

Queensland



Parliamentary Debates
[Hansard]

Legislative Assembly

TUESDAY, 25 SEPTEMBER 1866

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY.

Tuesday, 25 September, 1866.

Hospitals Committee.—Parliamentary Representation.—
Leasing Areas Bill.

HOSPITALS COMMITTEE.

MR. GROOM: Mr. Speaker—I now move that the report from the Select Committee on the Hospitals of the Colony be adopted by this House, and, in doing so, I shall have to trespass upon the attention of the House for a few minutes, to point out one or two matters which arise in connection with it. It will be in the recollection of the House, that early in April a select committee was appointed to inquire into and report upon the charitable institutions of the colony, and perhaps one of the chief reasons which induced honorable members to assent to that appointment was the very small expenditure they were required to vote in comparison with the actual expenses of those institutions. It was stated to the House—and the evidence, which I presume honorable members have read, will bear out the statement—that, unless some action be taken by this House and the Government, unless some larger expenditure be voted or some financial measure be adopted to keep them in existence, almost every charitable institution in the country will have to be closed. I may observe, that this is a question which does not apply to ourselves particularly just now, as far as Queensland is concerned. It has attracted the notice of the other colonies, as well as the leading

statesmen of the mother country. In the *Westminster Review* of October last, attention is directed to the heavy expense which hospitals entail upon the nation—nearly half a million of money. In Victoria, the question presented itself under a similar aspect, and became such a burden upon the Crown, that the Government appointed a commission, consisting of the most eminent medical men in the colony, to inquire into the subject and to ascertain the best means of supporting those institutions. Now, sir, the small amount we are called upon to vote for charitable institutions in Queensland is nothing compared to the expense in Victoria. The sum set down in the Estimates for 1867 for charitable allowances is £6,100, whereas in Victoria there are £90,000 voted annually for charitable purposes, and £40,000 for hospitals. The evidence before the committee has clearly shewn that the committees chosen by the subscribers have carried out the onerous duties imposed upon them in a satisfactory manner. I can refer to the Brisbane Hospital as being a model institution of its kind, although the committee by which it is managed have had serious difficulties to contend with, on account of the nature of the building set apart for the purpose. I may call attention to the fact, that the country has been put to the expenditure of the large sum of £20,000 for the new hospital on the Bowen bridge road, which, when completed, will, according to the Colonial Architect, only afford accommodation for one hundred patients. Now, in Victoria, the Melbourne Hospital cost £42,000, and finds accommodation for three hundred and fifty-eight persons. I mention this to shew the apparent extravagance of spending so large a sum of money to provide so little accommodation. The evidence, in fact, shews that the accommodation afforded by the new building on the Bowen bridge road is not at all commensurate with its cost, and I think the evidence also shews, that there will very soon be a necessity for accommodating two hundred persons, at least. The enlargement of this new hospital will be a serious consideration for the Government. I will draw the attention of honorable members to the appendix to Mr. Tiffin's evidence, in which it is stated that the probable cost of the new hospital on the Bowen bridge road, Brisbane, to accommodate one hundred persons is £20,000. But in his evidence he states, that the plans and specifications originally proposed by him, if carried out, would have cost £60,000 with the offices necessary to such a large institution, and would have accommodated four hundred patients when completed. I may remark, that this is a very serious question; it is, in fact, almost a financial question from beginning to end. The witnesses examined in connection with the present hospital have shewn that the furniture of that institution is not in a condition to be removed to the new building, and the committee have been com-

pelled to recommend to this House that the new hospital should be furnished and equipped at the public expense. In fact, we are told that the present furniture is in such a delapidated state that it is almost falling to pieces. I think, sir, that we should make this hospital worthy of the name, and that it should assume as much as possible a national character; and I think it is scarcely right that, in connection with an institution of such a character and of so much importance, undue parsimony should be displayed. The medical evidence given before the committee, in fact, asserts that the greater the attention paid to the furniture and to the comfort of the inmates, the more are the expenses reduced, as the patients get sooner cured and leave the institution. Then, with regard to the nurses, the evidence shews that the committee have great difficulty in finding proper persons, and the report recommends that the Government should put themselves in communication with their agents in London and get them to send out some properly qualified female nurses, who, on their arrival in the colony, would be able to instruct others; and thus there would soon be an organised staff from which nurses could be drafted to the different hospitals throughout the country. Then, with regard to other hospitals, the evidence taken by the committee clearly shews that additional assistance by the Legislature is necessary to support them; and I can assure the House that unless some further aid is given, the Ipswich hospital will have to be closed. I will point out to honorable members a statement in the fourth paragraph of the report, to the effect that the construction of this hospital is faulty, no provision having been made for sewerage, drainage, or proper ventilation. These matters appear to have been entirely overlooked when the building was erected, and unless some steps be taken to remedy these defects, instead of being a benefit, it will become a nuisance to the community, and will have the effect of disseminating diseases instead of curing them. The committee recommend that the Colonial Architect should be instructed to carry out whatever improvements are necessary for the safety of the patients and the health of the inhabitants in the town. Application on the subject has already been made to the Government by the medical gentlemen connected with the institution, but their suggestions have not been acted upon. In reference to the Port Curtis and Leichhardt District hospital at Rockhampton, I may mention, that the same course should be adopted as the committee have recommended in regard to the Brisbane Hospital. It appears on the face of the evidence that such is the intention of the Government, but the secretary of the institution states, that the original site comprised but three-quarters of an acre of land, on which were erected a number of detached wooden buildings which were totally unsuited

for hospital purposes. Those buildings were made use of as far as possible, and a good deal of assistance to patients was afforded. Another site, however, has been granted by the Government, consisting of three acres and a half on the Athelstane Range, and the sum of £2,000 has been voted to erect a new building upon it. While the committee were sitting, they obtained evidence that the Government were going to expend £1,500 on the erection of a wooden building on the old site, and the committee decided to send a telegram to request them to desist until the report of the Hospitals Committee had been brought up, and they have done so. Since that time the Crocodile Diggings have broken out, and there is every probability of a much larger population in the district, which, I think, is an additional reason why the Government should be authorised to increase the expenditure of £2,000 by such a sum as will render the vote sufficient to construct a new hospital on Athelstane Range. I may point out that this is the only hospital to which patients in the large district of which Rockhampton is the centre can apply to; and I can refer to the evidence given before a commission appointed in Victoria to consider this question, to shew that, by concentrating all the funds available for hospital purposes for the construction of one large hospital, more good is effected than by keeping up a number of indifferent institutions in the smaller towns, which are usually badly supported, and a heavy tax upon the general revenue. With regard to the Toowoomba Hospital, as a member of the committee of that institution, I can state that, on the 1st August last, the entire amount to the credit of the hospital was only about sixty pounds. We have about sixty patients, and the whole of the cost has to be liquidated by the local supporters of the hospital; and, in fact, unless some larger aid be afforded by the State, it will have to be closed. The honorable member for Western Downs is the treasurer of the Toowoomba Hospital, and of course the creditors will come down upon him unless the Government will give us some additional assistance. I think we should endeavor to make these institutions of an enlarged character, instead of having an hospital in every little town, unless the inhabitants of such towns can shew good grounds for the erection of such buildings. Applications are sure to be sent to the Government; but it very often happens that the contributions to these institutions, and the benefit derived from them, are not at all commensurate with the heavy expense they entail upon the Government. I may observe that, a short time ago, an unfortunate sick man was sent down from Roma, and of course we were bound to admit him in the Toowoomba Hospital. There was no other place to take him to; we had no alternative; and he died twenty-four hours after his admission. I

think this is a subject worthy attention, and that the Government may fairly consider whether it is not better to abandon the system of establishing small hospitals at every inland town, in order to create establishments in central situations where the inhabitants of a large district could avail themselves of its advantages. I may here observe, that Sir William Palmer, the President of the Legislative Council in New South Wales, is entirely of this opinion. Then, with regard to the Warwick Hospital, the committee have found that in a very different position. It is situated in a very healthy place, and the number of patients scarcely exceed six per week, and frequently not more than two. In financial matters, this institution is also of a healthy character; and the committee have especially called attention to the fact, that while in all the large centres of population colonial fever, as it is termed, has largely prevailed, not a single instance of such disease has been found to occur in Warwick, either in the hospital or among the inhabitants. A new brick building has been erected, and it is sufficient for all practical purposes. Then, with regard to the Woogaroo lunatic establishment, the committee obtained the evidence of Dr. Cannan, which, I think, is worthy the serious consideration of the House. I think the colony may be proud of that institution. It appears that Dr. Cannan not only knows thoroughly the work he has to perform, but I believe he has derived a great deal of information from a report issued by the Secretary of State, in 1864, on colonial hospitals and lunatic asylums; inasmuch as his treatment of lunatics accords with the recommendations contained in that paper to the letter, and appears to have been more satisfactory and successful than any system of a more parsimonious character. It has been shewn that under the mode of treatment adopted by Dr. Cannan, the average expenditure upon each patient has been under forty-five pounds a year. The Orphan School and lying-in institutions have come under the notice of the committee. Both institutions appear to be well managed. With regard to the Orphan School, the committee advise that a portion of the old hospital should be made available for carrying out the provisions of the Industrial Schools Act of 1865. There are now seventy or eighty children in this school, and the number is likely to increase. The committee, in their report, make certain recommendations that the Government should issue instructions to the clerks of petty sessions and the different police stations throughout the colony, in consequence of the very unsatisfactory manner in which the police fines are remitted to the various charitable institutions of the colony, to the effect that such fines in future be forwarded on the first of every month to the Colonial Treasurer, with a declaration verifying the correctness of the return in each

case, attested by the police magistrate of the district or the chairman of the bench, as the case may be. If honorable members will refer to page 14, they will find an appendix, containing an abstract of police fines received by the treasurer of the Brisbane Hospital, from 1st November, 1865, to 30th April, 1866; and it would appear from that return that the city of Brisbane contributes more than is contributed by seventeen police offices throughout the colony; and if honorable members will look over the returns, they will see that Roma contributed £8 15s. in January, and £26 5s. in April, of this year. The fact of that comparatively large contribution having been made by the inhabitants of Roma has called the attention of the committee to the disproportion of the contributions, and has given rise to their recommendation that the fines should be forwarded monthly to the Treasury, duly attested by the police magistrate of the district or the chairman of the bench, as the case may be. It is also a recommendation of the committee that a benevolent institution for the whole colony be erected at Dunwich, to which the benevolent patients from the outlying districts should be forwarded. This is also a matter for the serious consideration of the Government, and it has been suggested outside, and I do not know that it is not worthy the consideration of the House, whether an Act adopted by the Legislature of New South Wales—the Workhouse Act—could not with advantage be brought into operation here. The evidence before the committee has shewn that there are between forty and fifty persons in the Brisbane Hospital whose age would clearly prove that they are incapacitated from hard work. In the Toowoomba Hospital there are forty or fifty persons in the same position, and in other places in the colony the same state of things exists. In Rockhampton, until very lately, we found that this class of inmates were sent to the Benevolent Institution in Sydney. Now, the committee advise, and the evidence of the medical gentlemen examined shew, that it is unfair to keep these persons in the hospital with patients who are there for treatment of contagious diseases; and it is a question for this House to consider, whether some asylum should not be found for them, and whether such institution should not be made in a measure self-supporting. No doubt many of those persons are incapacitated from hard labor, but they might be equal to work of a lighter description; and looking to the present financial condition of the country, and the necessity for imposing taxation, it appears to me that such an establishment ought to be made self-supporting. With regard to the remaining three paragraphs of the recommendations, I may say that, looking to the report of the Victorian commission, some little difference of opinion appears to exist as to how this

recommendation should be carried out. The committee observe that those persons who form the greater bulk of the inmates of our charitable institutions rarely contribute towards their funds, and that the burden of the expenses falls upon those who voluntarily support them. An Act was passed by the Victorian Legislature to impose a capitation fee of five shillings per head upon all persons arriving in the colony; the proceeds of which tax are devoted exclusively to the support of charitable institutions. I find that this Act has since been repealed, but the committee have suggested that a similar system might with advantage be adopted here, and that large employers of labor might assist in collecting a revenue from this source. In some places the railway contractors are in the habit of deducting from each workman one shilling per week towards a sick fund, so that there is always provision to pay for the services of a medical man; and, also, whenever a man becomes so ill that he has to be sent to the hospital, they undertake to pay three shillings a week, and his funeral expenses in case of his death. It is a question for consideration, whether the Government could not adopt a system analogous to this; but that depends altogether upon the state of the funds. I do not suppose the House would desire that all the hospitals in this colony should be closed, because that would inflict an injury upon the whole community. The commission in Victoria recommended that the colony should be divided into counties or shires, and that a property tax should be levied, the proceeds of which should be devoted to this purpose. But that recommendation has not been carried out, and the Government have expended large sums to further the same object. But they insist that one-fourth of those sums should be contributed. The committee entirely disagree with the system, adopted at the Brisbane Hospital, of giving out-door relief. They advise that, as in Victoria, the practice should be adopted of giving relief through some police officer; and they think it is somewhat unnecessary to impose this burden upon the hospitals, which have already enough to do with the patients admitted into them, without having to undertake the duty of relieving one hundred and sixty or one hundred and seventy persons out of doors. Then the committee recommend that the system of giving orders upon tradesmen should be abandoned, unless the orders specify particular articles in the shape of cheap and wholesome rations. It came out, in evidence, that there was no guarantee that these orders were laid out in that way. I have since learned that the committee of the Brisbane Hospital have adopted this suggestion. In connection with this matter, I would observe that, in accordance with a recommendation made by the commission appointed by the Victorian Government, the committee have

advised that as soon as possible dispensaries should be established in Brisbane, Ipswich, and Rockhampton. These dispensaries could be made almost self-supporting; and it has been suggested by Sir James Palmer, President of the Legislative Council in Victoria, who is himself a medical man, that each person should pay a rate of tenpence in the pound, and have the attendance of a medical officer. That plan has been pursued in Victoria, and dispensaries established in Ballarat and Geelong have proved highly successful. In this way the hospital committee in Melbourne are freed from any demands for out-door relief, the patients being at once referred to the dispensaries. The committee, however, finding that to consider carefully the details of such a scheme would involve more labor than they could undertake at so late a period of the session, decided to leave it to the Government this session, and come down to the House next session with a more comprehensive scheme for the management of hospitals—that is to say, if the House should decide upon voting increased support to these institutions. The committee were surprised to find that the Government were not in a position to give evidence on this subject. They consider it highly desirable that an Act be introduced to amend and consolidate the Acts now in force, and to make better provision for the management of hospitals. The committee have already had such a measure under their consideration, and have drafted several clauses, although they have not yet been able to introduce it. With these observations, I shall now leave the report in the hands of the House. It involves a question of more than ordinary importance, because it affects the interests of a number of institutions which, as colonists, we must maintain; and, I think, it will commend itself to the attention of the House, as recommending the best course which can be pursued under the circumstances. I take this opportunity of thanking those gentlemen who came forward to give evidence. The committee are under obligations to Mr. Suter, an architect in this city, who kindly furnished the committee with plans and specifications of hospitals suitable to this country, accompanied with explanatory letters. I now move that the report be adopted.

