Forestry Board and with the Land Administration Board. I am not like the present Minister who gets information from somebody in his electorate, and on that information rushes into this House with a Bill. A capable Minister considers all sides of a question to see what the effect will be.

Mr. P. K. COPLEY: That is why the minute of Darracott's appointment was signed by you and you didn't know you signed it.

Mr. MOORE: All the hon. members on the Government side seem very anxious to get away from the main issue of this Bill. Their main desire is to introduce side issues.

Mr. P. K. COPLEY: Don't say that you discussed everything with the Public Service Commissioner.

Mr. MOORE: I said every Bill, just the same as any ordinary Minister would do. He would not rush in to alter the position without examining it most carefully.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: The intelligent electors of Dalby told me on Saturday night that they approved of my Bill.

Mr. MOORE: When the hon. gentleman gets into the country districts, he will find that the people there are always very courteous and anxious to please; and, if the hon. gentleman swallows everything he hears, he will have a head much bigger than he has to-day. But this is not a personal matter. This is a question of what Parliament ought to do. We have a Bill brought before us, and for the reasons I have given I object to it. Whether it is going to be decent or easy to get rid of individuals appointed by the Governor in Council under the great seal of

[Mr. Moore.

the State or not. I look upon this matter from the point of view that it is not right.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: Your Government sacked a lot of men merely because they were Labour supporters.

Mr. MOORE: If we had done that, the position would be different; but we were most careful not to do that.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! Will the hon. gentleman get back to the subject-matter of the debate.

Mr. MOORE: What I am concerned with is that the Parliament of Queensland should definitely commit an act of repudiation in a measure which we are asked to place on the statute-book of this State. For that reason I oppose the Bill.

Mr. WIENHOLT (*Fassifern*) [5.15 p.m.]: I did not support the Bill at the introductory stage because I considered the point raised by the Leader of the Opposition was a very important one; but, now that the Minister has made it perfectly clear and given a definite promise that clause 15 will be deleted, I intend to support the Bill, as my views are similar to those expressed by the hon. member for Keppel and the hon. member for Dalby. I believe the most vital thing ahead of us is to reduce the cost of Government, which falls so heavily on the shoulders of everybody, and for that reason I cannot do otherwise than support the Bill.

The Leader of the Opposition said that the removal of clause 15 did not make the Bill any better. Surely he must agree with the deletion of that clause; and, although he may still have an objection to the Bill, it is not now the same repudiatory measure. We want to give everyone the full protection to which he is entitled. With that we all agree; and I presume the Minister, when he replies, will be able to tell us who will be affected, and to what extent, and in what way he will be able to meet the objection of the Leader of the Opposition. It is very important that those officers who are affected should be given equal employment or receive fair compensation. This raises a very important question—the question of putting officers in the various departments outside the control altogether of the Government of the day. We know that Governments come in and go out; and, if the Attorney-General were here, he would remember that members of this House had a very warm discussion many years ago when the Government of the day proposed to put the then Commissioner of Police, Mr. Cahill, outside the possibility of any alteration in his status by any Government that might follow. I think we should be a little careful in future, and not make too many unnecessary appointments which eventually will have to come before Parliament itself before any alteration can be made. I am very pleased that the Minister has accepted the suggestion of the Leader of the Opposition and is going to delete that obnoxious clause. Personally, I cannot see that, when a Minister meets the Opposition in that way and corrects any mistake in a Bill, he shows weakness, or loses any prestige by so doing. That seems to me an attitude which we should not take up. It is very unwise to prophesy; but it seems to me that there may be long and lonely years for us on this side; and, if we take up the attitude

that any amendment or alteration we can win from the other side indicates weakness, then we might get very few suggestions accepted.

Mr. G. C. TAYLOR (*Enoggera*) [5.20 p.m.]: At the outset I might say that I am not too well assured that the co-ordination of the Department of Public Lands and Forestry, as mentioned by the Minister on the introduction of this Bill, is going to prove the great success that he thinks it will. In the first place, there is, as we know, a difference of opinion between the chairman of the Forestry Board and the chairman of the Land Administration Board. That may possibly be due to personal antagonism and not to any factor that may exist in the forestry or lands administration; but I do not think it would be fair for the Minister, knowing that, to place the chairman of the Forestry Board under the control of Mr. Payne as chief officer of the proposed new Land Administration Board. In my opinion, that would not be giving the forestry service a fair spin in regard to its future operations. The furtherance of land settlement may be the objective of the Minister in the formation of this new department, but what we shall have to consider very clearly is that we do not overdo the land settlement question. The subject of land settlement is one that should be taken into consideration with very careful thought, and with the realisation before us that it is possible to overdo land settlement at the expense of other departments in respect to services of the State.

