

Queensland



Parliamentary Debates  
[Hansard]

**Legislative Assembly**

**TUESDAY, 26 JUNE 1866**

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## LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY.

Tuesday, 26 June, 1866.

Crown Lands Sale Bill (Resumption of Debate).

## CROWN LANDS SALE BILL (RESUMPTION OF DEBATE).

Mr. McLEAN resumed the debate, on the motion for the second reading of the Crown Lands Sale Bill, and, in doing so, said that in making the few observations he had to address to the House on this all-important subject, he should endeavor as much as possible to take a general view of the measure; and he believed that, when he had finished, neither the one side nor the other of the House would be able to say that he had taken a partial view of the question. He would neither try to advocate one side or other of the question; and, especially, he should endeavor not to advocate that side of the question which was supposed to be advocated by honorable members on the Opposition side of the House, more than he would the views that were advocated by honorable gentlemen the Government side of the House. He regretted having to admit that a great number of the speeches which had been addressed to the House on the question, were conspicuous for want of ability, and for partiality. Many of the speeches were conspicuous for those qualities that were calculated to excite in the minds of the people imaginary grievances that did not exist. In reviewing the short history of this community as a colony, he believed that, so far, they had every right to be gratified, and to be proud of all the legislation that had taken place in the Assembly. He believed they could, with a great deal of satisfaction, and a great deal of pride to themselves, compare their legislation most favorably with the legislation that had taken place in any, or all, of the other colonies of the Australian group. He believed it could not be disputed that they had not erred in their legislation so much as other colonies had done, and particularly on the subject of the land question. He believed that to the just laws enacted by the Parliament of Queensland was to be attributed the great attraction, both of capital and labor, to the colony. That, he maintained, was mainly the cause of the vast increase of the population of the colony since Separation from New South Wales. He believed it was in consequence of the pernicious laws made by the older colonies with respect to the property of the Crown, that those colonies had receded, and not progressed. He believed that, if it had not been for the gold discoveries of Victoria and New South Wales, the towns in many of the districts of those

colonies would have grass growing in the streets, instead of being inhabited by large populations. Well, having those circumstances so very clearly before them, and not having gold fields to support a population, nor bad legislation as to the land to retard population, it was too clear that they must depend in a great measure for the success of the colony on the just, and prudent, and beneficial land laws which might be enacted by the Legislature. The land was the only property they had, and it was a magnificent patrimony, if they dealt fairly with it;—if they dealt with it, without being forced to rash legislation by any popular excitement—dealt with it fairly and calmly, something in the way a large estate holder would deal with his own land, so as to raise a larger revenue from it, and carry on his business as a trustee for the public; for he looked on every landholder as an acting trustee for the public, because, in managing his property so as to make it most beneficial to himself, he would also make it most beneficial to the community. Now, honorable members should look upon themselves as being somewhat in a similar position. They were only a small portion of the human family, and it was their duty to make laws that would deal evenly and justly, not only with all those who were in the colony, but with all who might come to it. They ought not to legislate in a way that would make one man rich by Act of Parliament and another poor. He believed it was an axiom in political economy, that one man could not be made rich by Act of Parliament without the pecuniary position of some one else being prejudiced. As honorable members knew those facts very well it was unnecessary for him to dwell on them. They were quite patent to every honorable member in the House. He believed there was not an honorable member of the Legislature but would scout and repudiate the idea of taking the property of any man from him, for the purpose of dividing it amongst others. Now, if they found the Government introducing a clause in this Land Bill that would have such a tendency, it was the bounden duty of honorable members to try and prevent it, if they could. If it could be shewn that the Bill before the House would have the effect of taking from any man that which he had labored for, that which, by his capital, his industry, and his labor, he had acquired—and which, after all, would not be so much for his own benefit as it would be for the benefit of the country, though he might be the lawful possessor of it—he believed there was not a member of the Legislature but would scout such a thing—but would scout the attempt to take his property from him and distribute it amongst others, who had not shewn that they could make a better use of it than the possessor of it. He believed that, if he could shew the Bill before the House would have that effect, there was sufficient wisdom, and prudence, and public

spirit amongst honorable members, to prevent it. It was, he believed, the apprehension that a Bill which would have such an effect might be passed by the House, that caused the agitation out of doors. A great deal of the agitation, he believed, also, was occasioned by the speeches that had been delivered in the House—he would not say whether by honorable members on the Government or on the Opposition side of the House. Honorable members, on both sides, had erred in that way, and had erred very much. He did not mean to refer to those speeches, except in so far as he considered it necessary to do so, in order to enable him to deal with the arguments put forward in them. He must say, that he was very much disappointed with the logic of the honorable and gallant member for Ipswich, Dr. Challinor, in dealing with the land question. It seemed to him absurd and ridiculous that a gentleman of his parliamentary experience, and experience in discussion, should take up the time of the House with such childish arguments as the honorable member had used in addressing the House on the question. The honorable and gallant member, for example, argued that, as some Darling Downs squatter offered the Government a piece of land in the vicinity of a railway terminus at five pounds an acre, the Government, if they had any intention of purchasing the land at such a price, recognised the land to be worth five pounds an acre—otherwise, they would not expect the sanction of the House to such a purchase. But, as the Government very properly rejected the offer, and also the idea of the purchase at such a price, the argument of the honorable and gallant member fell to the ground; and the proceeding only shewed that land had not risen in value, for, if it had, the Government would have accepted the offer. He believed the honorable and gallant member used that argument for the purpose of casting odium on the squatters generally, because a squatter had made such an offer to the Government. The offer, he believed, was made by a gentleman of the name of Wildish, who only very recently came to the colony, and not by any old squatter. The offer, as he had said, was rejected, and he supposed the honorable the Secretary for Lands and Works laughed at the gentleman for being at the trouble to make such an offer. Now, he supposed that, so far as that instance was concerned, no honorable member would admit that it founded a good basis for an argument in favor of the high price of land. If the honorable and gallant member were to say that many of the squatters on the Darling Downs had made large fortunes by buying land at a pound an acre, that would be a fair argument in favor of a high price; at any rate, it would be a better argument than the other. Last year, the question of the price of land came before the House. He could not then see the advantage of a reduction of

the price. It occurred to him at the time, that it would be very injudicious to reduce the price of land. He felt, that if the price of land were reduced, those who had purchased land at a high price would have good cause to complain of such an alteration, as it would bring the Government into competition with them, and would in fact also lower the value of their land. Since then he had discussed the question with gentlemen who had given a great deal of attention to this subject, and he had heard from them arguments that had convinced him, and he could not help coming to the conviction, that at least nine-tenths of all the land of Queensland was not worth a pound an acre, and would not bring a pound an acre at auction. Whether it would be better for the Government to sell the land at a fair present value, or keep it till, by settlement or otherwise, it might be increased in value, was one of the questions for the House now to consider. It was one of the questions the House had to determine, whether the Government would administer the large estate of the colony more to the advantage of the community at large by holding it over for the present than by disposing of it now, and selling it at a future time; so that what one man had an indisputable right to should be marked off from that to which his neighbor had an equal right to. He believed there should be a line of demarcation between that which was the property of one man, and that which was the property of another. He looked upon it as going back to the first principles of a savage life, to make the country a universal common. He believed that it was the idea of the country being equally the property of all—the idea that it was a large common—that had to a great extent caused so much crime in New South Wales; and another of the consequences was, that the progress of the country was retarded, because of the immense police expenditure necessary to keep down that crime; for which purpose even the great expenditure was quite futile. He believed the expense of the police department seriously weighed down and depressed all the honest industry of the country; and that expense had been caused mostly by bushranging. Bushranging, he considered, was very much occasioned by the commonage system. Young men who went into the bush found that the lands were to a great extent commons, and from the schooling afforded them by the example of the property of the Government being common, they readily extended the principle to private property. Now, they ought in Queensland to prevent any idea of that kind growing up in the colony; and he was firmly impressed with the belief that the sooner the lands became private property, or were under private management, and the sooner they could no longer be locked up as commons, the sooner would the people recognise the true principles of civilization, and come to

respect the property of others. He might here advert to the fact, that since the pernicious land laws of New South Wales came into existence, the ordinary revenue of that colony had been found to be quite inadequate to the requirements of the colony. Previous to those land laws coming into operation the revenue of the colony was chiefly obtained from the sale of lands; and the taxation, which was chiefly confined to tea, sugar, spirits, and a few other articles of import, was so light that it was scarcely felt at all. Now, in consequence of the land revenue being swept away by the land laws he had alluded to, the taxation on the articles previously taxed had not only been increased, but other taxes had been imposed, and a tax was now placed on every cheque that was drawn, on every promissory note that was given, on every bill of lading, and, in fact, on almost every business document that was written out. In fact, in New South Wales a man could scarcely breathe the air without paying a tax for the privilege. There was also a package duty on every package landed on the wharf. Everything that was landed there was subject to an *ad valorem* duty; and any one who had a package sent to him had to make up a list of the articles such package contained, and pay duties upon them. Now, he believed there was not an honorable member of the House but would deplore the establishment of such a state of things in this colony; and on that head he appealed to the people of the towns, rather than to the people in the country, for it was the people in the towns who would feel it the most. The townspeople, he also maintained, would be especially responsible for any such laws, if they resulted from the way in which the land question might be disposed of. As sure as they might give way, from any extraordinary excitement or agitation they might create—as sure as they departed one iota from the principles of impartial legislation, so sure would the evil consequences recoil upon themselves. So sure as they so interfered with the land laws, as to cause a reduction of the revenue from the land, so sure would they have to pay a penny or a shilling stamp duty on every receipt; so sure would they have to put a stamp on every cheque; so sure would they have to put a stamp on every promissory note—and it must be remembered that the business of townspeople was carried on largely by bills and other machinery of the credit system,—and so sure as they prejudiced the interests of the country, so sure, they might depend upon it, would the effects fall back upon the trade in town. The honorable member for North Brisbane, Mr. Pugh, in the course of his speech read an extract from Mill, but every honorable member who heard it read must have been satisfied that the honorable member who read it did not fully shew the meaning of the author, and that the quotation must

have been a garbled one. For his own part, he felt convinced that Mill was about the last man in the world to give expression to the statement the honorable member for North Brisbane seemed to quote from that author's works. If they adopted the views so expressed by the honorable member, they might at once return to a state of savage life, instead of pursuing the path of civilization. Instead of being subjects of the Queen, governed by laws, and holding property individually, they might go roaming through the bush lawlessly, having no property, having no religion, and enjoying none of those civilizing influences which were characteristic of the nation to which they belonged. He might also refer to some of the statements made at the meetings in Brisbane, of those persons who dubbed themselves the National Land League—those gentlemen who considered it was their peculiar privilege to direct the ideas of the people, and protect their interests. He was sorry to say that he had read in some newspapers, and those respectable newspapers, which were considered to be the leading newspapers of the colony, articles supporting the views put forward at such meetings. That, he thought, was a course they would not adopt if they would give a moment's attention to the effect it would have on this unfortunate country if the extraordinary ideas put forward at such meetings were carried out. He was sorry to say he had observed that those people advocated the leasing of lands without any discrimination whatever. One eminent pamphleteer, in a most patriotic way, stated—and the editor of a newspaper adopted the same line of argument—that the peculiar vocation of the squatter was to subdue the country,—to risk his life and property in subduing the waste lands of the colony,—to subdue lands which had not previously been owned or claimed or utilised in any form whatever by civilized man—that it was his peculiar vocation to go and subdue the country, and open up roads by his own labor, and his own capital, without any assistance from the Government—to undergo all kinds of hardships and privations in doing so; and that directly he had done all that—and there was no squatter but had to find his own stations, find roads to it, and sometimes had to find a port at which to ship his own produce,—well, directly he had done so, and had opened up the country, and had found a market, and had found a way to it—it was his duty, according to those pamphleteers, and those who adopted their views, that he should move out of the way, and that others should enjoy all the benefit of his labors. For his part, he could not understand what some people considered a squatter to be—if they considered him to be fish, flesh, or fowl,—or if they considered him to be a subject of the Queen, having the same privileges as others. It seemed to him that they did not think he

was one of the people. The squatter seemed to be looked upon as a sort of alligator that swallowed up everything.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: No. Only a cormorant.

Mr. McLEAN: Some, again, seemed to regard him as a sort of tame elephant, whose duty it was to go into the jungle and bring in the wild elephants. Now, if the squatters of the country were to assume that they had rights which were not possessed by the other members of the community, that they had higher developments of civilization and intellect, and were altogether different and superior beings,—if the squatters assumed all that sort of thing, he would himself attend the meetings of the Land League, and do all in his power to run the squatters out of the country, or send them off to the shores of the Gulf of Carpentaria. But the unfortunate squatter only wanted to be regarded as a British subject, and to be entitled to the rights and privileges of a British subject. He did not ask for more. If he was, unfortunately, called a squatter he could not help it. He felt sure that those would-be great defenders of the public interest, if they were brought face to face with a squatter, and who could tell them what a squatter was, how he got his living, and the difficulties he had to contend with, would have to retract all their hard sayings about the squatters, and admit that the squatters had not only done no injury, but had done good service to the State. But for the squatter, there would not have been such a city as Brisbane, or if there had been there would have been no Legislature in the city. But for the squatter the inhabitants would not have had the water laid on to the city, or have had the streets lighted with gas, or possessed in fact any of the advantages that were peculiar to a large community. He was sorry, he was truly sorry, the honorable member for East Moreton was not present, and he deeply sympathised with the honorable member in the cause of his absence. He would rather not, under the circumstances, refer to the speech of the honorable member, but there was one portion of it to which he would like to refer. The honorable member, in giving his dictum of what should be the land law of the colony, set it down as a rule that he could not deviate from, that no land should be sold except for agricultural purposes. The honorable member, however, did not specify the nature of agricultural pursuits to which he would have the land applied. He did not state, either, what he considered should be the kind of cultivation adopted—whether the land should be cultivated by horse or steam power, or whether the tillage should be altogether manual. He did not give the House to understand what course of cultivation should be pursued. Now, he believed that even the representatives of the townspeople would admit that was not a logical reason for the alienation of the Crown lands. He

believed the principal object of the Government in selling lands was to raise a revenue for the carrying out of the laws and the maintenance of order throughout the country. He believed that was the chief object in selling the lands at all. Another reason for the alienation of the lands was to be found in the fact, that when a person acquired land he was likely to make more by it than if he had only the privilege of a common. A further reason for disposing of the land was to bind the people to the country. He believed that after a colonist, by his industry and perseverance, and intelligence—whether he was a trader in town, or a successful squatter, or a lawyer or doctor in large practice—he believed that, after he had made money and acquired property, it was a loss to the colony to drive him away from the country; for he would take away with him all the money he had made, besides depriving the colony of his services. He regretted very much to observe that those people who would remain in the country, and would spend the money in the country they had earned in it—who would give to Cæsar the things that belonged to Cæsar;—he regretted to observe that, by those agitators he referred to, such people, instead of being looked upon as the friends of the country, were, on the contrary, looked upon as its despoilers. He believed that those people who made so much use of their tongues at public meetings endeavored, and that not altogether unsuccessfully, to make the people believe that as soon as a man was rich he became the common enemy of the poor. Now, he believed there were few wealthy people in the country but had been accustomed to hard work in their early life; and he believed that they were more sincere in their feelings for the poor than those who talked so much about being the friends of the poor. There was not one honorable member but could sing the song of Mr. Parkes, the Colonial Secretary for New South Wales, when addressing his constituents, and tell them that the same blood gushed through his fingers as through theirs, and that he was one of themselves. There was not one of them but had had to carry his cross, and to bear the burden and the heat of the day; and he therefore thought that, instead of abusing, generally, all who had made money, and abusing them for staying in the colony, every inducement should be held out to them to remain in the colony. Five years ago, the colony contained but a small population of 25,000 or 30,000, and now it contained about 100,000 people; and the colony had gone gradually into debt for the purpose of increasing its population. He believed he was not far wrong in saying that the colony had incurred a debt of £350,000 in carrying out the last Immigration Act that was passed. Well, if they had shewn such a desire to make this a great colony, surely