Mr. WALSH said that although he did not presume to follow the honorable member who had just spoken, through the wide field of evidence which he had traversed, and although he did not altogether understand the report itself, still he dissented in a considerable degree from the suggestions and the remarks made by that honorable member. He wished it to be understood that he did not indorse his recommendations or his statements. If the evidence did not prove that gross mismanagement had existed

with regard to many of the hospitals in the colony, it ought to have done so. It was only recently that a case had attracted considerable notice in Brisbane. It was as clear as noonday that in the Brisbane Hospital a female had been most grievously abused, in spite of the remonstrances of her husband. He thought it unsatisfactory that the report did not condemn *in toto* the hospital now being erected at Bowen Bridge. He would undertake to say that the present Minister for Works would, with £2,000 at his command, have caused to be erected a hospital capable of accommodating five times the number of patients that the present building could receive. He should like to see the report severely condemn the designer of the tower to the new hospital. There could be no necessity for it. He trusted the Government would not be led into the notion that the small towns of the colony did not require hospitals; they required them as much, in proportion, as the large towns did. Seeing the great distance there was in this colony between the small towns and the large, it would be cruel—indeed, it would be tantamount to leaving the sick to die on the roads—if honorable members were to devote all their sympathy to support the project of building large hospitals in the large towns, and thus leave the smaller to shift for themselves. He considered there was nothing in the management of the Lunatic Asylum at Woogaroo to call forth such praise as the honorable member who brought up the report had bestowed upon it. There had been scenes going on there that reflected great discredit upon all concerned—scenes that would lead people to think it was more like a brothel than an institution for benevolent purposes. The Government were in possession of facts connected with these proceedings which must prevent them from adopting that part of the report. He was surprised to see that no notice had been taken of the management of the hospital at Maryborough. That institution was exceedingly well managed. He hoped the omission was due to an oversight, and not to any antagonistic feeling.

Mr. PUGH said he thought the recommendations contained in the report were based on very insufficient evidence. He agreed with the recommendation to the Government to adopt measures to enforce the more punctual payment of police fines. It was well known that clerks of petty sessions, especially those in the outside districts, were not much given to violent personal exertion, even in the use of their pens; but still it would be a very good arrangement to bind them to forward every month a statement of the fines due to the hospitals, such account to be verified by the Police Magistrate. He thought it utterly absurd to go to such vast expense in constructing the new hospital in Brisbane. He quite agreed with the honorable member for Maryborough that

the building was too expensive; but they could not expect anything else while the plans were prepared by a certain gentleman at the head of that department. He hoped, at all events, the Government would take care that in future no such buildings were constructed of cut stone, as rough stone or bricks would answer all purposes. He thought the expense of preparing the plans accompanying the report might have been spared, as it was the duty of the Colonial Architect to design buildings for the Government; and there was no necessity to call in other professional aid. He did not see what was the object of printing the lecture on puerperal fever, which was appended to the evidence. He repeated that in his opinion the report was based upon insufficient evidence; and, if his vote were called for, he should feel inclined to give it against its adoption.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY said he was placed in the same position as the honorable member for Maryborough had announced himself to be placed in when he rose to address the House, because it was only since he had come into the House—and he regretted to be obliged to mention it—that he had been able to look at the evidence; and, as honorable members were aware, it was but little progress that could be made towards coming to a direct determination in reading evidence while the House was engaged in business. But one thing struck him very forcibly, and it was this, that the committee, in concluding their report, stated they had had a Bill before them which they would recommend the House to adopt, or something to that effect. Now, he thought the committee would have done much better—particularly after the fact admitted by the honorable member who brought up the report, that they had themselves drafted several clauses, and had considered the effect of them—if they had appended the Bill to the report, or kept back the report until they were ready to send up the Bill with it; because it was too much to expect that the Government could then prepare a Bill founded upon the report set out by the committee, when they knew that the committee had a Bill before them not in the possession of the Government. Another thing had occurred to him, and to other honorable members who had addressed the House, that the report was founded upon evidence scarcely sufficient to warrant the Government to take action upon it. He was not prepared to deny that the utmost credit was due to the committee of the Brisbane Hospital, and to all the committees of the various hospitals in the colony; but he maintained that the evidence had not been obtained through the proper sources to ascertain whether the hospitals were under proper management or not. He thought a mistake was committed in having a committee to consider the subject. The proper course for

the honorable member to have adopted when he intended bringing the matter before the Government, was to have asked for a commission to be appointed to inquire into the case, and to bring up a report taken from evidence from all parts of the colony as to the management of the different hospitals. One great objection which he took to the report was that the evidence of the persons who must have known most about the subject was not exhausted. That was especially noticeable in the case of the Colonial Architect. The honorable member who brought up the report asserted that the building being erected on the Bowen Brige road would cost £20,000; but Mr. Tiffin did not state what would be the cost of the completion of that hospital. The honorable member had stated that a building in Victoria capable of accommodating four hundred patients had cost £46,000, while the Brisbane Hospital would only accommodate one hundred patients, at an outlay of £20,000. He had, therefore, argued, by implication, that it would cost four times that amount before it furnished the same accommodation as the hospital previously referred to. But it was a well-known fact that additions could be made to buildings at much less expense than the cost of the original. The honorable member had also carefully omitted to give to the House a little more evidence which Mr. Tiffin had given on the subject. That gentlemen had stated that the sum of £20,000 included the cost of the fever hospital in addition to the number of hospital wards. It also included the whole cost of drainage. It would thus be seen that the cost of the hospital would not be so much as the Victorian institution referred to, and would give the same amount of accommodation. That instance alone shewed that the evidence upon which the report was founded was of a most unsatisfactory character. He did not think honorable members were justified in entirely condemning the site on which the new hospital was being erected, because he believed it must be acknowledged that a more healthy situation could not have been selected in Brisbane. It must also be recollected, that one of the great advantages for the present site was the comparatively easy communication which could be maintained with the bay, where a great many accidents occurred. These patients could be brought to the hospital much sooner than if they were first conveyed to the town. All those circumstances had been taken into consideration by his late honorable colleague, Mr. Herbert, before the permanent site for the hospital had been selected. He quite agreed with much that had been said with regard to the unsatisfactory character of outdoor relief in Brisbane. It seemed to be the practice to relieve all who chose to asked for it. He thought that outdoor relief might be much better dispensed if left with the Government. Allusion had been made to a

case in connection with the Brisbane Hospital, which attracted considerable notice some time back. He must remark, in reference to it, that the chief cause of that misfortune was attributable to a want always complained of by the committee of the hospital, viz., the want of proper nurses. With reference to the suggestions made by the committee, he had no doubt that they had paid the utmost attention to the matter; but still the report, he thought, had been brought up upon evidence insufficient to warrant any substantial action to be taken by the House. It became a serious question as to how all the charitable institutions which had sprung into existence in the colony were to be supported. They all knew that Parliament contributed very large sums of money to these institutions, but no distinct evidence was given as to the number of private subscribers. He believed only two hundred people in Brisbane were regular subscribers. He certainly thought that two hundred subscribers out of a population of fifteen thousand was a very small proportion. Some defect must exist to reduce the list of subscribers to so small a number. He felt confident that the benevolent feelings of the public, if aroused, would induce them to come forward and give liberally towards such institutions as hospitals. Many people who enjoyed the benefits afforded by hospitals refused to support them by even a sixpence. He thought the Legislature would have to interfere, and that some Act or another to compel payment would have to be introduced. Hospitals were institutions that must be supported at all hazards. It would be necessary, therefore, to legislate so as to compel each district to support its own hospitals. In the present state of the report, and without the Bill he had mentioned previously being appended to it, he would not, on the part of the Government, pledge himself to carry out any of the recommendations proposed. Before another session passed over their heads, it would be necessary to bring in a Bill to settle the question of providing for charitable institutions and hospitals; and if he were in office next session, he should feel it his duty to bring forward a Bill on the subject.

Mr. FORBES said that, as a member of the Hospitals Committee, he felt called upon to defend, to some extent, the report that had been brought up, against the remarks that had been made as to its deficiencies; and with that object he might be permitted to state, for the information of honorable members, that the report was hastily prepared, because, at the time, it was believed there would be a dissolution. The report ought, therefore, to be accepted by the House more as a progress report, because the committee were anxious that their labors so far should not be thrown away. It was a report that might have gone further if the committee had had the time to go more fully into

the subject; but, as a progress report, he considered that it deserved some allowance at the hands of honorable members. As to the hospital now in course of rection near Brisbane, and which was to cost some £60,000, he put it to honorable members whether that amount might not be expended for charitable purposes in a more economic manner than by the erection of a costly edifice, which certainly would be beautiful to look at, but which for actual use would not be worth more than a plainer edifice. From its situation, it was calculated to be more used for the treatment of chronic cases than for accidents. He thought, and it had always been his impression, that any Bill brought forward for the management of hospitals should embody provisions for the general health of the towns and cities of the colony. He was also in favor of the appointment of a medical registrar in each district of the colony, whose duty it would be to enumerate the causes of the deaths which took place within his district, to state in his reports the character of the diseases which were likely to prevail in that district, and to recommend what steps should be taken by the Government to stop the progress of any particular disease. It had been the intention of the committee to deal with this and other matters of similar importance in connection with the subject, but time was not allowed them to do so. He thought that something should be done to obtain more general contributions to the hospitals of the colony. At present, it was found, the names of subscribers to the hospitals of the colony were the same year after year; and cases could be quoted to shew that many people who had received timely aid in these institutions had proved very ungrateful in not paying the amount they were well able to afford in consideration of the benefits they had derived. He had thought of something in the shape of a poor's rate being levied, but this was only his own idea. He was much opposed to the principle which had been adopted in many of the hospitals of the colony of affording provisions and other outdoor relief; and he did not believe that it was within the functions of such institutions to act in that manner. However, he had no desire to go at any great length into the subject; and would conclude by again informing honorable members that they should regard the report under consideration as a mere progress report, and deal with it accordingly.

Mr. FITZSIMMONS said that, the other day, he presented to the Government a letter which he had received from the managers of the hospital at Rockhampton, which shewed that that hospital was in a very deplorable condition—that the building was in a very rickety state, and quite incapable of supplying more than one-tenth of the demands

that were made upon it. It was also shewn that the building was placed on a valuable piece of land, which, if sold, would yield a sufficient amount of money to erect a much more suitable edifice. Now, he did not know whether the report under discussion would be adopted or not, perhaps it would not, and he did not know that he would vote for its adoption; but he would earnestly press upon the attention of the Government the necessity of at once doing something in the matter of the Rockhampton Hospital.

Mr. WIENHÖLT said he felt it to be his duty to defend the gentleman in charge of the Lunatic Asylum, at Woogaroo, from the unjust accusations made against him by the honorable member for Maryborough, as he held that the asylum had always been managed by Dr. Cannan in a way that was highly creditable to him. He must also, he said, express his regret that the honorable the Colonial Secretary had failed to defend Dr. Cannan from the aspersions made against him.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: I forgot it.

Dr. CHALLINOR said he thought there could be no doubt that the Brisbane Hospital would be a very expensive edifice. The Ipswich Hospital, he believed, had not cost more than £3,000, and on an emergency it could accommodate from fifty to sixty persons. Now, if that number could be accommodated by an expenditure of £3,000, it must be obvious that £20,000 was a great deal too much to be spent for the accommodation of one hundred patients. He could not agree with the statements made by the honorable member for Toowoomba, to the effect that the Ipswich Hospital was a hot-bed of disease. For his part, he had never found it to be so. On the contrary, he believed that a little more attention to one or two details was all that was required to make the institution referred to one of the most perfect of its character in the colony. If proper water-closets were provided, and the accommodation increased in the other departments of the hospital, nothing more would be necessary. Female nurses were employed there, and he believed that there was a great point gained in employing only female nurses. That system had been found very successful in Ipswich, and he believed it would be very successful, if properly conducted, in every other town of the colony. The honorable member for North Brisbane, Mr. Pugh, had objected to the publication, in connection with the report, of the lecture appended to the evidence; but he could assure the honorable member that the lecture was of a very valuable character; and that it was especially valuable, in connection with a report such as was now under consideration. The honorable member would, for instance, find by that lecture, that the rate of mortality in lying-in hospitals from puerperal fever was

very much higher than in any other known circumstances; so much so, indeed, that those institutions were considered by the highest medical authorities to be the great generators of that most fatal disease; and, therefore, that they ought to be superseded as much as possible by domiciliary aid. He agreed with the honorable member for Maryborough, that, in his reference to the case which occurred at Roma, the honorable member for Toowoomba had been infelicitous; but he could not agree with the honorable member for Maryborough in the other portion of his argument. For instance, the tower to which the honorable member referred, at the new Brisbane Hospital, was not only an ornament, but was also calculated to answer a very useful purpose; for within it was to be placed a reservoir of water for effectually flushing the drains connected with the water-closets and other offices attached to the building. As to the question of distance, that would depend altogether upon situation and other attendant circumstances. He must say that he had never heard anything with reference to the Lunatic Asylum at Woogaroo of the nature referred to by the honorable member for Maryborough, and he trusted that the honorable member's statements were founded on nothing more than rumors. He had only visited the asylum once, and he must say that, on that particular occasion, he felt very much gratification from the manner in which the arrangements were carried out. He would doubtless visit the asylum on a future occasion, when he would have, perhaps, a better opportunity of judging of the way in which it was conducted. He quite agreed with the honorable member for the Warrego, that occasionally persons were found abusing the charity afforded by the hospitals of the colony. This had frequently happened at Ipswich; and he remembered that on one occasion a patient who had been in the hospital for several weeks became so ill that he thought it advisable to make his will, and it was then found that he was possessed of property to the value of something like £100; and, when he was discharged as cured, the committee of the hospital obliged him to pay a fair sum towards defraying the expense of his treatment. He quite concurred with the argument of the honorable member for Rockhampton, that it was much better to sell any valuable land upon which a hospital of a useless character might be placed, in order that a new one better adapted to the required purpose might be built. He would support the motion for the adoption of the report, though he was not particularly wedded to it.

