

Queensland



Parliamentary Debates  
[Hansard]

**Legislative Assembly**

**WEDNESDAY, 26 SEPTEMBER 1866**

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## LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY.

*Wednesday, 26 September, 1866.*Right of Petition (Stafford H. Webb).—Leasing Areas Bill  
(Adjourned Debate).RIGHT OF PETITION (STAFFORD H.  
WEBB).

Mr. WALSH rose, he said, for the purpose of enabling the House to do what he considered to be an act of justice to itself, in the matter of a petition which he presented on the previous day. On two occasions, the petitioner had addressed the House; and he contended that the House, in the way it had dealt with those petitions, had not done justice to itself. Both of the petitions were properly worded, and the prayer of each was unobjectionable. The House had, nevertheless, rejected the petitions on both occasions, and in doing so had, he maintained, done itself a grievous wrong. It was not necessary for him to remind honorable members that there was no privilege upon which Englishmen placed so high a value as that of the right of petition; and he considered it was the duty of the House to shew that, to a corresponding extent, it estimated the value of that right, and desired to interfere with it as seldom as possible. He was not aware that there was a single precedent, nor did he think it could be shewn there was one, where a petition from the meanest subject in the realm—a petition

properly worded and finished by a suitable prayer—was rejected by the House of Commons; and it was because he believed the House had been deviating from—

The **SPEAKER**: I do not know if the honorable member intends to conclude with a motion or not. If not, the honorable member is scarcely in order; but I do not know what the honorable member is desiring to bring before the House.

Mr. **WALSH**: He did not wish to do anything that was irregular or out of order. What he wished to do was to prevent the House doing, what he considered to be, a wrong to itself. He thought there was hardly a precedent of the House of Commons rejecting a petition, unless it embraced something that was repugnant to the good feeling of the House. Petitions were, he believed, invariably received, if they were properly worded, and were finished with a suitable prayer. He did not require to remind honorable members that the right of petition was a very ancient privilege; and that, from the time of Magna Charta down to the present time, it had never been questioned by the House of Commons. In "May's Parliamentary Practice," he found the following passage on the subject:—

"The right of petitioning the Crown and Parliament, for redress of grievances, is acknowledged as a fundamental principle of the constitution, and has been uninterruptedly exercised from very early times. Without a prayer, a document will not be taken as a petition; and a paper assuming the style of a declaration, an address of thanks, or a remonstrance only, without a proper form of prayer, will not be received. The rule upon this subject has thus been laid down in the Commons: On the 10th August, 1843, a member offered a remonstrance. Mr. Speaker said, 'That the custom was this, that whenever remonstrances were presented to the House, coupled with a prayer, they were received as petitions; but when they were offered without a prayer, the rule was to refuse them.' He added, 'that there was a standing order requiring that the prayer of every petition should be stated by the member presenting it;' from which it is obvious that a prayer is essential to constitute a petition."

Now, of his own knowledge, he was able to say that the petition he presented on the previous day had a prayer, and that the prayer was unexceptionable. Therefore, he held that the House forgot one of its paramount duties, when it so decidedly took exception to the reception of the petition.

The **SPEAKER**: The honorable member is in some degree out of order. It is only by consent of the House that he can go on. With reference to the petition presented yesterday, the honorable member was ruled to be out of order in making any remarks upon it at the time of presenting it; and an honorable member cannot put himself in order when he has been ruled out of order, by moving the adjournment of the House, as I presume the honorable member intends to do.

Mr. **WALSH** said he would do so, and he was satisfied the House would allow him to shew the grounds on which he considered he was justified in the course he was pursuing. Now, having stated so much as to the right of petition, he would take advantage of being in possession of the House to shew why he thought a wrong had to some extent been done to the petitioner; and that was another reason, perhaps, why the House should consider the precedent they had established, and should be glad of the opportunity to retrace their steps. He was satisfied the petitioner had a grievance, and if he could have explained that yesterday, the petition would probably not have been rejected. The petitioner, to his own knowledge, wished to present a petition to the House some time last June. In fact the petition was taken charge of by the honorable member for Ipswich, Dr. Challinor. But that petition met with the same fate as the one he presented yesterday, with this difference, that the honorable the Colonial Secretary was allowed to make some remarks on the subject which led to the objection to the petition. Now, that was not the case yesterday, or he should not have required to make any remarks on the present occasion. It was because he had seen that remarks against the petitioner were allowed when his first petition was presented, and that remarks explanatory were not allowed on the presentation of the second petition, that he again brought forward the matter now. The honorable the Colonial Secretary of the day thought it right, when the first petition was presented, to make some remarks for the purpose of shewing that the petitioner was dismissed for dishonesty. Now, he was in a position to disprove that by documentary evidence. When the honorable member for the Burnett was Colonial Secretary he objected to the petition being received because the petitioner had been dismissed on account of a charge of misappropriating some public money. The honorable member alleged that the charge had been clearly proved and, further, that the head of the department had informed him that the petitioner was totally useless as a clerk. Now, he held in his hand a letter written by the Principal Under Secretary, in which that gentleman acquitted the petitioner of dishonesty. The statement was made by the late Colonial Secretary on the 27th of June last, and probably when he had read the letter which he now held in his hands—a letter written, as he had said, by the Principal Under Secretary—the House would come to the conclusion that the petitioner had received less injury than the House, from being misled by the statement of the late Colonial Secretary. The letter was as follows:—

"Brisbane, 4th August, 1866.

"SIR,—I am directed to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 30th ultimo, in

which you seek a re-investigation into the circumstances which led to your removal from the public service, and to state that, after a careful perusal of the papers bearing upon your case, the Colonial Secretary regrets his inability to hold out any prospect of your re-employment. Your removal from the service resulted from your inefficiency to perform the duties entrusted to you, and nothing has since transpired to induce the Government to reverse their decision.

"I have the honor to be, sir,

"Your most obedient servant,

"A. W. MANNING,

"Under Colonial Secretary.

"Stafford H. Webb, Esquire, Edward street, Spring Hill."

Honorable members would bear in mind that the first petition was rejected, because of the statement made by the late Colonial Secretary, that the petitioner was dismissed for clearly-proved dishonesty. Now, here was a letter from the Under Secretary, stating that such was not the case. If those circumstances had been understood yesterday, as he trusted they were now, the petition he thought would have been received. But they were not understood, and hence the House, on the custom—this modern custom—of rejecting petitions, had not only established a very bad precedent, but one by which they might be led to do a very great injury. He had nothing whatever to say in favor of the petitioner. He believed he was an inefficient public servant. Indeed, of his own knowledge he formed that opinion; but nothing could justify the Government in dismissing a public servant for a certain act, and allowing him to be provided with a document sliewing that for that act he was not dismissed, and by which he might be able to mislead his future employer. He hoped that, from this circumstance, the right of petition would meet with more favor in future. He would now conclude by moving the adjournment of the House.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY said he merely wished to say a few words, because he thought that, in justice to the honorable gentleman who was one of his colleagues at the time the first petition referred to was presented—who was then Colonial Secretary—as well as to the public generally, he was bound to set the House right so far as he could remember the facts. The letter which had been read by the honorable member was a letter for which neither the present Government nor the Government of which he was formerly at the head, were at all responsible. He had no doubt that it was as stated in the letter, and indeed as was admitted by the honorable member for Maryborough himself, for inefficiency that the petitioner was dismissed. The petitioner was recommended for dismissal by the head of the department where he was employed. He had, previously to that, been dismissed from a situation he had been in, but upon a different charge. He was brought down to

Brisbane and appointed to a situation, but was found by the head of his department to be utterly useless. The Government had no alternative, therefore, but to remove him from the public service. He was not satisfied with the reasons given for his removal, but demanded an inquiry. A board was appointed to sit on his case, and the board found that he was guilty of the charges that had been made against him. That being the case, the Government, he thought, took the right course. He was removed for inefficiency; and by a board appointed at his own request he was found to have been guilty of certain acts. The Government, therefore, as he had said, took the right course. It was a course he approved of then, and which he approved of now. With regard to the right of petition, he quite agreed with the remarks made by the honorable member for Maryborough. He believed it was the right of every British subject to petition the Legislature, not only once, but twenty times, if necessary. Still, he thought there was a point beyond which, in certain cases, the right should not be allowed. If a person by the frequent presentation of petitions became a nuisance, it was right, he thought, that the petitioner should be put down.

Mr. MACKENZIE said he was Colonial Secretary at the time the petitioner was dismissed; but the Government of which he was a member was in no way responsible for the writing of the letter which had been quoted by the honorable member. That letter, he thought, was an additional proof of how wrong it was to allow any letters to be written by a subordinate without the knowledge of the head of the department or his revision. As far as he recollected, the charges brought against the petitioner were fully proved; and, in fact, the accusation of embezzlement was brought under his notice, shortly after he took office, by the honorable member for Maryborough himself. The petitioner had every opportunity afforded him of clearing himself before a board of inquiry. He thought the best way to have got rid of the grievance would have been for the honorable member to have moved for the production of the papers connected with the board of inquiry.

Mr. WALSH: He did not say the petitioner had a grievance, but that he had been denied the right of petition.

Mr. MACKENZIE: As his successor had taken a different view from him, of the matter, after a perusal of the papers, he did not see that that bore on the subject at all, in any way, or gave an additional right of petition. When the first petition was presented, he stated his views of the case, and on the strength of them the petition was rejected. He agreed with what had been said as to the right everybody had of petitioning the House, but nothing had been said as to the right of the House to reject petitions. If a petition was only received, it

was of no earthly use to the petitioner; and to print the petition, in order that it might be taken into consideration, occasioned great expense to the country. And that was the point at which the right of rejection might come in.