those who had been brought here by the money of the State, those whom earlier colonists had been working for, as it were, should not expect they should have privileges accorded to them at once, such as the older colonists had acquired for themselves after many years of hard labor. If those new immigrants had only to observe the same laws as older colonists, if they had the same liberty accorded to them, and the same free action for the exercise of their intelligence to improve their position, and if they had the country opened to them in any shape or form, that, he thought, was all they could reasonably expect. He did not suppose there was any one who would say they had a right to expect privileges to the detriment of others. Well, he believed that the speeches delivered at those public meetings tended to produce such extravagant expectations—that they tended to produce expectations that the people should have the land of the colony thrown into their hands, and the old occupiers deprived of it. He had seen it stated, clearly and boldly, by both the leading papers of the colony—by the *Guardian* and by the *Courier*—that it was desirable the squatters should recede into the interior, and should give up the lands they had discovered and occupied to others; but, in advocating that cause, they seemed to forget that the squatter was one of the people, and, as such, had a right also to the land as one of the people. If the land had to be appropriated in another way, and must be withdrawn from lease and disposed of on fee-simple, the squatter only desired to be placed in the same position as others, and to have the same privileges afforded to him for purchasing the land. If he were prepared to give more money than any other body for it, why should he not have it? and, on the other hand, if he refused to give as much for it as the agriculturist, or the trader in town, then let the agriculturist or the townsman have it. They were all equal in the eye of the State; they were all subjects of the same sovereign; and, as they were all running the same race, let them start fairly and run fairly. It was unfair, to use a sporting phrase, to handicap the squatters too heavily. If they had run a race and won it, that was no reason why they should be prevented from running any more. He would read one clause of this precious Bill, to shew the effect it would have on the whole colony; and, he might say, he did not believe the honorable gentleman who introduced the Bill ever expected that it would have such an effect. The clause was the eighty-ninth, which related to commons. It was as follows:—

“It shall be lawful for the Government to proclaim any unsold Crown lands in or within five miles of the boundaries of any municipality town or agricultural area or gold field to be a town common farmers’ common or gold fields common as the case may be.”

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There were other clauses in the Bill providing that there should be gold fields, agricultural areas, and town reserves. Well, from his knowledge of some of the districts of the colony—some of the most valuable and most densely peopled districts of the colony—if the clause he had quoted were applied to those districts, and if all the lands within five miles of every gold field, town, or agricultural area, were to be proclaimed as commons, there would not be an acre on the Darling Downs but would be included in some common or other. Now, he would ask if it was considered by any honorable member that that would be a good state of things to bring about. He, for one, thought it would not; and, apart entirely from the financial position in which the colony was at present placed, he thought, if such a state of things were brought about, it would have a most damaging effect on the morality of the population of the colony, and would tend to sink those who remained in it into a horde of thieves and robbers. With regard to the land question, all he had to say was, he was sincerely impressed with the idea that it was one of those questions which should be discussed quietly, fairly, and calmly. If they had too much agitation on it, they were likely to oscillate too much one way or the other. If the question were not discussed temperately, and if feeling were excited by agitation, the honorable members on the Opposition side of the House, should they happen to be in the majority—should they happen to gain the day—would, he feared, do a great deal of injury, by making a law to suit their own peculiar views. Again, he thought that if, on the other hand, the Government, in order to gain support to enable them to carry out their own views, agreed to certain propositions, they might be led to pass a measure which, when it came to be reduced to the test of practice, would be found to tend greatly to the destruction of the property they had to deal with. He hoped, therefore, honorable members would keep within the record, and not allow themselves to be too much guided by one side or the other. For his own part, he should treat it entirely as a matter of pounds, shillings, and pence, on the one side as well as on the other. They had to see what revenue could be reasonably obtained from the land, and to make regulations by which the land would be open to one man as well as to another; and they would have to see that the regulations they might make would not tend to cause similar results to those which had already obtained in New South Wales. Those results were patent to every honorable member, and if the House made such mistakes as were made in New South Wales, they would be more deserving of blame than those who erred when they had no warning example before them. As to the Bill, he should vote

for it as it stood, although he disapproved of some of the provisions it contained, as he believed that in committee they would be able to correct any mistakes which might be found in it. He very much regretted that the Bill was not sent to a select committee, for he believed that the adoption of such a course would have been attended with good results. With those observations, he would support the second reading of the Bill.

Mr. HERBERT: I should have been very glad if I could have spared myself the necessity of addressing the House on the second reading of this Bill, for I feel that, owing to so many honorable members having already spoken, much that I might have wished to say has necessarily been anticipated. But, as I was the individual who introduced the original Land Bill, which the Government propose now to re-enact, with some amendments; and as I am familiar with the question, and have always had a distinct policy of my own on the subject, I should desire to offer a few remarks to the House before the question is disposed of. In the first place, I consider it my duty to say that I do not see the honorable members who sit opposite, those who are designated as the representatives of the squatters, have been illiberal to so great an extent as has been represented, in the views they have brought forward. I believe there is as much liberality, and as much common sense on the one side of the House as on the other; and I believe there are honorable gentlemen opposite who could frame a Land Bill that would be quite as conducive to the advancement of the country, and as satisfactory to the community in the country, and to those immigrants whom we hope to see here, in after days, as the Bill now in our hands; and so I regret very much that honorable members sitting on this side of the House have dealt out somewhat hard measures on the squatters in those opinions they have brought before the House. I believe that the fair consideration of this question has been very much hampered by this course being adopted; and I should have been glad that some of the supporters of the Government had not adopted that course. I have felt this, though I do not think it matters much to honorable members opposite what is said in reference to them, that the course that has been adopted by some honorable members has thrown impediments in the way of the settlement of this question. However, I hope we shall be able to surmount those impediments. It is needless for me to state that I intend to vote for the second reading of the Bill, because I see it is to a great extent a re-enactment of the measure I had the pleasure of carrying through the House in 1860. I have no doubt my honorable friend the Secretary for Lands and Works feels now somewhat as I felt on that occasion—that it is not given to mortals to pass Land Bills without amendments on them

in committee; and I shall be prepared to see this Bill very materially altered in committee from what it is on the second reading. And I hope the Government will consent to see the Bill amended, as far as may be consistent with seeing at the same time their principles retained in the Bill. That, I presume, is all they want; and I trust we shall be able to see in committee that those principles will bear extension in various directions from those in which they have been placed before us. There is a difficulty in drafting a large measure of this kind so as wholly to express the views of the promoters of it. Indeed, there is extreme difficulty in doing that; and if a large question is brought forward in a Bill, on the second reading it should always be held that honorable members may be at liberty fully to express themselves on the general question; and then honorable members may see that their views are not so different from those of the introducers of the measure, but they may reasonably hope to get them embodied in the Bill, and may endeavor to promote the Bill at the stage of its second reading. I may now state that I still adhere, after the lapse of five or six years, to the views which I, as Colonial Secretary, and my honorable colleagues, entertained on various points of the original Bill. I still feel great difficulty in departing from the original upset price of country lands—namely, one pound per acre; and that is one of the points on which, after consulting honorable members on the other side of the House, I cannot agree with them. I am not satisfied that, without causing great inconvenience to the holders of property, it is possible to make such a radical change. They might very naturally complain that while they held property for which they had to pay over one pound an acre, another person might come along side of them and hold property for which he was charged only five shillings an acre. I cannot help seeing that that would be inconvenient; but I think we need not trouble ourselves much about that; because, though the person might be allowed to settle, on the payment of a portion of the purchase money, the title deeds would not be handed over till a pound an acre had been paid. However, I do not see why some means should not be adopted to meet the case of the small capitalist; and, in fact, the honorable the Secretary for Lands and Works said, in moving the second reading of the Bill, that he had drawn up some clauses for leasing lands to persons of small capital; but the Government has not yet placed the House in possession of the nature of those clauses or of the details of them. I am, therefore, ignorant of what they amount to, but I shall be glad, when the House goes into committee, to see such clauses submitted to enable us to consider them. One great difficulty arises as to the settlement of the Crown lands, which I fear we will never be able to master

as long as the country is so large as it is, and that difficulty arises from the great difference of the different interests in the colony. I desire, as I have no doubt other honorable members do, to see this a great country, not only politically, but great in area, so long as it is good for the inhabitants that it should be so. But we do labor under a great difficulty in having to make a law that will be equally good for those resident on the Darling Downs, and for those resident at the Gulf of Carpentaria, and in the Kennedy District; and, therefore, if we desire to make a law as beneficial as possible, we must make it as elastic and as various as possible, before we can say we have produced a measure that will be beneficial to all parties. I do not know if it is consistent with the general principles of the measure introduced by the Government, to say that there must be a difference in the price of land in those districts where there are few inhabitants, and where it is desirable to promote new industries and raise new products; but it does not seem to me to be fair to say that, because land is worth a pound an acre on the Darling Downs, no man should go to the Gulf of Carpentaria without paying the same price for any land he might take up there. That seems to me to be an obstacle at present, but I do not see any reason why it should be so. I do not see any reason why some kind of sliding scale in the price of land should not be introduced, such as that which was referred to by the honorable member for North Brisbane, Mr. Raff. The basis of the theory of not selling land at less than a pound an acre is this: that those who support that theory do not think the Crown should part with any of the lands till they come to be worth a pound an acre. But that is a theory which will admit of stretching. I do not say that the lands of the colony should not be sold till they come to be worth a pound an acre; but I would say the Government should sell the lands proved not to be worth a pound an acre at less than a pound an acre. It would not be departing from the principle of the theory to do so. I think it is extremely important to consider, in valuing any land, that though at present it might not be worth a pound an acre, it might in five hundred years hence be worth more than a pound an acre. Now we have no reason to part at present with the freehold of such land, for the country might last a thousand years, if the end of the world does not come sooner. Though I never could agree with the proposals of the Northern Land League, I see some elements in their scheme which would accommodate the settlement of the country by the settlement upon it of persons of small means. But I think we should try to make some difference between our thinly populated districts, where labor is scarce and the price of provisions is high, and those districts which have the means of railway communication;

and without parting with the land at a cheaper rate, place the farmer or grazier upon it on cheap terms. I am strongly of opinion that few kinds of agricultural pursuits will pay in this country, unless accompanied with the breeding and rearing of stock. It may be that the growth of sugar will be successfully carried on, and that ordinary farming and gardening may be profitable in the neighborhood of towns; but if we are to invite persons to come to this country to pursue agriculture with any reasonable prospect of success, we must be able to put them on such an area of land as will enable them, combining grazing with agriculture, to go through seasons when agricultural produce would not grow. I agree with the honorable member for the Burnett, Mr. Haly, that the cultivation of the soil is not sufficient to pay for the capital and labor expended, unless it is accompanied with the raising of stock, and unless a great amount of capital is invested. The only farmers, small farmers, I know, who are not market gardeners, have had to turn their attention to the rearing of poultry and to dairy pursuits to keep them going in seasons unfavorable to agriculture. If the Government measure were such as to enable persons to hold farms of from a thousand to two thousand acres, within easy distance of railways and the centres of population, I have no doubt much capital would come to the colony from the other Australian colonies, from British North America, from the United States, and from England. Indeed, I do not know where it would not come from, if you could settle the people on the land with a reasonable prospect of success. With regard to commonage, it is considered to be necessary by some persons. I believe it, however, to be a barbarous system, and one that does postpone the settlement of the country, and interferes with the squatter, unless where firmly controlled. I believe the system is bad for all parties—bad for the people and bad for the State. Persons resident in towns desire commons that they may have the privilege of running a number of cattle on the common for nothing. Now, I have no sympathy with such people, in the matter of commons; and we have never found out any regulations or system of controlling commons in any way. I think the town of Warwick is the only town where regulations for commons have been made; and I believe there are several people in that town, which has a common of three or four hundred acres, petitioning that agricultural reserves might be made in the district; but their only object, I believe, is, that they may be able to run more cattle themselves, while turning out the squatter. The only person who, I think, has any claim for commonage, say for a cow or two, is a poor laborer or carter, in order that he may be able to obtain sufficient milk for his family. But I believe that commonages are a loss to the people who may seek to use them for profit;

for there is the time lost in looking after the cattle, in bringing them in and milking them, and in other ways; and the dissatisfaction and disappointment of the whole thing, reduces a man to very much the condition of the poor white in America. I think it might be well to have patches of land fenced in for commonage, for the convenience of persons employed on the road. It might be well to have commonages to that extent fenced in; but I am not hopeful of seeing any system of commonage proposed, of which I can be a warm supporter. That portion of the Land Bill that is before us, which deals with new industries, such as the growing of sugar, cotton, and coffee, will not necessarily remain a portion of the Bill when it goes into committee. The Bill is introduced for the advancement of farming generally; and, so, I think it would be better to introduce some clauses of a general nature than to have special clauses in the Bill for special industries. As it is, I consider the terms of the Bill do not offer much encouragement to any of those new industries, because they seem to me to be harsher than the terms the Government offer at present. If I were desirous of seeing a sugar or cotton company coming here, as I am, it must be permitted for me to vote against the terms proposed in the Bill, as they are harsher than those that now exist. I want to see double the amount of land cultivated for such industries, as soon as possible; but I do not see why we should call any of those industries special industries. They are tropical industries, and, therefore, are not to be regarded as special industries here. This is a tropical country, and tropical industries are natural to it; so let us have the clauses relating to those industries so large as to be as general in their application as possible. I do not wish, at the present time, to go into the question of squatting tenures, further than to say, that I differ very much from my honorable friend opposite, because it will never pay a squatter to purchase land for squatting purposes alone. The interest of the money laid out in the purchase of the lands would amount to much more than the rent he would be called upon to pay for it. At the same time, I am decidedly of opinion that, with really good management, upon the Darling Downs and other favorite spots, the squatter may be able to pay five shillings or two shillings and sixpence per acre for lands, and keep stock upon it; but that cannot be done in the ordinary forest country of Australia; and that is one reason why I wish to see the squatting interest released from the difficulties pressing upon it. I cannot see how the ends anticipated by honorable members opposite, for the purchase of lands at a small price, will be realised. At the same time, I do not, because I disagree with them, doubt that the proposal to reduce the upset price is brought forward *bonâ fide* by them, as a fair thing.