Mr. TAYLOR said he was quite surprised at the tone of the remarks that had been made by some honorable members with reference to the report now before the House. For his own part, he considered the report was a

very creditable one; and he hoped the labors of the committee, whether the report was adopted or not, would be productive of much benefit. The evidence, no doubt, was not so extensive as it might have been; but honorable members should bear in mind that the committee experienced great difficulty in obtaining evidence as to the state and management of the hospitals in distant parts of the colony, from the want of funds to pay the travelling expenses of those officers whose evidence, he admitted, it would have been desirable to obtain. No doubt, the hospitals in the country towns were almost all of them in a very bad state, from want of sufficient funds either to carry them on or to provide the necessary amount of accommodation; and that, he had no hesitation in saying, was in no small degree owing to the great expenditure upon the new hospital for Brisbane. That building was altogether too expensive; but it was only in keeping with the extravagance that had always been indulged in by a certain honorable gentleman for the aggrandisement of Brisbane at the expense of the rest of the colony. He hoped, however, there was now an end to that.

Mr. FITZSIMMONS rose to order. He must say he thought it was not fair to attack any gentleman who was absent from the colony. If the honorable gentleman referred to were present, and thereby in a position to defend himself, the attack of the honorable member would be quite fair. It was not, he considered, so much the fault of the honorable gentleman as it was the fault of the House that so much money had been expended in the way complained of.

Mr. TAYLOR: He was not attacking any honorable gentleman who was absent from the colony. He had not named any one.

Mr. WIENHOLT: The honorable member, he understood, was referring to the late Colonial Secretary.

Mr. TAYLOR: Were there not many persons absent from the House? And as their two late Colonial Secretaries were absent, no one could say which of them he meant. However, he must say he was not surprised at the speech of the honorable the Colonial Secretary, who was now present. A more unjust speech he had never heard come from that honorable gentleman's lips. Though he had heard a good many from him, a more unjust speech he had never heard than the speech that honorable gentleman had delivered respecting the committee. Any one would think, by his speech, that the honorable the Colonial Secretary was in the Brisbane Hospital every day, and that he subscribed largely to its funds. Now, he would warrant that the honorable gentleman never put his foot inside the hospital, and never subscribed to its funds. Yet, one might be prompted, from his speech, to say "What a fine fellow the Colonial Secretary is—he is

in the hospital every morning before breakfast." But he would like the honorable gentleman to look at that portion of his department which was connected with the hospital—the department of the clerks of petty sessions. It was the duty of the clerks of petty sessions in those districts where there were no hospitals to remit the fines for drunkenness to the Auditor-General, or some other officer in Brisbane, for the Brisbane Hospital. Now, let the honorable gentleman just look at the figures shewing the amount of fines that had been remitted by clerks of petty sessions, and say if he believed one-half or a quarter of the fines had been sent in. From the Brisbane Police Court there had only been £166 8s. 6d. from fines received during six months; from Bowen, £30 16s. 6d. for the same period; from Taroom, £5 only in six months; from Yaamba, £1 17s. 6d.; from Springsure, £12; from Woogaroo, 15s. Now, he asked if it was possible those figures could be correct. Was it possible that there had not been more fines for drunkenness at the places he had named, than the total sums he had mentioned shewed there had been? The next place on the list was Banana, £1; then Leyburn, £4 16s.; Dalby, from a large district like that, only £6; Goondiwindi, £1 10s.; Roma, £35; St. Lawrence, £4; Charleville, £2; St. George's, £3; Condamine, £3; Surat, £2; Cardwell, £2; and the court town of Gladstone, 10s.

MR. PUGH: That was for the Brisbane Hospital alone.

MR. TAYLOR: All such fines had to be sent to Brisbane, if there was no hospital in the district. Now, would any one, he asked, with a grain of common sense, tell him that no more money than the small sums he had mentioned had been collected from fines for drunkenness in the districts he had named? The country, he maintained, was robbed to a fearful extent in the matter of such fines. He did not say by whom; but he held it was a disgrace for the Colonial Secretary not to look into the matter at once. He had for the last nine months received the fines for the Toowoomba Hospital, and they amounted to between £25 and £27 a quarter; and from all the large towns he had mentioned, there was a mere nothing sent in. Now, who got the money? And that was why the report recommended that all the fines should be sent to the Treasurer, and not entrusted to the supervision of paymasters. He considered it disgraceful that the moneys were not better looked after. He agreed fully with the report, and he would vote for it whether it was adopted or not. He believed the committee had done justice, so far as they had had the time or means of performing justice, and, what was more, he believed they had done a great deal of good. But whether the House adopted the report or not, they would be compelled to vote a large sum of money

for hospitals. He happened to be the treasurer for the Toowoomba Hospital, and was therefore in a position to inform the House that the expenditure of that hospital was from £2,000 to £3,000 a year; and how that amount was to be raised for the next year, he was quite at a loss to know. He had funds in hand for about a month or two, but when it was spent all the patients would have to go out. He must say that the Government had acted most liberally towards the Toowoomba Hospital, as no doubt they had done towards all the other hospitals in the colony; but they must have a large fund set apart to enable them to do so. The honorable the Chief Secretary fell into a mistake, when he said that it was the inhabitants of the towns that supported the hospitals. Now, he denied that. One-half of the support of the Toowoomba Hospital was derived from the stations; and they contributed very liberally. There was one gentleman, a squatter, from whom he received, as treasurer of the Toowoomba Hospital, the sum of one hundred pounds, consisting of money which the gentleman was fully entitled to put into his own pocket; and he had received subscriptions from many private persons of twenty pounds.

AN HONORABLE MEMBER: The Colonial Treasurer.

MR. TAYLOR: Oh, no. He did not mean the Colonial Treasurer. He had never received a sixpence from him yet. He was rather astonished to hear the honorable the Colonial Secretary acknowledge, in the course of the important debate on this subject, that though the evidence taken before the Hospitals Committee had been printed for some weeks, he had never so much as looked at it. It was strange that the honorable gentleman had not looked into the evidence taken with respect to so important a matter, and one that belonged to his own department. The honorable member for the Warrego said he would hand the hospitals over to the municipalities, and give them power to levy a tax for their support; but the honorable member forgot that the patients taken into the hospitals did not all belong to the towns. A great many of them came from the country, and others were persons temporarily connected with public works. For example, before the railway works were commenced, there were only about fifteen patients weekly in the Toowoomba Hospital, and since the works were commenced the number had increased to between fifty and sixty weekly. It would therefore be seen that it was from the railway workmen that the number of the patients in the Toowoomba Hospital had been increased; and so it would be unjust to tax the towns for the hospital requirements of patients who were sent in from the country and from public works. He could not, therefore, agree with the proposition of the honorable member for the

Warrego to hand the hospitals over to the municipalities, to be supported by a tax. The Rev. Mr. Griffith, the honorary treasurer of the Brisbane Hospital, expressed the opinion that if the Government took over the hospitals into their own hands voluntary subscriptions would fall off. Now, he disagreed with the reverend gentleman, in that opinion, for in the case of the Toowoomba Hospital quite the reverse had been found to be the result; for when the Government took the Toowoomba Hospital into their hands, the voluntary subscriptions increased rapidly. He believed the Government would have to come down to the House and ask for something like £10,000 for the support, during the coming year, of the hospitals now in existence. He thought it would be a very excellent thing if there could be a small hospital established at Roma, as the want of such an institution there rendered it necessary for many patients from the country to be brought a very long distance to the Toowoomba Hospital. If the House could only do away with a large number of those useless arrangements which the country was now paying far too dearly for—such as the "Souchays," the District Courts, the Rivers and Harbors Department, and a few other of those little arrangements, they might be able to do something for the hospitals, and something that would be adequate to their requirements and importance.

Mr. MILES rose for the purpose of informing the honorable member for the Western Downs, Mr. Taylor, that the inhabitants of Roma were taking steps now for the establishment of a hospital in the district; and, as soon as their plans were completed, they would come down to the Government for a grant in aid.

Mr. GROOM wished to make an observation or two, in reply to what had fallen from the honorable the Colonial Secretary with regard to the Bill which was so pointedly referred to in the report. The honorable gentleman who undertook to draft the Bill had now taken his departure to another place, and therefore the responsibility of framing the measure necessarily fell on some member of the committee, but no one felt himself equal to the occasion. What was more, the committee thought that this was one of those matters that properly came within the province of the Government to look after. He could hardly understand, and probably no other honorable member could understand, the House being called upon to vote the salary for a Parliamentary Draftsman, unless the House were to have the benefit of his services in the preparation of such measures. It was hardly fair that the colony should have to put up with the imitation or copying system, which had been frequently complained of; and the committee thought that in a matter of this kind there might be a Bill drafted of an original character, and suited to the circumstances of the colony—a

measure which, perhaps, some of the other colonies might find it advantageous for them to copy. He must apologise to the honorable member for Maryborough for not having any evidence taken with respect to the state of the Maryborough Hospital. He could assure the honorable member that it was entirely an oversight that that institution was not inquired into. He had no doubt the Maryborough Hospital was a model in its way—for the honorable member said so—but he also knew that that hospital had suffered very much from the want of funds; for he knew that on the arrival in Hervey's Bay of an immigrant ship, in which there were a large number of fever cases, the committee of the Maryborough Hospital was under the necessity of writing to the late Colonial Secretary, Mr. Mackenzie, for a sum of £200.

Mr. WALSH: Was that in the evidence?

Mr. GROOM: No. It was not in the evidence; but the late Colonial Secretary, Mr. Mackenzie, stated on the floor of the House that he had to send that amount—as would no doubt be found in the reports of the debates. However, he was prepared to admit the observation of some honorable members, that the report of the committee was not so complete as it should have been. But the honorable member for Ipswich, Dr. Challinor, properly stated the reason, when he said that the report was prepared at a time when it was generally expected there would be a dissolution, and that it was desired to bring up the report before such expected dissolution should take place. As the honorable member for the Western Downs, Mr. Taylor, had said, the treasurers of all the hospitals were in this position: that unless additional aid were given to them, the whole of the hospitals in the colony would have to be closed. The honorable the Colonial Secretary had said that, instead of a select committee, there should have been a commission of inquiry, which should have visited the several hospitals, and inspected them; but he would observe that the proper time for the honorable gentleman to have made such a suggestion was when the original proposition was before the House for the appointment of a select committee. It was entirely within the province of the honorable gentleman to have appointed a commission; and it might have been better that he had done so. But, as a committee was appointed; as they had done the best they could do under the circumstances, and had brought up a report, he thought it was unfair to commence and castigate the committee for being remiss in the performance of the duty they undertook to perform. His own opinion was, that the committee had given the subject as much attention as the circumstances warranted them in doing, and that they were perfectly justified in asking the House to agree to the report.

The motion was then agreed to, and the report was adopted.

PARLIAMENTARY REPRESENTATION.

Mr. GROOM moved—

1. That the rapid growth and development of several portions of the colony, and the large increase of population in many of the electorates since the passing of the Additional Members Bill of 1864, render a re-distribution of parliamentary representation necessary.

2. That it is, therefore, desirable a Bill be introduced to provide for a reconstruction of the different electorates.

He said he should not detain the House with many observations on this question, because it was one that, he apprehended, had commended itself to honorable members on many occasions; and, as it had been given to be understood that a dissolution was likely to occur before another Parliament was called together, it had occurred to him that a dissolution should not be allowed to take place till a distinct understanding had been obtained from the Government as to their opinions on parliamentary representation. It could not be forgotten that a considerable amount of bungling took place with the Additional Members Bill of 1864. When he said bungling, he referred to the arrangement of the boundaries of the different electorates, which in some instances it was impossible to define. He would take for illustration the case of the electorate of Northern Downs, which was represented by Mr. Coxen. When the Additional Members Bill was before the House, it was proposed to give one member to Dalby and Condamine townships; but when the matter came properly before the House, the additional member was struck out; but Condamine township, though properly a portion of Maranoa, was now attached to Northern Downs, though ninety miles away from it. Then, again, as to East Moreton; that electorate had a population of 12,000, with 3,000 electors, who were represented in the Assembly by two members; whilst West Moreton, with half that population, and an electoral roll of only 1,000, had three members. Then Drayton and Too-woomba—the additional member for those towns was struck out, and not only that, but there was tacked on to the electorate the agricultural reserves, and the whole of the outside lands, so that in that case there was a population of from 8,000 to 9,000 represented in the House by one member. He would next take the case of Rockhampton, which had a population of 4,000, and according to the last return for that town the number of registered electors was 1,000, and they were represented by one member. Then Ipswich, which had a population of 4,000, and an electoral roll of 700 or 800, was represented by three members. As to the northern parts of the colony, some of them were entirely unrepresented in the House. He, therefore, thought it was necessary there should be some alteration made in the representation of the country before the House was dissolved,

or before an appeal to the country was made; otherwise, the same difficulty, or anomaly, rather, would present itself as existed at present; and one portion of the colony would continue to be more largely represented than another. It had been said, and he thought with some considerable degree of truth, that the town of Ipswich and the district of West Moreton virtually ruled the colony at the present time; because, where a small locality returned six members to the House, and where there was a unity of action or feeling with those six members, he thought it could not happen otherwise than that its members should rule the House; and any division in which they concurred could not but be carried. He had no desire to force the motion on the attention of the House, but if it should be shewn that honorable members thought a Bill should be introduced by the Government to provide for the anomalies he had pointed out, and to increase the number of members, he thought the object of the motion would be obtained. But, he might say, he thought the expression of opinion that might be obtained from the Government by the discussion on this motion would satisfy the public that the question had received their attention, and that there was some hope the Government would at no distant day give the matter of parliamentary representation that attention which the subject merited.

