

Queensland



Parliamentary Debates  
[Hansard]

**Legislative Council**

**THURSDAY, 31 AUGUST 1865**

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## LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

*Thursday, 31 August, 1865.*

Appointment of Attorney-General.—Real Property Act  
Amendment Bill, 2<sup>d</sup>.—Crown Lands Laws Amendment  
Bill (Resumption of Debate).—Government Annuities  
Bill, 2<sup>d</sup>.

## APPOINTMENT OF ATTORNEY-GENERAL.

The Hon. J. BRAMSTON: Honorable  
gentlemen, it is my duty to inform you,

officially, that, owing to a change, of which you are probably aware, in the Ministry of this colony, the honorable Attorney-General having yesterday tendered his resignation, His Excellency the Governor has been pleased to nominate me to the office. At the same time, I may state, that it has been previously discussed by the Government, and is now under their serious consideration, whether the duties of the various law offices, instead of being confined to the Attorney-General, may not be distributed in a better way than they have hitherto been, and I have accepted office on the understanding that there may be some re-arrangement of these duties.

#### REAL PROPERTY ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

The Hon. G. HARRIS moved the second reading of the Real Property Act Amendment Bill. He said he did not think it necessary to trouble the House with any further remarks in support of the measure. As honorable gentlemen were aware, a select committee had been appointed to consider the subject, and their report had just been brought up. The committee had obtained much valuable information on the subject, and had made certain suggestions which would be considered in committee.

The Hon. D. F. ROBERTS said the report had but just been laid on the table of the House, and he had not had time to read it or a single line of the evidence. He thought the proper time for discussing the merits of the Bill would be when the evidence was in the hands of honorable members.

The Hon. W. WOOD said that although on a former occasion he had opposed the second reading of this Bill, believing it would never meet the views of all parties concerned and operate to the public interest, he thought now it might safely be read a second time, as, if the suggestions embodied in the report of the select committee were adopted, it would be considerably modified. In reply to the honorable gentleman who had spoken last, he begged to say that the evidence was printed, and would probably be circulated on the following morning.

The question was then put and passed, and the Bill was read a second time.

#### CROWN LANDS LAWS AMENDMENT BILL (RESUMPTION OF DEBATE).

The Hon. W. LANDBOROUGH said that at present no doubt the pastoral interest was the chief producing interest in the colony. He had no desire that it should remain so, but that other interests should be encouraged, and that all classes should meet with equal justice. He did not entirely concur in the provisions of the Bill before the House; but he did think that, at some future period, some such principle would have to be adopted as the stock tax of Victoria. In this colony there was not the same market for stock as existed in that colony, nor could such large fleeces be grown.

While that was the case, the wool growers could not afford to pay such high rates. He thought a rate per sheep would interfere less with the claims of the squatters than any rate upon the pastoral lands. In the northern districts, as he had stated upon a former occasion, the pioneer squatters and others in the occupation of Crown lands were not in a position to pay an increased rent, at least for the next four years; and it appeared to him that the Crown, as their landlord, seeing that they were not in a good position—that they had taken up country of very little value, which they were making valuable, and considering the difficulties they had to contend with, ought to be lenient towards them. He had no desire to oppose the system of agricultural reserves, for, as he had observed, he did not wish the pastoral interest to predominate; he approved of some of the principles embodied in that system, and he should not like to see it done away with without a further trial. If the honorable the Attorney-General would assure him that the Government intended to introduce, at an early period, a comprehensive measure to deal with the Crown lands of the colony, he would not support the Bill; otherwise he should feel compelled to do so.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL said the debate had been adjourned in order to give him an opportunity of consulting with his colleagues. But owing to the occurrences of the last few days he had not had an opportunity of doing so. He could only assure the honorable gentleman that such a measure as he had suggested was, and had been for some time, under the consideration of the Government. He thought that ought to be sufficient to satisfy the honorable member; if not, it would be desirable to adjourn the debate.

The Hon. W. WOOD said that, as the statement made by the honorable gentleman was now made by him as a Minister of the Crown, he (Mr. Wood) felt inclined to accept it. But as the honorable gentleman had said that he had not yet seen his honorable colleague who had more especially the charge of these matters, it would, perhaps, be advisable to adjourn the debate.

On the motion of the ATTORNEY-GENERAL, the debate was then adjourned until Tuesday next, 5th September instant.