Mr. PUGH said he should be very sorry that the right of petition should be denied to any one, but he thought the honorable member for Maryborough was wrong as to the rejection of the petition that was presented by the honorable member for Ipswich, Dr. Challinor. His impression was, that it was on the motion that the petition be printed that the late Colonial Secretary made the statement that had been alluded to, and that the House then rejected the motion for the printing of the petition. But the second petition—the one presented on the previous day—the House refused to receive. He thought if the present debate had no other good effect, it would have this effect—that it would prevent subordinate officers of the heads of departments writing letters committing the Government to certain courses which the Government themselves knew nothing at all about; for it was evident that the letter which had been read by the honorable member for Maryborough was a contradiction of the statement made by the honorable member for the Burnett, Mr. Mackenzie, when he was Colonial Secretary. In that letter the right of petition seemed to be renewed. The Colonial Secretary, in June, stated that the petitioner was dismissed for embezzlement; but the letter said he was not dismissed for embezzlement, but for inefficiency. The consequence was, that as the statement was made public through the press, the petitioner, wherever he asked for employment, was told that the brand of embezzlement had been fixed upon him by the Legislature. The letter, however, revived the petitioner's prospects of having the brand removed, and of his being then able to obtain employment; and all that he desired was, he believed, that the brand should be removed.

Mr. FORBES said he did not intend to go into the matter of the petition, as it was not before the House at the present time. The usual practice, he believed, with respect to petitions was, that the member presenting a petition gave notice that it should be printed, and on the debate upon that motion the petition was generally considered. He found there was a resolution of the House that ordered that all petitions should be referred to the Printing Committee without any discussion taking place at all; and he thought that as long as that resolution stood on the journals of the House, so long would honorable members be debarred by the rules of the House from entertaining the consideration of any petition that might be presented to it. He thought, therefore, that the sooner that resolution was rescinded the better, for the effect of the resolution, so far as he could see, was to

prevent the consideration of any petition that might be presented to the House. He had observed that when a petition was presented to the House, it was usually referred to the Printing Committee. Now, that was not the object of the petitioner. The object of the petitioner was that his petition should be considered by the House. Even in the case when a petition was referred to the committee and was returned in a printed state, there was generally no further action taken in the matter. He thought the reason why the petition had not been fairly considered was owing to the House having passed a resolution without fully considering the effect that it would have on the right of petition. From what he remembered of the petition presented on the former occasion, the merits of it were entered into by the then Colonial Secretary, and it was considered the explanation he gave at the time was satisfactory to the House.

Mr. TAYLOR said it struck him that there was some slight misunderstanding in this matter. So far as he understood the case, the changes in the office of Colonial Secretary were so rapid about the particular period when the letter was written, that it was hard to say who authorised it to be written. He rather imagined that it was the honorable member for the Burnett, Mr. Mackenzie, who was Colonial Secretary at the time, and who caused the letter to be written, stating that the petitioner had been dismissed, and for what?—for incompetency and something else. The petitioner then applied again for another inquiry, and another Colonial Secretary, Mr. Dalrymple, ordered another letter, the one read by the honorable member for Maryborough, to be written to him. He supposed if there had been any case for a further inquiry, it would have been entertained. If the time of the House was to be taken up by petitions of this kind, after the grievance had been inquired into by a board, the time of honorable members would be taken up till doomsday with such matters.

Dr. CHALLINOR said he could not, from any personal knowledge, say anything of the petitioner, further than that he presented his petition in June. It might be a very light matter to the honorable member for the Western Downs, that the petition should be set aside, but it was not a light matter to the petitioner, whose daily bread depended upon the removal of the stain from his character. Now, so far as he was aware, there was no official document that shewed that the petitioner had been guilty of embezzlement. Had he been aware the honorable member for Maryborough intended to bring the subject forward, he would have looked over the papers. He knew that, as stated by the honorable member for North Brisbane, Mr. Pugh, in consequence of the reports as to embezzlement against him, the petitioner was unable to get any employment whatever. Now, it surely shewed that the petitioner

was conscious of his own innocence, or he would not have brought forward this matter so frequently. If he was guilty of embezzlement, he would not likely have courted public inquiry. The fact that he courted public inquiry, he thought, shewed that he was not guilty of embezzlement. He thought there was evidence to shew that he was not guilty of embezzlement. At the inquiry that took place, documents, he believed, were put in to that effect, from a banking establishment at Gladstone. If any person considered that a wrong had been done to him, he had a right to petition the House from time to time till justice was done to him. The stigma resting upon him, was prejudicial to him and to others depending upon him; and it was not right for the House to throw impediments in the way of his clearing himself. The House, he thought, had acted wrongly in the matter on the previous day, and he had a doubt in his own mind as to whether the matter could be decided this session—whether the House could come to a decision a second time on the same subject during the same session. He had not had time to mature the question, or he should have called for a division upon it, on the previous day.

Mr. WALSH explained, that the petition presented by the honorable member, Dr. Challinor, was rejected on the motion that it be printed, after the honorable the Colonial Secretary made a statement of the case to the House. With reference to the remarks made by the honorable member for the Western Downs, he would ask the honorable member to bear in mind that it had been admitted by every speaker on this question, but himself, that all their fellow-colonists had the right of petition; but the House had the right of rejecting the petition. When the honorable member spoke of the time that was taken up considering those petitions, he ought to give credit to honorable members who presented them, that their time was sufficiently valuable to make sure that they would not present any frivolous petition. He begged now to withdraw the motion for adjournment.

The motion was accordingly withdrawn.

#### LEASING AREAS BILL (ADJOURNED DEBATE).

Mr. WALSH, on rising to resume the debate on the motion for the second reading of the Leasing Areas Bill, said he must state that he regretted that honorable members who had preceded him had not, as a rule, afforded him the opportunity, which they might have afforded him, of being benefited by the information which they might have given to the House on the subject. Nor had they given him the opportunity of rebutting any real arguments against the general tenor of the Bill. He regretted that honorable members, or most of those who had preceded him, did not seem to have been prepared to discuss the Bill on

its merits; but had departed from that course, and, as it seemed to him, had used the Bill as a means of attacking honorable members of the Government who had introduced it to the House. Even from the honorable the Premier himself he had heard less upon the merits, upon the probabilities, upon the quality of the Bill, than he should have expected to hear from him, and certainly far less than he wished to hear from him. In fact, it was only from the common-sense observations which were addressed to the House by the honorable member for North Brisbane, Mr. Raff, and the honorable the Secretary for Public Lands, that he was able to receive any information at all. He might even go a little further, and say that the honorable the Premier did give the House some information, but he might have given more than he did. He had no doubt the honorable member found that the Bill before the House was a great advance upon any Bill previously presented to the House, and therefore took it that such an improved Bill would require but little explanation, on the principle, he supposed, that good wine required no bush. Well, he must confess that he was delighted with the Bill. Not because he believed it was anything like perfect, but because, as had been said before, it was a step in the right direction; because it was the best step in the proper direction that he himself had seen taken; and he trusted, now that they had commenced to deal upon that principle with the land, that long before honorable members were satisfied with the land laws of the colony, other advances would be made by the Government, or by the House, to persevere in that course. The grand object in disposing of the lands of the colony was obviously to make them an advantage to the country—to make them a blessing, not only to their fellow-colonists, but to those who were inclined to be their fellow-colonists—those who might be induced to become colonists. Therefore, he hailed the Bill with considerable satisfaction, believing it would tend, to a considerable extent, to cause the somewhat rambling population of the country now to settle themselves on the land; and cause their numerous fellow-creatures, who had not yet become colonists, to look to Queensland as a better home than it had hitherto presented itself in their sight to be. The honorable the Premier, he thought, admitted that all the land schemes of all the colonies, without any exception, had proved to be, more or less, failures; and he supposed honorable members might argue upon that that it was about time they should prevail upon themselves to depart from those land schemes as far as they possibly could. Because, if they had been such utter failures, it was evident that the right thing to do was to go on a different tack; and that the less they had to do with any portion of those failures, they might argue, the less would be the failures of their future schemes. It was a

fact, that the land laws, as at present in force, induced neither capital nor people to come to the colony. They induced neither the cultivation of the soil, nor the best application of the grazing lands of the colony for grazing purposes. In fact, they seemed to have a kind of terrifying aspect, which alarmed every one who had to deal with them, whether as a buyer or renter. The Crown tenant lived at present as it were by sufferance. He knew not the day his tenure might be cut short; and, with very few exceptions, the purchaser of land in the colony was not to be found who did not regret the bargain he had made. Now, nothing could be more unsatisfactory than such a state of things. Those who rented the land felt they were placed in that position that they could not make the best use of it, and those who had bought land, regretted their bargains. Those were patent facts; and, if such was the state of things that had been brought about by the course that had been pursued, nothing could justify the House in pursuing that course farther. Then, the question was, what were they to do? He must say the proposition of the Government failed greatly in one respect, and that was, that it was nothing like a final or a full measure. It was not that which the Government promised last session. It was not a measure that would settle the question of the management and alienation of the Crown lands of the colony. Now, the Bill failed in those particulars, and it did so, because it was of that character that was denominated patch-work. He maintained, that, as the whole of the Crown lands were occupied and dealt with in an unsatisfactory way, the Government should have brought in a Bill to put the whole of the Crown lands, and those who occupied them, on a better footing. But, he maintained, the Government had failed in that respect. Last session, the House was told that there was no time to deal properly with the question, and that during this session a sweeping and comprehensive measure would be brought in. But this session had arrived, and the House was told again that there was no time to deal with the subject properly. He did not know if the time would ever arrive when they would be able to deal with this question properly. A select committee should have been formed to consider this subject at the commencement of the session; or, as a committee was an unpalatable body, a commission should have been appointed to devise some scheme that would probably have enabled the House to give finality to their proceedings on the subject, and to extricate the colony from the serious position in which it was now placed. But such had not been the case, and so they must just make the best they could of the Bill now before the House. He thought that if honorable members would