Mr. FITZSIMMONS, in seconding the motion, said he thought this was a very proper time for the introduction of a Bill of the kind referred to in the motion, in order to provide even-handed justice to those districts that were not at present fairly represented. It was recognised at the time when the honorable the late Colonial Secretary, Mr. Herbert, brought forward the Additional Members Bill, that equal justice was not done to the whole of the colony in the matter of representation. There was one constituency which an honorable member thought should have three members given to it, but he was out-voted, and only one member was allowed. The honorable member for Too-woomba had stated the population of Rockhampton at 4,000, but he could assure the honorable member that there was over 7,000 persons in Rockhampton, and on the gold fields, not thirty miles distant. Now, while that electorate, containing 7,000, returned only one member, there was another constituency having only 6,000 of a population represented by six members. He was contradicted when he made the statement a few days ago, but he found he was correct, and that it was the case that Ipswich and West Moreton returned six members, and Brisbane and East Moreton seven members. Now, there was a degree of inequality in that, which ought to command the attention of honorable members. Supposing they were not to go on the population basis, but were to take the customs

revenue as the basis, it would be found by that criterion also that Rockhampton was entitled to one more member. As he had previously stated in the House, the customs revenue of Rockhampton was about two-thirds the amount collected at the Custom-house in Brisbane. Well, in the face of all that, the city of Brisbane was represented by seven members, and Rockhampton by only one member. He found, also, that Rockhampton returned a larger revenue by about one-fourth than Ipswich did; and yet Ipswich had six members, and Rockhampton only one. Those facts, he thought, ought to command the attention of the Government. For some time there had been promises made by the Government that even-handed justice would be done to the northern districts. Those districts were not at present properly represented in the House, and never would be till this Bill, which had been promised for so long a time, was brought forward. He had no doubt the honorable member for Drayton might do it, for he sometimes did perform kind acts; or, at least, if he did not, he very often promised them. However, he would support the motion. He did not expect it was coming on that evening; and as he had often referred to the injustice that had been done to the northern districts, perhaps his opinions on the subject were pretty well known, and it might not, therefore, be necessary for him, at the present time, to go into the matter at so great a length as he otherwise would do. The district of Port Curtis, he might, however, say, was not at the present time represented at all, for there was only one member for Port Curtis and for Gladstone; and to give two additional members to Rockhampton would only be doing something like justice to the northern districts. There were now about 2,000 people at the old gold fields; between 1,200 and 1,300 at the Crocodile Creek; and 600 or 700 at the Canoona diggings. Well, the gold fields in the farther north were not represented at all in the House at present: as the honorable member who represented the Peak Downs was not present; and as little or no notice was taken of them. He thought that, in justice to the rapidly increasing population of Rockhampton, the Government ought to give their attention to the matter of increasing the representation of that town. There was no doubt that, if the honorable member for the Peak Downs was present, the first thing he would do would be to bring forward a Bill for the purpose of doing away with the increased duty on gold. The opinions expressed by almost every honorable member who addressed the House on the Additional Customs Duties Bill were to the effect that there should not be any export duty imposed on the products of the colony; and as gold was one of the products of the colony, it ought not to be subject to an export duty. However, the miners were not

represented in the House at present; but no doubt they would make themselves heard by and by.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY said he regretted to some extent that such a motion as the one under consideration should have been placed upon the notice paper at the present period of the session; because honorable members must be aware that at this period of the session it was too late to take the subject of parliamentary representation into consideration with the view of effecting any practical results. The honorable member for Drayton and Toowoomba had assumed that a general election must take place before the House met again. Well, that might or might not be; but he was not aware that, since the House met after the adjournment, there had been any announcement made by the present Government on the subject. In saying so, he merely wished the honorable gentleman to understand that he should not make statements in the House without knowing, at the latest moment, that he had authority for doing so. He said so, though he had not altered his opinion as to a dissolution since he expressed that opinion in the House; but, looking to the fact that since then several months had elapsed, and two or three Governments had been in and out of office, the honorable member might have made some inquiry before he made such a statement; because the existence of the present House did not legally terminate before the end of next year. The honorable member complained of the Additional Members Bill, passed in 1864, that gave six additional seats in the House. The honorable member was affected himself by the distribution on that occasion; and yet he did not recollect that the honorable member opened his mouth to give a single expression of opinion on the Bill.

Mr. GROOM: He divided the House on the third reading.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: Divided the House on the third reading! Well, that was rather a day behind the fair. He had no recollection that on the second reading of the Bill, or when it was in committee, the honorable member took the slightest exception to it. Now, suppose they were to attempt to introduce a Bill for a re-distribution of the seats, he wanted to know the principle the honorable member would lay down for such re-distribution, as he had not stated any to the House; for he had not stated if the re-distribution he would propose should be founded on population — whether the principle was to be the representation of the adult population, or whether it was to be divided between population and property. Now, those were questions that must enter materially into the consideration of any question of this kind. Then, there was another important question, and that was: was the House in a position to consider the question? Had they a census shewing the

population of the different parts of the colony? He thought it was essential that that should be ascertained before any Bill was considered imposing either additional seats or a re-distribution of members. The honorable member for Rockhampton had told the House of the wants of Rockhampton, and he agreed with that honorable member that Rockhampton was not sufficiently represented in the House; but the honorable member ought to recollect that if Rockhampton was not sufficiently represented there were other districts in the north that were too much represented. Take the district of the Mitchell—what was the population of that district? Now, it was those questions that ought to be taken into consideration in dealing with a motion of the kind before the House, for if they took the population as a basis, instead of the northern districts having an increased number of members, they would probably have to lose some of those they had at present. It was such questions as those; and whether the basis was to be the adult population, or the adult population and property, that ought first to be taken into consideration. It was all very well to discuss this as an abstract question at present; but, until they had a census of the population, they would have nothing to found a Bill upon.

Mr. PUGH said he was ready to admit that the resolution of the honorable member for Toowoomba was sound in the statement contained in the first part of it—

“That the rapid growth and development of several portions of the colony, and the large increase of population in many of the electorates since the passing of the Additional Members Bill of 1864, render a redistribution of parliamentary representation necessary.”

Though he was ready to admit that that was a perfectly sound statement, still he regretted that the motion was not brought before the House at an earlier period of the session; because he apprehended that unless honorable members were kept longer over the Estimates than was anticipated, the House would not be in session for more than a fortnight, and the chances were that in that time, even if the Bill were introduced, it would only be a crude and hasty measure, and would probably be amongst the innocents that would have to be slaughtered at the end of the session. Now, a Bill for the redistribution of seats should be carefully elaborated; and, as the honorable the Colonial Secretary had stated, he did not think the measure could be properly framed unless there was a census upon which to base it. The honorable member for Rockhampton, with his usual astuteness, had compared the customs duties paid at Rockhampton, which had one member, and the customs duties paid at Ipswich, which returned three members—or, as the honorable member affected to put it, including West Moreton six members. Now, he apprehended the honorable member would

not wish the House to believe that the customs duties paid at Rockhampton represented the wealth of the town itself; or that all the goods on which customs were paid there were consumed in Rockhampton; for there was a larger population received dutiable goods through Rockhampton than received dutiable goods through Brisbane. However, as population should be a primal consideration for the redistribution of seats, he agreed with the honorable member that Rockhampton was not sufficiently represented; and he would be prepared to support an additional member being given to Rockhampton. He would now refer the honorable member to the speech of a late honorable member for North Brisbane, Mr. Blakeney, in the debate on the second reading of the Additional Members Bill, on the 28th of July, 1864. That honorable member, in the course of his remarks, said:—

“The entire population of the Darling Downs District, on the first of January last, numbered 11,173 souls, who were represented by six members; while the district of Moreton, including the city of Brisbane, and Ipswich, which had a population, in round numbers, of 30,000—almost a moiety of the entire population of Queensland—had but thirteen representatives.”

Now, he thought that his late honorable colleague was correct in that instance; and he might remind the honorable member for Rockhampton, as he referred to Brisbane having seven members, that one of them was a member of the present Government; and two of them represented a district that was universally acknowledged to be the least adequately represented district in the colony. East Moreton, owing to the cultivation of cotton and sugar in that district, had increased in population most wonderfully lately; and he had it on good authority, that there were three hundred families now settled on the Logan alone, from its junction with the Albert to its mouth. He therefore thought, the least the House could do, in any scheme for the re-distribution of seats—the least they could do for that electorate, would be to divide it in two, having one division, say, the county of Stanley, and the other, East Moreton, and give to each of those districts two members. That would be more equitable, he thought, and more reasonable, than to give a member to the Mitchell, which, whether it had or had not an electoral roll, no one, he believed, could from personal knowledge testify. The electoral roll, if there was one, had never been seen in the House, and no one, so far as he knew, could say if there was one in existence. He hoped the honorable member for Drayton and Toowoomba, under the circumstances, considering the lateness of the session, the impossibility of preparing such a measure as he had in view, and the want of a census as a basis, would withdraw his motion. He hoped that in the new Parliament they

would be able to deal with the subject in a way satisfactory to the country.

Mr. PALMER said that, for several reasons, he thought the motion before the House could not lead to any practical result; and he thought that honorable members might save themselves the trouble of dealing with the question of parliamentary representation so far as the northern parts of the colony were concerned; for long before they could agree on a revision of the representation of the country, the northern districts would be erected into a separate colony. He had long heard it said that the north had nothing to expect from the south; and he was satisfied that, whatever the north might get from the south through fear, it would get nothing through a sense of justice. He thought the discussion that had taken place in regard to the hospitals of the colony, shewed to what extent the interests and requirements of the north were likely to be considered. In Brisbane, for example, there was a hospital which, though only in a semi-finished state, had cost £20,000; and he should like to know how much the north ever got for any purpose except for a useless railway. The northern districts, he maintained, were most unfairly represented; and, indeed, had hardly a voice in the Legislature of the colony. He did not, however, see the necessity of going into the question of a redistribution of seats, because, as he had already said, long before any measure would be passed, the northern districts would be formed into a separate colony.

Dr. CHALLINOR said he did not know how it was, but the honorable member for Rockhampton seemed—to use a phrase in use in the colony—to have a “great down” upon Ipswich. Somehow or other, he would fall into the error of confounding West Moreton with Ipswich, and East Moreton with Brisbane. The honorable member said that he (Dr. Challinor) wrongly corrected him the other evening in denying that Ipswich returned six members. The six members were returned by two constituencies. One was Ipswich, which returned three members; and the other West Moreton, which also returned three members. While the honorable member was continually talking about Rockhampton being represented by one member, though its customs revenue exceeded that of Ipswich, he seemed to forget that the customs duties on goods destined for Port Curtis, the Leichhardt, and Clermont, were all included in the revenue returns for Rockhampton. He believed it would not be denied that the inhabitants of those districts contributed towards the customs paid at Rockhampton, and that they also sent representatives to that House.

Mr. FITZSIMMONS: And Darling Downs, to the customs paid at Ipswich.

Dr. CHALLINOR: He did not know that there was much love lost between the Darling Downs and Ipswich at present; though the

members for Ipswich had done for the Darling Downs what the other members would not do for them; and now the Downs were ready to give them the kick and the go-by. The honorable member had spoken about striking off the gold duty, because it was impolitic to tax any of the products of the colony. He could not say what view the honorable member took of the question when it was under consideration; but he had not, on the present occasion, made any mention of a duty on wool; though it would only be consistent that those two articles should stand together in the matter of taxation. According to the principle advocated by the honorable member—that the products of the country should not be subject to taxation—gold should be exempt from duty as well as wool; but those who consented to a duty on gold, should, also, consent to a duty on wool. Now, the honorable member was not one of those who consented to a duty on gold, but objected to a duty on wool. Therefore, in the views he had expressed, the honorable member was at least consistent; but he was not just. With regard to the honorable member for Port Curtis, he ought to be the last to complain of any place being wrongly represented; for, though he had a seat in the House for the purpose of representing Port Curtis, he really represented Rockhampton rather than Port Curtis, and therefore the less that was said upon that subject the better. He had been told, also, that the constituency which the honorable member represented was not in favor of separation, and that, notwithstanding the injustice, as it was called, of the south, they would rather trust to the south than to themselves. The honorable member had asked, when did the north get £20,000 voted for it, except for a useless railway. Well, he thought the question would be sufficiently answered by referring to the jetty at Bowen. He did not know when the Government intended to take the census, but if they meant to wait only till the quinquennial period, he thought it would have to be taken this year. Whatever action honorable members might take in this matter, he was sure that if justice was not done to the northern districts by the south, from a sense of justice, nothing would be done for them through a sense of fear; and as to the cry of separation, the north would not frighten the south by that one bit, for whatever might be got from the north, in the case of separation, all would have to go back which had been paid more than was due. When separation took place, all moneys would have to be accounted for, and if it were found then that the south owed the north anything, it would have to be repaid. For his own part, he did not think there was any disposition on the part of the inhabitants of the southern portion of the colony to do those in the north the slightest injustice; and when they were ready for separation, they would be allowed

to have it. He, himself, however, was one of those who thought the Queen in Council would not be disposed to grant separation to the north in a hurry. When the Queen in Council came to know the extent of the mortgages upon the pastoral leases, she would be rather afraid to trust the north with the management of the Crown lands, lest it should be sought to wipe off the mortgages by the sale of the lands belonging to the Crown. For his own part, he was ready at all times to do justice to the north, for he had not forgotten the injustice that was done by Sydney to what was formerly known as the Moreton Bay district. He agreed with the honorable the Colonial Secretary, that if population was to form the basis of representation, the north had already got more than its share of representation, though the representation might fall somewhat unequally on the different districts, some having too little and some too much; but while the north and the south were together, they might as well endeavor to go on harmoniously, if they could. He thought the motion could not at present, even if it were carried, have any practical effect given to it; neither did he believe that representation should be based solely on population, or solely on property, but upon the union of both, and to hit upon the right proportion was the thing required. He had formed his own opinion long ago, as to whether there would be a dissolution or not, and the conclusion he had arrived at was, that if the Ministry had a working majority, there would not be a dissolution till 1868.