Supposing that, at no distant time, the northern part of the colony should be separated from the remainder, and that it should become a law that the land, in large or small blocks, should be saleable at a very low figure, I do not mean to say that the occupier would not profit by it, or that men of small means would not prosper; on the contrary, I believe that the small capitalists would do exceedingly well, but I do not give my preference to a law of that kind. The Land Bill is a measure upon which we cannot all agree; I do not agree with every member in this House, and I never yet found any two men agree with each other in the various details on any question, and, therefore, in our advocacy of any question we must be considered as merely giving expression to our own opinions. I do not think that the opinions of the Government are fixed, as to the exact details of the Bill before us, but I think that the Government will work together with the House, generally, as the House is disposed to work with them, to make it a good measure. I like the Bill for second reading purposes, which are really rudimental, but I should not like to see it stand as it is upon a third reading. Taking everything into consideration, and feeling that I hold views which I have no reason to abandon, because they are in a great degree re-enacted in the measure; and feeling that any separation of one district of the colony from another is very much to be deprecated, and that a dissolution of this House would be an evil, which I hope we may avoid by the way in which the measure will be dealt with in committee, I shall, therefore, vote for the second reading. I trust honorable members will see that we ought to make the Bill one which will lead to the introduction of immigrants of all classes into the colony. I do not think there is any fear that the capitalists wish to attain a position above others in this community, as the honorable member for Eastern Downs seems to think some people do. I trust that honorable members will see the necessity of voting for a second reading, and for passing it through committee as soon as possible. A great deal of capital is waiting for investment, and is at a stand-still, in consequence of this question not being settled one way or the other. There are persons in this town waiting for the decision. I put it to any honorable member, if he has a friend who wishes to invest money, and who asked him for advice in the matter, whether he would not recommend him to wait for six weeks or two months, until the question was settled; and if he did so, that friend might say he was tired of waiting, and that he would go to Victoria or New South Wales, where he could get land on easier terms than either the Land Bill now before the House or the present land laws offer. I trust that we may get the question settled at a very early day,

on more equitable terms than we now anticipate.

Mr. STEPHENS said the prominence given to the land question, he thought, was owing to the agitation on the subject got up by some gentlemen in the north. During the recess there was a land league formed, which started with demands that no one had advocated in the House. Then there was a series of resolutions which had been submitted by the Opposition as the foundation on which the Government should form their measures—these had given prominence to the question now before the House. These resolutions were withdrawn, and certain other resolutions were presented to the Minister for Lands and Works, which were withdrawn also. The purport of those resolutions was not made known, but he believed their object was to give a more liberal squatting tenure. This agitation had directed public attention to the land question, to a greater extent than it had been directed on any previous occasion since Separation. There was now great anxiety for an alteration of the land laws in another direction to obtain greater facilities for settlement in the most populous parts of the country. There were, therefore, two distinct objects in view by those who had agitated the question;—he thought it would be desirable that they should bear strongly in mind the difference existing between those two great divisions in the land laws. They had, under the old squatting system, the old Orders in Council, which permitted the occupation of the land until it was wanted for other purposes; and they had, under the land laws, regulations for the sale of land in the settled districts, in which agriculture was carried on. He thought it would be desirable for their friends in the north to treat those two subjects separately, and he believed it would have been much better if the squatting tenure had not been introduced into the Bill. He thought that the northern or outside squatters would have been perfectly willing to entertain this question if it had been brought forward as a separate resolution; but he agreed with the honorable member who had just sat down, that it would be impossible to frame a set of land laws suitable alike to the Moreton District, the Darling Downs, and the other districts of the colony. He must again repeat, that it was a great mistake to introduce the squatting tenure into this discussion, which ought to be confined to the alienation of land in the settled districts, it being understood that the squatting tenure had been settled by previous laws. They must anticipate that land for a long time to come in the northern districts, could not be alienated, in consequence of the limited population; and, therefore, he thought the Bill was practically confined in its operations to the settled districts. If the House, for the present, confined its attention to the alienation of

Crown lands in the settled districts of the colony, he thought that an excellent Bill would be matured without the slightest detriment to the squatting interests of the colony. He believed it was admitted on all hands, that as the population increased the land must be alienated from squatting purposes, and be put to other uses. He thought it would be important that they should make laws applicable to the land in the the far districts, such as the Plains of Promise, as well as to the Darling Downs, where there was a railway. He thought they must have a different system for these districts. The Bill was a modification of the present laws in regard to the alienation of Crown lands; the main difference being the establishment of commons, and the removal of certain restrictions applied to the taking up of land in the agricultural reserves. So far, he considered the Bill was an improvement;—there was sufficient inducement held out to farming interests. Looking at the smallness of the population, and the very small amount of produce raised from the soil, it was absolutely necessary that the Act should be so modified as to favor the settlement of a larger number of people, and the raising of larger quantities of produce. The returns for 1865 shewed that the value of the produce imported into the colony—of produce which might be grown in the colony, viz., flour, hay, maize, potatoes, and a number of other things—and if they included sugar, rum, and the produce of the vine—was £800,000, a sum equal to the value of the whole export of wool for the colony during the year. That shewed the necessity for such an alteration of the land laws as should lead to greater production. There was this difference between the interests of the inside and the outside squatters: the outside squatter would not be disturbed for a long time to come, but the gentleman who held his land within a certain distance of the towns, as the country became settled, must of necessity give way. He could not conceive how the majority of the House could put any restrictions on the sale of land in the immediate vicinity of the railway. He believed, that when the House voted money to make a railway on the Downs, they decided that a large quantity of land must be reserved from the squattages there, to be put to other uses. They all knew that if the land were properly fenced in and otherwise improved, it would be more productive than land which was unfenced; but that could not be done under the squatting tenure, and that was the object which the House had now before it. With regard to the Bill itself, it appeared to him that there were a great many restrictions in it; and in that respect it was capable of considerable alteration and improvement in committee; and although they had not now before them a series of leasing clauses, the honorable the Minister for Lands and Works, in introducing the Bill,

had given a distinct promise that he would introduce in committee a number of resolutions relating to the leasing of agricultural lands. The House was not made acquainted with the nature of them, but if they were sufficiently liberal and elastic, they would meet all the necessities of the case. He was not at present prepared to advocate any reduction in the price of land in the settled districts. The reason the upset price had been kept so high, was the fear that a reduction to a smaller amount would lead to a monopoly by the squatter on his run, or to speculation. He believed that it was this feeling which led the House, on the passing of the Agricultural Reserves Act, to clog it with restrictions, so as to render it perfectly useless. He had no fear of speculation taking place in country lands. He believed there had been speculation in country lands, in times past, but it had been caused by the fact that very little land, at that time, had been brought forward for sale. He recollected a few portions of land being put up for sale outside the town, previous to Separation; they were immediately sold, as it was not known how long a time would elapse before any more land would be offered for sale. Afterwards £6 or £7 an acre was refused for the land, and it was now unoccupied. But if the Government would survey portions of land in the different districts of the colony, and near the towns, he believed no speculator would interfere with them, because no person requiring land would give him £2 an acre when he could get it for less from the Government. All that was heard about speculation in land was confined, almost exclusively, to town and suburban lots. They could not, by legislation, stop it, but in country lands they had no fear of speculation. He hoped that the House would not allow itself to be led to interfere with the agricultural reserves, on that ground. Under the present system, it took up the whole of a man's capital to purchase the land he wanted. He was aware that nearly the whole of the successful farmers were those who had been themselves agricultural laborers in the neighborhood. They were the best kind of settlers, because they knew all about the land and the difficulties that would arise, and would not encounter them unless they saw their way through them. Their savings were the means which enabled them to farm on their own account; but under the present system it took all their money to purchase land, and they were left for three or four years before they could make anything out of it. He thought the best plan of obviating this difficulty, was to adopt liberal leasing clauses, which would have the effect of leaving to those persons their capital to commence business with, instead of leaving them without money to make their improvements. With respect to these leasing clauses, he thought that they should be framed, so far as practicable, with the view to the alienation

of the land, in order that the leaseholders might be enabled to become freeholders as soon as possible. He would not follow the honorable member for Maryborough, in his remarks as to the Crown tenants being Crown serfs; he did not agree with that, he thought the boot was on the other leg altogether. He thought that, in all the Australian colonies, they had found it worth their while to join in politics, and took care that the men sent to represent them in Parliament should look after their interests. He wanted to see an absolute alienation of the land, every man being settled as a permanent occupant of the soil; and in order to accomplish this, he thought that the leases should not be for a longer period than ten years, and that they should not be renewable. The lease should contain a provision for the pre-emptive right of purchase of the whole land during the currency of the lease; but if the right was not exercised during the currency of the lease, the land ought to revert to the Government, because he thought the worst thing they could do would be to establish a system of leaseholds renewable interminably. He thought that if they established a system of leaseholds, at a rent of sixpence per acre, which was the price fixed by the Act now in force, it might be an inducement to people to take up more than they would use. He considered that it would be better to fix the rent at two shillings an acre, although he would be satisfied with one shilling. But whatever amount was determined upon, whenever the person exercised his pre-emptive right, the rent should be deducted from the amount of his purchase money. The amount of rent under this system would not be a burden, the amount which he had already paid being a part of the purchase money. This system ought to be applied to the agricultural reserves. He thought it was of the greatest consequence that this should be contained in the Act. Lands in agricultural reserves should not be put up to auction, but open for selection, with certain conditions attached to them. The condition of residence should be sufficient. They ought not to be more than from three to six miles distant from the market, and not in the immediate neighborhood of a town or railway, because, in such places, land could be sold to greater advantage. No one should be allowed to take more than from one hundred to three hundred acres in them. With regard to country lands generally, the system at present in force was to submit them at auction, and all unsold lands were open to selection at the upset price. In passing, he would just remark, that in the resolutions which were laid before the Government by certain Opposition members of this house, it was proposed to do away with selection altogether, and put all lands up to auction. For instance, every man who wished to buy a piece of land looked at it before he bought it, but if he had to look at a larger portion

of country he could not do so. He thought that the purchasers of land should not be compelled to go to the auction in this way and take their chance of what they could get. It was of the greatest consequence, in his opinion, that a free selection of the whole surveyed land in the colony should be the principle of that Bill. The agricultural reserves, though they would suit the small farmer, would not be so suitable for stock-breeding, which would be more profitably carried on in ordinary country lands. He thought it would be a great inducement to persons to settle on this land, if the principle of leasing were applied to the present system, and that all lands not sold by auction should be open to selection, or lease, for ten years, with pre-emptive right of purchase. There should be no conditions attached. When they had sold the land at what might be considered its fair value, they had no right to tell a man what he was to do with his land, for what they laid down might in fact ruin him. Taking the land, for instance, in the West Moreton District, some of it was very good, but the hilly portion was not considered first-class or fit for agricultural purposes. Under such a system as that which he proposed, if it were surveyed in blocks of 160 acres and upwards, and thrown open to lease, they would have a number of small capitalists,—men who might be unable to drive the plough themselves, but who would be able to drive stock,—occupying it, and fencing it in. It had been stated that a number of young men with capital, varying from £2,000 to £3,000, had come out with the intention of settling in this colony, but, in consequence of the land not being obtainable in the way proposed in the settled districts, they had taken up new country, and in many cases, from sheer want of experience, from want of a knowledge of the country, or from the difficulties attending the venture, they had been ruined. But he thought that such a system as this, which he now proposed, would enable these parties to take up land in the settled districts. He looked upon these leasehold clauses as the most important part of the Bill. He believed it was admitted on all hands that persons would very much prefer to buy land by auction without conditions, to getting it in the agricultural reserves, where certain conditions had to be complied with. He considered that it would be necessary to make some alteration in the system of surveys. Under the old system, it was very difficult to persuade the Government that it was necessary to make any surveys, and to submit land for sale. Instances had occurred where the surveys had not been made until two years after the application had been sent in. Some alterations should be made in the system of surveys, in order that a large quantity of land might be surveyed and brought into the market for sale. If a squatter was running his cattle on land which had been surveyed, he did not see why they

should be taken off it, or why he should not continue to occupy it until it was sold. He thought no one would say that the reserves, which were proclaimed upon the Darling Downs, took any profitable occupation from the squatters, who had still the use of the land. He should of course vote for the second reading of this Bill, and he hoped that the alterations to which he had alluded would be made in committee, and that the House would co-operate to make the Bill as comprehensive as possible; and if a Bill were brought before the House to give effect to the views of the northern members, he should be ready to give it his cordial assistance.

Mr. FORBES: I may state, that when the Alienation of Crown Lands Bill passed this House in 1860, the House was composed of members of much practical experience, and the Bill which has since then become the law of the land was framed upon the experience of the working of the land laws in other colonies. Now, sir, when I come to look at what has been the working of the system of alienation of Crown lands in other colonies, I find that where free grants of land were given to an unlimited extent, the country was in an impoverished state. I find that where grants of land were made to capitalists arriving in the colony, they were made in proportion to the capital they possessed. I find, too, that when Crown lands were put up by auction, conspiracies were formed for the purpose of preventing the land from realising more than half-a-crown an acre. I find that, wherever this state of things prevailed, the colony was not progressing; but, as soon as a system of immigration was established, the colony prospered. To what are we to attribute our success in this colony? It is to the way in which our land laws are framed, which has given an increased value to the lands of the colony. Without population, this country would still have been a barren wilderness. We find the colony has progressed under our land laws—under the system of selling the land at an upset price of one pound per acre—that this system has given a value to the lands of the colony. I feel unwilling to alter that upset price, because by so doing we shall be committing an injury upon those who will follow us. If the price of land were lowered to five shillings an acre, we should not have capital to introduce labor into the colony, and we should soon drift into an impecunious position. When we look at the way in which the land laws have worked, and when we consider that the Bill before the House is the consolidation of those laws, I cannot refrain from asking—What is the bone of contention? The only bone of contention is, whether the land shall maintain its price, or whether it shall be reduced to five shillings an acre. A low upset price is, in my opinion, the cause of impoverishment. The difference in the condition of those colonies, where the value of

the land is fixed at one pound per acre, from those where the price is merely nominal, confirms the view which I have taken. What has brought the Cape of Good Hope to the position in which it is now, but the land laws which prevail there? The settlers cannot obtain employment, and steps are being taken to send a large number of them to Australia. What is the state of New Zealand? In the provinces where the price of the land is less than one pound an acre, the country is in an impoverished position. If we look, on the other hand, at those colonies in which the price of land has been maintained at one pound an acre, we find that they have progressed in a satisfactory manner. If the lands of the colony were reduced to a uniform price of two shillings and sixpence per acre, where should we get the funds from to bring in population? If we offered the lands for nothing, it would be impossible for the laboring population of the United Kingdom to find their way to this colony. They have not the means of doing so. It is our duty to find them the means to come out here and to settle in this colony. I do not think that it is for the interest of the colony that that favored spot, the Darling Downs proper, has been made the bone of contention; and I do feel surprised that the gentlemen from the outside districts have made such an unholy alliance—for I cannot but call it an unholy alliance. The squatters have had their pre-emptive right, and they have exercised it. If that right were extended beyond the Darling Downs, to the westward, beyond the Moonie River and the Condamine; where, as it is well known to honorable members of this House, the country is one vast desert, no one would begrudge the pastoral interest for taking those lands under pre-emptive right. I certainly think that it is the best bargain the Government could make, but I really think that the Crown tenant is the person most deeply interested in the matter. I think the pre-emptive right is a great bug-bear in this colony. I agree with the honorable member, Mr. Stephens, in his observations with regard to the leasing of land for agricultural purposes. I never could understand why lands should not be leased for agricultural as well as for pastoral pursuits. The honorable gentleman, now Postmaster-General, introduced resolutions into this House last session, the object of which was to provide leasing clauses in the Agricultural Reserves Act, which was then brought forward by the Government. I supported that measure chiefly on the grounds that the honorable gentleman intended to bring forward leasing clauses. The honorable member for South Brisbane has stated that men of small means often proved the best agriculturalists, and he has so well and truly described the straits to which this class of men are put, through the existing laws, and I am of opinion that it would be far better for the country to receive interest