apply themselves to the perfecting of this measure, with the real intention of doing so—not with the intention of indulging a hostile spirit, or indulging in recriminations, or accusations—but if honorable members would set to work upon it in a proper spirit, they might even yet make the Bill a blessing to the colony. He thought the speech delivered on the previous day by the honorable member for South Brisbane, Mr. Stephens, was a speech that was entitled to much consideration. That honorable member threw out suggestions as to what he would endeavor to do—and they were suggestions which ought to receive the earnest consideration of honorable members. He rejoiced to see that the honorable member did not approach the subject as one section of the community—a section rival to another section—might have wished him to do, but in that patriotic and right spirit which entitled him to the respect of the House. He wished he could say the same with respect to the honorable member for Ipswich, Dr. Challinor. He was grieved to think that this important matter should have been dealt with in the way that that honorable member had dealt with it. The honorable member evidently came down to approach the subject with some bottled-up speech from his old magazine of grievances. He found, on referring to his notes of the honorable member's speech, that the squatters were denominated by him as dummies and mediums; or that money-lenders were mediums, and squatters were dummies; and that at the end of his speech the honorable member dwelt with considerable indignation on the fact that the lands of the colony would be applied to pastoral purposes, instead of being applied to agricultural purposes. Now, it was surprising to him that any honorable member in that House, or that any one at all, could imagine that the lands would not be turned by the purchaser of them to their best use. It almost appeared, by the way the question was argued, that squatters were supposed to have come to the colony determined to put the lands to an improper use—that they were determined to do all in their power to frustrate nature, and to imperil the Government—that they seemed to act as if the best purpose was to get as little off the land as possible. Now, would the people believe that any man in his senses—any man who attempted to make a fortune, or to make a living—would go through the length and breadth of the land for the purpose of diverting it from the object for which nature seemed to have fitted it? He deplored that such arguments were brought to bear on the subject, and that something like business views, if not liberal views, were not entertained and discussed. He presumed that no honorable member would wish it to be thought as being his notion, that, if any colonist could make a pound an acre more per



annum from the land by running stock on it than by ploughing it up, he was not justified in applying it to grazing; or that he would say it was not his duty to do so. It had been well said that that man was of the greatest advantage to the country who could get an additional ear of wheat from the land; and, if a squatter could make two pounds by grazing, while he could only make one pound by cultivation, was it to be supposed he should not pursue grazing instead of cultivation? Why suppose that those lands that might be applied, or that the honorable member might wish to apply, to pastoral purposes would be diverted from their proper use? There was, he maintained, as much credit due to the man who could run an extra bullock or an extra sheep upon an acre of land, as there was to the man who could grow an extra ear of corn upon it. There was nothing that he was aware of—nothing that could come down from heaven, or be entertained on earth—as a reason why the lands of the colony should be invariably considered to be agricultural lands. He knew that some of the best lands in England—which had ranked as first-class agricultural lands—were now found to be more profitable as grazing lands, and were accordingly being greatly converted into such. What, he would ask, would be said of those politicians at home, who would raise a hue and cry against the sheep farmer of England, because he abandoned the plough for the sheep cote? It was well known that a gentleman, who was one of the most successful sheep farmers in this colony, was doing better at home—and he was one of the most successful sheep farmers there—by turning his best agricultural lands into pastoral lands. The great mistake seemed to be that all honorable members, whatever might be the promptings within them—and they committed a grievous mistake—continually set class against class. By setting up that, because the Government brought in a land Bill, it was for the benefit of the squatter or of the agriculturist—or by allowing it to go forth that because this member or that member—a squatter for instance—said there should be amendments made in the land law, he was actuated by selfish motives—by doing the like of that was to place impediments in the way of the progress of the colony. How much better would it be to abandon that course, and to approach this vital subject with the object of doing the greatest amount of good for the greatest number? The extent of agricultural lands in this colony, he believed to be beyond conception. He believed that were all the land within the reach of water carriage to be offered for sale to-morrow, the whole population of Europe would hardly be able to occupy it. And when a Bill was introduced for the purpose of facilitating the alienation of the land—for he apprehended that that was the object of the Bill

before the House—why honorable members should throw obstacles in the way, prompted by jealousy, he could not conceive; and he very much regretted. Honorable members should bear in mind that most of the lands of the colony that were fit for agriculture were not fit for pastoral purposes; and he would warn all those of his fellow colonists who were induced, by the bad spirit that prevailed, to take up pastoral land under the belief that it was suitable for agriculture—being recommended by persons who had no experience of the matter, but who were actuated solely by hostility to a class—he would warn those unfortunate persons who accepted the bad advice given to them, that they would be the dupes in the end. Those were the best friends to the future purchasers of land for agricultural purposes who would direct them to go into those very parts of the country where sheep would not thrive. The grand object of too many of the colonists was, he knew, to cut up the Darling Downs. Some were impressed with the notion that the Darling Downs, *par excellence*, was the agricultural area of the colony—that it was the great cereal producing and blessed region of the country. But he would unhesitatingly say—not that he had the least regard for the Darling Downs squatter—that he looked upon those persons who were induced by such advice to go on the Darling Downs and buy land there—he looked upon those who were thus led astray, when they could select from the rich alluvial banks of the rivers—he looked upon them as singularly unfortunate in taking such advice—and he said so without the least wish to defend the Darling Downs squatter. He repeated what he had often said before, that he believed the Darling Downs squatters were mainly to blame for the state the country was now in; and that they deserved no sympathy from the House whatever. But if the House induced people, or, by any misrepresentation of facts, led people to go and locate themselves where nature and experience led others to know that the lands were unsuitable for them as agriculturists—if they did that, they would do a serious injury both to the individuals themselves and to the country. Now, what, he would ask, could be grown on the Darling Downs that could be used as an export? And he ventured to tell all who might desire to turn agriculturists that anything they could grow on the Darling Downs would not pay them. They might succeed for a year or two; but if they should be able to grow the wheat which it was said the Darling Downs could produce, then they would in a few years occupy a very unfortunate position; for the better the crops were, the greater would be the failure of the agriculturists. It was a fact, that a good agricultural season, in a good agricultural district, was a season of distress; and those honorable members who were not cognizant of the fact, so far as



New South Wales was concerned, ought to have made themselves masters of it before attempting to deal with this question. If the whole of the agricultural colonists were to become prosperous, they must turn their attention to the production of some article of export; for the Darling Downs farmers could make no profit by growing wheat. But if the people went to some place where they could produce an export, they might become as fortunate as the growers of sheep or cattle. A strong feeling of jealousy seemed to actuate, not only those in the House, but also people out of the House, in treating this land question. Now, was it fair, he asked, in a colony in which ninety-nine out of every hundred were occupied upon the land—was it fair that the whole of the colony should be injured by stupid barriers being put in the way of alienating land, and all to spite the Darling Downs tenants? It would have been far better for the country, and the country would have been better for it now, if the Darling Downs had been shut out of it; for whenever a Land Bill had been brought forward, the thoughts of the Darling Downs had always frozen men's minds, or heated their imaginations, on the subject. Why, he would ask, should the wealth of the Darling Downs squatters be taken into consideration in dealing with the lands of the colony? Why should there be always this stupid bugbear in the way of the alienation of the land? The honorable member for Ipswich, yesterday, dwelt, and dwelt with some propriety, on the necessity for cultivation. No doubt, it would be a serious matter if the people of the colony bought land, and did not put it to some use. It would be a serious matter for the colony if such were the case—especially if they did it in the more crowded parts. But there was a more serious matter to be taken into consideration than the existence of land in a dormant state, and that was, that by the non-alienation of the land to speculators, both they and their capital were allowed to depart from the colony, without leaving any impression on it. Now, it would be better far for the Darling Downs to be divided amongst ten individuals—sold to them without any conditions whatever, than to allow those individuals, and the enormous wealth they would require to possess in order to purchase such a quantity of land, to leave the colony. And for what purpose were speculators, with their capital, allowed to leave the colony? For the purpose of keeping the lands in the possession of one person. The Legislature seemed alarmed at the idea of one person becoming possessed of 36,000 acres; though they made no objection to the Government possessing millions of acres. Now, for the sake of the colony, he would rather see the whole of the lands of the colony given to the first man he met in the street; for then he would be satisfied that that man would deal with them in a rational way; and instead of keeping people off the

land, would do all in his power to attract them to it. He trusted that honorable members would look at the matter in a large view, and put entirely out of their minds what was due to the Darling Downs by way of retaliation. Nothing of that kind ought to animate them in dealing with the whole of the lands of the colony. He regretted deeply the remarks that were made, on this subject, by the honorable member for North Brisbane, Mr. Brookes; and he was sure that if the whole of his speech had been reported in the newspapers the honorable member himself would have deplored it, for he never once appeared to approach the real question before the House. It was, from beginning to end, a tissue of accusations and unpleasant sentences, directed against the honorable the Premier; and, he must say, that he could not see, in any one instance, that a single accusation was deserved. The honorable member opened his tirade against the squatters and the Government, by saying that the people would regard this Bill as "wanting," and he followed that up by a series of severe sentences. Now, wherein was it wanting? He himself admitted that it was wanting; and he was now endeavoring to shew wherein it was wanting—but the honorable member never attempted in his speech to make one suggestion. He, Mr. Brookes, pulled the honorable the Premier to pieces, and contended the Bill was wanting, but not one valuable hint for the benefit of his fellow-colonists did he make. The honorable member also said the squatters were determined to keep their grasp of the lands. Well, now, he would ask the honorable member if he would not endeavor to keep a grasp over the means of his own business?—and he would not blame him for that; but the honorable member should remember that self-preservation was the first law of nature;—and was it natural that the squatter, who was dependent on his sheep—was it natural that he should be anxious to get rid of the lands on which his sheep depastured? Was it not the case, that so long as the squatter had the lands and stock he was a good colonist; and that when he lost the former he and the stock must perish too? Now the honorable member would have it believed, from his argument, that the duty of the squatter, who was so dependent on the grass of the lands—that his first patriotic duty was to return all he occupied to the Government, and himself abandon the country. The honorable member also accused the Premier of taking into his counsel two very large squatters. Well, the honorable the Premier had done so, and so far as he was concerned, he congratulated him upon it. A great change had come over the minds of those two very great squatters, within the last year or two. He might say, so from his own knowledge of them, and