The Department of Public Lands cannot feel proud of its achievements in the past in regard to the settlement of soldiers. There is no doubt that the settlement of the soldiers on the land was a dismal failure in Queensland, and one which lost no end of cash. The figures I have procured show that the total expenditure in connection with soldier settlements was £1,853,315, and of that amount the State lost £922,657. There was one particular instance in which land settlement caused a huge loss to Queensland.

If the function of the new Land Administration Board, as set out in the Bill, is to continue to further land settlement at the expense of the other industries, consideration should be given to the forestry service. The forestry service contributes from a primary point of view to the secondary industries in connection with the making of utility objects in the way of small goods supplied by the forestry service to the people of Queensland and in the Southern cities. I have had some experience in connection with handling forest service products. I was with the Tourist Bureau for ten and a-half years, when I had charge of all the shipping to the various Agents-General, to the consuls of other countries, and to various agents for the Commonwealth abroad. I had to handle many of the smaller advertising matters in the shape of samples of timber from Queensland and the articles made from those timbers. In 1921 the forest service had not reached the pinnacle of its achievements in putting upon the market timbers useful for the making of utilities, as they have done this year. I claim that the Forestry Department has been very valuable to the Government, and that it should not be sacrificed to the Department of Public Lands, as I believe it is the intention of the Minister to do. Mr. Swain has been a very valuable officer, although he has made mistakes during his term of office.

There is not one officer in the service of the Government who has not made a mistake; consequently, I claim that, in spite of the mistakes Mr. Swain may have made, viewing the matter from the Minister's standpoint, there is no equity or justice in placing Mr. Swain at the mercy of one who is known throughout the service as his recognised enemy—the chairman of the Land Administration Board. Mr. Payne may be, and I believe is, a very excellent gentleman, but he is imbued with the idea that he could settle the whole of Queensland if he had the opportunity.

We have to take into consideration many factors. The Commonwealth committee which inquired into the sugar industry in 1931 stated that there was 45 per cent. excess production of sugar over and above the requirements of the Australian people, and that it would be necessary to curtail production as far as possible. If that be so, where is the necessity for such a huge land settlement policy appearing in the forefront of the Government policy to-day? If we are shown by an inquiry such as that that we shall have to be very careful that we do not get too far ahead of Australian consumption and have too much over-production, ought we not to consider that when framing our land settlement policy?

I think also that we should at least take into consideration the broader aspect of land settlement by men who have been at all times prepared to take up land under ordinary conditions without any incentive from the Government. Because we are passing through the period somewhat similar to that which we passed through after the war, when Great Britain desired to get rid of its surplus population who were unemployed, we should not allow ourselves to be stampeded into a huge land settlement scheme at the expense of the best interests of Queensland. We want to take into consideration also the fact that we ought to give effect as far as possible to the feeling within the Labour movement that we should not be only a primary producing country. If we do not give consideration to the necessity for secondary industries, we shall certainly be forced along the lines our opponents in the Federal Parliament would have us travel. This Parliament should take into consideration the question of secondary industries as well as land settlement. This is a question that needs to be studied from the forestry point of view. To my knowledge, for the last ten or twelve years the Forestry Department has been endeavouring to stimulate secondary production by the utilisation of forest products, and has achieved a fair amount of success. Many timbers which a few years ago were classed as firewood are to-day bringing fair prices in the markets of Australia; and that alone should receive consideration rather than wipe out the forest service which has achieved it.

The Irrigation and Water Supply Commission is no longer interested in active irrigation projects; and it might have been quite all right to place that sub-department under the control of Mr. Payne. When the Inkerman irrigation area was handed over to the farmers by the late Government, the Irrigation and Water Supply Commission lost the control of its largest scheme. It will be interesting to note that the Inkerman project cost £595,000, but, when it was handed over to the farmers, the figure had been written down to such an extent that

Mr. G. C. Taylor.]

it was valued at only £200,000. I hold the view that a loss of £395,000 was made in respect of that undertaking. This is another phase of land settlement that must be considered very carefully. It is a well known fact that most of the land purchased by the previous Labour Government for soldier settlements was purchased at an exorbitant price. Land that was purchased at £8 or £9 per acre is to-day valued at £1 10s. and £2 per acre. There has been a distinct loss in regard to that phase of land settlement.

The House adjourned at 5.30 p.m.
