

Queensland



Parliamentary Debates
[Hansard]

Legislative Council

THURSDAY, 1 SEPTEMBER 1864

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LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

Thursday, 1 September, 1864.

Provincial Councils Bill, read 2^o.—Cultivation of Sugar.
— Gas Company's Bill, read 2^o.—Settlement of
Accounts with New South Wales.

PROVINCIAL COUNCILS BILL.

The Hon. J. BRAMSTON reminded honorable gentlemen that the principle of the Bill had already been discussed, and he trusted that no opposition would be offered to its second reading.

The Hon. St. G. R. GORE thought that the Bill was entirely unsuitable to the country in which he lived, and entered his protest against it. He would move as an amendment, "That the Bill be read that day six months."

The Hon. W. WOOD could not but agree with many of the objections which had been raised against the Bill. Although, however, as had been stated, this was merely an experiment, it was an experiment which was worthy of a trial.

The Hon. H. B. FITZ thought that although the provisions of the Bill might not be applicable to some districts, they would be highly advantageous to other portions of the Colony, particularly to those of the north. He should oppose the amendment.

The Hon. J. WATTS would remind honorable members, that before separation many of the public works had been carried on by a description of provincial councils, and it had been explained to the Government of New South Wales, that many men could be obtained in the various districts referred to, who were willing and able to act in the capacity of provincial councillors. As this scheme had been found successful in the instances to which he alluded, he was of opinion that, under somewhat similar circumstances, they might expect equally beneficial results at the present time—that is, in respect to the outlying districts of the Colony. He trusted that the Bill would be made as perfect as possible, and passed.

The Hon. The PRESIDENT assented to the principle of the Bill, but found some difficulty with regard to it, owing to the short time it had been before the House. He would very much regret that the Bill should not pass through another stage, before honorable members finally decided to reject it. It might not be prudent to pass the Bill this session, but he trusted that at any rate it would not be shelved by the proposed amendment.

The Hon. J. BRAMSTON took occasion to remark, that if the Bill were passed, there would be no difficulty in carrying out the various works of the several councils. He thought the Bill one which might fairly be considered as deserving of being passed, and made law, and was, therefore, glad to find that the opinion of the Council was in favor of its being read a second time.

The Bill was then read a second time, and its committal ordered for the following day.

CULTIVATION OF SUGAR.

The Hon. F. E. BIGGIE: Honorable gentlemen, I have been requested to bring before the Council the resolutions passed by the Legislative Assembly in favor of the cultivation of sugar in this Colony. They are as follows:—"The Legislative Assembly having agreed to the following resolutions, viz.:

(1.) That considering the importance of promoting and establishing the growth and production of sugar and coffee in Queensland, it is desirable that land be granted under lease, with right to purchase, to any person or company, undertaking the growth of either of the above productions on an extended scale.

(2.) That the Government be, therefore, empowered to lease any lands selected for the above purpose, in blocks of not less than 320 acres, nor more than 1,280 acres, for the period of three years (such lease not to be renewed), at the rate of one shilling per acre per annum, with a right of purchase to the lessee at the rate of twenty shillings per acre during any period of the said lease. Provided that an amount of not less than twenty shillings per acre in the aggregate shall have been expended on the land so selected, and not less than one-twentieth of the said land shall have been planted with either sugar-cane or coffee.

(3.) That the above resolutions be communicated by address to His Excellency the Governor, with a request that the necessary regulations in this behalf may be promulgated without delay,—beg now to transmit the same to the Legislative Council for their concurrence." I need hardly urge upon honorable members the desirability of affording encouragement to the cultivation of the sugar-cane in this Colony, as the large amount of money (nearly £100,000) sent away annually for the purchase of this article is a sufficient argument in itself. That we should derive great advantage from keeping a portion, at least, of this money in the country, there can be no question. I have no doubt that sugar can be grown here, for I have myself made a few experiments which have been attended with success. At present it is only cultivated upon a small scale; but I am convinced that if these resolutions are passed, fresh capital will be introduced, and operations of a much more extensive character will be gone into. The sugar-cane can be grown here as readily as maize; it requires no more care, and very little more labor. Good land, in a suitable position, is all that is required. Honorable gentlemen are not to suppose that by acceding to these resolutions they are asserting the principle of free selection. The fact is, that the only lands suitable to the cultivation of sugar lie near the coast, and only extend a short distance inland, where frost does not exist. There need, therefore, be no fear that any runs will be encroached upon in consequence of these resolutions; and, considering the value of the product, and the impetus which will be given to its growth by this