without being at all disrespectful to them; and it was because of this change that he congratulated the Premier on his association with them. He should last session have objected to the Premier associating so with them, because they did not then view the question of the lands of the colony in the way they had since viewed it. They did not then frankly express the views which, to their credit, they had manifested this session. He should have regretted, as much as any honorable member, to have seen the Government of last session influenced by the squatting interest, but now, when he found the squatters were the foremost in demanding that the land should be alienated to all alike, without any distinction—that every man who had a pound should be able to invest it in the purchase of land, if he desired to do so—when he knew that the squatters entered into an association for that purpose—then, he said, it was a subject of great congratulation to all in the colony to see that the Premier had not rejected their aid and advice. Another accusation against the Bill was that it was a squatters' Bill. Well, viewing it in a squatting light, he could only say—and he was a squatter himself—that the Bill would be the destruction of squatters; and if the Bill was passed in its present shape—if it should be agreed to in its integrity—there would not in five years time be a squatter within three hundred miles of Brisbane. The only aspect in which he could view the Bill as being in any way a squatters' Bill was, that it still proposed that the price of land should be such as would chiefly enable squatters to purchase lands largely; and if honorable members would join with him in endeavoring to reduce the price of land down to a price that would enable men of small means to buy land, then they would, perhaps, succeed in divesting the Bill of the character of being a squatters' Bill. The honorable member for North Brisbane, Mr. Brookes, had also talked about the “crack of doom,” and about the “George street clique.” He had no doubt that the term “George street clique” had become a cant word of reproach, but he could tell the House that he was proud to say he belonged to an association which met in George street. He was sure that it was due to the members of that association that the colony had got the advance shewn in this Bill in the right direction. The association had been enabled by their arguments, by their writings, by the evidence they had circulated, to remove a great deal of the mist that hung on the minds of honorable members and of the public, as to what should be the price of the Crown lands of the colony. But it was wrong to treat a measure of this kind in the way it had been treated. Again, he said, honorable members ought to approach the subject

with the desire of improving the Bill, and not for the purpose of insulting or maligning individuals. It would be as much the province of the squatters to retaliate on the honorable member for North Brisbane, Mr. Brookes, by referring to the Town Hall clique, which had done so much to the injury of the colony. The greatest mistake, however, made by the honorable member, when he at all descended to argument, or to deal with facts, was when he quoted the case of Tasmania. The honorable member spoke of the land laws of Tasmania as being its curse, and said that the lands were held there by a few capitalists; and the conclusion he drew from that fact was, that the land laws, from the way they had been mismanaged, had proved a curse to the colony. Now, he was, for his part, inclined to think the principle of administering the lands in Tasmania—though he did not entirely understand it, for it was only within the last hour he had had the Bill,—but he was inclined to think that if in this colony they took the Tasmanian principle as their guide, and acted upon it for the next few years, they would bring about a change such as few could anticipate. The House had been told by the honorable member that the lands of Tasmania were in the hands of a few people, and that the administration of them had proved a curse. Now, he believed, it so happened that in no other of the Australian colonies had so much land been alienated under all systems as in Tasmania; nowhere had such facilities been offered to the agriculturist to get possession of the land; and nowhere else had those facilities been so largely embraced. He had now before him a report from the Surveyor-General of Tasmania. It was dated 1866, and was issued from the Government Printing Office in Hobart Town. Its object was to shew the results of the working of the Tasmanian land laws, and he found, in looking through the return, that there had been an extraordinary number of alienations effected under those land laws; and, judging by the evidence afforded by the return, with the most admirable success. Because, though it appeared that a large quantity of land had been alienated, and credit given to the purchasers, there had not been many defaults in payments. Now, the House might take that as a convincing proof that the method of alienating the Crown lands of Tasmania had been a success. He might quote page after page, shewing the enormous number of alienations, as well as the various modes of alienating the Crown lands in that colony; but if honorable members would look for themselves, they would see that this colony could offer no comparison, and was less advanced than Tasmania in the success that had attended their alienation of the Crown lands. He found, also, that in Tasmania, it was possible for a man of small means, or of large means, to obtain exactly

what lands he might require. There was no hostile or class legislation in that colony. Again, it would be found by the report that land could be obtained there at the rate of five shillings per acre; and, more than that, he also found, by reference to one of the Land Acts of the colony, that it was possible for a man who could shew that he was likely to be of advantage to the colony, to get a certain amount of land without paying for it at all—if he possessed one pound in money for every acre that might be granted to him. It was not required that he should spend this one pound on every acre of his land, but it was simply desired that he should have a sufficient amount of money in hand to cultivate the land that was granted to him. In Tasmania, there was not the same absurd feeling with regard to class as existed in this colony. There the same facility was offered to the grazier as to the agriculturist. If the farmer could shew that he was in a position to make profitable use of land for a certain period, he obtained the use of that land for ten years for nothing. He would also draw the attention of honorable members to the fact that the Tasmanian Crown lands situated in towns could be purchased on credit; and he did not see why a similar principle should not be adopted here. The Government had as much right to afford every facility to the purchaser of town lands as to the occupier of country lands.

Mr. GROOM: No.

Mr. WALSH: He maintained that his argument was a correct one; and he would again express a hope that people who were desirous of wheedling agriculturists to the Darling Downs, where they must lose what little capital they might possess, would be unsuccessful. Now, he would refer to the Bill; and in doing so, he trusted that the antagonistic spirit between the squatting and the anti-squatting interests would cease to exist. He maintained that the measure should be calmly deliberated upon by all sides of the House. It was not, or should not be, a question of parties. Honorable members should recollect that it was to a Bill of a nature similar to that of the one now under discussion they must look for getting rid of the numerous difficulties by which the colony was at present surrounded. He believed the Bill was one that should be supported, inasmuch as it struck at the root of the anticipated motion as to what should be the upset price of land. He felt it was quite time something of the kind should be done. Indeed, he would be willing to vote for the price being reduced to one shilling per acre; or to adopt the system which prevailed in Tasmania of making gratuitous grants, provided that the grantee promised, and shewed his ability, to make use of the land of which he was placed in possession by the Government. He was opposed to the system of long deferred payments; and it was his intention to move an amendment in committee to the effect that, instead

of eight payments of two shillings and sixpence each, the number of payments should be limited to five. He might quote from one of the greatest authorities on the subject, John Stuart Mill, to shew that in the opinion of that eminent political economist what was wanted to ensure the prosperity of a colony or nation was permanent possession of the land on fixed terms. That author said that if a man were placed in permanent possession of a rock he would turn it into a garden, while if he had a garden on a lease, he would leave it a wilderness. He maintained that the House should so legislate with regard to the disposal of the lands of the colony, as to offer greater inducements to persons to come here than were offered in any other Australian colony, or he might say, any other British colony. They ought to make the land laws so liberal that numbers of industrious persons would be attracted to the colony, and induced to settle upon the lands and cultivate them. Those persons, by the taxes they would pay, would give more effectual support to the maintenance of Government, than could be secured by upholding the present high price of land. He was afraid that the Bill before the House was not sufficiently attractive to overpower the various shocks the colony had lately sustained; but, notwithstanding all its defects, he thought that when its provisions became known to the hundreds of persons who now had only temporary employment, the Government would receive their meed of praise for the facilities they had granted for the pursuit of agriculture. He hoped that nothing more would be said with reference to the squatters by honorable members who were opposed to the Bill; for he considered the time was not far distant, when every squatter would be made a purchaser, and when his value as a colonist would be greatly enhanced. What they ought to do was, to legislate for the benefit of all classes, and if they did so, they could not fail to secure the best interests of the colony. He was much gratified to see that the Government had had the courage to bring forward a Bill such as the one now before the House—a Bill which would certainly receive his support.

Mr. FORBES said he was pleased to find that any measure could be brought before the House that would succeed in obtaining so much praise from the honorable member for Maryborough, as the Bill now under discussion. He must, however, deprecate the attempts which had been made by that honorable member to raise class against class; as he had plainly endeavored to do in the speech which he had just concluded. He quite agreed in the remark that, in deliberating on the provisions of the Bill, honorable members ought to consider only the one great end of benefiting the colony at large—that they ought to provide for the interests of all classes alike, so that it might be truly

said that everyone would be placed in a position

"To clear his lands, to build his humble shed,  
To give the lips he loves unborrowed bread;  
To be his home, his children's heritage,  
For ages yet to come."

He quite agreed with the amendment suggested by the honorable member for Ipswich, and if that amendment were proposed in committee he would support it. He also believed that it would be desirable to give a bonus to any man who shewed himself to be a real benefactor to the colony by growing such products as were calculated to advance its interests. Of many of the suggestions which had been made by several honorable members he fully approved, and he thought it would be wise to adopt some of them, and also to make such arrangements as would facilitate the taking up of land for grazing purposes as well as for cultivation. The honorable member for Maryborough had said, that if the Bill were passed there would not, in the course of a few years, be a squatter within three hundred miles of Brisbane. Well, he also trusted that the name of squatter would be changed to that of producer, and that the land would be occupied by people who would be willing to follow the two occupations of grazing and farming. He thought that the Bill was a measure that might be made beneficial to the country, and therefore he would vote for the second reading.