Mr. GROOM, in accordance with what he considered to be the wishes of honorable members, then withdrew the motion.

LEASING AREAS BILL.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: I now rise for the purpose of moving the second reading of "a Bill to authorise the leasing of Crown lands, and to give the right of purchase to the lessees." According to the usual practice, this Bill ought properly to have been brought before the House by my honorable colleague the Secretary for Public Lands; but it has been agreed, that as my name has been specially kept before the public in connection with this measure, I should, on this occasion, move the second reading. In asking the House to deliberate on this Bill, I am aware that I am inviting discussion over a very wide field—in point of fact, a discussion, if the House should desire it, on the whole land question. I do not, however, ask for anything of the kind; and I do think the House will scarcely act wisely should it enter on so wide a debate. It may be as well, however, that I should remind the House of the circumstances under which I have been induced to introduce this Bill. On the occasion when the Land Bill was before the House for a second reading, I was charged with having omitted the old leasing clauses

of 1860—a charge which in itself was perfectly true, but the reasons put forward for the omission were unfounded. I mean, the reasons given by other honorable members for my omitting the clauses were unfounded. The old clauses of the Leasing Bill were wilfully omitted by me under the following circumstances. The old Land Act provided that the purchaser of land was entitled to lease three times the quantity of land he bought, for five years, at the rate of sixpence per acre, with the right to him, on certain conditions, of purchasing the leased land at any time within the term—at the end of five years, at the rate of one pound per acre. Now, from a return which I have obtained from the Survey Department, a copy of which was placed on the table of the House at the commencement of the session, it appears that those leases, with the exception of a small proportion, had been all forfeited; and, though I was unable to obtain any returns as to the reasons for that, I have satisfied myself that leasing of that description was of no advantage whatever. That leasing which involved the purchase of land, and the sinking of capital, was no favor at all. In point of fact, the purchaser had so many conditions to attend to in reference to his purchased land, that the leased land remained untouched and profitless. While, therefore, I felt that to introduce the old clauses into a Land Act would be perfectly useless, as honorable members will recollect, I stated that should the committee be inclined to entertain them, I would introduce leasing clauses in committee, and that is the reason I have brought in this Bill. I may mention, that it was the intention of the Government, of which Mr. Herbert was the head, to have introduced a similar measure; and although it has been said that this Bill differs to some extent from the leasing clauses as I intended to have placed them before the House, yet I think when honorable members consider the whole Bill, they will find that the difference is not essential. I have mentioned that, in inviting the House to determine upon the second reading of the Bill, I have opened out a somewhat wide field for discussion, which I think the House with some advantage might postpone. My opinion for saying so is, that I have always found, upon an important question connected with the alienation of Crown lands, it is difficult to find two individuals to agree. My honorable and learned colleague, the Attorney-General, I remember some time ago, remarked that every man carried a land Bill in his head; while the honorable member for East Moreton's old friend, Adam Smith, has been occasionally quoted in this House as an authority under circumstances of which I am sure he never dreamt. I know this, sir, that although I have taken the trouble to search, go over, and understand, the laws of almost all—I may say all—of the Australian colonies, and although I have endeavored to

find out how those laws have worked in the several colonies, I have invariably found this to be the result: that the best of these laws have been met with the gravest objections, and have almost invariably given the greatest dissatisfaction. While, therefore, I feel that the land laws of every colony ought to have settlement as their great object; yet, when I regard the land laws of South Australia, Victoria, and New South Wales, I am still firmly convinced that, with the Bill now before the House, our own laws are infinitely superior. And while I conceive the land question to be one of the very greatest importance, yet the prosperity of the colony, to my mind, depends upon many circumstances altogether irrespective of the price at which land may be sold. I think we have this view fully illustrated in the case of the now fading colony of Tasmania; for there, with a soil unequalled, or at any rate unsurpassed by any in Australia, with a climate admirably adapted to the European constitution, and with land at five shillings an acre, the colony has been gradually sinking in public estimation until the tide of adversity appears to have set in steadily against it, and bids fair, if not to ruin the colony, at all events considerably to thin its population. It has been stated that the homestead law of America might with great advantage be introduced here. I confess that I am not as intimately acquainted with the practical working of that law as I should desire, but from the information I have been able to elicit from those who have resided in the States, I am led to believe that that law has been made a vehicle for the grossest jobbery; and if it were introduced into this colony I have no doubt it would be attended with a similar result. I may mention to the House, that I have lately been led to go through a mass of evidence taken last year before a select committee of the New South Wales Legislature appointed to inquire both into the state as well as the banking and currency of the colony; and if I were to mention the names of the witnesses examined before that committee, I should only mention the names of gentlemen well known to every member of this House. They were persons holding high positions in mercantile and squatting circles, and they could not agree as to what land should be disposed of, with a due regard to the true interests of the country. For although some of the mercantile gentlemen who were examined seemed to think that the upset price should not be less than one pound, although with long credit, the squatting witnesses denounced all idea of granting freehold properties. All they asked was security of tenure and the right to purchase improvements. Now, these circumstances only tend to confirm me in the opinion which has been expressed over and over again by many members of this House, months ago, that between the alienation of public lands and the

security of tenure to which I have just referred there is no connection whatever. They are two different questions, and I can see no reason whatever why these two interests should not be legislated for without prejudice to either. I see no reason why they should clash, or why the opinions of honorable members should run into wrong channels in regard to them. Now, Mr. Speaker, I believe that, in my last observations, I have somewhat digressed from the real question before the House. I will therefore return to it. The measure I have now introduced is said by some persons not to be carried far enough; others say it has been carried too far. I can only observe that I have introduced it with the view of giving assistance to an interest which has increased, and is still increasing, and comprises two classes. The first class of persons are those who have come to this colony within the last two years, or who have been here longer, and have brought with them capital to the extent of from £1,000 to £5,000. It is a well-known fact that many individuals have come here with that amount of capital, who would have gone into grazing operations combined with farming, if there had been a Bill like the one before the House in operation. As it is, they have gone into speculations, or embarked in pursuits, of which they knew nothing, and the consequence is that many of them have been ruined. As far as I can judge from the information I have received, there are persons in the neighboring colonies who are prepared to come to Queensland and take up land under the provisions of such a Bill as is now before the House, and to become graziers and cultivators of the soil at the same time; while I know that this Bill is anxiously looked for by a large number of respectable persons in this colony. The second class of persons who are provided for by this Bill are those who take up land in the agricultural areas; because it is absolutely necessary that some further provision should be made in reference to these areas than have hitherto existed. I have had, personally, upwards of five years' experience in the practical working of the Agricultural Reserves Act, and I have no hesitation in stating that the invidious conditions with which they have been clogged have not only proved a bugbear, but have actually resulted in being obstructive to settlement. It may be said that the same objections would not apply to this Bill if those conditions were attached to it, because a person who, under the old system, was compelled to advance his money before he could obtain possession of the land, will now retain it and expend it upon the cultivation of the soil, and may therefore be able to comply with those conditions. It may be so; but I think, beyond a provision to secure the cultivation of the soil, all conditions are invidious, and tend to destroy instead of further the object which we seek to attain. I do not know that it is necessary

for me to detain the House much longer upon this question. I will now go through the different clauses of the Bill, as they now stand. I will invite the attention of honorable members to the first clause, which gives power to the

"Governor with the advice of the Executive Council to create leasing areas wherein such Crown lands as hereinafter mentioned shall be open to lease by the first applicant."

The second clause enacts that—

"Such leasing areas shall comprise only such Crown lands situate two miles at the least from the nearest part of the boundary of any town or village now or hereafter to be proclaimed as shall have been surveyed in portions of thirty acres or upwards and have been offered for sale by auction and neither sold at auction nor purchased by selection within thirty days after being offered for sale by auction."

Now, sir, I observe that some objections have been made to this clause, and, as my object is to make the Bill worthy of public approbation, I feel it my duty to notice some of those objections. One objection is, that the areas provided for by this Bill were intended to be proclaimed within two miles of a township; that, in fact, the areas would occupy suburban land. Now, that is not the tendency of the Act, because honorable members will see that the very outside of the suburban land is the furthest extent to which these areas can go; and they may be fifty miles beyond the township—there is, in fact, no foundation whatever for that objection. Another objection is, that the lands which I propose to proclaim are not distinctly defined as country lands. My answer to that is exceedingly simple. The clause which I have just read provides that the leasing areas shall comprise all lands beyond the suburban lands which have been surveyed and put up to auction and not sold within thirty days. Now, I am not aware of any other country lands which are placed in that position. That objection is also entirely groundless. The clause is framed for the purpose of dealing with country lands which have been, at any time, put up at auction and remained unsold for thirty days. Another objection has been urged. It has been said: "Why allow thirty days to elapse before permitting the selection?" My answer is simply this: I maintain that a man who has twenty pounds and wishes to buy twenty acres, is entitled to have the preference over a man who has only twenty half-crowns, and that the preference shewn to him is not a very marked one. I think that is the common-sense view of the matter, but that is a question for the House to deal with. Now the third clause provides:—

"So soon as any lands shall be so proclaimed as aforesaid as leasing areas it shall be lawful for any person to apply to the land agent within whose district such land is situated to be declared the lessee of any portion or portions of land so open to selection and in case there shall be but one applicant for any such land such sole applicant shall be declared the lessee."

Under this clause it will be seen that there is no option. If there be only one applicant, the agent has no option, he must give him a certificate for the land. The next clause provides that where there are two or more applicants for the same land, the applicant who shall pay the highest premium shall be declared the lessee. In such a case, instead of asking an additional rate, which some persons think would have been the proper course, I have proposed to adopt the principle which is enforced in reference to squatting tenures; the premium given may be small or great, but once paid it is paid for ever. The fifth clause provides for the form of application, and that applicants shall pay one year's rent to the agents. The sixth clause provides that—

"The lessee shall receive from the land agent a lease and shall sign a duplicate lease which shall be forwarded by the land agent to the office of the Surveyor-General."

And the seventh clause enacts the terms and conditions as follows:—

"(1.) The term thereof shall be for eight years from the first payment of rent.

"(2.) The yearly rent shall be at the rate of two shillings and sixpence per acre when the upset price of the land or the sum for which it is open to purchase by selection is twenty shillings per acre but if the upset price of such land or the price at which such land is open to purchase by selection be higher than twenty shillings per acre then the rent shall be increased in proportion.

"(3.) The rent for the second and each succeeding year shall be paid in cash in advance to the Treasury at Brisbane on or before the first day of January and in default of such payment in advance the lease shall be forfeited and the land and all the improvements thereon shall revert to the Crown but the lessee may defeat such forfeiture by paying into the Treasury at Brisbane in cash within sixty days of such original rent day a sum equal to the annual rent together with an additional sum equal to one-fourth part thereof by way of penalty but in the default of such payment of rent and penalty within sixty days the lease shall be absolutely forfeited and the lessee and any person claiming under him who shall thereafter remain in possession or intrude upon the land in such lease shall be deemed a trespasser upon Crown lands and may be removed in the manner provided by law."

Some persons are of opinion that this clause is too stringent, that, in point of fact, there should be no forfeiture at all. But I must confess I cannot see the force of that objection, unless, indeed, it is intended to give the land away. There must be some period named for forfeiture if the payment is to be exacted at all. The fourth and fifth conditions refer to the issue of the deed of grant, and read thus:—

"(4.) So soon as the lessee shall have made the tenth payment of rent as aforesaid he shall be entitled to a deed of grant in fee-simple subject however to the payment of the fees chargeable on the issue of deeds of grant."

"(5.) If at any time during the term of such lease the lessee shall pay in cash into the Treasury at Brisbane the rent for the unexpired portion of such term he shall be forthwith entitled to a deed of grant in fee-simple subject however to the payment of the fees chargeable on the issue of deeds of grant."

Of course, if a person, during the first period of his lease, chooses to pay the whole of the rent, he gets his title deed at once. An objection has been taken, I believe, to the fifth condition, in reference to the land orders. Now, no doubt, it is very desirable that the land orders should be got rid of as soon as possible, and we must take payment for the land in some shape or other. I shall have no objection, if the committee deem it desirable, to introduce after the word "cash" in the second line, the words "or land orders," so as to enable parties who have land orders to dispose of them; but I do not undertake to accept them except as payment for land. The eighth clause provides that the amount of land to be held by one lessee within the same leasing area is not to exceed 2,560 acres. The ninth clause states that

"It shall not be lawful for the lessee of any such lease or any person claiming through or under him to transfer assign or encumber the same without the consent in writing of the Surveyor-General and any transfer assignment or encumbrance made or attempted to be made without such consent shall be absolutely void and of no effect."