for the value of the land, in the shape of rent at two shillings an acre and the right of pre-emptive purchase, than to force the money out of the settlers for actual payment at the time of taking up the land. I certainly think that the leases should be for a considerable length of time, say, from seven to ten years; but I cannot agree with the last speaker, that it would be advisable to allow the whole of the sum paid for rent during that time to go as part payment for the fee-simple of the land. I think, in such instances as this, the country should act as an individual would act; and I am of opinion, if the honorable gentleman who made the proposal had one thousand acres to sell, he would not like to adhere to those terms himself. Whatever honorable members may say, with regard to the alienation of Crown lands, I most decidedly object to any alteration in the present system of one pound per acre as the upset price of land. If they quote Adam Smith, and go back hundreds of years to find arguments in their favor, it was still possible, if honorable gentlemen would look at other quotations of Adam Smith, to see how very inappropriate they were to the times in which we live. What was applicable two hundred years ago is not applicable for the present time. I have heard honorable members praising the idea of men with two or three thousand pounds capital going into farming pursuits. I can refer to Adam Smith, and find that he advises a person with two or three thousand pounds to take his chance in the world, rather than take to farming; for, if he once becomes a farmer, he will always be one; but, if he takes his chance with other men, he will probably improve his position in life. We can find no better authority or guide as to what would be most conducive to the benefit of the colony, than by looking at what has been injurious, and what has been beneficial, to older colonies. We have found that our Alienation of Crown Lands Bill was framed so as to avoid what had been found injurious to the welfare of other colonies, and to accept that which was beneficial; but whilst we have done so, we find that our parent colony has taken another course, and enacted laws which have led to nothing but anarchy and confusion, whilst we have experienced in this colony nothing of the sort. In the settlement of the older colonies, persons used to locate themselves within fifty miles of the seaport, and commence with agricultural pursuits. Their herds rapidly increased; and as they did so, the settlers generally formed a station about fifty or one hundred miles further inland, to which they removed their stock, and thus steadily rose to prosperity. We, however, jump at once into the matter, and go in for 20,000 sheep and a very large extent of country. The most wealthy of the New South Wales settlers had no such beginnings; their commencements were small, and they owned perhaps

but a small section of land. But, with patience and industry, they rose gradually to be the richest in the country. I say, sir, of a gentleman who now holds a similar position in another colony to that which you fill in this, that I know, on his first arrival in the colonies, his—and several others were similarly circumstanced—whole fortune consisted in his brains. Men of that order were the first colonists who developed the resources of this colony. Not, as at the present time, people who, jumping suddenly into position upon credit, if things turn out well, and they are fortunate, will praise the colony—but if, from over-speculation, ill-management, or a want of experience, which has not been practically gained, they fail, they condemn the colony, and say there is something radically wrong in our land laws. I say that the land laws in this colony are more liberal towards an enterprising man, be he an agriculturist or a pastoral tenant, than those of any other colony. No person who is worthy of any occupation, either in agricultural or pastoral pursuits, has half the difficulties here to contend with that he would have in the older colonies. If a person fails in his enterprises in this colony, it is not, generally, the fault of our laws, but of himself. Whom do we find, on looking through the country, as the most prosperous men? Do we find those young gentlemen, who have become full-fledged squatters on the Darling Downs, the most prosperous? No. We find the old practised hands, who have gradually worked their way from small beginnings, until they have got to the top of the tree. It is this class of men which is of the most benefit to the country. I have heard of the benefits that are likely to be derived from men coming out here with one, two, or three thousand pounds, and combining both agricultural and pastoral pursuits. The idea seems to me simply ridiculous, for I have never known an instance in the older colonies, that these two occupations have thriven when combined. The pastoral pursuit requires a large extent of country. It has been found out, that where sheep are confined in paddocks, and kept there for about two years, they will become infected with some disease. It is contrary to the free nature of the animal to be so confined. (Oh! oh!) Honorable members may say "Oh, oh," but I can give instances, and I speak from practical experience. The honorable member for the Burnett told me the other day, that the plan of keeping sheep in paddocks until the country became bare, was frequently the cause of poisonous weeds springing up, from the scarcity of vegetation, and from over-stocking. But I believe that in a country such as the Darling Downs proper, that little locality which has caused so much noise in the colony, and perhaps in the world, fencing might be very advantageous, but I cannot think it would prove so in other parts of the

country. It is impossible to put much stock on some parts of the country in the Moonie and Maranoa Districts. I have lost five thousand sheep two or three times on a station in that locality—the beautiful desert of the Condamine. Although the subject of the squatting tenure is not now under consideration, so far as the squatter is concerned, I feel inclined to give an increased length of tenure, and a better fixity, than is possessed at the present time. I see no reason for any organic change being made in our present land laws, so far as the altering of the upset price of Crown lands is concerned. I shall decidedly object to any sliding scale that may be introduced. All honorable members know what that means. I have no objection to allow the lands to be leased for a fixed period, with the right of pre-emptive purchase; but I think if we depart from the system of one pound an acre as the upset price of Crown lands, we shall soon fall into confusion. If those persons who take up land for agricultural purposes are compelled to pay away all their money for its purchase, and then be driven to borrow money to cultivate it, I cannot but think that the Government would be more lenient than a private creditor; therefore, while advocating that every indulgence should be granted to this class, I cannot agree with the honorable member for South Brisbane, that the whole of the amount paid for rent for the lease of the land, for a certain period, should go as part payment for the fee-simple. I cannot but think it fair to buyer and seller, that the purchaser should pay a fair rate of interest for the value of the land he purchases, especially since it leaves him so long a time to pay for it. In the course of three years he might become the possessor of the property in fee-simple, and he might extend his possessions in this way indefinitely. I must now look forward to the many evils that would result from lowering the price of land. I think the land would get into the hands of a few individuals, and the masses of population would thus be shut out from any participation in the resources of the colony. The bulk of the people we are bringing, and have brought, to these shores, would, in reality, become little better than the serfs of the large landed proprietors. The political writers of the present day agree that the system of small farms is more beneficial to the interests of the State than the taking up of large tracts of land. It might have the effect of raising up a class of gentlemen, like the one to whom so much hero worship was paid some time ago, and who left the colony to abuse us to the extent of his ability in the House of Commons, by telling them that we were a parcel of roughts. We can bear that sort of abuse from an honorable gentleman of talent and ability like Mr. Lowe, although a political adventurer, but not from one who would, probably, find some difficulty in obtaining a seat in this House, in spite of the con-

tempt with which he spoke of this colony. I think those honorable gentlemen, who paid so much hero worship to that individual, must feel sorely vexed at the way they have been treated by him. I should not like to raise up a class in this colony, who, after having amassed wealth and left the colony, would turn round and abuse us unnecessarily. I certainly think that, whilst the alienation of Crown lands is being considered, it would be improper to make any one portion, either of the agricultural tenantry or the pastoral tenantry, or any other class of landholder, predominant over another. I certainly think, if a predominance be given to the small agricultural landowner, it would be as injurious, or perhaps more injurious, than the present dominant power would be in the hands of the pastoral tenant. So, I think, in constructing or improving the Land Bill in committee, that due care should be taken to keep each power equally balanced, that none should have the predominance over the other, and that this House should not be under the direction of the agricultural tenant any more than under that of the pastoral tenant. I have stated, from past experience, that I would rather bear with the present, than a dominant power that might be created from a large agricultural tenantry. This is a matter that should be considered in committee. On the whole, I am prepared to support the Bill in its second reading, and, also, to support any clauses that may enable the people to take up land at a fixed rent, with the pre-emptive right of purchase. I think that the Bill may be conducive to the best interests of the colony, and will add to its prospects and advancement. With these remarks, I shall support the second reading.

Mr. COXEN said: He felt very unwell, and quite unfit to address the House on the important question before it; but still, with the permission of honorable members, he would venture to make a few remarks before the second reading of the Bill. He might say, at once, that he was somewhat disappointed with the Bill, and regretted that it had not been introduced earlier, and placed sooner on the table of the House than it had been. A great deal had been said as to the introduction of leasing clauses into the measure, and he should have wished to have understood the nature of them, and to have spoken more fully on the subject. He fully agreed with what had fallen from the honorable member for South Brisbane, Mr. Stephens, that a liberal leasing clause would be of great benefit to the colonists, generally, and more particularly to those engaged in agriculture. It was needless for him to state to the House that agricultural products should form a great staple of the colony. When a large amount of money was constantly paid out from the colony to other colonies for agricultural produce, all would admit such was not a sound state of things. The climate of

Queensland was adapted to the growth of cereals, and the soil was rich, so that all requisite produce might be grown in the colony. If, then, proper inducements were held out to agriculture, this evil would cease to be in the future; but it would continue, if such clauses were not introduced into the Bill as would render the obtaining of land easier than it was at the present time. A rental of two shillings, or more, had been spoken of by the honorable member for South Brisbane, as a fair price for land. He (Mr. Coxen) did not advocate the principle laid down by that gentleman, that the whole of the money paid as rent should be taken as payment for the fee-simple of the land. He thought that a portion—say five per cent., or, at least, some part—should be deducted as interest for the money, which would be accumulating for the ten years. A clause ought to be introduced to meet that view, and another clause such as would call the attention of the small agriculturist, would be of great benefit. He did not feel very clear about the proposed sliding scale of prices for Crown lands, but he was satisfied that there were very large areas in the colony not worth one pound an acre, and many portions not worth anything at all. It was very difficult to handle this subject, but he hardly thought that they were in such a state that they ought to reduce the price of land. Yet, he thought a time might come for that in those districts that could not be used for agricultural purposes. The subject of squatting laws was out of place in a discussion upon this measure, but, as it had been mentioned, he would like to add a few remarks to what had already fallen from honorable members. He was then quite prepared to support a measure—if introduced by the Government, or some independent member, or even a northern member—for extending the leases of pastoral tenants of the Crown in some outside districts of the north and west. He thought the leases might be extended without any injury to the colony, but care should be taken that all lands, suitable for agricultural purposes, and likely to be required, should be kept available; while the whole district on this side of the Main Range would be required for cultivation, and should, therefore, be excluded from any extended leases.

Mr. GROOM said: Representing as he did a constituency that was vitally interested in the settlement of the Crown lands and laws of the colony, he would scarcely like to give a silent vote on the present occasion. He was the more inclined to address a few observations to the House, because this was a question that was looked forward to with much interest by the public generally, but more especially by his own constituents. He hoped, therefore, that this session would not pass over without the laws affecting the land being settled upon some distinct and definite basis. His constituents took a great interest

in this question, and they had had several meetings to discuss it—he was aware that some would treat these meetings with indifference, yet he hoped the time would not come when the views expressed by the public in their meetings, or in petitions to the House, would be disregarded by that House or the Government of the colony. Doubtless, a great diversity of opinion existed, and would continue to exist, concerning the right settlement of the land question in this colony. It had been, and was so in South Australia, in Victoria, and in New South Wales, and thus it would be a remarkable circumstance, indeed, if the present or any other Government whatever could introduce a Land Bill that would satisfy every honorable member, or meet with the general concurrence of the public out of doors. Now, when they found such a diversity of feeling and opinion, it was worthy of consideration whether honorable gentlemen should not be calm and deliberate in the discussion of this question. He regretted extremely the speech of the honorable member for Maryborough upon the measure before the House. He (Mr. Groom) always paid very great attention to the observations of that honorable gentleman, because he truly believed him to be honest and sincere in his intentions; and he thought that no motion of his was ever brought forward but upon the best and purest motives. But that gentleman had, by his speech, proved himself the most injudicious adviser the honorable gentlemen opposite could have put forward. In reference to the Bill, he did not go so far as to say that it would please all sections of the community. The head of the Government, or the popular Minister (as he had been designated—and, perhaps, truly—by the honorable member for Maryborough), would indeed have been a most illustrious person, if he had brought forward a Land Bill that would have satisfied all parties, without meeting with some objections to it. The speech of the honorable member for Maryborough was a speech neither against the Bill, nor a speech in favor of it; and while advocating the claims of those on his side, he had done more injury to their cause than any other honorable member who had yet addressed that House. The honorable member had denounced the Bill as a sham, and a shame to the public generally, and to the agriculturists in particular. But that was simply assertion, and he had yet to learn in what way it was so. His statements were mere declamations, and would not satisfy honorable gentlemen that the Bill did meet the requirements of both. If the honorable member had backed his assertions with anything like proofs, he (Mr. Groom) might, perhaps, have been disposed to go with him. The general measure was designated by him as a measure of "class legislation," and some of the clauses called "tyrannical." He (Mr. Groom) must confess that the measure was not of that

class or nature, and he had yet to learn that it was. He had gone carefully through the Bill, clause by clause, and had listened carefully to all that had been said about it; and he thought the Speaker would agree with him, that the debate had been unsurpassed in that House, and was one of great interest. It was perfectly true, that the Bill did not deal with the squatting tenure, but the honorable gentleman, the Minister for Lands and Works, had distinctly stated that it was simply intended to deal with the alienation of the Crown lands of the colony, without touching upon the other question at all. When the leader of the Opposition addressed the House in this debate, they were informed that it was a hybrid Bill, without any distinct or definite principles involved therein; and that there was nothing in it to satisfy that honorable gentleman, or the honorable members with whom he was associated; and the honorable member, Mr. Pring, added, that he or they were prepared to bring forward a measure that would embody "a comprehensive Land Bill." Now, as they had been informed that the resolutions of those gentlemen had already been repudiated or withdrawn, it would perhaps be scarcely fair to allude to them any further on the present occasion. But yet those resolutions were before the country, distinctly and definitely, and if honorable members opposite had reason to complain of any expressions made use of in reference to them, they had themselves to blame, for they had arisen more on their own account than any others, in or out of the House. He (Mr. Groom) was told that such was not the case. Let them turn to resolution number four. He would read it, although he did not mean to say that it had not been withdrawn now; but such a proposition had been brought forward and had possibly been withdrawn; indeed, they were told so. He simply used and referred to these resolutions to bear out and justify observations which he had yet to make. One resolution stated that no blocks of less than six hundred and forty acres should be put up for sale, and the gentlemen who made those resolutions were to blame for the unkind expressions which had been used against them. But if those resolutions were really withdrawn, they were quite ready to settle the land question amicably. They might be sure that a majority of the people would resent any such proposition, as that for submitting reserves to a joint legislative committee, and an alteration of the upset price. They had heard a great deal about class legislation, and it had been said that all the Acts for agriculture had been for a class, to the detriment of other portions of the community. But he would ask: did not resolution number seven partake largely of a class character, proposing that pastoral lands should be sold at a price not exceeding five shillings per acre, while the Government or a commission should have power to fix the price of suburban

land at £100 or £200? That was a clause of a very objectionable character, and would assuredly be objected to by the colony. He objected to the reduction of the upset price of land, at present. He had heard no sound argument yet in favor of such reduction, except, indeed, from a very long lecture delivered at Rockhampton. That argument was that, by reducing the price of land, the squatter would have freehold instead of leasehold. That was the only argument he had heard advanced in favor of the upset price of the Crown lands being fixed at five shillings per acre. They had heard a great deal about the colony of Victoria, from the honorable member for the Western Downs. As he did not wish to quote that gentleman incorrectly, he would read from what he had said in this debate; he had told this House that the greater part of the alienated land there, was going into the hands of the pastoral tenants of the Crown.