Mr. FITZSIMMONS said he had listened attentively to the arguments which had been urged for and against the Bill before the House, and he could not help thinking that great skill had been manifested in avoiding the real question. He regretted that some honorable members had, as usual with them, indulged in attacks upon the squatters, and had, in so far as they referred to the Bill, gone the length of describing it as a purely squatting measure. He thought it would have been better for those honorable members to have confined their attention to the question before them, and to have endeavored to offer some practical amendments. He believed that if the Bill passed in its present shape it would be a failure; but he was prepared to support the second reading, in the hope that the Bill would be altered to some extent in committee. It was true that the Government offered very great inducements for people to speculate in leasing lands; but such advantages were very dangerous. As an experienced bushman of many years, he felt sure that no land in the colony, excepting that of the Darling Downs, was worth one pound per acre; and if the Government insisted on that price for land generally, they would drive a large industrial population from the country. He could not see that land passed at auction, and again refused by free selectors, could still be considered worth one pound per acre. He would therefore propose, in committee, that such land should be sold at two shillings and sixpence per acre, and that the

condition of fencing should be made absolute. The mere fencing of the land would render it doubly valuable. If fencing were made compulsory, not only would the value of the land be enhanced, but a great deal of ill-feeling would be prevented between neighbors. The fencing in of the land would prevent the stock of one farmer straying on to the land of other persons, and would therefore be the means of avoiding a great deal of heartburning. In committee, he would endeavor to reduce the price of lands, and would also propose the insertion of a fencing clause. If the land were sold at two shillings and sixpence per acre, the remaining seventeen shillings and sixpence would be available for the cost of erecting a suitable fence. Those considerations, he thought, were well worth the attention of honorable members. He did not intend to address the House at any greater length on the second reading, but would reserve any further observations he might desire to make until the Bill was under consideration in committee.

Mr. GROOM said the honorable member for Maryborough, as usual with him when the land question was before the House, had not allowed the Darling Downs to escape his attention, nor had he failed either to make honorable mention of the productive capabilities of the Wide Bay District. If the argument was a sound one, that two out of every three of the persons who embarked in agricultural pursuits on the Downs would be ruined within five years, the Bill introduced by the Colonial Secretary was, he maintained, a delusion and a snare to induce people to settle down and carry on a pursuit which it was acknowledged must prove a failure. But he held that the argument was not sound, and that it was disproved by the success of agriculturists, even under the present arbitrary conditions attached to selectors in agricultural reserves. Agriculture had paid well in the Drayton and Toowoomba reserves, notwithstanding all the disadvantages under which the cultivators labored. In Victoria, a leasing measure, of not nearly so liberal a character as the one before the House, had been attended with great success. Honorable members could fully satisfy themselves of this, by referring to the report of the Minister for Lands in Victoria, Mr. Grant, on the working of the last Land Bill passed by the Legislature of that colony; for in that report they would find that a very large quantity of land had been taken up in Victoria for agricultural purposes within the last two years. In that colony, the agriculturist had to pay two shillings per acre for five years, and at the expiration of that time he might purchase the fee-simple of the land at one pound per acre. Yet, transmuted as that Act was with conditions, it was found to be a success; and, such being the case, what, he would ask, might not be expected of the Bill before the House, which offered greater advantages, and was fettered

with very few conditions? He considered that one of the causes of the depression that at present existed in commercial circles was the sending out of the colony the enormous sum of £700,000 a year for the purchase of articles which could be grown here quite as well. He denied that agriculture would not prove a paying speculation in this colony; and maintained that, if the Bill were properly moulded, it would produce the benefits the House and the country expected from it; but it would not do to pass it in its present form. There was no doubt that the Bill did not come up to the expectations of the people. He thought, when the large sum of money which continued to be sent out of the colony for the purchase of articles of consumption, which the soil here was well capable of producing, was considered, honorable members would admit that it was their bounden duty to make the Bill under consideration of as liberal a character as their circumstances would warrant, and their position as a legislature would justify. In referring to that question, he must confess that it appeared to him the honorable member for Maryborough was exceedingly unfortunate in adducing the colony of South Australia as an instance to shew that farming would not pay; because he thought that, if they looked to the position this colony occupied at the present time, with reference to its state of bankruptcy, and to that of South Australia, which had a surplus of revenue, and kept in mind the fact that South Australia was a purely agricultural country, and that this colony, as well as the other Australian colonies, was greatly indebted to it for large supplies of breadstuffs, an unanswerable argument was furnished to the fallacious grounds the honorable member had taken up in this matter.

Mr. WALSH: It was Tasmania I referred to.

Mr. GROOM: He regretted to hear the honorable member say that the honorable member for North Brisbane, Mr. Brookes, was the first, last evening, to throw down the apple of discord between the squatters and the other sections of the community. Now, he contended that it was the honorable member himself who had done so, and that not only amongst the squatters, of whom the honorable member acknowledged with pride he was one, but also amongst other classes of the community; and he regretted to hear him also say that two persons out of every three who might go into farming in this colony would necessarily be ruined. When the House was endeavoring to pass a measure to secure the settlement of the people on the unalienated lands of the Crown, a statement of that kind, from such a source, going forth to the public, could not but have the effect of deterring persons from embarking in agriculture. He was aware, however, that it was a loose assertion, and, being unsupported by evidence, it could

not sustain the fallacious ground the honorable member had taken up. He regretted the circumstance because the public might attribute it to another cause than the one the honorable member stated; and he could personally deny that farming in the districts alluded to by the honorable member would not pay. He felt confident that, if the Bill was amended in the way in which he hoped it would be amended, it would promote the object which the House had in view; but he did not think it would do that in the shape in which it was presented to the House. He must say that he scarcely thought the honorable the Premier had come up to the expectations of the House, or of the public out of doors. Honorable members had, of course, seen comments on the measure, and had heard persons speaking together about it, and no doubt those comments and opinions were of a very diversified character. But there were defects in the measure which he thought were worthy of the attention of honorable members, and which he would be prepared to point out in committee. The honorable member for Maryborough alluded to an admirable report of the Surveyor-General of Tasmania; and he must confess the honorable member did so with some degree of justice. He also should like to see the Government of this colony adopt a course similar to the one shewn in the report—as they would thereby supply to immigrants their great want of information as to the best parts of the country to go to—and also obtain, as the Government of Victoria did, through the Board of Agriculture, annual returns as to the extent of land under cultivation, and the nature and quantities of the various kinds of produce grown. If they would do so, and would embody the whole in a report, they would afford great assistance to the carrying out of any measure for the settlement of the people on the lands of the colony. At present there was no such information; and the only information at all on the subject was that contained in the Statistical Report of the Registrar-General. As to the surveys of the country, the information contained there was of a most meagre description; and the report did not contain any general information as to the portions of the country that were best adapted to the purposes of agriculture. With regard to the Bill, he should like to express his opinion in this way: that he did not think it was necessary the lands open to leasing should be first submitted to auction; for it appeared to him to be a farce to think that persons would pay a pound an acre for land at auction when, by waiting for thirty days, they might go and lease it at half-a-crown an acre per annum. He thought that provision would have the effect of defeating the entire object of the Bill. He would, therefore, suggest that the provision as to auction should be struck out; and as the House was



disposed to make the Bill of an exceedingly liberal character; they should provide that all lands whatever should be thrown open to lease immediately that the Act came into force. He did not think that any harm could occur from such a course being adopted; and he thought that if it were adopted, it would be the means of a large number of persons settling on the lands immediately. Another thing he took exception to in the Bill was the provision allowing one person to take up 2,560 acres. That provision, he thought, was simply offering a premium to land jobbing; because, as the leasing clause stood in the Bill, there was no condition attached to it. He should himself like to see the condition of residence inserted in the Bill, whether the person took up thirty acres or whether he took up 2,560 acres. It could scarcely be considered as consistent with the object of the Bill, which was the settlement of the people on the land, if a person could take up 2,560 acres, and not only not reside on it, but also allow it to lie uncultivated. To allow the like of that to be done was simply to offer a premium for the combination of capital to defeat the object of the Bill. He thought it would be well for the House to take those matters into consideration; and especially the provision limiting the leasing to those lands that had been offered at auction. He knew there were many persons who were waiting for this Bill to pass, that they might put in applications to Government for several portions of land for leasing; and, what was more, they would be *bona fide* occupiers. They were possessed of capital, but they had no desire to pay one pound an acre for land, when they would, by waiting a short time, have the facilities the Bill proposed to offer. If the condition that the land must first be offered at auction should be allowed to remain, and those persons should have to wait for a month afterwards, the capital might be diverted to other channels. In conclusion, he might say, that he regretted the honorable member for Maryborough should have spoken in the way he had done, as to class interests, and having antagonistic feelings excited between honorable members; for he took it that honorable members spoke the views of their respective constituencies in expressing their own; and he did not think an honorable member, after expressing his views, should be told that he had been exciting antagonistic feelings; more especially under the present circumstances of the colony. He desired that the House should do something to effect a change, and he thought it was the duty of every honorable member to express his views without consulting any other honorable member; and, therefore, he did not think the honorable member for Maryborough had any right to assume to be the *censor morum*, and to dictate to every other honorable member the course he should pursue. He took it, that every other honorable member was as well able to judge

of his duty to his constituents as the honorable member for Maryborough was able to judge as to his. He should be prepared to give any assistance to the Government in his power, so to shape the measure as to suit it for carrying out the object in view. The Bill, he must say, was, in his opinion, a good one, and was far in excess of the measures of the adjoining colony, and he hoped it would have the desired effect. What was sought was a measure that would induce an agricultural population to settle on the lands of the colony and cultivate them, and he trusted that object would be attained by the present Bill.