#### GOVERNMENT ANNUITIES BILL.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: Honorable gentlemen, I have now to call your attention to the Government Annuities Bill, which I move be read a second time. Quietly as this Bill has passed through the other chamber, attracting but small notice, and creating but little discussion, it is, probably, one of the most important measures which has ever come before the Parliament of this country—I may almost say, it is a Bill which will have a wider scope than any other, if it be thoroughly carried out. I believe this Bill, short as it is, and simple as its provisions appear, comprises the most magnificent

scheme of political economy ever devised. It is the reprint of an Act introduced into, and carried through, the Imperial Parliament by Mr. Gladstone, last year, with the object of giving small annuities guaranteed by the Government to the working classes. Its most sanguine supporters see in this Act a measure which will have the effect eventually—if it be thoroughly understood, and properly trusted in—of striking a very serious blow at pauperism in England. And if this Bill is calculated to have that effect in the mother country, it cannot, surely, be introduced too soon in this colony, not as a cure, for happily pauperism does not exist here as yet, but as a preventive of what must occur some day or other. I am only sorry that in introducing this measure to your notice, I am not able to do that amount of justice to the subject which its importance requires. Its object is to enable persons of small means—whether laborers, handicraftsmen, or artisans, or persons in small Government employments—by moderate thrift to secure either a competency for themselves in their old age, or a moderate sum at their deaths as a provision for their families. The Bill provides that it shall be lawful for the Colonial Treasurer on behalf of the Government to contract with any person willing to make such a contract, to secure an annuity not exceeding £50 per annum, or to allow any person not over 60 years of age to insure his life for any sum not exceeding £100. Now, these are such small amounts that the Bill will in no way interfere with the larger assurance offices. The great merit this measure possesses is that by a small payment of something like 6d. a week, a man at the age of twenty-five can insure a sum of £50, payable to his family at his death. If an artisan, when he marries, which these men usually do at twenty-five or even at a less age, lays aside—not two shillings a day, which many of them, I believe, might easily do in this country without feeling it—but two shillings a month, he can insure his life for £50, and his wife's for a similar sum. There is, however, a little difference in the case of the wife, as the tables in force in England, which we propose to adopt here, fix the premium for insuring a woman's life at a slightly higher rate. I will proceed to explain, by reference to these tables which I hold in my hand, the different advantages which are offered by this Bill. The principle of insuring life by a single payment is recognised, and if a man of the age of twenty-five can pay the sum of £39 18s. 8d., his relatives at his death will receive £100. If he insures his life for only £25, instead of £100, he pays, of course, a smaller premium, but in the same proportion. Again, if a man twenty-five years of age—for I will take the same age as an illustration of the working of the system—choose rather to pay the requisite premium in annual sums, he can by paying £2 10d. annually assure the payment at his death of £100. The Bill, in short, pro-

vides that a man can assure his life either by consideration money, payable in one sum, or annually, monthly, or weekly, as may be most convenient to him. By an annual payment of £1, a man who commences at twenty-five will leave to his family at his death the sum of £48 19s. 6d. By the payment of 2s. monthly, he would secure £52 11s. 10d. And by an annual payment of £2 5s. 8d. up to the time at which he attained the age of sixty years, he would assure the payment to his family of £100 at his death. So that there are several different modes by which a man of small means may ensure a provision to his relatives at his death, or, if he be an artisan or working man, and he desires to secure a provision for himself in his old age, the tables attached to this Bill will shew him clearly how that result can be obtained, for he can, by annual payments, secure at the age of fifty or sixty an annuity not exceeding fifty pounds per annum. Men of this class, who are now receiving good wages, must nevertheless look forward to a day when they will be unable to work and to provide for themselves the necessities of life; and if in this case they will only have confidence in the Government, they can, by a very moderate saving, secure themselves against want when that time arrives, and prevent their families from becoming destitute. The immense range which this Bill must have is, I believe, even in England, as yet, not thoroughly understood; and in this country, of course, it can only be imperfectly conceived. Honorable gentlemen, in bringing this measure under your notice, I feel that I may confidently ask you to assent to its second reading. I feel sure that if it be properly understood, and received by the public in the spirit in which it was framed, it will prove to be of incalculable benefit to the colony. And I trust, if the Bill be carried, as I fully believe it will be, we shall find the employer counselling his men to take advantage of its provisions, and pointing out to them the benefits which it is intended to confer upon them. I believe it will prove a boon, not only to the man who saves his earnings, to invest in a provision for his family at his death, or an annuity for himself in his old age, but to the colony at large, in encouraging habits of thrift and foresight among the working classes in this colony. I now move that the Bill be read a second time.

The question was put and passed, and the Bill was read a second time.