An objection has been made to this clause, and it will be for the House to consider whether there is anything in it. It is stated that it will be cumbersome and oppressive to persons, to compel them to apply for the consent of the Surveyor-General to the transfers or assignments of land they may be desirous of making. It appears to me, however, that it ought not to be so regarded; because it must be remembered that, until the Government receives the whole of the money, the party is only a lessee. And, therefore, if he proposes to do anything beyond remaining in possession of the land, he ought, at least, to put the Government in possession of the fact. Now, the real object of this clause is to compel every lessee to give the Government information of his intention to assign, or the actual assignment, or transfer, or mortgage of, any of his leased land, so that a register may be kept of every such transfer. I regard that as one of the most important details of the Bill. The only security which can be given is afforded by keeping a correct register, such as is provided for by this Bill. I do not intend that the Surveyor-General shall have the least option of refusing any such transfer. The next clause is the tenth, which provides that

"A fee of ten shillings shall be paid upon every transfer assignment or encumbrance of any lease issued under this Act."

I do not think that is unreasonable. The next clause refers to damages, and enacts that—

"It shall not be lawful for any lessee under the provisions of this Act to claim damages for any stock impounded for trespass on his leased land unless such trespass shall have been committed on land surrounded by a fence."

Some honorable members have objected to this, and expressed their opinion that there ought to be a fencing clause. But it appears to me that if persons were compelled, under the Bill, to fence in all their land, the provision would be oppressive, and would militate against the proper working of the Act. I have endeavored, therefore, to provide the best remedy, and by this clause the person impounding shall not be empowered to claim damages for trespass, unless his land be fenced. The twelfth clause reads thus:—

"All lands so forfeited as aforesaid and all lands in any leasing area remaining unleased for the space of three years after the same shall have been first proclaimed for lease shall as soon as conveniently may be thereafter be brought forward for sale by auction as Crown lands in the same manner as if they had never been included in a leasing area except that it shall not be necessary in any such case to re-survey such lands nor to deposit or issue fresh maps or plans of the same."

An objection has been taken to this clause. I believe that the lands ought not to be put up to auction, and that, in fact, they ought not to be interfered with. But it seems to me that forfeited lands must be disposed of in some way, and I know of no form which would be likely to meet with public approbation, except that of sale by auction, and the same rule will apply to lands which have remained for a long period of time unused and not looked after. I do not know that it is necessary to carry this clause further than it goes at present, and I think that after three years' experience of the working of this Bill, we shall be in a better position to suggest any alteration which it may be found to require. The thirteenth and last clause refers to lands, not mentioned in the Bill before, in agricultural reserves, and the whole object of this clause is simply that those lands, at the end of one month after they have been opened for selection, be regarded as leasing agricultural areas, and may be leased, subject to the same conditions as the lands in the agricultural reserve—in fact, they are converted into leasing agricultural areas after one month, with a condition as to cultivation. There are other conditions in the Agricultural Reserves Act, but I do not intend to impose them, as I think the condition of cultivation is quite sufficient to insure the proper use of the land. I think I have now said all I can say on the subject of this Bill, and if honorable members approve of the principle it contains as I have announced it, any difference of opinion with regard to detail can

be considered when the House goes into committee upon it. I now move that this Bill be read a second time.

Mr. STEPHENS said he looked upon it as a matter of great importance that the Bill before the House should be passed into law as quickly as possible, and he, therefore, intended to support the motion. He wished, at the same time, to state his opinion that it would require considerable amendment in committee. The general principle of leasing land, he thought, could not be brought into operation at too early a period. The restrictions attached to the Bill ought, however, he thought, to be omitted; he would take the opportunity of pointing out some of them. In the first place, he thought the first clause should be omitted altogether, which gave the Governor in Council the power of proclaiming leasing areas. He thought the operations of the Act ought to be general and complete, and not confined in any way by any act of the Surveyor-General or the Governor in Council. With the exception of the thirteenth clause, the whole of the Bill applied to land put up for sale and passed at auction. He thought the Bill ought to provide distinctly that all lands passed at auction, and remaining open for sale by selection for one month, should be open for lease by selection. He wished to draw the attention of the House to the forfeiture of the lease, within sixty days of the rent becoming due, if not paid up. Many hardships might arise from such a clause. A man might, for instance, after some three or four years' labor, bring the land to a high state of cultivation, and then suddenly die, leaving his widow and children unprovided for, because he had spent all his money on improvements. If the widow could not pay the rent, the lease would be forfeited without compensation. He would suggest that the sixty days be extended to ninety days; and if the rent were not satisfied within thirty days of that date the interest of the lease might be sold by auction; and after deducting the rent, and fifty per cent. for forfeiture, the balance, if any, be handed over to the widow. The honorable the Premier had stated that all the Government meant in the ninth clause was, that it was necessary to inform the Surveyor-General of any transfer or assignment of a lease, in order to have it registered. He would, therefore, suggest that the word "consent" and the word "register" so inserted, be expunged; that the Act should clearly express that the Surveyor-General had no option in the matter, and that no such transfer was valid or legal without being registered. With regard to the quantity—2,560 acres— which one person was permitted to take up within the same leasing area, it appeared to him that there might just as well be no limit at all. The definition should be absolute, that no person could take up more than 2,560 acres. There should be some fixed limit, or it would be better to omit the clause. That was,

however, a point which could be discussed in committee. With regard to the thirteenth clause, it would be much better to repeal the two obnoxious conditions as to fencing and residence, which were in the Agricultural Reserves Act, and provide that a person could lease land in an agricultural reserve subject to the conditions in all other respects contained in the Agricultural Reserves Act. He did not think it was necessary to put any absolute restriction upon the quantity of land which a person might buy at auction, because it might have the effect of checking the investment of capital in large grazing farms; but he would limit the quantity in the reserves, or it might otherwise happen that all the best agricultural land in the neighborhood of a town would be taken up and made use of for grazing purposes. There were other points to which he should refer when the Bill was committed. In the meantime he should support the motion for the second reading.

Mr. WALSH moved the adjournment of the debate, which was lost on division by a majority of 16 to 8.

Dr. CHALLINOR said he believed the professed intentions of the Government would not be secured by the Bill before the House. It would be a good measure if it secured the settlement of a population who would be *bond fide* cultivators of the soil. If that object were not achieved, it would be a curse instead of a blessing to the country. He felt quite confident that if the eighth clause were left intact, instead of an agricultural population being settled on the land, there would virtually be a renewal of the pre-emptive right upon better terms than had ever existed. Because, if it happened that "any one person, co-partnership, or company" became the lessee in any one year of 2,560 acres within a leasing area, what was there to prevent such person or persons from taking up the same quantity next year? But, even during the first year, there was nothing to prevent a man from getting A, B, C, D, or, in fact, as many persons as he choose, to act as mediums to enable him to take up an additional quantity; and all they would have to do would be, not to find the principal, but the interest of the money for a certain time, which would be less than the rate of interest at twelve and a half per cent., they would have to pay if they were to borrow the money to purchase the land at one pound an acre, to say nothing of the principal which would have to be met as well. And as in the ninth clause there was a provision to transfer the lease from one person to another, nothing would be easier than to carry out the system of employing dummies or mediums. Some honorable members had informed the House that it would not pay to buy land for grazing purposes at one pound an acre. But the thing had been done, notwithstanding; and he had heard that upon one run, and that not the largest on the Darling Downs, there were not less than

36,000 acres of freehold. If it had been done once, it would, no doubt, be done again; and if the lands could be obtained in the way he had pointed out, it was to be feared that a great deal of the land which ought to be cultivated and settled would become mere permanent grazing grounds. The great object of the Legislature should be to settle a population upon the lands as speedily as possible; and he hoped when the Bill was considered in committee, honorable members would keep that object in view, and endeavor to prevent the practice of that system of dummies and mediums which had prevailed so extensively in Victoria. The Bill said, in the eleventh clause, that there was to be no impounding or trespass unless the land was fenced in. He thought he heard an honorable member on the Treasury benches say that impoundings with damages could not take place on Crown lands at present. Now, he thought he was correct in saying, that at present a Crown tenant could not only charge driving expenses in impounding cattle trespassing on his run, but also charge a certain amount of damage besides. The provision in the Bill might cut both ways. A large number of stations, he believed, were now fenced in, but some of them might not be; and he knew, as regarded the neighborhood of Ipswich, that the cattle belonging to the lessees of Crown lands were continually trespassing in large numbers on the town common and agricultural reserves. It appeared to him that this provision was intended to prevent the lessees under this Bill impounding squatters' stock that might trespass on their lands. He might be wrong; but it did appear to him that this clause was intended, as it were, indirectly, to compel the lessees to fence in the land, by depriving them of the right of impounding squatters' stock that might trespass on their lands, which were unfenced.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: The stock of each other.

DR. CHALLINOR: Oh! the stock of other lessees of land adjoining. Though he thought there ought to be a forfeiture of the land where the conditions of the lease were not complied with, he also thought the time ought not to be too short, or the conditions of the forfeitures too stringent. He did not think it was right that the value of the improvements when the forfeited lands were sold should altogether revert to the Crown. He thought the value of the improvements should go to the persons who made them. If the Crown obtained all it had a right to ask, the lease and the rent or deferred payments—if the Crown was secured in those respects—that was all the Government had a right to ask; and if any person was unable to fulfil the conditions of the lease, he should be protected as regarded the value of his improvements. He knew the course at present was for the Crown to put a valuation on improvements on any land, and add the

value to the upset price of the allotment; and the amount assessed for improvements went to the person who made those improvements. Now, he thought that that system should be carried out with regard to the leased lands which might be sold under forfeiture. He had often been spoken against as a virulent opponent of the squatting interest, and that term had often been applied to him.

MR. TAYLOR: Quite correct.

DR. CHALLINOR: It was applied to him, but he denied that it was correctly applied. He had always said that the pastoral tenants should be paid the value of their improvements. He had said so out of the House, and he was prepared to say so in the House—that if the pastoral lease did not cover fencing—if the provisions in the Act did not cover fencing—he was prepared to go in for securing fencing to the pastoral tenants—that if from any cause they should lose their leases, the incoming tenant should have to pay for the fencing, so that there should be no occasion whatever to prevent them from erecting those fences. He was also convinced that the thirteenth clause would require alteration. It was as follows:—

“All lands in agricultural reserves which shall have been proclaimed as open for selection and have remained so open and unselected for one calendar month may be treated as if proclaimed part of a leasing area. Provided only that if taken up on lease they shall be subject to the same condition and restriction as to cultivation as if they were selected by purchase.”

He believed that was not sufficient to abrogate the law already in existence, and the present law must be abrogated before this Bill could come into force. The honorable member for the Warrego could inform the House with regard to the Real Property Act, that in consequence of the thirteenth section of the Act 11 Victoria, No. 33, which was an Act to regulate the taxing of attorney's bills and costs, and the practice of conveyancing, not having been repealed, the Real Property Act was in a certain respect rendered nugatory. And in the same way, he was convinced that, unless several clauses in the present Agricultural Reserves Act were repealed, the thirteenth clause in the Bill before the House would be rendered nugatory. He believed the great matter required as a condition, by a measure of this kind, was cultivation. He was quite confident that a man who went to the expense of cultivation would go to the expense of fencing; and, whatever kind of fence he might erect, it would, at any rate, be one that would be sufficient for the purpose. He thought that if cultivation were secured, the matter of fencing might be left to the cultivator. He would not oppose the second reading of the Bill, but he would endeavor to limit the operation of the eighth clause in the way he proposed to do on a previous occasion, by a clause that had been printed and circulated, and which he

intended to move when the Bill went into committee.

Mr. RAFF said he would support the second reading of the Bill before the House, because he considered it to be a step in the right direction; and, indeed, he thought it would be somewhat surprising to honorable members, if he did not support the second reading, for it approached very near to an amendment he gave notice of when the Land Bill was passing through the House in the early part of the present session; and he was pleased to see that the present Bill not only conceded all that was asked for by his amendment, but even went a little farther; for he considered this Bill, in effect, reduced the price of land,—an object which he considered to be highly desirable. He considered it right that the land should be reduced in price. He agreed with the observations that were made by the honorable member for South Brisbane, as to the necessity for certain alterations being made in the Bill; and he was glad to hear from the remarks of the honorable member at the head of the Government, that he would not object to those alterations. Indeed, the honorable gentleman himself suggested there should be certain amendments made in the Bill. He had said he considered the Bill proposed a reduction in the price of land; and, in saying that, it might be necessary he should explain himself. The Bill proposed that lands that had been submitted for sale at auction should, after the expiry of thirty days, be open for selection on lease; and that the party selecting or taking up the lease should obtain the land at twenty shillings per acre, and have eight years to pay the money at the rate of half-a-crown an acre, without interest, which was giving the land at four years' credit, on an average. Now, that four years' credit, without interest, was equivalent to a reduction of a third of the price, putting interest at eight per cent., so that the land was actually offered by this Bill at thirteen shillings and fourpence, instead of twenty shillings an acre. Now, as there was a large quantity of land that would be put up at twenty shillings an acre that would never be sold or utilised, he looked upon this measure as a step in the right direction. It was not proposed to offer lands for lease that had not previously been offered for sale; nor were lands to be offered at thirteen shillings and fourpence that were worth more than twenty shillings an acre. He did not agree with the honorable member for Ipswich, who would object to the sale of a single acre of land for any other purpose than that of cultivation; for the honorable member stated that if the Bill should be taken advantage of by any one else but *bonâ fide* cultivators, it would be a curse. He was astonished to hear such sentiments expressed by any honorable member. He so far differed with the honorable member, that he considered it would be

a curse if a large amount of land were not sold for any purpose, while the Government was under the necessity of borrowing a large amount of money for which a very high interest had to be paid. The House was in the position of a trustee of the lands, and honorable members ought not only to keep in view the speedy cultivation of the land, but also keep in view the advantageous sale of the lands of the colony; and the lands of the colony ought to be sold, if purchasers could be found who could pay the money. Surely, if only a farthing an acre could be obtained for the use of the lands as leased at present, they should be content if by the sale of the lands they could get sixpence or a shilling an acre, at a time when the colony had to borrow money at a rate of interest equivalent to that amount.