Mr. HALY said he was afraid honorable members would be so liberal that they would defeat the end they desired to arrive at. He was willing to accede to many of the suggestions he had heard; but he was afraid the liberality of honorable members, if they did all they said they wished to do, would defeat the object in view, and, for this reason: that they would induce people with little capital to go on the land; and after they had spent their little all they would have to come to the Government to afford them relief. Something of the kind had happened under the Victorian land law, for he saw a letter in the *Australasian* of the 15th of September, signed "Sufferer," addressed to the Minister for Lands and Works of Victoria, asking for relief, and the letter stated there were 20,000 sufferers who had taken up land within the agricultural reserves on the leasing principle. The writer stated that he was induced to go on the land with two cows, a horse, and £26, and that he had a family of eight children, and that after the first three months he found he had nothing to live on. The honorable member for Toowoomba had stated that in one year there were 640,030 acres taken up by 42,044 persons; and that proved, he thought, that there might be a good deal of truth in the letter to which he had referred. No man was more anxious to see the lands of the colony occupied for agricultural purposes than he was himself. He believed it would be a great boon to the colony if they could grow all the agricultural produce in it that they required; and he believed they could do that, but not in the way that agriculture was usually carried on. Now, he would state it, as a practical man, that in five years time the system would be found not to answer. They might have good seasons for two or three years, but in a period of five years the leasing system would be found not to answer. Those were his opinions, and he warned the House not to make the Bill too liberal—not to make it so liberal that it would induce people to go on the land who had not sufficient means to enable them to cultivate it. He had no objection to make the land laws as liberal as possible; and he would even go the length of saying to those who desired to take up the land and cultivate it, "If you have at the rate of one pound an

acre to bear the cost of cultivation, go on the land without having to pay any rent." If any person could shew him that he had that much money of his own, and was willing to spend it in cultivating the land, he would charge no rent. He was in favor of the land being occupied by agriculturists; but he did not want to delude the people to go on the land by passing an over-liberal Bill. That was his opinion. If they passed an over-liberal Bill they would only open the door to land jobbing. The honorable the Premier would remember that the Bill that was passed in 1860 was a very liberal one, but it was very shortly seen to what extent the land jobbers took advantage of it; and it was found necessary to pass certain occupation clauses, which he was the first to suggest. Those clauses had been a great advantage, and he had heard many say so. Now he wished the House to do a great benefit to the generality of the people of Queensland by not passing a too liberal Bill. As a practical man, and one who had been twenty years in the colony, he wished to see the colony advance in the matter of agriculture; but he did not wish to see this course pushed farther than the colony could stand. He warned the House not to go into railways so soon as they did, and said it would be time enough ten years hence to have railways; and time had already proved that he was right. It was their railways, and the new Parliament Houses, and that bridge across the river, that had brought the colony into a state of bankruptcy, and that had rendered it necessary to tax the people beyond what they were able to bear. He could assure honorable members that he never felt such pain in voting, as when he had to vote for some of those measures. Now, after saying that, he had a right to warn the House against passing a too liberal land Bill. He believed that if the Government had brought in a Bill fixing the upset price of land at five shillings an acre, and selling it by auction to the highest bidder, without any restrictions whatever, they would have done right; because, if that were the case, no person would take up the land unless he had the means to make good use of it. They might then bring in the clauses shadowed forth by the honorable member for Ipswich, Mr. Reed, proposing to give a bonus for every acre of land that was improved annually. He believed that land getting into the hands of a lot of people, unless they could improve it, was a folly, and a delusion, and a snare. But if they could induce people who bought the land to improve it, they would confer a great benefit on the colony. He had heard honorable members frequently refer to America. He had not heard anyone do so that evening. Though he had never been in the States, he had been over all parts of British North America, and he could inform the House that all the lands there were wholly useless till they were

cultivated. The open country there did not go by the name of plains, as it did here, but by the name of barren country; for it was of no use till it was cultivated. Now, there was hardly any land within a hundred miles of Brisbane but would produce something; and he would say, by all means give those lands to people who could improve them; but let them not induce people to go on the land who could not improve it. Those were his opinions. He might be wrong; but he had before given the House warnings, and time had proved that he was right. He trusted that the suggestions he had now given with respect to the Bill before the House would be accepted, and that the Bill would not be made too liberal. If they put restrictions in requiring cultivation, then he would say they could not make it too liberal. He thought, however, that farming would never come to a full measure of success in this colony until means of irrigation were adopted; and, as showing the value of irrigation, he would just read a paragraph on the subject from the *Australasian* of the 15th of September. The paragraph, which was copied from the *Bacchus Marsh Express*, was as follows:—

"What irrigation would do for the lands in Bacchus Marsh and neighborhood, may be ascertained by paying a visit to the farm of Merrimul, the property of Mr. McDonald. In a paddock of thirty-four acres, may be seen—not only grazing, but up to their knees, in clover—two hundred and twenty-eight sheep, fifty-one head of cattle, and five horses, or about equal to twenty sheep to the acre—an astonishing number. But we believe, with irrigation, from ten to eighteen sheep to the acre could be grazed on most of the lands in the neighborhood of the Marsh all the year round. If the present moist weather continue, Mr. McDonald says, he will require to put more stock upon his land, or the grass will get ahead of the stock that are now pasturing in the field."

Now, if that could be done in one part of Australia why could it not be done all over it. He would not expect a poor man to irrigate, and it would greatly depend upon what part of the country he went to whether he could do it, but he could otherwise improve the land. He could ring trees, cultivate, and sow artificial grasses, and to a person who would do that he would give every inducement to go and settle on the land. He thought there should be some restrictions; and, for his own part, he thought the best restriction was fencing, but he knew that was not a popular opinion; and, therefore, though he was not one that was ready to give way, though he was not a man that would pander to the prejudices of the people, yet, in a crisis like the present, when a popular land Bill was necessary to meet the wishes of the people outside, and to assist in meeting the circumstances of the colony, he would recommend that the fencing clause in the Bill should be done away with altogether. But if it were done away with



he must have some other restriction, for he would not give his support to a Bill that would induce the people to go on the lands and starve. With those remarks he would support the Bill; but would warn honorable members not to make it too liberal.

Mr. WIENHOLT said he thought that, under the present circumstances of the colony, the idea that had been shadowed forth, of paying a bonus for the cultivation of land, was most preposterous. At present the colony was in such a great financial difficulty, that the Government did not know how to raise money to meet their requirements. They were under the necessity of laying on heavy taxes and of borrowing large sums of money at a heavy interest, and yet, in the face of all that, some honorable members were found to advocate the granting of bonuses for cultivation. He could only tell the House, that if bonuses were to be given he would soon have a few thousand acres under cultivation. If, therefore, he were to study his own interest he would go in for bonuses on cultivation. If the House desired to do something liberal to the agriculturalist, it would, he thought, be better to put a tax on flour. If that were done, agriculturalists would be encouraged to grow wheat—which might be done in many parts of the colony—and then, instead of the colony having to pay away £200,000 or £300,000 annually for flour, they would be able to export a large quantity; and at the same time provide additional means of employment for the surplus population. As to the areas for leasing, he could not approve of them being dotted all over the colony, for that would be worse than free selection, because it would enable one person to go to one gully, and another to another creek—one to the top of a range, and another to the bottom of it; and thereby render it entirely impossible for the present occupants of Crown lands to carry on their business. In particular, the breeders of stock would not be safe; and he could assure the House, that he was already so much annoyed and injured by having his stock stolen, that he was disposing of it altogether. He believed he had the most valuable stud of horses in the colony; but he felt that such encouragement had been given by the last Land Act to persons to steal stock, that he now found he was a heavy loser. He should say, as regarded the present agricultural reserves, he would like to see them protected against the operation of this Bill. He should be very sorry to see any one take 2,560 acres from any of the agricultural reserves. It would be a great injustice towards those who had gone on the agricultural reserves. Let those who had gone, or desired to go, on the agricultural reserves, do so under the existing Act, and let them have the benefit of the Act; but let the extent that any one person should be able to take up on them be limited to 320 acres, or half a section. His attention had just been

called to the thirteenth clause of the Bill. 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 must confess he was not aware of the provisions in the latter part of the clause. That would be a sufficient check; and he quite agreed, if they were to be liberal with those agricultural lessees, and to give them the land for nothing, they ought, at any rate, to insist upon the restriction of fencing. If the lessees were to pay one pound an acre, well and good; but, if the Bill was to be made as liberal as had been suggested, the House ought to insist on the condition of fencing.

Mr. COXEN said he was sorry that his state of health would not allow him to speak with reference to the Bill at the length he should wish to do; but he, nevertheless, felt called upon to make a few observations. He had listened very attentively to what fell from the honorable member for South Brisbane last night as to the alterations he said he would propose when the Bill was under consideration in committee; and he had now to state that he coincided with all that was stated by the honorable member. He thought the alterations suggested by the honorable member would meet very much the requirements of what should be a leasing Bill; and, he must say, that he did not agree with the Bill in its present shape. The object of such a Bill should be to induce agriculture in all its branches, as much as possible. When they saw what their imports had been during the past year, and compared them with their exports, they found that the imports of grain and other cereals had exceeded, by more than three-fourths, the amount of their exports. Now, it must be patent to every one that such a state of things could not go on for many years. If a man received £500 a year, and spent £1,000 in the same period, he must soon be brought up with a round turn somewhere; and, perhaps, the present financial crisis might be considered the round turn he was alluding to as regarded the colony. He hoped the Bill, if it should be agreed to in committee, as he trusted would be the case, would result in saving to the colony the large amount of money they were now paying out for the necessaries of life. He was sorry to see that no attention had been paid, in preparing the Bill, to another article of agricultural produce. He referred to sugar. He had brought the matter before the attention of some honorable members; and before the Bill passed through committee they might give their attention to it. He held that, as sugar formed a large amount of their exports, the same advantages should

be afforded to the growers of sugar and of sugar-cane as were proposed to be given to the growers of the different cereals. It did not appear to him to be unreasonable that persons who had taken up lands under the sugar and cotton regulations, if, when this Bill became law, it was found they had faithfully fulfilled the conditions under which they took up the land, should be admitted to obtain the same advantages as other agriculturists—that they should be able to bring their lands under the operation of this Act. He thought it was not too much to ask that they should be allowed the same amount of time to pay off the fee-simple of the land as would be allowed to other parties. It could not be in any way injurious to the country to extend the application of the Bill to that extent; and as the growers of sugar-cane, from having to purchase and fit up machinery, would be put to a much greater outlay than the growers of wheat and hay, he did not think it was too much to ask that they should have similar advantages given to them. He might state that there was a large amount of land now under cultivation for sugar; and he thought he was justified in saying there were at least five hundred acres at present under tillage for cane.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Twice that.