Mr. WATTS: No, no!

Mr. GROOM: He should be sorry to misquote the honorable gentleman, but such observations had been addressed to the House. Now, a report had been presented to the Victorian Legislature by His Excellency Brigadier-General Carey; it was prepared by Mr. Grant, and it would be seen, on referring to that, how far facts in that colony were from being as had been thus represented. That report proved the very reverse; and if any argument could be urged for leasing agricultural lands, the facts and figures adduced by the Minister for Lands in Victoria would prove sufficiently convincing. According to the—

“Statement of country lands, selected under the Amending Land Act, 1865, to the end of that year, there were ‘leased’ by 5,337 selectors an area of 1,546,237 acres, and the amount of the first instalment for a half-year of the lease, payable in advance, was £77,318, being an average area of 260 acres to each selector. Again, in the same tabular statement, they would find that the number of certificate holders was 1,573; the area leased by them, 280,978 acres; the amount of the first yearly instalment, payable in advance, was £35,129; the average area held by each being 179 acres: making a total of 6,919 persons, occupying an area of 1,827,235 acres, and giving a revenue of £112,447.”

Honorable members objected to these statements;—he was alluding to facts. The money could not be “dummies,” if they did say the selectors were, for it was actually paid into the Treasury. From this report it appeared that the leasing clauses in Victoria were attended with very great good. As to the settlement on the lands there and its extent, under the Act of 1865, as contrasted with the same under former Acts, more had been done for the permanent location of the people on the land than in any previous year. The report said—

“With respect to the extent of the settlement that has taken place under the provisions of this Act, as contrasted with the results obtained under

former Land Acts, there can be no question, that more has been done towards permanent location of the people on the lands of the colony, than any recent legislation has been enabled to effect.

“Under the Land Acts of 1860 and 1862, as shewn before, 1,883,000 acres of the most valuable lands of the colony, both from position and relative quality, were alienated by selection.

“From reliable information supplied to this department, it would appear that of this large area, at least 1,600,000 acres have fallen into the hands of the pastoral tenants on whose runs the lands were proclaimed open for selection, and that the lands so acquired remain to this day untouched by the plough.

“Under the auction system that prevailed up to 1860, 3,733,000 acres of country lands were alienated. The assessment returns of 1861 show that 651 pastoral tenants had acquired 1,935,301 acres in fee-simple, in connection with their runs. As an example of the working of that system, it may be stated, that in the western districts, forty individuals have obtained 890,000 acres, at an average price of £1 4s. per acre, in blocks ranging from 18,000 to 40,000 acres; and on these vast estates, no sound is heard but the bleating of flocks and herds.”

Now, there they had a distinct statement from a Minister of the Crown, which refutes the statement made by the honorable member for the Western Downs. With regard to the “dummies” mentioned by members opposite, they found from the same report the following:—

“Reports are received from all sides of the increased demand for fencing and building materials, with which the present saw-mill proprietors in the various forests are quite unprepared to keep pace.”

From that report, it was sufficiently clear that the introduction of leasing clauses had been productive of a very great amount of good in affecting the settlement of an agricultural population upon the lands of Victoria. In a financial point of view it had proved a very great success, for no less than £77,318 had been paid into the Treasury of that colony, which would not have been paid without those leasing clauses, or under the old Act. Much had been said by the honorable member for the Kennedy (he believed) about the evils of free selection, and why the Crown lands of New South Wales were not taken up. Now he would be able to shew that, twelve months ago, in a debate upon the land question there, so far from the land laws in Queensland being regarded with disfavor, they were looked upon in that colony as superior to those in New South Wales; and he thought, at all events, that the Parliament should follow on in the same course of legislation. He would read from the reports of the *Sydney Morning Herald*, for May 31, last year; and refer them to what had been said by Mr. Morrice. Mr. Morrice said—

“After the squatters had had the whole pick of the district, he could not see why the runs should not be had at a lower rate; and he did not see why they should not expect an extension of lease

for five years as well as the more remote tenants of the Crown. He did not think he should be acting fairly to the rising population of the colony if he consented to the tying up of these lands. Young men of means and good family were rising up, but they had to go to Queensland, and other places, because the lands were held in such immense tracts, and were consequently in so few hands. He was told that one gentleman held forty stations, and he would guarantee that they would average 100 square miles each. It was no wonder that squatting runs were so difficult to obtain. In his opinion, it would be much better, both for the country and for the revenue, if such large tracts of country were divided into smaller stations."

Now, these observations, delivered May 30, 1865, clearly shewed that our laws were considered liberal in New South Wales, and that many men of means were induced to speculate in Queensland for pastoral pursuits in preference to New South Wales. Honorable gentlemen had heard a great deal delivered to the House, in the course of a debate, in regard to the settlement of an agricultural population on the lands of this colony. It had been maintained that it would be a farce to expect this colony ever to support an agricultural population. He distinctly denied such a proposition; they had very large tracts of land adapted to agriculture, and it was a pursuit that would pay. On the contrary, numerous instances could be adduced to prove that agriculture, when properly conducted on a proper system, was payable in Queensland. He was, therefore, an advocate for the leasing clauses, and he altogether concurred with those honorable members who had addressed the House with regard to the restrictions put upon the agriculturists; which he thought should be removed as much as possible. He should, therefore, be prepared to support any clause sanctioning the leasing of lands for agricultural purposes. If it were possible for the Government to lay a return upon the table of the House of the number of persons who had applied to be relieved from the condition of fencing, imposed upon those in agricultural reserves, they would see how evil those restrictions were. Most of those persons had to spend all their capital for the purchase of their farms, and afterwards were compelled to mortgage their land to commence cultivation and to comply with the conditions imposed. He spoke on this matter from personal knowledge, and he had spoken the truth with regard to those persons. If they agreed with the proposition of the honorable member for South Brisbane, and, instead of buying, allowed agriculturists to lease land for seven or ten years, at a nominal rent of one or two shillings per acre, they would have their capital to expend in necessary improvements, and the Crown would be indemnified by the expenditure upon those improvements. For he felt certain that liberal leasing clauses would have the same good results here as in

Victoria. They had a large extent of land available, and was it not better that it should be taken at sixpence an acre, rather than that it should be lying idle? There were hundreds and thousands of acres perfectly idle, which would be occupied by hundreds of persons under lease. Whatever might be said of the productive capabilities of the eastern portions of the Main Range, he firmly believed that the western slopes of the Range were the best, and contained a large tract of country, well watered and adapted to the growth of any particular cereal, or product of the mother country. If that House would assent to clauses leasing these lands, with the right of pre-emption, not only would the colony at large be benefited, but the occupants, by a revenue from lands which were at the present time lying idle. He regretted to hear the honorable member for West Moreton, Mr. Herbert, deprecate the claims of different towns to commonage. In Victoria there were five or ten; in New South Wales the same privilege existed, and, before Separation, had extended to the town of Warwick, which had its commonage rights to the present time. He might observe, in speaking of this subject, that nothing had tended so much to bring about antagonism to the squatter as the system of impounding. And that originated because there was no commonage in the colony, except to Drayton and Toowoomba. Working bullocks and horses had been impounded by squatters, and being released were impounded afresh. It was true that this was not carried on now so much as was formerly the case, as the owners of runs had stopped this practise of their superintendents. Now, the granting of commonage to the several towns would do away with a large amount of impounding that was carried on in the interior. He would ask: if lands were to be sold, and if they made railways, but declined to make branch lines, what would become of the cattle bringing down produce to the railway? If they took Dalby, for example, without any commonage, and the carrier from Roma, the Condamine, and Goondiwindi, with the general knowledge which prevailed that the railway was to stop at Dalby for years to come, they would find land selling at a ridiculously high rate, as much as £500 for a quarter of an acre. What carrier could buy land for paddocks at so high a price? Why should not large areas be set aside for such purposes, in Dalby, at all events? With Drayton and Toowoomba they would have some difficulty, because a large area of land had already been alienated and taken up in those places. But in Dalby, Roma, and such places, there could be no reasonable objection to large commonages being granted to the inhabitants. He had been surprised at the observations made upon commonage by the honorable member for West Moreton, because they shewed a want of knowledge of the interior, to depreciate the system of commonage. He

had previously given that honorable gentleman credit for a greater knowledge of the wants of the population in the interior than, from those observations, he appeared to have. With regard to the Bill, generally, he was prepared to give a cordial support to the Government, but, at the same time, he wished to state that, if the amendments which were proposed by honorable gentlemen opposite proved of a character not prejudicial to the rest of the colony, he would almost give them his promise to support them. The feeling of antagonism between classes should be set aside, and done away with. He did not wish any member of the House to suppose that his constituency of Drayton and Toowoomba was of so rapid a character, as that they would seek to debar the pastoral tenant from any just privileges, while seeking the same for the farmer. Every facility, he thought, should be placed in the way of pastoral occupants. He was quite prepared to support measures with that object for the outside squatters. The inside squatters had possessed advantages over the former, who might be regarded as pioneer squatters. Any amendments, therefore, which would tend to their advantage he should be disposed to support, and not to offer any factious opposition to their introduction. He would not, however, vote for any extension of fourteen years' leases, nor agree to the reduction of the upset price of one pound per acre; while he should be prepared to give a general and hearty support to the Bill then before the House.

Mr. WATTS rose to make an explanation of what he had said as to the position of agriculture in Victoria. He would do so by reading what he really had said:—

"I shall prove that, although a large quantity of land has been alienated in Victoria, I presume for the specific purpose desired by the honorable member, namely, for agricultural purposes only. That land is now used for pastoral purposes. What has been the result of alienating land solely for agricultural purposes in the colony of Victoria? Why, agriculture has been tried and has failed, and the land alienated for that purpose has been resumed for pastoral purposes. The paddocks, which had been used for cultivating cereals, are now used for fattening sheep."

And he would wish that to be taken with his quotation of facts, collected from the statistical returns of Victoria:—

"The progress of cultivation in Victoria is not cheering. Out of 6,125,000 acres purchased or rented from the Crown, only 479,460 acres are under cultivation; or, 28,335 acres less than in the year preceding. The acreage under wheat was less than at any period since 1859, and was actually less by 71,800 acres than in 1861. This is an alarming state of facts, and demands close investigation. Are we really to understand that corn growing cannot be carried on with profit? or, is the depressing influence to be attributed to circumstances capable of amelioration? The quantity of wheat grown in 1864 was 1,700,000 bushels less than in 1861."

Now, those quotations went to prove that the lands, intended for cereals, were turned into grazing paddocks again, and occupied solely for the fattening of stock.

Mr. GROOM explained that the grazing paddocks alluded to were those occupied owing to the redundancy of population. It was far better to fence and let out such paddocks at sixpence per acre for the purpose of fattening cattle. That was what the honorable member referred to.

Mr. PALMER said that, in the few observations he should make to the House before the Bill went to a second reading, he would endeavor to confine himself to the Bill and his objections to the Bill. Before doing so, however, he might be allowed to observe that the resolutions submitted by the honorable members on his side of the House had been very unfairly quoted by the last speaker. When asked to quote the whole of them, that honorable member might have been fair enough to do so; instead of that, he had referred only to the right of the lessee of the land. The squatters, it would be seen, had no desire to keep all the lands to themselves. But one of the clauses was that the Government should be allowed to make large reserves, not for agriculture, indeed, because he did not believe in it; and also, that land should be sold at an upset price of five shillings an acre. That honorable gentleman should quote fairly, and also from what preceded in the context. Having said thus much, he would endeavor to do what he wished honorable members would do—confine themselves to the Bill. He had considerable objections to the Bill. It was not an attempt to legislate for the whole colony so much as for the interests of a small portion. It did appear to him that every man almost who had dealt with the question, whether in the House or outside of the House, was always talking about the Darling Downs and East Moreton, while the whole of the rest of the colony was thought nothing at all about. Every member had been talking of the whole colony as if it were Darling Downs. He had noticed that the north and west had no part in this interest. That was just as if it were a term of reproach to be a northern member, for all the districts outside the two were called northern districts. He looked for justice to the north and west only from the fears of that House. They were growing very fast, and would very soon be ready to take their just rights for themselves. It was very well known, that in the north and west of the colony agriculture was totally out of the question. He, and others who acted with him, were of opinion that no man could live on or by it. No man fifty miles out of a township, and away from it, in the northern and western districts, could do so. One of the chief objects his side had in view, when proposing these large reserves, was to enable a man taking up land to combine agriculture with pasturage, so as to feed a small flock or

herd with or without agriculture, as he chose, for his own benefit. If he chose to go in for agriculture, he ought to be allowed to purchase land to suit his requirements, so long as he did not become a public nuisance. As to the alienation of Crown lands, the question to be considered was not the amount of money to be derived from the sale of the land, as the amount of revenue to be derived from the people settling upon that land. That was, he thought, one of the first principles of political economy, although he could not speak of his old friend, Adam Smith, as some honorable gentleman had done. It had been said that the squatters were selfish, and proposed by their measures to benefit themselves, and that they would go in for the purchase of large tracts of land for their own ends, to feed sheep upon. He denied that, for it would not pay to buy land to feed sheep upon in any part of the colony, with the prospect of having interest on the high price of one pound an acre. The very idea was absurd, except, perhaps, on the Darling Downs, the pet place of that Assembly; and even there it was impossible to realise the interest. But if any man chose to buy land, neither he, nor they, nor the Government, nor anybody else, had any right to prevent him from buying and doing what he liked with it. When bought, he had a right to do with the land as he liked, and it was his business only. As to the restrictions endeavored to be placed upon the purchase of land, he thought them useless and quite out of the question. The Government of this colony were the great monopolists of land; and though they were, unhappily, heavily in debt, it appeared to him an absurdity that the Government, with millions of acres to dispose of, should prefer to go further into debt and pay heavy interest, and, waiting till the lands became worth one pound an acre, keep them for a future generation, rather than sell them at once and pay off the principal. Those who bought the land could not take it away with them; it would be still there for a future generation, and a great deal of it always in the market for ages to come, to be bought, perhaps on easier terms than they could get themselves. It was, however, a matter that would work its own cure. He believed that public opinion was already at work on this question, more than it had been at any time before on any public matter. The principle of alienating the Crown lands at a low rate was making enormous strides among the people, and he confessed that he had been astonished at the success of its progress already. It had found friends in quarters never anticipated by its promoters, and in a few years its influence would be felt, and the Government would be called upon by the public to untie the hands of the buyer. He had taken an interest in the management of this subject; and the Government would have to give way. He had no doubt whatever

of the future success of the movement. He had another great objection to the Bill: it placed too much power in the hands of the Minister for Lands for the time being. Such power was too great, and should not be placed in the hands of any man. He cared not for the character of the Minister at all, it was too great a power for him to wield. He had great faith in the present Minister for Lands, and he was sure that honorable gentleman would not do anything reprehensible. That honorable gentleman, as an honest man, should look to it himself, and get rid of the power, and put it in the hands of another body. Under no less than fourteen clauses of that Act, the whole power of dealing with the land was left in the hands of that Minister, and not a syllable said of the Executive. That was very improper; and he had no doubt the honorable Minister for Lands would be the very first, in committee, to throw that power out of the hands of the Minister of the day. As to the leasing clauses, which it was proposed should be introduced into the Bill, he would say that, under proper regulations, he had no objection to them. He thought agriculturalists should have every facility and power under them, on very liberal terms, to lease land. He thought it would be only right that, if the price of one pound an acre were put upon the land, and a rent of two shillings an acre were charged upon it for ten years, the occupant should have the fee-simple at the end of that period. As to the clauses relating to agricultural reserves, he thought they were a great deal too strict already. He thought, if a man purchased land, there should be no restrictions whatever—with the single exception of compelling him to fence it, and not to allow it to get overrun with thistles or burr. Again, in the agricultural reserves clause, he had another objection, and that was to the residence clause. He could not see why a person living in town should not be allowed to take up a piece of land without being obliged to reside upon it. There were many persons who could not leave their business, but who were anxious to make a home for themselves in their old age—an object which most men had in view; and there was no way, under the Bill before the House, for them to obtain a piece of land without being compelled to reside upon it, and become mere serfs of the soil. As to the commonage clause, he looked upon it simply as a robbery. It proposed to take away from one tenant of the Crown, without any compensation, a quantity of land, and divide it among others, not tenants of the Crown, who paid nothing whatever for it. That would be a dead loss to the revenue. He perfectly concurred in the opinion expressed by the honorable member for West Moreton, Mr. Herbert, that it was the very worst thing that could be done to make these commonages. He (Mr. Palmer) could speak from his own experience on the subject; and he had found it to be the case, that men

who had no runs of their own became possessed of horses and cattle which they turned out upon these commonages, and that those horses and cattle wandered over the neighboring runs, and became a great nuisance. A great deal had been said in the House about the Queensland Land League, which was started in Rockhampton; and he must remark that most honorable members who had spoken on the subject had shown that they understood very little about it. The speech of the honorable member for South Brisbane, Mr. Stephens, who had expressed himself a strong opponent of that league, was, in his opinion, one of the strongest arguments in its favor. That honorable gentleman had avowed himself an opponent of the Land League because, to his mind, it did not offer any encouragement to agriculturists; but it was clear, nevertheless, from what the honorable member had stated, that he agreed with many of its principles. The only resolution to which he need refer, from the prospectus put forth by the Land League, was the sixth:—