concession, I think we may safely assent to them. I believe they will be beneficial to the country, and that if the action of the Legislature be made known in other countries, a number of people will be attracted to this Colony with capital and machinery for the purpose. I beg to move that the resolutions be adopted by this House.

The Hon. J. BRAMSTON cordially supported the motion, and thought the resolutions were highly desirable. The concession to sugar growers was so small that it could scarcely be opposed. He had every confidence in the profitable cultivation of the cane in this Colony, and believed, if the first undertaking resulted successfully, that in a short time a number of persons would be found engaged in the pursuit. The successful prosecution of this branch of industry would be a great advantage to the Colony. It would benefit the consumer, who would be able to purchase at a cheaper rate, and would cause the introduction and expenditure of capital, which must necessarily follow if sugar growing were gone into on a large scale. He believed that in the northern ports, on the banks of the River Mary and elsewhere, a number of persons were already engaged in cultivating sugar. He hoped that we should be able to produce enough, not only for home consumption, large as that was, but in time to supply the neighboring colonies.

The Hon. H. B. FITZ suggested that some alteration might be made in the wording of the resolutions, which virtually amounted to free selection—a principle he should always oppose. He would suggest that the selection of land should not extend more than ten miles inland. If the resolutions were so amended he should cordially support them.

The Hon. J. WATTS supported the resolutions. He did not think the selection of land would at all interfere with squatting pursuits, as it was only the land near the coast which was required by the cotton growers; or that squatters would object to the resolutions, especially when they would probably have the effect of retaining some £100,000 or £200,000 a year in the Colony. The crops which had been obtained on Captain Hope's estate were a sufficient proof that the cane would thrive in this Colony. They had not as yet paid that gentleman for his outlay, but he (Mr. Watts) had no doubt that he would eventually derive a large profit from them. Captain Hope's experience would be of great value to new comers who might settle near him, and who would, perhaps, be allowed, for a small payment, to avail themselves of the machinery he had erected for crushing the canes, &c. He (Mr. Watts) gave his hearty support to the motion.

The Hon. J. BRAMSTON said he could not support the amendment suggested by the honorable member (Mr. Fitz), as he did not consider it desirable to limit the operations of sugar growing to any particular part of the coast. He did not think the squatters need

entertain any fear that too much of the country would be taken up, as the sugar estates were of small extent, comparatively speaking. Besides which, the squatters would derive great advantages from having those estates in their vicinity. He hoped the Council would agree to the resolutions without imposing any restrictions.

The Hon. F. N. ISAAC said he had no doubt that the cane would thrive in this Colony, and should be glad to see any sugar growers settle down near his station. He believed the preparation of sugar involved a considerable outlay, in the shape of plant. He could not, however, see that the squatters would be injured in any way by the resolutions, which should, in his opinion, commend themselves to every one who had the interest of the Colony at heart.

The Hon. F. E. BIGGE, in reply to the objections which had been advanced, said, that sugar growers would not care to select land at a greater distance than ten miles from the coast, and, therefore, their operations could not possibly interfere with the squatting interest. But for that he should not have undertaken to introduce the resolutions. He was of opinion that sugar could be grown in this Colony with greater success than many other products, as the large cultivators would be able to purchase the smaller crops in their neighborhood, in the same way as millers purchased crops of corn.

The Hon. H. B. FITZ withdrew his amendment.

The motion was then put and passed, and the concurrence of the Council transmitted to the Assembly with the usual message.

GAS COMPANY'S BILL.

The Hon. J. WATTS moved the second reading of this Bill, which was agreed to without debate. The honorable gentleman congratulated the House upon the progress of the city, which had rendered such a measure necessary.

The Bill was then read a second time.