Mr. COXEN: Well, but if there were only 500 acres it shewed they had made a great stride in a right direction. If they were certain that that 500 acres—some said twice that—were tilled, *bonâ fide*, for sugar-cane, he thought the House would be justified in granting what he asked for. He was happy to say there appeared to be every desire on the part of the colonists to advance the production of sugar; and he saw by the newspapers that there was a person in the colony prepared to supply machinery for the crushing of the cane at a reasonable rate; and that fact itself was a notable proof of the extent to which the cultivation of sugar-cane had already advanced, and the amount of attention that was being given it. As he said before, he had looked over the alterations suggested by the honorable member for South Brisbane, and he agreed with them. The honorable member, however, as it appeared to him, had omitted a little addition that might be made to clause eight. It would be remembered that it was found necessary in 1863 to alter the Agricultural Reserves Bill—it was found necessary to restrict the taking up of lands under the Bill to adults, and to provide that minors, agents, or trustees, should not be allowed to take up lands under the Bill. Now, he thought that a similar provision should be inserted in this Bill. It was intended by the Bill that only a certain amount of land should be taken up by any one person; and if there was to be a restriction made, it should be provided in such a shape that it would be effective. It was not necessary for him to call attention

to the reason for such a clause being introduced into the Bill of 1863, as most honorable members were aware of it—that many parties were taking advantage of the original Bill and committing abuses.

Mr. PUGH said he had a few observations to make before the Bill passed its second reading, and in making them he would be as brief as possible, as the debate had already gone to a great length. He rather regretted that the old sore should have been re-opened, and that the whole of the land question should have been touched on in regard to a measure that was intended merely to lease the Crown lands and to give a right of purchase to the lessee. It seemed to him that no object could be gained by exciting antagonistic feelings, and he regretted that that had been done; but still there was no helping it. He quite approved of most of the amendments suggested by the honorable member for South Brisbane, and he believed the Government would be prepared to accept those amendments, together with others that might be proposed, in order to make the operation of the measure more secure as to the object intended to be carried out under its provisions. He thought the Bill might be made a good one, and one that might work with advantage to the colony. He thought that cultivation should be made a *sine qua non* in the Bill; and that that should be the only restriction placed upon the lessee. One honorable member held that fencing should be the restriction, and another that residence should be the restriction required. Now, he did not think that the restriction of residence would work at all, for it would prevent a large number of persons, who were engaged in business in town, from taking up lands under the Bill. Then, as to fencing, the question arose as to whether the fencing should extend to the whole of the land taken up, or only to the portion under cultivation. If, for example, it extended to the whole of the land taken up, and should any one take up the extreme quantity allowed—2,560 acres—the cost of fencing in all that would rather absorb the little capital which the person who took it up might have. He, therefore, thought that cultivation should be the only restriction; and while upon that point, he might refer to the suggestion made by the honorable member for Ipswich, Mr. Reed, with reference to what the honorable member for Warwick had chosen to term a bonus. He did not think the honorable member could have understood the honorable member for Ipswich aright.

Mr. WIENHOLT: It was the honorable member for the Burnett, Mr. Haly, who called it a bonus.

Mr. PUGH: If the honorable member for Ipswich were to elaborate his scheme a little more, some good might come out of it, and in this way: that at the end of three years, instead of one year, as the honorable

member proposed, the Crown should grant to the person actually residing upon and cultivating the land a certificate of ownership, which should be for the time being a provisional title, and as he extended his cultivation during the term of his lease, so his provisional title should be extended in area. That, he thought, ought also to meet the views of those honorable members who wanted the price of land decreased to five shillings an acre, because the lessee would have paid in three years the sum of seven and sixpence per acre, for the amount he had cultivated. He would suggest that the lessee should have a free grant, but it should only be for *bonâ fide* cultivation. The only argument used by the honorable member at the head of the Government was this: that he would rather have upon the land a man with twenty pounds in his pocket, than a great many men with only half-a-crown in their pockets. But the honorable member forgot that a seven and a half *ad valorem* duty Bill was before the House the other day, and, therefore, the more people they could have on the land the better, for the purpose of lessening the necessity for import. For his own part, he would rather have a number of people on the land with only half-a-crown in their pockets, than one person with twenty pounds in his pocket. He thought the words "have been offered for sale at public auction" should be left out of the Bill, and in committee he would propose that that should be done, whether he carried it or not. The honorable member for Maryborough had—so he considered—perhaps it was owing to his own obtuseness—appeared to him to be inconsistent in his own line of argument, for he stated at one time that a season of high agricultural success was a season of deep distress. Now that, to him, was a *non-sequitur* altogether. The honorable member merely stated it was a fact. Then the honorable member told the House that it was a mistake to think of growing wheat on the Darling Downs, and that they should rather induce people to settle down on the banks of rivers—meaning the River Mary, of course, and other rivers;—but almost in the same breath he told the House that to go into agriculture would be utter ruin to anyone. Then, a little further on, the honorable member said he was anxious to see the Bill pass, because he wished to see the people go into agriculture. Well, the honorable member might have been correct, but he must say that he could not see it. Then, the honorable member for the Burnett, Mr. Haly, warned the House against making the measure too liberal. Now, he did not think a charge of passing a too liberal Land Bill was likely ever to be urged with truth against the Legislature of Queensland, as at present constituted. The honorable member might, therefore, keep his mind easy on that point, for he did not think they would be too liberal in any land measure they might pass. The

great object of this Bill was to secure the settlement on the land of people who were willing to cultivate it; and if by this Bill people were induced to go on the land who had nothing in their pocket, and were unable to tide over the time of preliminary difficulty, it would be their own fault. A man had no right to come to the Government and complain of want of success, if he entered upon an undertaking he could not live by, because the Legislature having passed a measure for the benefit of those who could live well by entering on the same undertaking, he had thereby been induced to attempt it, but had failed. Lately, they had heard, *ad nauseam*, of people going to the Government for support who were actually so well off as to have rents coming in to them weekly; and he took it that those who took up the land, and came back to the Government for support, belonged as a rule to the same category. The honorable member for South Brisbane had spoken about the Government taking land orders in payment of the rent. Now, if they were to continue, in any respect, the land order system to persons who came into the colony on their own account and without the assistance of the Immigration Agent, he thought the least they could do was to utilise the land orders that were given to them for coming. The land orders might be taken in payment of rent for the first year, and, afterwards, in payment for land taken up for the purpose of extending the leased area. The Government, he hoped, would not be indisposed to accept the amendments proposed by the honorable member for South Brisbane; and he trusted they would also be prepared to accept some clause by which actual cultivation would be rendered necessary. Unless actual cultivation was inserted in the Bill, it would be as much a dead letter, and be as much abused, as the measure of 1860. However, if some clause requiring cultivation were inserted, and the amendments suggested by the honorable member for South Brisbane adopted, the Bill, he believed, would be a great benefit, and would be found to do more for the prosperity of the colony than the Treasury Notes Bill, about which there was some difficulty in another place.

Mr. ROYDS said that, in supporting this Bill, he did so in the hope that agriculture would receive an impetus that it had not yet received in this colony. As reference had been made to the great success of agriculture in some parts, he might be allowed to say that he had heard from other parts that the farmers were in very poor circumstances. In many cases they had had to borrow the money necessary to carry them on, to an extent and at a rate of interest that had swamped their farms, which had to be sold to meet the liabilities incurred. As to the Bill now before the House, the first and second clauses, he considered, must decidedly be altered. The proclamation of the leasing

areas ought to be made obligatory on the Government, so that it might not be left to the whim of any Ministry to say where they should be. He could not agree with the provision in the Bill that the areas should consist of lands that had been offered at auction previously. He thought such a provision would have the effect of doing away with a large source of revenue—which the colony wanted very badly at present; and they might be more necessitous in a year or two. Now, by giving the capitalist the opportunity of purchasing at once the lands he wanted, it would be a decided advantage to the colony. The matter of his having to wait for a period of thirty days before being able to lease any area was a mere trifle, and was not worth alluding to. It was advanced by the honorable member for North Brisbane, Mr. Raff, last night, and denied by his honorable colleague, Mr. Brookes, that the principle the Bill went upon was, in effect, a reduction of the price of land. Now, he thought he could prove to the latter honorable member that taking half-a-crown an acre for eight years was really a reducing of the price, for it was merely the colonial rate of interest on a pound; and he thought that some honorable members who had had the same experience as he had had would be able to say that they could not get money for much less than twelve and a half per cent., which was half-a-crown a pound per annum. The proposed rent would therefore merely pay the colonial interest on what was supposed to be the value of the land. The last speaker suggested that the Government should receive land orders in payment of the rent. He agreed in that proposition, for he thought it would be doing a great injustice to immigrants who had paid their own passages to the colony not to accept their land orders in payment of rent; and he would go so far as to say that they should be taken in payment of rent, not only for the first year, but all through—so many being written off every year. If a man had to pay ten pounds for the first year, his land orders to that amount should be written off. It would be a great inducement to people to come to that colony if they knew their land orders would be received at once. If they were disallowed, the Government would have to buy them at once, and the lessees would have to pay half-a-crown rent per acre for so many years; so it would come to the same thing in the end. He would not allow this to apply to what were called shippers' land orders, which could be purchased at a reduction, and the Government, he believed, purchased them at a reduced rate now. With regard to large areas, which had been objected to, he did not think the quantity, 2,560 acres, was too much; and the Bill, it should be remembered, was specially intended for the encouragement of agriculture in combination with grazing. Those two pursuits combined required a large amount of land, and 2,560 acres was not so very large when compared

with the large estates held by some persons in the other colonies. With regard to residence, he thought that was a restriction that would not be advantageous. The last speaker had referred to the case of persons resident in towns, who might wish to lease land under the Bill, but could not comply with a residence clause. Now he might say the same thing with respect to persons resident so far in the country that they were unable to send their fat stock to market. It would be a great benefit to those persons if they could take up land under this Bill within a reasonable distance of a town, as it would enable them to send down their surplus stock to be fed up for market. It would thus also be a means of supplying meat to the towns, as well as a further means of assisting those struggling outside squatters. The eleventh clause, which referred to fencing, had been alluded to. He must acknowledge that he was in favor of fencing the leased areas; but he was quite willing to give way on that point as the general opinion seemed to be against it, both in the House and out of it; but there was one point he should in particular like to allude to, and that was the operation of this Act in regard to the Fencing Act. Those who leased lands under this Bill would, he thought, hardly come under the Fencing Act of 1861. It would affect the public in this way, that a purchaser who gave his pound an acre down for land might have the land taken up alongside under the Leasing Act; and under this Bill the lessee could not be compelled to fence. The Fencing Act alluded to the occupier, certainly, but as it was drawn up it referred especially to lands alienated from the Crown—not to lands leased from the Crown. He, therefore, thought there should be a clause put into the Bill providing that the Fencing Act should apply to this Act as well as to the other. It would be a manifest injustice to a person who was willing to pay down money for his land to have to put up a fence, and that the lessee alongside should have half the benefit of it without paying any portion of the cost of putting it up. He should be glad if the Bill, with some few amendments which might be introduced in committee, were allowed to pass.