Dr. CHALLINOR: No!

Mr. RAFF: No! Was there another honorable member in the House who would say no?

Mr. BROOKES: Yes; it was absurd.

Mr. RAFF: Well, he was ashamed to find there were two honorable members in the House who could say so; and he must, therefore, say that he hoped those honorable members would come in for a full share of the increased taxation which it had been considered necessary to impose. He would go the full length with the honorable member for Ipswich, and would give every facility for the settlement of *bonâ fide* cultivators. Indeed, if it were considered necessary, he would even go for the homestead system of America. The honorable member at the head of the Government had referred to the homestead system, and had said that it would be a source of much jobbery if it were brought into operation here. But any land law that could be enacted would be fruitful in giving occasion to jobbery. The question, therefore, was not whether the system would or would not give occasion to jobbery, but whether the benefits that would be derived from such a law, in attracting population, would counteract the evils of jobbery. Jobbery there would be; and they had it, no doubt, in the matter of the agricultural reserves. He was afraid they could not avoid jobbery; but the question was, would the benefits they could derive from any arrangement they might make, counterbalance the evils unavoidably incident to it? If the benefits to be derived from the homestead law would far more than outweigh the evils of the jobbery—that would accompany such a law, and if men were willing to pay a fair price for the land, let them have the land, and let them even put stock to graze on it. But the honorable member for Ipswich said it would be a curse to the country to do that.

Dr. CHALLINOR: No. He did not say it would be a curse to the country to do so.

Mr. RAFF: The honorable member said that to apply the lands to grazing purposes

would be a curse to the country; and he (Mr. Raff) was ashamed to find that there were two honorable members in the House who would assert this. The honorable member for South Brisbane had suggested that the first clause of the Bill should be expunged. Now, while he agreed with him in his objections to the first clause, he did not see any necessity for expunging it, if it could be amended. He did not believe in leaving it to the will of any Government to proclaim leasing areas. It was for the House to decide, and to enact what lands should be subject to leasing under the Bill. He would not leave it to any Government to proclaim leasing areas; and, instead of striking out the clause, he would so alter it as to make it read thus:—"It shall be lawful for the Governor with the advice of the Executive Council by proclamation in the *Government Gazette* to declare all such Crown lands as hereinafter mentioned as open for leasing by the first applicant." And in the next clause, he would say:—"All Crown lands which shall have been surveyed in portions of thirty acres or upwards and have been offered for sale by public auction and neither sold at auction nor purchased by selection within thirty days after being offered for sale by auction shall be open for lease. Provided that it shall be lawful for the Governor in Council by proclamation to except any lands situate within two miles of the nearest part of the boundary of any town or village now or hereafter to be proclaimed." He thought that that would carry out the intention of the honorable member for South Brisbane, with whom he quite agreed, that it should not be left to the option of any Government to declare what lands should be set apart as leasing areas. Whatever Government was in power, let them be ever so upright or impartial, if they had the power to oppress or shew favor, they would be charged with doing so, whether they did so or not. He thought it would be an advantage to any Government to be rid of any such excuse for any party to blame them; and he therefore held that it should be decided in the Bill that all lands that had been exposed for sale by auction should, after the lapse of thirty days, be open for leasing under this Act. The honorable member at the head of the Government, he was glad to see, had shewn himself to be somewhat progressive in his ideas on the land question. That honorable gentleman had stated to the House that many parties who had come to the colony with sums of money, varying from £1,000 to £5,000, and who had attempted under the present law to apply their money under the Agricultural Reserves Act, had come to ruin because they could not combine grazing with agriculture. Now he was very glad to see the honorable gentleman look at the question in that light; and although he did not put it as corroborating this statement, yet he made another statement, which he

meant as an argument against reducing the price of land. Now he thought the statement was capable of quite another application. The honorable gentleman referred to what he called "the decaying colony of Tasmania;" where, though the lands were unequalled and the climate unsurpassed, the lands were sold at five shillings an acre. Yet, everything there, the honorable gentleman said, was going to decay. Now, he (Mr. Raff) did not know if the honorable gentleman had ever seen those lands. He could not contradict the honorable gentleman's statement as to the climate, but as to the lands, he would say that the purchaser paid at a very dear rate for them in clearing them. Then, again, it must be remembered that there had been failure amongst the purchasers—and that because they were small holders. They could not afford to purchase a large extent of land at the high price they had to pay for clearing. They were therefore obliged to confine themselves to a small quantity; and the consequence was, that the farmers being obliged to raise as much as possible from it, in order to obtain a living, the land was fully cropped, year after year, till it was entirely exhausted. Now, if the lands had been such that the farmers could have purchased a large area, and could have combined grazing with agriculture, there would have been nothing whatever heard of the land being exhausted; and farming would have continued to be a success in the island instead of being a failure. It was quite well known that the grazing portion of the country community was prosperous, though all around, as depicted by the honorable gentleman at the head of the Government, was in a decaying condition. He thought the honorable gentleman might have made use of those statements in defence of the principle in the Bill which he approved of, but which was not properly stated in it—that was the reduction in the price of land; but he was glad to see the principle admitted, that there should be a reduction in the price of land; and, talking of the reduction in the price of land, he saw in the seventh clause the following words:—

"That if the price at which such land is open to purchase by selection be higher than twenty shillings per acre then the rent shall be increased in proportion."

Now he thought it would be well if a few words were added to the clause to this effect: "or if lower the rate should be decreased in proportion." No harm could occur from that, and the insertion of those words might save additional legislation at a future period; for he could not form such an opinion of the good sense of the House as to believe that it would adhere to the price of twenty shillings an acre for any long period. He thought that to adhere to such a price, as a general rule, would be greatly obstructive to settlement. He observed what he considered to be a

misprint in the fourth clause of the Bill. He referred to the words "as soon as the lessee has made the tenth payment." Now, as far as he could understand, a tenth payment was not contemplated by the Bill. He would not any further detain the House, but would merely repeat that he believed this Bill, with the amendments which had been suggested, and which, he had no doubt, would be proposed in committee, would be found to be a useful measure. He would therefore support the motion that it be read a second time.

Mr. BROOKES said he thought he was justified in saying, that not only this House, but the whole of the colony, had been looking forward to the introduction of this leasing Bill, by the present Government, with a good amount of interest. That, indeed, he might say, he was perfectly certain of. It was, however, a matter of opinion as to the feelings with which the public might regard this Bill; but his own opinion was that they would regard the Bill now before the House with feelings of considerable disappointment; and he could not say that there were not wanting very good and valid grounds for believing that that opinion would be perfectly right. Though he sat on the Government side of the House, and was supposed to be a supporter of the Government, perhaps it might be that, from that position, he might, with the more advantage, say that this Bill gave the key-note to what, he believed, would be a loud sounding tone by and bye, of distrust in this Government. Remarks had been made about an "unholy" coalition. Now he did not know why a coalition should be unholy. Perhaps that might be a term used rather mechanically than from an understanding of what it meant. Perhaps it might not be unholy—for they were all honorable gentlemen—but he certainly thought the coalition was composed of gentlemen, who entertained opinions entirely dissonant, the one from the other. He believed the Bill would be found to be like that celebrated image that was put up in olden times, that had its feet of one material, its body of another, and its head of another. He did not believe the Bill would ever have the confidence of the colony; and he might say that—as a reason why he thought so—he believed the Bill was just exactly the one thing necessary to shew that the squatting party—for he would not with it—he was not there to mince words—he believed the Bill would shew the colony that the squatting party were determined to maintain their grasp on the lands of the colony. Now, when the honorable the Colonial Secretary gave the House to understand that he was to produce a Leasing Bill, the honorable gentleman, he knew, figured before the colony as a coming man—as the man who was to propound a Leasing Bill that would really meet the growing demands of the colony. Now, what did they find? Why, they found,

as honorable members all knew—that evil communications corrupted good manners. They found that the honorable the Colonial Secretary had taken into his counsels two gentlemen who were very large owners of land—lessees of land, and owners of land, also, on the Darling Downs—and they found in consequence that the honorable the Colonial Secretary;—and he would just observe here, that the Ministry had increased very greatly, and if the increase went on as it had been going on, by and by those two benches would be required to hold the Ministry;—but, as he was about to say, they found the Colonial Secretary had given proof in this Bill that he had been influenced to a very great degree by the recent admissions into the Executive Council. And he would maintain, against all comers, that the honorable gentleman had been unduly influenced; and that he could not, consistently with his former professions, or with any degree of political decency, stand up and defend the Bill before the House. They all knew very well the exigencies of his position; and that sometimes he required to stand up and defend, simply anything; but when he presented this Bill for a second reading he ought to have allowed a further time for its discussion—he might have allowed something like adequate time for the digestion of this strange and incomprehensible Bill; and he might very fairly have said, when the House pressed the matter to a division, that he would allow more time for its consideration. So far, as regarded the Ministry; and on this point he would put this finally as regarded them,—that the Bill shewed they were a Ministry not to be trusted by the colony. For his own part, he had no further faith in them. He believed their Treasury Notes Bill, and all the Bills they had brought forward at the present time, were a mere delusion and a snare. They had brought forward those measures just as a humane society man would bring out a drag to save a man from drowning; and as soon as they thought the patient was pretty well recovered, he was offered this Leasing Bill. But the patient was so far recovered that he would not have the Leasing Bill; and the Leasing Bill did not faithfully represent the promises of the Colonial Secretary for a considerable time past; and there would be very great dissent in the colony, if the Bill which the honorable the Colonial Secretary made so much political capital of lately, and upon which he endeavored to stand as on a pedestal, from which all posterity was to view him as an exemplary character, as the savior of the colony, as the introducer of a combined system of agriculture and grazing—and say "There stands the great Colonial Secretary,"—there would be very great dissent if such a Bill should pass. Now, as to the last speaker, he would introduce that gentleman to the attention of the House as a skilful horseman. But

he had a hobby, and he seemed determined to ride his hobby to death. When the honorable member talked of his approval of the Bill being mainly based on the conditions attached to the seventh clause, he shewed that he did not understand what was the vital principle of the Bill. The price of land had nothing to do with it. The Bill was a leasing Bill, and it had no more to do with the price of land than it had to do with the electoral list. The vital principle of the Bill, he thought, was shewn in the second clause of the Bill. The honorable member, Mr. Raff, he was sure could not have really seen the effect of some of his observations, when speaking of a homestead law—when he uttered the opinions he did on a homestead law. Because, suppose there were a homestead law introduced here, it would entirely destroy squatting, and, yet, he said he would rather agree to a homestead law than something or other. Now, it seemed to him (Mr. Brookes) that they were arriving at a conclusion in a great hurry; and that strengthened his opinion that this Bill was a squatters' Bill. So far from the Bill being a Bill to facilitate the leasing of the land and its occupation by the people, it narrowed itself up into a very small compass; and the question that seemed to have been uppermost in the minds of its promoters—and he would not do so much injustice to the honorable the Colonial Secretary as to believe that he was its promoter—was how to limit the areas of the land that should be open to leasing purposes. He might just say that when the last speaker proposed that the areas that should be declared to be open for lease should be left to the House, he was unconsciously repeating what was the vital principle, and the objectionable principle, of those celebrated resolutions that were arrived at by the George-street clique—neither more nor less. Now, he maintained that they must not leave it to the House to say what areas should be open for lease. That would be to leave it to the occupiers.

Mr. RAFF rose to order. The honorable member was altogether misrepresenting him. He would appeal to honorable members whether he ever said it should be left to the House to declare the areas. What he said was, that the areas should be determined in passing this Bill, and that it should apply to all lands that had been offered at auction and had not been sold after the lapse of thirty days.