“That, in reviewing what has been published in the pamphlet of 31st January, 1866, as the basis of a law for effecting the alienation of Crown lands, the members of the Land League bind themselves merely to the principle of alienation there laid down, reserving the right of opposing and altering the details.”

He fully indorsed every word that had fallen from the honorable member for West Moreton, Mr. Herbert, whose speech that evening had, in his opinion, been the best yet delivered upon the subject. The main principle advocated by the Land League was the alienation of land at the lowest possible price. They could have no possible objection to the leasing of land as shadowed forth by the honorable member for South Brisbane, Mr. Stephens. A great deal that he (Mr. Palmer) had intended to have said had already been well expressed by other honorable members. He repeated that he endorsed every word which had been said by the honorable member for West Moreton, Mr. Herbert, and he believed, with him, that the Bill might be made a good measure in committee. If the honorable the Premier, in his reply, would give the House some idea of the amendments the Government were prepared to submit to, he could answer for himself—and, he believed, for other honorable members on his side of the House—that they would be prepared to meet the Government in a liberal spirit, and, as far as they could, to make the Bill such a measure as would further the interests of the country at large.

Mr. MILES stated that it was not his intention to take up the time of the House long, as nearly all that could be said upon the subject had been already said. When the Bill before the House had been introduced by the Minister for Lands and Works, that gentleman had stated that it was a question of the utmost importance. He

perfectly agreed with that statement, and was of opinion that no question of greater importance than that of dealing with the public lands could come before the House. He must, however, confess, that in looking over the Bill he had felt very much disappointed. He had read it over, and bestowed much attention upon it, and he did not see one redeeming feature in it, and he could not cordially agree with a single clause it contained. He considered the price of one pound an acre as the most obnoxious principle in the Bill—that was, in his opinion, the great objection to it. There was another great objection, and that was, that the Bill was hampered with conditions. If the high price of one pound an acre were kept up, and the purchaser paid the full value, why should he be fettered with restrictions? He could quite understand, if the land were to be alienated at a low price, the justice in surrounding the purchaser with certain conditions; but to adhere to such a suicidal principle, when such a price as one pound an acre was paid for the land, would be, in his opinion, virtually to prevent any persons from becoming occupants of the public lands. Then, again, it must be patent to every one, that the disposal of the land at such a high price, and with such conditions, would compel an agriculturist by Act of Parliament to do that which he would not do of his own accord; and he (Mr. Miles) did not think it was right, in disposing of the land, to take into consideration the question, whether it would be profitable to the occupant or not. That might very well be left to the purchaser of the land, and he should be at perfect liberty to embark in any pursuit he chose. They had no right to argue the question, whether squatting or agricultural pursuits were the most profitable; that was a question which should be left to the parties themselves. He maintained that no Act of Parliament should compel a man to do that which did not pay him to do. Allusion had been made to some leasing clauses. With regard to leasing land for agricultural purposes, he must confess he was not so sure that it would work well. He thought it would bring about a sort of Irish tenant system—that, in fact, it would place the Minister for Lands and Works in the position of an Irish landlord, and he (Mr. Miles) had some doubts whether, if the honorable member attempted to eject persons from their holdings, who might be in arrears with their rent, he would not be very roughly handled. He did not, however, say that it might not be desirable to make a trial of such a system, with conditions. He would place the agriculturists, in that respect, in the same position as the squatters, and ask them to pay a certain sum in advance, and if they could not pay he would give them time, he would give them a limit of, say, ninety days—in fact, he would afford them every facility. It would be found that the squatters did not take up their land without being obliged to

adhere to certain conditions. If a person wanted to go out into the wilds of the country, take up land and subdue the blacks, and render the land productive, he must, in the first place, go to the Commissioner of Crown Lands, and declare that his country was stocked, which might cost him a great deal of money. He should like to know what security was offered by the agriculturist as a guarantee that he would make good use of his land? However, he would waive that objection to the Bill. He thought it would be well to give the system a trial, at any rate, with certain conditions—that the purchaser should pay a certain rent annually, say for ten years, and at the end of the time have the fee-simple of the land. He should have felt inclined to have called for a division upon the Bill, had it not been for the remarks made by the honorable member for West Moreton, Mr. Herbert, who had stated, from his own knowledge, that there was a certain amount of capital which was lying idle until the question was settled. He (Mr. Miles) was aware that that was the case. There were men in his own employ, who were possessed of considerable means, which they would take the opportunity of investing if the Bill were passed. For the reasons he had stated, he should not call for a division, but he hoped that, when the Bill went into committee, such improvements would be made in it as would render it a workable measure, which at present he did not consider it to be.

Mr. HARDEN said he felt that the Bill before the House was one of vast importance, and that everyone should give an expression to his opinions, for upon that Bill rested to a certain extent the future greatness of the colony. It had been stated in other parts of the world that Queensland offered the most liberal terms to squatters, as well as to agriculturists, and it was the duty of the House to see that such assertions were not groundless. Several objections had been urged against the Bill, and he concurred in the objection that, if the Bill passed in its present condition, too much power would be vested in the Minister for Lands and Works in declaring agricultural reserves. On that point, some little alteration should be made. He thought, also, that certain clauses in the Bill approximated too closely to the land laws in Victoria and New South Wales, which were decidedly detrimental to the welfare of those colonies. If the House could produce a liberal Land Bill, to meet both agriculturists and squatters, they would induce capitalists to come to Queensland, not only from other colonies, but from home. So far as he was concerned, he felt that his constituents had no interest in the Bill, as it would be many years before agricultural reserves would be proclaimed in the district he represented. He should be delighted to see a Bill framed which would meet both squatters and agriculturists, and advance the general welfare

of the colony. With a liberal land law, they could induce capitalists to come to the colony and invest their money. He did not think, however, that he could say much more upon the subject than had already been said, and he felt sure that, when the Bill was in committee, it might be so framed as to meet the wishes of all parties.

Mr. DAVIS said he had heard a good deal about a leasing clause for agriculturists, but no one had yet said how the rent was to be collected from them. It was easy to collect the rent from the squatters, because they could always be found; but the small farmers, who worked the land themselves, would work it out, and away they would go. He contended that it would be far better to let them have the land in fee-simple at five shillings, or even half-a-crown, an acre, than to allow them to take up land on lease in the manner proposed.

Mr. ROYDS: Sir—The greatest objection to the motion before the House appears to me to lie in the few arguments which have been adduced in its favor in the course of this debate. I have listened to a great many arguments against certain resolutions which are supposed to be advocated by the squatters, and certain alleged wants which do not exist, but I have heard scarcely any argument in support of the Bill. Honorable members who have supported it, in alluding to the upset price, have spoken of the land as if it were in every way suitable for agricultural purposes, and have utterly ignored the fact that there are thousands and thousands of acres which are no more adapted for agricultural purposes than the floor of this House—which would never yield any return for the money which might be expended upon them. In fact, with regard to this Bill, I may say that I have heard a gentleman, who I believe to be as sound a judge upon the land question as any person in this colony, call the Bill a "Crown Lands Sale Prevention Bill," and I think that is a very good term for it. A great deal has been said about the power which would be placed in the hands of the Minister for Lands, and I must say I quite agree with the honorable members who have urged that objection to the Bill; and I will appeal to the honorable the Premier, and ask him whether he is not of the same opinion? If he is not now, he was not very long ago, for I find that the honorable gentleman, when speaking upon the land question, in 1860, is reported to have said:—

"The Bill proposed placed too much power in the hands of the Executive, in granting it authority to proclaim what lands shall be reserved from the auction system."

Now, sir, I perfectly agree with that remark of the honorable the Premier, and although the honorable gentleman has no doubt by this time forgotten it, I believe he is of the same opinion still. There are several other points in which I am sure the honorable gentleman, in those days, at least, agreed with us in reference to

the reduction of the upset price of land. But I know perfectly well what effect change of climate will produce upon honorable members; the climate on this side of the House is very different from that on the Government side, and I am ready to make every allowance for the difference. The honorable gentleman also stated, in reference to what had been advanced by the Colonial Secretary, that—

“The honorable gentleman had stated that to lower the price of land would not conduce to the settlement of the country; and he had instanced the fact in support of his argument that the Victorian Government had given over importing emigrants at the public expense. This fact went against, instead of in favor of, the argument; for, if with an upset price of one pound per acre it was found unnecessary to import labor, or to offer a free passage to emigrants from Europe, surely much less would such a course be necessary if the land were reduced in price to five shillings an acre.”

We have been favored with a number of quotations from Stuart Mill and Adam Smith; and I am now referring to a publication far better known in this colony—the *Brisbane Courier*. The honorable gentleman proceeded to say:—

“In Queensland the settlement of the land question was everything, and upon it depended the future prosperity of the country.”

He could not have spoken better. He also said:—

“He would like to see such a measure passed as would enable the Government to say to the people of England, ‘Here is land in abundance, offered on liberal terms; come and occupy it.’”

Further on, the honorable gentleman stated that—

“The reservation of agricultural areas would tend to prevent rather than promote the settlement of the country.”

The SECRETARY FOR LANDS AND WORKS: Is the honorable member quoting from a speech of mine?

Mr. ROYDS: I am.

The SECRETARY FOR LANDS AND WORKS: In which I expressed myself in favor of land at five shillings an acre?

Mr. ROYDS: It is so stated in the *Courier's* report. Change of climate, no doubt, occasionally has also an effect upon the memory. There is another honorable member of this House, who, I am sorry to say, has not spoken during this debate, because I should have been glad to hear his opinion upon the question before the House—I mean the honorable and learned Attorney-General. That honorable gentleman had also undergone a change of climate: he then sat on this side of the House, and he is, no doubt, a high authority on the subject. I may here observe that one of the great recommendations advanced in favor of this Bill is, that it is, to a great extent, a transcript of previous Bills—of this very Bill of 1860. Now the honorable and learned member for Fortitude Valley, in

speaking upon this question, is reported to have said that—

“He thought the Government might have saved them the discussion of this Bill; it was nothing more than a compilation of exploded ideas.”

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: That did not apply to the Bill which passed through this House.

Mr. ROYDS: I believe he does not apply that term to this Bill. And then he goes on to say:—

“The Colonial Secretary had told them that the Government held the lands in trust for the people; but was it just to the people to keep the lands in their hands for ever? As trustees, did they not think it would be wise to let out the land in such a way as to make it most productive? They were also told, too, that by reducing the price of land the value of property would be depreciated. Was it not a well-known fact, in all parts of the world, that the more people purchased and settled on the land the greater the value became? They had been reminded that the maintenance of the existing high price was necessary, as a matter of justice to the existing population. But he contended that the reduction of the price was the very best thing that could possibly happen for the present population, inasmuch as it would relieve the towns, by inducing people to go into the country for the purposes of settling.”

I think that is as good an argument as I have heard for the reduction of the price of land, and I am extremely obliged to the honorable and learned member for introducing it. To continue the quotation, the honorable member goes on to say—

“It had been said, on the other hand, that the land would fetch one pound; but, he would ask, was it at all likely that people would give one pound for land here which they could get elsewhere for five shillings?”

I was sorry to hear one honorable member who spoke this evening—the honorable member for Warrego, Mr. Forbes—oppose the system of mixed agriculture and pasturage, because I am quite sure that, if he thought over it a little more, he would hold a different opinion. I read, not long ago, the evidence taken before a select committee in the colony of New South Wales, and there a Mr. Oxley, a gentleman of great experience, who had been for a number of years engaged in the cultivation of land, was obliged to abandon the pursuit because he could not make it pay; and he stated, as the result of his experience, that if a system of mixed agricultural and pastoral farming were adopted, he should be able to make a profit out of the land, which he had not previously done. He, also, in those days, was in favor of five shillings an acre, and he was opposed to the placing such extreme power in the hands of the Minister for Lands. He said—

“He did not think that the power of selecting these reserves should be left in the hands of any Government. When people could get land for one quarter the amount in America, and else-

where, it was not likely that they would come here to purchase land."

