**LAND SETTLEMENT ACT AMENDMENT BILL 1969**

**Legislative Council, 6 November 1969, page 2790**

Second reading

**The Hon. C. R. STORY (Minister of Agriculture):** I move:

*That this Bill be now read a second time.*

The Land Settlement Act, 1944, which constituted a Parliamentary Committee on Land Settlement, provided that the committee would operate for about five years—that is, until December, 1949. Since that time by a succession of amending Acts the life of the committee has been extended by two-yearly intervals and the last of such extensions will expire on December 31 of this year.

By the Land Settlement Act Amendment Act, 1948, the committee was given power to recommend the acquisition of land in the Western Division of the South-East, either by agreement or by compulsory process. This power was expressed to be exercisable for nine years from the passing of the 1944 amending Act, but the time within which this power is exercisable has also been extended to accord with the extensions of the life of the committee.

Section 4 (2) of the principal Act provides that two members of the committee shall be members of the Legislative Council and five members shall be members of the House of Assembly. By custom, one of the members appointed from the Legislative Council has been a member of the Party led by the Leader of the Government and one has been from the Party led by the Leader of the Opposition. This custom was, by implication, adverted to in an amendment to the principal Act in 1965 by the Statutes Amendment (Industries Development and Land Settlement Committees) Act, 1965, when it was thought desirable to provide for the situation when one or other of the Parties represented in the Legislative Council did not have a member available for appointment. The effect of that amendment was that, when the Governor was formally apprised of this situation, he would be empowered to appoint six members from the House of Assembly and one member from the Legislative Council.

However, when the question arose of extending the life of the committee past December of this year, it was apparent that the situation would need examination. Under the previous system of extending the life of the committee by merely extending the terms of office of the members in office, there would be no way of altering the composition of the committee back to its representation of five House of Assembly and two Legislative Council members until a member from the House of Assembly vacated his office, since in the terms of the Act there is no provision for such a member being required to vacate his office to restore normal representation. As the position now stands, there is a representation of six Assembly members and one Legislative Council member when the need for that type of representation is long past.

Accordingly, in this Bill it is proposed that (a) the life of the committee will be extended for four years, that is, until December 31, 1973, any further extensions after that time being within the province of future Parliaments; (b) on December 31 of this year all members in office will go out of office and future members will be appointed for a two-year term; and (c) whenever the Governor is required to make an appointment to the committee, an opportunity will be provided for appropriate representation to be made by the President of the Legislative Council in the light of the composition of the parties in that Chamber, which should ensure that after such appointments the representation by Houses of Parliament reflects the current situation.

I now consider the Bill in some detail. Clause 1 is formal. Clause 2 sets out a formal expiry date for the measure. Clause 3 sets out in detail the mode of advising the Governor of the availability of members of the Legislative Council for appointment and directs the exercise of the Governor’s powers of appointment in this regard.

Clause 4 provides for the vacation of offices of members, for appointments for two-year terms thereafter, and for the terms of members appointed to fill casual vacancies. Clauses 5 to 8 effect certain amendments consequent on the adoption of a system of decimal currency . Clause 9 provides that the power to recommend acquisition of land in the 2791 South-East may be exercised for the duration of the life of the Act. Clauses 10 and 11 effect decimal currency amendments.

The Hon. D. H. L. BANFIELD secured the adjournment of the debate.