Mr. BROOKES: If he had misrepresented the honorable member, he had to express his regret for it; for he felt they were now dealing with a very grave subject, and to gain an advantage by misrepresentation, while it might secure temporary applause, might be productive of prolonged injury to the colony. But he would not be a consenting party to promoting the advantage of one class—that was the squatters—in such a way that their advantages would clash with

the interests of the colony. The interruption of the honorable member, however, enabled him to repeat, that the whole Bill was a squatters' Bill; and it also enabled him to repeat, that the speech of the honorable member, Mr. Raff, was a squatters' speech; and it shewed he had no interests in common with the colonists—it shewed he was, as he always had been, bound up, even mentally, with the progress of Queensland as being identical with the progress of the squatters. Now, he would take that opportunity of stating that all recent events, that the great increase of the population of the colony within the last few years, that the present financial crisis, all pointed to a time coming in which, he believed, the last speaker would be, just, nowhere; because, notwithstanding the present large and important vested interest of the squatters, he would find that that vested interest must submit to be encroached upon. There was nothing else for it. They were now driven to primary principles, and the occupation of the country by the squatters was understood to be only a preliminary occupation. They were coming now to the old quarrel, and he was sorry to see the representatives of the city standing up on the wrong side; and seeing that every Crown lease contained a provision to the effect that when the land was wanted for public purposes it should be resumed, he was sorry to see the honorable member for Brisbane standing up on the side of those that would argue till the crack of doom that the lands were not yet wanted. Now, he maintained they were wanted; and that hundreds of thousands of people were waiting to know when they were to have those lands. When the last speaker spoke of the combination of grazing with agriculture, he (Mr. Brookes) did not see what he was aiming at. Was the honorable member, he would ask, sincere in his wish for the combination of grazing with agriculture? It did not appear that he was. The honorable member said he would vote for the second reading of the Bill; and he would vote for almost everything that the Bill contained; simply because, as seemed from his speech, that it appeared to flatter that chimerical idea of his that the upset price of land should be reduced. Now, that was not the opinion of the colony; and he would tell the honorable member that the upset price was not the difficulty, but the Surveyor-General was the difficulty, and had always been the difficulty, because he always began at the wrong end. That gentleman had always dealt with the lands of the colony as a merchant would deal with his goods. He had, as it were, said—"Sell the bad first, for you can always command a market for the good lands";—and, consequently, looking at the conduct of the Surveyor-General in that view, he entirely differed with him; and the honorable member for North Brisbane, Mr. Raff, joined with the Sur-

veyor-General in that opinion, so far as to suppose that, if the good land was worth twenty shillings, the bad land was worth only one shilling per acre. Now, he wanted to know what was good and what was bad land? For he supposed that what was considered bad land this year would be considered good land ten years hence; for that which was good land depended on more than the geological character of the land. It depended, for one thing, on the proximity of the land to a market, and on a thousand other circumstances. He had heard the honorable member, not only to-night, but on other occasions, allude to Tasmania; and he had not spoken of the honorable member's opinions of Tasmania before, because he thought that expressing such views as he did, the honorable member might be laboring under some delusion. Now, it had been his lot to have to pass some short time in Tasmania; and from all he could see or hear, from the conversations of all with whom he had any intercourse—and those gentlemen comprised not only squatters, but farmers, and merchants, and bankers—he must say that everything he had heard stated by the honorable member about Tasmania was entirely different from what he had heard about Tasmania when he was there. When the honorable member talked of the decline of agriculture in Tasmania, it was evident that he did not know the cause; and when he talked of the land being so heavily wooded as not to be fit for agricultural purposes, it was clear that his information on the subject was very limited indeed, and that he did not know the real cause of the decline of agriculture. He (Mr. Brookes) would not enter into the question at present; but would only say that the curse of Tasmania was that the land was in the hands of a few capitalists, and nobody else could get a hold of it. There were many ancillary causes; but that was the main cause. Now, reverting to this Leasing Bill, he would submit to the House that the second clause was the weakest clause in it. It contained the principle of the Bill, and contained all the evil of the Bill. He would ask whether this second clause, read as it was printed, could in any way be made to harmonise with the idea that the House and the colony was led to entertain of the Leasing Bill, as it would be brought to the House by the honorable the Colonial Secretary. He would ask honorable members if they had not heard of some such proposition as this—and he knew it had been fondly cherished by persons who had capital, that they might take advantage of it: that they were to have leasing areas on the banks of navigable rivers and creeks, and also along the lines of railway? There were to be other features in it; and he had heard the honorable gentleman himself speak of cutting up East and West Moreton into agricultural areas. But, as he said before, evil commu-

nications corrupt good manners; and the recent importations into the Ministry had destroyed the honorable gentleman's ideas, and had taken away all the force and strength that was in them. The second clause provided that the leasing areas should comprise only such Crown lands situate two miles from the boundary of any town or village, &c., as had been offered for sale by auction. Now, what did the squatters want with towns or villages? But there was here a singular limitation, and he would put it to any sensible man—to any disinterested person—and he would ask him, whether in a Queensland Leasing Areas Bill the limitation should be to such lands only—only—as had been offered at sale by auction? It was unquestionable that the gentleman who held the responsible position of Surveyor-General had always been inimical to any change of the system of sale by auction. That gentleman was a squatter himself to the backbone, and if the leasing areas were to be limited to lands that had been offered at sale by auction, he (Mr. Brookes) would say to those who were waiting to invest capital in the occupation of the leasing areas, and to those who had been trusting to them—disabuse your minds at once, for there will be nothing of the kind. The Bill before the House was not a leasing Bill; and it was a measure that convicted the honorable the Colonial Secretary of having been traitorous to his former principles—that rather than yield his present position he would sacrifice his political reputation—that he would yield to an influence the worth of which would be gone to-morrow,—and that he had forfeited his right to be considered the leader of the Government, by this Bill. It was not a leasing Bill, it was a Darling Downs Bill. It was nothing else but a Darling Downs Bill, and that was a term that was synonymous with class legislation. It would not fit in with any of the other measures of the Government. It would not fit in with any system of liberal immigration. He would defy it to fit in with the *ad valorem* duties Bill, or with any scheme that would have for its intelligent object the settlement of the colony, or the progress, in any material respect, of the colony of Queensland.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS said he regretted very much the speech that had just been addressed to the House. It appeared to him that, instead of trying to deal with the great question before the House, the honorable member had allowed himself to give vent to his feelings, and to speak against his own honorable colleague, and against the honorable the Colonial Secretary. The honorable member had said that the Bill would be the means of causing a great deal of distrust in the present Ministry; and he also said that the Ministry were divided in their opinions with regard to the Bill. Now, he must say that it was impossible for him, as one of the members of the Ministry, exactly to understand which

side of the House the Ministry were to expect to receive approbation from. Whether from that portion which the honorable member represented, or from the representatives of the squatting interest. He was inclined to think that the squatting interest must look with some distrust on a squatting Ministry for bringing in such a Bill as this; but he must say he did not expect the honorable member who last spoke would look on the Ministry with distrust because of this Bill. However, he did not fear the result. He believed there was no difference of opinion amongst the Ministry with regard to this Bill; and when the House had made those amendments in the first and various other clauses, most of which he approved of, prepared by the honorable member for South Brisbane, he believed the Bill would be complete. Now, he might say to the House, that one of the questions put to him as the Minister for Public Works, by the deputation from the unemployed, was, whether he would be prepared to allow them to take up land at the rate of two shillings and sixpence an acre; and, having before him an application of that kind, coming from such a source, he could not help coming to the conclusion that the honorable member for North Brisbane, Mr. Brookes, was not expressing the opinion of the people, but his own opinion; otherwise he could hardly conceive that such a question would be put to him by the unemployed as he had mentioned; or that the unemployed would express themselves as satisfied with such a Bill as this—a Bill by which, as he told them, they would be able to get the fee-simple of the land, not in ten years, but probably in eight years. As the honorable member for North Brisbane, Mr. Raff, had stated, the Bill virtually proposed a reduction of the price of land—instead of the price being twenty shillings an acre, it would be only thirteen shillings and fourpence an acre;—and, he would inform the honorable member, Mr. Brookes, that there were at present about 80,000 acres open for selection between Brisbane and the Main Range. Now, if the amendments of the honorable member for South Brisbane were carried, those 80,000 acres would at once be open for leasing purposes. To say, therefore, that the lands would be locked up by this Bill was a fallacy. The honorable member, Mr. Brookes, also said that the Surveyor-General was the great impediment to the settlement of the lands. Now, how could that be the case when there were 80,000 acres open for selection at the present time? It was not, therefore, he maintained, the Surveyor-General, but the upset price that was the impediment to the sale of lands. It was because the land was not considered to be worth twenty shillings an acre that it was not taken up. So the honorable member for South Brisbane was correct, for it was not that the Surveyor-General had locked up the lands, but that

the lands were not worth twenty shillings an acre, or that the people had not the money to pay for the lands. That was why they were not taken up. The honorable member, Mr. Brookes, had told the House that he had been in Tasmania, and that the statements made by the honorable member, Mr. Raff, were not true. But the honorable member, Mr. Raff, could further inform that gentleman and the House that when he was in Tasmania, he found that the land there could be bought almost for a song; and that a large farm with a fine and substantial house, with orchards all round it, could be purchased for about a third of the price of building the house; so there must have been some other cause for the decline of agriculture in Tasmania than the cause assigned. Another point the honorable member set forth was as to the proclamation of towns and village sites, and he asked what object could the Ministry have in proclaiming such sites. Now, that shewed that the honorable member was not up in this question, or that he knew nothing about the matter of the proclamation of lands; but if he went to the Surveyor-General, he would find that there were town and village sites reserved throughout the country at distances of only about ten miles apart; and it was necessary in this Bill to provide that those reserved sites should not be taken up; and all lands within two miles of those towns were also excluded from its operation, but lands such as those specified at a distance of two miles from such sites would be available for leasing. He trusted honorable members who belonged to that portion of the community to which he himself belonged, would not throw any obstacle in the way of this Bill being passed into law; and he would request honorable members, representing other sections of the community, not to ask too much, otherwise the Bill might be lost, and the community would be deprived of the great boon which it was desired to confer by this measure. He was sure it would not be the fault of the squatters if the people were deprived of the benefits intended to be afforded by the Bill, but the fault of those who professed to be the friends of the people. He hoped the House would endeavor to make the Bill as good as possible; and desiring to see that the case, he would, for his own part, accept the propositions of the honorable member for South Brisbane.

Mr. REED said he wished briefly to refer to one or two amendments which he proposed to introduce in committee. The manner in which the measure had been introduced by the Ministry into the House was to his mind very satisfactory. He could not, however, say that he altogether approved of the matter contained in it. It had been submitted to the House as an unfinished measure, to be left almost entirely in the hands of the House to be shaped and matured; at least, that was what he had gathered from the

language of the Minister who brought it in. He thought, therefore, the Government might rely upon meeting with no factious opposition from any member on that side of the House, and that honorable members on both sides would throw aside all party or personal feeling and assist the Ministry in making it as perfect a measure as possible, as much for the good of the squatter as that of the community at large. He was fully impressed with the importance of the measure. In his opinion, a more important measure had never been introduced into the House; and he believed that when the finance Bills about to become law had faded away from memory, it would remain as a memorial of the progress of the colony of Queensland. Most honorable members must be aware, that at the present time there was a considerable exodus of population from the colony to America, New South Wales, Victoria, and New Zealand. In his district, he could state that a number of persons had emigrated to America; and unless some steps were taken to prevent this exodus, the drain upon the population of the colony would be very severe. But no measure of an ordinary character would be sufficient to effect this; it must be the most liberal measure of its kind. He did not think that a measure simply as liberal as those in existence in New South Wales and Victoria would do; but something must be done, not only to induce colonists to remain, but to attract persons from the other colonies. If the exodus to which he had referred had been caused by a temporary stoppage of the railway works, what would be the case when those works were stopped altogether? A great many people were unquestionably dependent upon the railway works for their support; and it was the duty of the Legislature to introduce such a measure as would have the effect of retaining those persons in the colony. At present, with the heavy railway expenditure to which the country was committed, the state of things was in a great measure analogous to the state of things in Victoria at the commencement of the gold fields, when it was frequently suggested that some steps should be taken to give small farms to the diggers in the neighborhood in order to keep them in the colony. No measure, with that object in view, was carried; but had it been—had a liberal measure been introduced to enable those men to settle on the gold fields, or upon farms in the neighborhood—the miners would not have been the wandering class which they were now, ready at any time to rush off to New Zealand, or to any other country where a new gold field was discovered. He considered that the large railway expenditure incurred by the country should be utilized by enacting some measure to settle a population upon the lands. There was one point in which he considered the Bill before the House was very defective, which did not

appear to him to have been touched upon by honorable members, and that was, the necessity under the measure before the House of putting all lands up to auction. Now, as was stated by the Colonial Secretary in introducing this measure, its great end was to bring about a settlement of the lands of the colony, and one of the chief recommendations of such a leasing measure was, that it would not drain the money out of the people's pockets, but allow them to retain it, and to employ it in cultivating the land. The Bill was generally regarded as an inducement to intending farmers, by rendering it unnecessary for them to deprive themselves of their capital by sinking it in the purchase of land, and allowing them to use it in developing the resources of the colony. Why should there be any obstacle thrown in their way? Why should not land in the leasing areas be proclaimed at once as open for selection, without being put up at auction for sale at all, as the best of the land would be sure to be bought up at once, and nothing would be left but inferior land, with unfruitful soil, heavily timbered, or else far away from water, or from a town; only such lands would be available for leasing. That appeared to him to be a great defect in the measure. With regard to the argument that the revenue from the lands would be reduced by the measure before the House, it did not appear to him that it would be borne out by past experience. As far as he could judge from the *Statistical Register*, the revenue for 1865 had been chiefly derived from the sale of town and suburban lands. All that had been received for country lands had been received in land orders, and as the land order system would now be done away with, those lands could hardly be looked upon as a source of revenue. Another thing struck him, in looking over the Bill. There was no actual encouragement given to parties to cultivate the land. No bonus was offered, no inducement held out, nor, in fact, was the least encouragement given to the man who succeeded in making two blades of grass grow where one had grown before. He thought some substantial encouragement should be given to every successful cultivator. That had been done before. A bonus of ten pounds a bale had been given as an encouragement for the growth of cotton; and a bonus of five pounds an acre was now given for the planting of an acre with cotton—that was to say, five pounds a bale was given, which amounted to the same thing. He believed that one pound an acre, or some such bonus for wheat, or any other product for which there was a market in the colony, would be equally desirable. At present £500,000 was annually sent out of the country for food for man and horse, which might be kept in the colony if some such inducement were offered. He intended to suggest an amendment in committee, the effect of which would be to allow the actual cultivator of the

soil to make it his own in fee-simple as effectually, to all intents and purposes, as if he had paid the full price for it. There was another point in which he thought the Bill was wrong, and that was in the provision for absolute forfeiture. He really thought, with the honorable member for South Brisbane, it would be found a great hardship to persons who had resided on a piece of land, cultivated and improved it, to have to run the risk of forfeiture, or of being punished by penalties. He thought the same system should be adopted as was pursued with the building societies. The property should be put up for sale, and the surplus, after paying rent and charges, given to the proprietors, and he thought such a clause might be introduced into the Bill. There was a further point in which he thought this measure was rather defective. There was no mention made of the extent of land to be open for selection. When the Land Bill was passed in Victoria, it was provided that there should always be two millions of acres open for selection. That might be rather too large a quantity in this colony, but he thought there should be some definition as to the extent of land which would be put within reach of the speculator.

On the motion of Mr. WALSH, the debate was adjourned until the following day, to take precedence of all other business, and the House then adjourned.