With regard to this mixed system, several instances have occurred which have confirmed my belief that its introduction would be very beneficial in this colony. About three years ago, a gentleman who had a large family came to this colony with the intention of investing capital in the purchase of land; he had some £5,000 or £6,000, and from the fact that he had his family with him, he did not desire to go into the interior to enter upon squatting pursuits, and was anxious to purchase a couple of thousand acres of land in the settled portion of the colony for agricultural purposes. But this he could not do, and the consequence was that he left the colony. I can mention other cases. I know two or three other gentlemen, one of whom has been in the colony twelve or fourteen years, and has managed to save some money; I know another person in the same position. These gentlemen were anxious, also, to invest in land, and were prepared to pay some £6,000 or £8,000 in cultivating it, and to have a combined agricultural and pastoral farm. But they were unable to obtain the land, and I do not know what they are going to do. Possibly they may take their capital out of the country. With regard to the commonages, I think this Bill carries the system too far. I believe that around large towns these commonages may be necessary, but not to such an extent as the Bill provides. The honorable member for Drayton and Toowoomba made some allusion to the squatters impounding stock, and said that the poor man's cow was in danger of being impounded. But, sir, it is not the cow or the working bullock belonging to the poor man which causes the impounding; it is the stock belonging to the inhabitants of the towns—some of whom have as many as 400 or 500 head of cattle—which stray on to the adjoining runs of the squatters and get impounded, and it is very possible that the poor man's cow may suffer with them. As a case in point, I will mention Warwick. I know persons living there who have 600 or 800 head of cattle, and I believe it is the same in Toowoomba. These people pay nothing for the pasturage of their stock, and it is not to be expected that their cattle are to graze upon other persons' runs. I do not think, sir, there need be so much fear entertained of speculators, if there is plenty of land kept in the market. When that is the case no one will go to a speculator in land, when he can go and buy the land at first hand from the Government. I think the system of leasing may be carried on to a certain extent, and I certainly agree in the principle enunciated by the honorable member for South Brisbane, Mr. Stephens, and the honorable member for Port Curtis, Mr. Palmer, of allowing the holders of the land to pay the price of the land by degrees, and charging a rent of about two shillings and

sixpence an acre, for, say, ten years, so that the price of the land would be paid, with about five per cent. added. If the land, as has been proposed, were leased at sixpence an acre, it would do away altogether with *bond fide* cash purchasers; for no one would buy land at one pound an acre when he could lease it at two and a half per cent. They would always be able to borrow money at eight per cent., and they would lease instead of buy; the consequence would be, that a very small revenue would be derived from the sale of land for a number of years. Five shillings an acre, with compound interest added, in ten years, would be equal to one pound an acre. Where, then, is the advantage of withholding it from sale? To withhold the land from sale until it fetches one pound an acre appears to me just about as wise as it would be to withhold the sale of land in the townships until it reached a high price. It would be as just to say that the Government were wrong in selling land in South Brisbane at eight pounds an acre, or whatever it was sold for, because it is now worth £500 or £1,000. With regard to our public security, it is said, that if we reduce the price of land we shall take away the only security for the public debt. Well, if so,—if the land is not worth one pound an acre, are we to go on borrowing money on false pretences? I say, the sooner we put things straight the better, and let the public creditor know what the land is really worth. Another argument has been adduced: We were told the other day, by the honorable Secretary for Lands and Works, that if we did not vote a certain sum of money, there would be 30,000 people thrown out of employment. Now, the honorable gentleman has told us, that we are not likely, for some time, at least, to enter upon any very important works, after those which are now in progress are completed; and I should like to ask him what we are to do with these men? If we can offer them lands to settle upon, at a moderate price, would not that be a way of meeting the difficulty, and keeping all this bone and sinew in the colony, instead of allowing them to go away to the other colonies to be employed upon works of a similar nature? As to the upset price of lands, I think they might very well be classified, and that some boundaries should be defined, and that certain lands worth one pound an acre should only be alienated at that price, but that other lands of less value should be sold at a proportionally lower rate. It comes to this: that unless some such scale be adopted there will be no lands sold at all in some districts. I shall not, sir, oppose the second reading of this Bill, as I believe it may be considerably amended in committee.

Mr. SANDEMAN: Sir—After all that has been said upon this important subject, I am sorry to prolong the debate by speaking at any length to the question before the House. But, sir, when matters are discussed which

so largely affect both the present and the future of this colony, it is impossible for me to be silent. I regret to observe that, in the course of this debate, the old feeling of antagonism between the towns and the Crown tenants has been revived. It would almost appear that some honorable members considered it a crime on the part of the representatives of the pastoral interests to do their duty to their constituencies. We are here, sir, for the purpose of defending those interests, to the best of our ability; and because we have attempted to do so, we have been taunted with imputations that we are actuated by motives of a selfish character. I regret that so much has been said on this subject by certain honorable members who, I am sorry to see, make a point, whenever questions are introduced into this House affecting the pastoral interests of the colony, to retort upon honorable members who represent those interests in the way to which I have alluded. It is a great pity, because it tends to foster a party feeling which ought not to attend the consideration of a subject of such general importance. There is no subject that has assumed such an important bearing upon the best interests of the country, or upon which so much could be said as on this, and I feel that in approaching it I do so at great disadvantage, because I belong to that section in this House who represent that unfortunately proscribed portion of the body politic of the country, who are denounced as caring for nothing but their own peculiar interests. The course which I have been compelled to take during this session, I have taken, not from choice, but of necessity. My opposition to the present Government has been founded, not only upon their recent railway policy, but upon their policy on the important question we are now discussing—a question which I consider to be the pivot upon which the prosperity of this country really turns. Doubtless, a great deal that is irrelevant to the question at issue has been said, and if, in the few remarks which I think it my duty to make, I may diverge from the strict line of debate, or may have to refer to what has already been stated, I must claim the indulgence of the House; because, in reference to this question, I happen to stand in rather a peculiar position. As one of the representatives of pastoral constituencies, I have been held forth to the public by a section of the press, as having taken a very prominent part in it; and I believe that the opprobrium which has been cast upon the representatives of those constituencies has been called forth by the distorted and perverted manner in which the real sentiments entertained by those honorable members have been conveyed to the country. Sir, if I had been in this country at the time the original Land Acts were passed, and had had the honor of a seat in this House, there are many provisions to which I should have objected. And having more recently had an

opportunity of taking up a position which enables me to express my opinions upon such an important subject, and of acting upon those opinions, I have felt it my duty to refer to many things which ought not to have taken place in the past history of the land question. I believe that the outlying districts of this colony were never scarcely partially represented until the passing of the Additional Members Act, the session before last. Their interests were never understood, and it was not until, by the exertions of the pastoral members, that a great deal of pressure was brought to bear upon the convictions of a certain section of of this House, that it was admitted to be, not only desirable, but necessary, to represent those districts. Some time after that Act came into operation, and a somewhat fairer representation had been introduced into this House, it was found necessary to take action to relieve the outlying districts. On that occasion, the members representing pastoral constituencies met and agreed to certain resolutions of a general and most important nature, which were laid before the Government. The Ministry did not, apparently, concur fully in the views which we laid before them; but we were promised by the honorable Secretary for Lands and Works a comprehensive Land Bill. We relied upon that promise; and to the faith placed in that promise, I believe the Ministers were mainly indebted, or in a great measure indebted, for the support which enabled them to carry on the Government. But for that pledge, on the part of the Government, action might have been taken which would have jeopardized their position. Relying upon their good faith, we supported them, and we expected this session that their promise would have been fulfilled. But what has been the result? We find a Land Bill placed before us which—instead of being an embodiment of the views we endeavored to lay before the Government, and the Government promised to entertain—is a mere apology for a Land Bill, and has created nothing but disappointment. Dissatisfied, in the extreme, at the breach of good faith which had been perpetrated, the members representing the pastoral constituencies, generally, met again this session, and passed certain resolutions, with which we waited upon the Minister for Lands and Works. Special care was taken that our views should be reported, which was a matter of great gratification to us, because there was nothing in our views which we desired to conceal: on the contrary, we wished to make them as public as possible. We stated, upon that occasion, that the meeting had been hastily got up, but that we were prepared to modify our views, if the subject were taken into consideration by the Government in the way which we proposed. We proposed that a select committee of this House should be appointed to inquire

into, and report upon the whole question. That proposition was favorably received by the Government, and the honorable the Secretary for Lands and Works stated upon that occasion, that he thought, if the Bill were sent to a committee, the proposal should be made when the second reading came on. We were quite prepared to bow to that opinion, and we retired, believing that that course would be followed. We came down to this House, and that very evening the committee was moved for by the Secretary for Lands and Works, on the first reading of the Bill, notwithstanding the remonstrances made by honorable members, to the effect that certain representatives of pastoral constituencies, who were deeply interested in the question, being absent at that time, it was only fair and just to postpone the further discussion of the question, but we were compelled to submit to the decision of the Government, who carried their committee. Of that committee, I need say nothing, except that it was one most unworthy to be appointed upon a question of this kind. It was a committee composed of members of this House, whose opinions were well known to be opposed to the pastoral interests, and the views which their representatives considered it their duty to uphold. It was, in fact, what is commonly called "a packed committee." The result of that unfair treatment of us, was the formation of the present opposition to the Government. For that opposition, the Government have themselves to thank. Now, sir, a great deal has been said with regard to the resolutions which were submitted to the Government, but nothing has been said about the modified resolutions; and I beg to call the attention of the House to the fact, that we, in our proposition to the Government, stated that we were prepared to modify those resolutions. I have already stated that they were drawn up hastily. We stated that, on further consideration, we were prepared to meet the Government. It was certainly fair that we should not be the arbitrators on this question, but that the whole subject should be discussed, upon the evidence taken; the modified resolutions were of a very different nature to those sent forth to the public, and upon these we are prepared to stand or fall. I will read a few of them:—

"That the lessees of runs in the above districts shall be enabled to apply to have lands, not included in any reserves, put up for sale by public auction, in blocks of not less than \_\_\_\_\_ acres or exceeding \_\_\_\_\_ acres, at the upset price of one pound per acre.

"That, at the expiration of \_\_\_\_\_ from the time of putting up for sale by auction of any such blocks, any unsold blocks may be required to be again put up, as aforesaid, at one half the original upset price, and, in every succeeding period of \_\_\_\_\_, the same, or any then unsold blocks, may be again required to be put up, as aforesaid, and in every such succeeding period

of \_\_\_\_\_, the upset price shall be reduced by one half of the last preceding upset price, and shall be put up for sale as aforesaid.

"That all improvements, included in lands resumed by the Crown, shall be paid for at a price to be determined by valuation.

"That all lands in agricultural reserves shall be put up for sale at auction, at the upset price of five shillings per acre, and when purchased, shall be fenced in within two years from the date of the purchase.

"That the lessee of any run shall be allowed to purchase six hundred and forty acres round his head station, if the run shall be resumed, at the original price fixed under the pre-emptive right system, namely, one pound per acre without competition.

"That reserves sufficient for public requirements shall be made in every district, but no proposed reserves shall be proclaimed if both Houses concur in objecting.

"That all new leases shall be granted for a period not less than fourteen years.

"That all lands held under the above leases shall be subject to be re-valued every five years."

We have been charged with wishing to obtain the extension of leases at the original rates we are now paying; whereas, if the truth had been put forth to the public, it would be found that we did not wish the lands to be put up at the present rates, but at whatever value might be considered fair. And, further, as regarded the extension of the leases, we proposed—

"That in revaluing such lands allowance shall be made in respect of improvements made upon the same, purchases of any portions of the same, and reserves taken out of the same."

These are some of the modifications which we proposed to make in our original resolutions. In a former debate I was taunted in a very unbecoming manner by a section of the press and by certain honorable members of this House. Motives of a most unworthy nature have been imputed to me for my action in the land question, and, although not by name, I was referred to by the honorable member for Ipswich, Dr. Challinor, in that debate, to the following effect:—

"I may be permitted to refer to a report—which might come under the consideration of the House, if any extension is asked for of the five years' leases—that a gentleman holding large squatting properties in Queensland has sold a station conditionally upon the fourteen years' leases being granted. I am not prepared to say whether the condition affected the price to be paid for it, or whether it affected the fulfilment of the terms, either as a premium to be paid for carrying out the contract or otherwise. I am not prepared to say that it is true, but I am prepared to say that it is reported to be so."

When that honorable member was, very properly, taken to task by the honorable member for Maryborough, for the unworthy imputation implied, he attempted to evade the question by saying—

"I never said that any member of this House had sold his station under such circumstances. I simply stated that such a rumor existed."

Now, sir, the honorable the Colonial Secretary, in reference to "the report," was heard to exclaim, "It is true." I was very much surprised to hear that honorable member make that declaration, because I have no hesitation in declaring it to be utterly without foundation. If the honorable the Colonial Secretary were as consistent in the views which he entertains on this question as I have been it would be well for him. He has entertained views in reference to the subject we are now discussing, which are not consistent with the course he is now taking. I recollect, in reference to the question of fencing, that the honorable member consulted me as to my opinion and experience in 1863, and I may be allowed to quote from a letter on this subject, in which he says—

"If all one hears is correct, the cost, let alone the necessity, of buying the land, or getting a longer term, would be amply repaid by the diminished cost and increased receipts."

And again—

"I quite agree with you that some systematic plan of fencing in land must improve our runs and make them carry much more stock."

In reply to that, I remarked:—

"I have not a doubt in my own mind, that by a system of fencing, country that is now unfit for sheep, would be redeemed and made thoroughly productive as sheep country,—for abundant evidence could be produced to shew that country in Victoria worse than the average in the districts of Moreton, which was untenable as a sheep country before fencing, is now worked under fencing with sheep to a profitable result. The whole or nearly so of the Moreton District could be made productive as a sheep country under fencing, but to induce the public to incur such an expense, an increased tenure with the right of pre-emptive purchase over a portion, at least, of each run would be necessary. In Victoria, people who fence have purchased largely.

"I believe a renewal of the pre-emptive right would attract capital both from Victoria and the mother country; and we must keep pace with other colonies. Look at Western Australia on their newly discovered first-class pastoral country, granting fourteen years' leases at a merely nominal rent with a pre-emptive right at ten shillings; and South Australia is following suit; and her northern Australian regulations, when declared, will be even more liberal, to enable her to compete with the other new colonies."

I quote these remarks to shew that my opinions on the subject in 1863 were perfectly consistent with what I now advocate. Therefore, thus to charge me with being inconsistent with what I have advocated, or being actuated by merely selfish views, is perfectly unwarrantable on the part of any honorable members of this House. My honorable friend, the Colonial Secretary, has, in the course of this debate, been pleased to allude to me,—he has taunted me with being the head-centre of discontent. Discontent! With what? Discontent with abuses which exist in our land system, retarding the progress of the

country, and injuring its position, not only internally, but in the eyes of the other colonies. I thank the honorable member for the compliment he has paid me; for I think it a high distinction, with such influences to contend against, to be charged with advocating the true interests of this colony,—for we know that unless the pastoral interest be upheld, the colony cannot progress. What has made this colony? Nothing but its producing interest. We have no other producing interest at present but the pastoral. We may have hereafter, but I fear very much that, unless we place the small capitalist in the position of purchasing land at such a rate that he can combine agriculture with grazing, we shall never have any other producing interest but the pastoral. My great desire is to see another state of things in this country. My belief is, that we shall be able to introduce another class of settlers in this colony, if we enable the small capitalist to invest his money in land with profit. At present it is impossible for the small capitalist to do anything with his capital in the purchase of land. It is lamentable to see the wretched results of those who have invested their capital in land for agricultural purposes at one pound an acre. They have found that the result is attended with loss and ruin to themselves. I think that for the Government to induce the poor man, who is so often quoted, to invest his money at one pound an acre in land which is utterly unfit for the purposes of agriculture, is to obtain money under false pretences. The country will never be in a prosperous condition until we alter our system, and reduce the price of land to a rate at which the agriculturist may be enabled to support himself; and the only way we can do so, is by reducing it to such a rate as will enable the small capitalist to combine agriculture with grazing. We very well know that in the mother country, especially in modern times, if any one attempted to conduct farming operations without a combination of grazing with agriculture, it would be absurd to hope to obtain a profit at all commensurate with the capital invested; and in a colony like this, where the climate is so uncertain, how much more necessary that we should combine grazing with agriculture? How can we do so, if we keep up the price of land at one pound an acre? How can an agriculturist of small, or even moderate means, obtain, at that price, sufficient land to graze as well as cultivate? With regard to the leasing clause which has been spoken of in this debate, there is a strong feeling in favor of it, evidently, outside this House.