Mr. MILES said it was his intention to support the Bill, provided the suggestions of the honorable member for South Brisbane were adopted, because he thought the Bill might then be of some little service. He must say that he had no very great faith as to the success of agriculture in this colony; not that he considered the soil was unsuitable, but because, in his opinion, the climate was not favorable to the production of cereal crops. However, he was quite willing that the pursuit should be allowed a fair trial, and for that reason he would support the Bill. Indeed, he could not very well oppose it, because it distinctly recognised what he had always contended for, a reduction of the

price of land. Now, while on the one hand the price of land was to be reduced, fencing, on the other hand, should be insisted on. He thought that, with a few amendments in committee, the Bill should be allowed to pass, and that it should have a fair trial given to it—say, for a year or two. If in the course of that time experience shewed that any alterations were necessary, the subject might again be brought before the House for further legislation. Though he supported the Bill, he had his own doubts as to whether it would prove as satisfactory as either the Government or the public expected; and he would warn the House against making the Bill too liberal, for if they did so they might induce many people to go upon the land who had not sufficient capital to enable them to contend successfully with the difficulties they would encounter at the outset; and the result would be that those persons would have to fall back upon the Government for relief from their liabilities, or for support in some other shape.

Mr. TAYLOR said he would vote for the second reading of the Bill now before the House; and that he would vote for the most liberal Leasing Bill that could be introduced. He did not, however, believe that the Bill under discussion would answer the expectations of the Government or of the public. It appeared to be a very liberal Bill, as it was entirely without conditions. The Government had already tried two Bills, both of which contained conditions, and now they were to try how a third Bill, that was without conditions, would work. Well, they might try it for a couple years, but he thought they would find that it would not work, unless it were considerably amended in committee. He saw that there was no fencing clause in the Bill. Now, he held that there ought to be such a clause in it; for if lessees under the Bill were not compelled to fence in their land there would be a great deal of trespassing and impounding; and, consequently, frequent disturbances between the lessees and neighboring Crown tenants. The honorable member for Ipswich, Dr. Challinor, had, as was always the case with him when a Land Bill was before the House, attempted to introduce party strife into the debate, by vilifying the Darling Downs squatters. He would like to see what kind of a Land Bill the honorable member would bring in if he were Minister for Lands. No doubt it would be a very liberal measure on one side, but it would bear very hard upon the squatters. However, the honorable member made an advance last night, in liberality towards the squatters, for he said he would allow them compensation for fencing and other improvements. Squatting had been spoken of as a pursuit by which those engaged in it were able to become very wealthy in the course of a few years; but he could assure honorable members that those who thought so were very much mistaken indeed. There might be a

few Darling Downs squatters who obtained twenty per cent. on their outlay; but it was far otherwise with the squatters throughout the colony generally; and for his own part, he would be very glad if he could derive a profit of seven per cent. on the capital he had laid out. He hoped the Bill before the House would pass both branches of the Legislature and become law, so that there might be some hope of the land question being settled for a few years to come; but he felt convinced that the measure, even though it were considerably amended, would not give that satisfaction it was expected to give.

Mr. R. CRIBB said he did not think the best part of the Bill was the absence of conditions, for the Bill was intended for the encouragement of agriculture; and, therefore, he advocated the condition of cultivation. If there were no such condition, the land would be taken up by squatters and speculators, and so shut out from agricultural occupation. As to the fencing, he would not insist upon that or upon residence, as those conditions, if strictly enforced, might perhaps prevent cultivation in some cases. Land orders should be receivable for rent from those paying their own passages, but not from others. The honorable member for the Western Downs was a standing proof of the difficulties squatting presented to the agricultural occupation of the land. He would accept the offer made by that honorable member to-morrow, to take his run without the stock; and would be happy to meet him on the terms he proposed, of seven per cent.

Mr. WIENHOLT said the point before the House was not a matter of contract.

Mr. R. CRIBB: The honorable member did not find that out before. The honorable member for Maryborough had expressed a great dread of over-cultivation; but neither he nor any other honorable member need have any fear for that, so long as there was a railway to bring produce from the interior to the towns, and while flour had to be imported from California. The advantages thus afforded would be found sufficient to prevent the ruin apprehended to the cultivator. He would not detain the House by repeating what had been said over and over again, but would only further express a hope that conditions of cultivation would be inserted in the Bill.

Mr. SANDEMAN said he differed in his view on the subject from that expressed by many honorable members who had spoken. A great deal had been said about the good to be derived by passing the Leasing Bill. He sincerely hoped that the expectations of those honorable members who so strongly approved of it would be fulfilled; but he, for one, very much doubted whether they would be. He had no great faith in the Bill. It did not go far enough, in his opinion, in several respects. They had been compelled to submit to very heavy taxation; they had been obliged to put a stop to their

immigration; they would be compelled to reduce their Estimates by a very large extent; and he would therefore ask how were they to get over all those difficulties, and when were they to bring the colony into a state in which immigrants with capital would have a prospect of doing good to themselves? He presumed they could not arrive at the end of their difficulties until they had a surplus revenue, and how were they to obtain it? There was only one way of doing so, in his opinion, and that was by the sale of their Crown lands; and he feared that such a result would not be obtained by the Bill before them, unless very greatly modified in its provisions. The only real panacea for the evils under which they were suffering, the replenishing of the Treasury and the reduction of taxation, was the sale of their Crown lands, and unless they were in a position to compete with the other colonies at a lesser distance from the mother country, and with greater advantage than they possessed, they never could expect to sell their Crown lands, and thus bring in a revenue to make up their great deficiency. Until they made the liberality of their land system patent to the world, they could not compete with other colonies who possessed greater advantages than they did; and he maintained that until they made up their minds to such a reduction of the price of land as would enable them to do so, they never could be placed in a fair position with them. That he believed to be one great defect in the Bill. The price was placed at too high a rate. The honorable member for Ipswich, Dr. Challinor, said that cultivation was what was required, and fencing would be secured by enforcing it. Now, he thought the majority of the House would admit that the great object they had to attain in disposing of the Crown lands of the colony was to combine grazing with agriculture. And he would meet the apparent defect in the Bill by providing that purchasers under fifty acres should be compelled to cultivate. That, as the honorable member said, would render fencing necessary for that description of purchaser. Above fifty acres he would render fencing compulsory. That would prove *bonâ fides*, and would put an end to heartburnings, dissensions, and the interminable difficulties attending trespass, stock impounding, and all other annoyances resulting from the absence of fencing. He would briefly refer to what passed last night on the part of the honorable member for North Brisbane, Mr. Brookes. That honorable member said that the members of the coalition were honorable men. He (Mr. Sandeman) concurred with him in that sentiment, and trusted they were "all honorable men"; but the honorable member qualified his opinion by again and again reiterating one of his favorite saws, "Evil communications corrupt good manners." There was an apparent inconsistency in the honorable

member which he could not understand. He had taunted another honorable member with riding his favorite hobby to death, and had alluded to the conviction of his honorable colleague, Mr. Raff, that until they had reduced the price of land in the colony, they could not be placed in a prosperous condition. He sincerely wished that the honorable member for North Brisbane, Mr. Brookes, would ride the same hobby—a hobby that he rode years ago. No man was more staunch in his opinion than on the reduction of the price of land than that honorable member. But what reason had he given for the change in that opinion? None to the House. If that honorable member had been more consistent in his views on the land question, he would have been listened to with more consideration by the House; but he feared the influence possessed by the honorable member for his constituency had been greatly impaired by his want of consistency. If he had been as consistent as his honorable colleague, he would have been placed in a different condition. If he had ridden a hobby horse of the same stamp as his honorable colleague it would have been better than going about riding that bucking, ungovernable brute, on which he had so often aired his ideas before the House. The subject was not really worth carrying further; but he could not help referring to the inconsistency of that honorable member. If the honorable member had brought reason to bear on what he advanced last night, he (Mr. Sandeman) could have understood his argument; but nothing but prejudice had guided his observations. He had no desire to occupy the time of the House longer than he could help; and therefore he would only add that he trusted that, in going through committee, honorable members would be prepared—putting aside all party considerations—to aid in passing a measure which would reflect credit upon the colony, would do much to repair its shattered resources, and to bring population to its shores—population not of the improper class to which the colony had been subjected of late, but of a class which would, by the introduction of capital, advance the interests of the community, and would enable them to rise from the state of depression into which they had drifted, with credit and advantage to themselves and the country in the future.

Mr. PALMER said he looked upon the Bill as a step in the right direction, as it proposed the alienation of the Crown lands, and the getting of them out of the hands of the Ministry of the day. He should therefore support the Bill as far as he could. As he had stated, on a previous occasion, it was impossible to legislate for the whole colony, on the land question, in one particular manner. What would suit the Darling Downs and East and West Moreton would not suit the north. He, therefore, hoped the Government would confine the operations of the present Bill to

the southern districts, and would introduce another Bill for the north. The largest quantity of land allowed to be taken up—2,560 acres—would be quite insufficient in the north, where agriculture could not be carried on unless it was combined with grazing.

The question, that the Bill be now read a second time, was then agreed to.