The SECRETARY FOR LANDS AND WORKS: And inside, too.

MR. SANDEMAN: The honorable member says—"And inside too." Well, I have no objection to a leasing clause. I am quite prepared to see a leasing clause introduced into the Bill now before the House; but is

it not better to enable the small capitalist to purchase his land at five shillings an acre, than to lease it at even one shilling an acre? Those who have been held up to the animadversion of the country, will eventually be found to be the poor man's friends. This has been made purely a pastoral question. It is not. I quite agree with those honorable members who have stated that there are very few of the pastoral tenants in the outside districts who are likely to purchase an acre of their land; but because there are some who may desire to do so, we are taunted with taking up the views of that class alone. But we take a wider view of the question, and we believe that unless some great alteration be made in the land laws, this colony never can progress. And looking at one of the great subjects connected with this question, namely, that of immigration, it is not necessary for me to tell honorable members of the state into which we have fallen on that subject. It has been much discussed in this House, and will be still more discussed before this session is ended. We have tried our system of immigration, and have found it very faulty. There is not an honorable member of this house who is prepared to uphold it. We are obtaining a class of immigrants who are unfit for the purposes for which we require them. It has been said by several honorable members of this House, that many of the immigrants are a disgrace to the community. That is not the class of immigrants that we require in this colony. Allusions have been made to an under-current of discontent and disappointment at work between the immigrants here and their friends at home. No doubt, that is one of the elements of prejudice operating against this colony;—and, I believe that, unless we hold out a greater inducement than that of a free passage, we shall not obtain a better class of immigrants in this country. How can we expect immigrants to come here, when they can go to America and Canada, so much nearer home, and where they can obtain some of the finest land in the world at from one shilling and sixpence to five shillings an acre? How can we expect them to come sixteen thousand miles, to purchase ours at one pound an acre?—lands, moreover, which are not equal to those on the banks of the Mississippi. How can we expect to get a better class of immigrants than we are getting at present?

The SECRETARY FOR LANDS AND WORKS: We have them already.

Mr. SANDEMAN: The honorable member says—“We have them already,” but how, I ask, shall we continue to get them, under the present system?

The SECRETARY FOR LANDS AND WORKS: By the land orders.

Mr. SANDEMAN: The honorable member, the Colonial Secretary, has taunted me with having been a head-centre—a prime mover in this important question. I beg to return him the retort courteous; and to tell him

that he is the head-centre of obstruction. He is the clog on the Government wheels, which do not indeed require the drag of obstructiveness to retard their present uphill course. I trust the honorable member will not think I am at all personal in the remarks I am making. He stands convicted upon his own statement. In his speech upon this subject, in a former debate, he says:—

“Now what would be the effect of reducing the lands to five shillings an acre at present? A large quantity of land has been sold at the usual upset price, and to reduce the upset price of Crown lands to five shillings an acre, would be in effect to reduce the value of those lands already alienated by three-fourths of their original value. That is a fact which should be taken into consideration.”

With all deference to the honorable member, it is not a fact but a fallacy. By reducing the price of our lands, instead of reducing their value, we are adding to it; because, by reducing the price, we are attracting population of such a class and to such an extent, in conjunction with a free passage, as to give all the lands of the colony a greatly increased value. I may say that it is the only way of attracting a population of the proper class. Of what value are our lands to us, without population? The honorable member further says:—

“Again, honorable members should remember that if we reduce the price of land, one of the principal effects will be to give rise to a large amount of speculation and jobbery; and that is one of the evils that all governments have to guard against in anything they do in relation to the lands of the country. There is another objection which occurs to me, but which I have not yet heard touched upon; and that is the effect such a reduction as that proposed would have upon our credit at home. What will the public creditor think of it?—and how can we go into the market for further loans, with any chance of success, if the public creditors are told that we have reduced their security at one swoop by three-fourths of its value? The application of this principle has been so far departed from, that the proposal, it is now suggested, should not take effect in the southern, but only in the northern, portions of the colony. Now, I do not see any good reason for making this difference, except that in the north there are no vested interests; but even so, I do not see why the price of land should be five shillings in one part of the colony, and four times that price in another part of the colony. In this view I may state that I do not agree with all my colleagues; at the present time I do not see it.”

Exactly, sir, what I have said. The honorable member does not see it. He sees no necessity for any change; and I fear that, instead of advancing, he is prepared to stand still, and, as a member of the Government, to be a culpable example of the axiom—“*Non progredi, est regredi.*” Now the honorable member finds members on this side of the House are really in earnest in the views they entertain, I trust that he will not hold out

in his objection to the strong arguments which have been adduced, in reference to the price of land. Let those who wish to purchase their pastoral lands, do so. I, for one, agree with many honorable members, that it is better to rent lands for purely pastoral purposes than to buy them. For it would require a very low rate indeed, to justify the pastoral occupant in paying for his land at all. It is not one of the views which I hold upon this subject, and, therefore, I say, let those who wish to obtain the fee-simple of their land do so. To have the power of doing so would, doubtless, as regards the lands, in general, have a beneficial effect upon the country; it would be the means of introducing capital, and enabling and justifying those who take up their abode permanently in this colony to improve their property; and the reduction in the price would, upon the whole, benefit the country at large. There is one objection to this Bill, which I cannot avoid expressing my opinion upon; it is that of commonage. This is a subject of great importance to the inhabitants of towns, who should be liberally dealt with. I should be one of the last to prevent them from obtaining anything they are entitled to; but, in doing so, I would ask why, while doing the utmost justice to them, act unjustly to others? Why seriously injure existing interests, without benefiting any portion of the community, for a merely theoretical and Utopian object. I fear that this idea has been thrown out for political and ultra-popular purposes, and I cannot avoid the idea that it has proceeded merely from a desire to cater for popular opinion. I am not one of those who ignore popular opinion; but I do object to the results to which this Act would lead. We are introducing into this Act clauses from the Act of Victoria, a colony which is in a position utterly dissimilar from ours—a colony with a population of 700,000, and an area of 90,000 square miles, while we have in Queensland a population of only 85,000, with an area of 576,000 square miles. Now, sir, I would ask if the objections, which have been urged by honorable members of this House, to class legislation, is not here carried out to an extreme? It is not at all necessary to drag a scheme, which may be required in a colony like Victoria, where the population is in such a vast disproportion to the acreage, into a Bill to provide for the requirements of a colony, where the very opposite prevails. I think that the question of commonage would be best dealt with in a separate measure. I believe, in the management of commons, that of the corporations of the towns should be the best; at least I believe the corporations, under proper regulations, are the best custodians of the interests of their respective townships.

The SECRETARY FOR LANDS AND WORKS: They have not been, hitherto.

Mr. SANDEMAN: Now, sir, with regard to

the formation of reserves, I can see no objection to the Executive having a certain discretionary power as to the proclamation of reserves, but there should be a limit. Under a corrupt and despotic Ministry, the consequences might be most serious. Look at Victoria—to my certain knowledge the Minister for Lands there was heard to say, during the late elections, that he hoped to see the day, within three years, when there would not be a squatter alive in Victoria. He meant, of course, that the system would be dead. Even in New South Wales, under the extremely liberal Land Act of Mr. Robertson, so often quoted, it is provided, with regard to reserves—

“That within one month should Parliament then be in session and otherwise within one month after the commencement of the next ensuing session of Parliament there shall be laid before both Houses of Parliament an abstract of all such declarations.”

That is one of the propositions, in fact, which we have placed before the Government, which has led to so much distorted comment in the press of this colony. And, sir, with regard to ourselves, if the honorable member, the Minister for Lands and Works, requires any further argument on this matter, I would refer him to his own opinion—I would remind him again of what he himself has stated on this subject. In speaking upon the Bill—

The SECRETARY FOR LANDS AND WORKS: What date?

Mr. SANDEMAN: The 28th of August, 1860. In speaking on the Crown Lands Alienation Bill, the honorable member said—

“The Bill proposed to place too much power in the hands of the Executive, in granting it authority to proclaim what lands shall be reserved from the operation of the auction system. It was not calculated to promote immigration, and consequently it was not calculated to promote the settlement of the country.”

The honorable member did not then object to the auction system, but now he is only partially in favor of it.

The SECRETARY FOR LANDS AND WORKS: The one has no connection with the other.

Mr. SANDEMAN: I will refer to the opinion of another gentleman on this subject. I find that Mr. Jordan, who has been so often quoted in this House, and who propounded our immigration system, considered it was an essential part of the subject that the lands should be reduced in price, and he denounced the Wakefield system in the following terms:

“Three or four hundred thousand people every year must go somewhere; with proper inducement they would rather come here than go to America, but they left their own land to become land-holders. There was an intense desire among the class spoken of to possess land. Tell them to come to Queensland, and work till they had saved money enough to buy a farm at one pound an acre, they would reply “No, we are going to America, where they sell it at five shillings.” It was an absurdity to suppose that poor people of

this sort, wanting to emigrate, would be willing to travel 12,000 miles further to give us twenty shillings for lands, when they could purchase the same commodity at a nearer market for five."

My honorable colleague, Mr. Royds, has already quoted the opinion of the honorable the Minister for Lands and Works.

The SECRETARY FOR LANDS AND WORKS: Read the whole of it.

Mr. SANDEMAN: It would be only wasting the time of the House. He also referred to the opinions of the honorable the Attorney-General, but there was one extract which I am not certain he quoted—

"It had been said, on the other hand, that the land would fetch one pound, but he would ask, was it at all likely that people would give one pound for land here, while they could get it elsewhere for five shillings?"

The honorable member for South Brisbane, Mr. Stephens, appeared to approve of the present upset price of land. Still I find that, at the great meeting, which took place in 1860, when this subject was so much discussed, he was the gentleman who moved the adoption of the petition to the Assembly—and if the House will permit me, I will just read one or two of the clauses of that petition:

"That your petitioners having anticipated with some degree of confidence a liberal scheme for the alienation of the Crown lands of the colony, beg most respectfully to express to your honorable House their great disappointment at the Bill now before your honorable House, entitled 'A Bill to provide for the alienation of Crown lands,' and also their unequivocal condemnation of that portion of it which provides that the upset price of Crown lands shall be one pound per acre.

"That your petitioners are unwilling to believe that your honorable House can be indifferent to the great claims that the agriculture of a country has upon the Government thereof for its fostering care in the early periods of its development; and while your petitioners would disclaim all intention of asking for protection of any description for the agricultural interests, yet they venture most respectfully to submit to your honorable House, that in order to encourage agriculture, and to make it a great, prosperous, and permanent interest in this colony, Queensland must be made attractive as a field of emigration to English agriculturists, who, by their skill and capital, would soon convert the present barren and unprofitable wilderness into a fruitful field; and your petitioners further submit that, to accomplish this most desirable end, it is absolutely necessary that the upset price of land should be reduced to five shillings without auction, occupation the sole condition, in order to enable this colony, with any prospect of success, to compete with Canada and New Zealand, in the great emigration market

"That your petitioners earnestly and most respectfully solicit your honorable House to take the premises into favorable consideration, and to devise and adopt such a scheme for the alienation of Crown lands, as shall tend to inspire confidence in the mind of the British emigrant, that his hopes of obtaining a cheap freehold in Australia

can be easily realised in Queensland, and that such hopes are no longer blasted by a land system which is little better than a cruel mockery, and a sham."

That petition was proposed at the meeting by the honorable member for South Brisbane, who, in the course of his speech, said—

"He would say nothing about the upset price, as that had been discussed; but it made no difference whether it was a pound or a penny, if they could not get hold of the land at all."

No doubt the honorable member may have had occasion to alter his views since that time. But I think it is right honorable members should be reminded that they once expressed these opinions; and, unless they can shew some strong grounds for their change of opinion, they must be amenable to the charge of inconsistency. I hope the time may come when that honorable gentleman will give some stronger reason than he has given for his change of opinion. I find, by the remarks in the public journals at the time referred to, that agriculture had been a failure; and, to a very great extent, the same has been found to be the result up to the present time. And, as I said before, unless we can combine agriculture with grazing, we are obtaining money under false pretences, by selling our lands for purely agricultural purposes. I have already referred to the population of the colony, and I find that, with a population of 85,000 souls, our expenditure amounts to the enormous sum of £618,000, which is equivalent to a charge of £8 9s. 8d. per head on the population. That includes interest on the debt. This disproportion of expenditure to population must result in an increase of taxation, and I think we should find it the most prudent course, to reduce our large debt, by alienating a large portion of the Crown lands. To do so at one pound an acre is out of the question. The only way in which we can do so, is by reducing the price; and by offering them at a low price, I think we should produce such a result, that we might perhaps be justified in instituting a moderate land tax, by which we should be enabled to apportion taxation in a far more equitable and lenient way than I fear we shall find it necessary to do, if we go on as we are now going. I believe that if we had had an opportunity of placing this question before a select committee, properly and fairly appointed, we should have saved ourselves a great deal of discussion. My opinion is, that this would be the most desirable method to adopt, with regard to questions involving such important consequences as this involves. I am prepared to move, even now, that this question be referred to a select committee, but will withdraw the amendment, if it be contrary to the opinion of the House; but I shall move it at all events, in order to give honorable members an opportunity of expressing their opinion upon points which may have

been overlooked. I trust, whatever may be the issue, we shall arrive at a result which will be conducive, under Providence, to the best interests of the country. I now beg to move that this Bill be referred to a select committee.

The SECRETARY FOR LANDS AND WORKS : Honorable members can say what they have to say in committee.

Mr. SANDEMAN : If it be the opinion of the House that the amendment should not be put, I will withdraw it.

Mr. FITZSIMMONS : Can the honorable member withdraw it?

The SPEAKER : My own opinion is, that it is not competent for the amendment to be put.

The Bill was then read a second time.

The SECRETARY FOR LANDS AND WORKS : In proposing the committal of the Bill on Thursday next, it is necessary that I should call the attention of honorable members who intend to move amendments to the advisability of getting their amendments printed and circulated as soon as possible. I propose to take the committal of the Bill on Thursday week. I am prepared to shadow forth to the House the amendments which I shall be prepared, on the part of the Government, to submit in committee. I should have been prepared to do so before the second reading, but if I had done so, according to the Standing Orders of the House, I should have been compelled to refer to some remarks which have been made in the course of the debate. I now submit them to the House in order that honorable members may have time to consider them. The first is in reference to the land order system, and I propose to make all land orders transferable, like bills of exchange, so long as the present system continues in force. The second amendment has an intimate connection with the present Bill, and refers to the mode of taking up land. I do not propose in my amendment to recognise any other upset price than twenty shillings an acre; but I propose to adopt a course which I am satisfied will conduce to the settlement of an industrious, enterprising, and, I trust, a virtuous, population. I propose that in all cases after land has been once offered by auction, and has passed the hammer without sale, to lease it for eight years at half-a-crown an acre, with a right of pre-emption by paying up the difference between that amount and the one pound per acre. By that means the price of the land will be realized, and we shall give encouragement to industrious settlers. In applying that principle to country lands, I do not propose any condition whatever. But on the principle that "What is sauce for the goose is sauce for the gander," I propose that the same system shall be applied to the agricultural reserves; and that when once land has been thrown open to selection and not purchased, it may be leased for a term of eight years, with a right of pre-emption (subject to the conditions) at

any time. I propose these amendments, and I trust that honorable members will give them their careful consideration.

The House then adjourned.