

Queensland



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[Hansard]

Legislative Assembly

THURSDAY, 10 OCTOBER 1867

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY.

Thursday, 10 October, 1867.

Privilege—Non-Production of Returns ordered by the House.—Contagious Diseases Bill.—Crown Lands Sale Bill (Resumption of Debate).

PRIVILEGE—NON-PRODUCTION OF RETURNS ORDERED BY THE HOUSE.

Mr. WALSH said he wished to call the attention of honorable members and the Government to what he thought he might term a question of privilege. It was the acknowledged duty and privilege of honorable members to move, as to them might seem fit, for information in the shape of returns. In furtherance of his notion of his public duty, about eighteen months ago, he moved for certain returns; and he now had to call attention to the fact that, although his motion had been assented to unanimously by the House, no returns were forthcoming from the Government. He wished to understand, from an expression of opinion by the House, or from the ruling of the Speaker, or from the Government, whether motions adopted by the House were to be treated as so much

waste paper by the authorities. On the 25th April, 1866, he moved, pursuant to notice—

“That an address be presented to the Governor, praying that His Excellency will be pleased to cause to be laid upon the table of this House a return shewing—

“1. The number and cause of the collisions which have taken place between the native police force and the aborigines, since the 15th January, 1865.

“2. A return of the blacks officially reported to have been captured, or wounded, or shot dead by the native police, or by others.

“3. A return of the murders and other outrages committed by the blacks during the same period.”

The records of the House shewed that, after debate, the question was “put and passed.” He begged to inform the House that the motion was shaped in such a way that he considered it would be within the possibility of the Government to furnish easily the returns; it was so worded that the returns should embrace only such reports as had been officially made to the Government; therefore it appeared to him that there had not only been a disregard of an order of the House, but that the Government would not be able to frame an excuse that the information sought for was beyond their power to give. But it was sometimes convenient for the Government of the day not to furnish returns, when they were of a nature not pleasing to them. For himself, he might safely say that he seldom moved for returns without having some ulterior object in view; and, in consequence of those returns not having been presented to the House, he could not carry on an investigation which he felt it his duty to initiate as soon as possible.

The COLONIAL TREASURER said he could enlighten the House on the point raised. The honorable member called for the returns when he (the Colonial Treasurer) was in office, as Colonial Secretary, last year, and the answer he then gave, was, distinctly—That those returns could not be furnished, because all the reports sent in by officers of the native police were merely, that the blacks had been “dispersed.” They were not refused in any way; but it was merely impossible to give them in the shape wanted.

Mr. WALSH could not allow that statement of the head of the Government to pass without remark. He was in a position to state, and he had information proving, that a certain number of blacks had been shot by the native police, in what they considered the performance of their duty; and that, by the instructions given to all police officers, whenever a fellow-subject was killed, from whatever cause, the officer, or individual who was concerned in, or cognizant of the fact, was bound by the law to make a report to the authorities upon the occurrence. That statement only shewed him how absolutely necessary it was that the House should jealously watch their privileges in respect to having their orders obeyed; if

for no other purpose than to preserve the lives of our fellow-creatures. If the Government could content themselves with receiving such reports as the honorable the Premier had said they received; they were blindly, wilfully, conniving at deeds which they knew were committed, but which they were afraid to exact reports of. This was a matter deeply affecting honorable members as Christians, as in every other relation of life, public and private. He trusted that such an explanation as they had heard would not be taken as an earnest that so long as the native police force were in existence, so long would our fellow-creatures be put out of the world, and the Government not allow the ordinary course of law to take cognizance of such occurrences. He would leave the matter in the hands of the House.

Mr. STEPHENS suggested to the honorable member for Maryborough that he should put the same motion on the paper this session, and let it come before the House in due form. If the House passed the motion, there could be no difficulty, after what had passed, in the Government making a return in some shape.

CONTAGIOUS DISEASES BILL.

The (*formal*) motion, giving Mr. LILLEY leave to introduce a Bill for the Prevention of Contagious Diseases, having been agreed to, upon a division, by fourteen to eight votes, and the Bill having been brought up, read a first time, and ordered to be printed; the honorable and learned member then moved that the second reading stand an order of the day for Thursday next.

Mr. WALSH said he trusted that before honorable members consented to the second reading of a Bill of such a peculiar nature as the present, they would make themselves acquainted with it. He spoke from knowledge, and under advice; and he ventured to say that, though the Bill might be fit to be introduced in another place, it was so utterly repugnant to the feelings of Englishmen generally—

Mr. LILLEY: No, it was English law.

The SPEAKER called the attention of the honorable member for Maryborough to the fact that this was not the time to discuss the Bill, but when the motion for the second reading was before the House. Leave had been given to introduce the Bill—it had been read a first time, and ordered to be printed; and the question now was, when would it be convenient for the House to take the second reading and discuss the principles of the Bill.

Mr. WALSH said he would move an amendment.

The SPEAKER: Then the honorable member must adhere to his amendment.

Mr. WALSH considered he would be wanting in his duty as an Englishman, if he did not take the course he was now taking; and he would move that the Bill be read, at the earliest date, this day six months.

Mr. LILLEY submitted that the honorable member was clearly out of order. The

question was—when could the Bill be conveniently read a second time, not that it should be read, by the House.

Mr. WALSH said he had very good advice for what he was doing. He would never consent to the Bill being read next Thursday, or on any day. It was un-English, indecent, unnecessary; and, in its character, it was unworthy of Englishmen. More than that, he looked with horror on the Englishman who would consent to become an officer under such a measure, who would so far forget his manhood and his country as to take the odious, the frightful office for which provision was made in it. He begged to inform honorable members that the Bill provided payment for an obnoxious, an intolerable, a disgraceful office in the public service of Queensland; and he hoped that, under the circumstances, honorable members would pardon his feeling. They must not inflict on this colony the payment of such an office. He was told the Bill was Imperial legislation. It was not, in the real meaning of the term. It might be applicable to a military town—it might be applicable to soldiers; but the people of Queensland were not soldiers. What was necessary for the good conduct and health of soldiers was not necessary for the good conduct and health of Queenslanders. For himself, he protested against anything so utterly repugnant to what was due to the House, as Christians and law makers.

Mr. MACALISTER said that though he had voted for the introduction of the Bill, he did not consider himself pledged to support the second reading of it, nor was any honorable member in that position. But he well understood that, unless reasons of a very extraordinary or urgent character existed, it would be discourteous towards a private member of the House to refuse him the right of bringing his measure under the consideration of the House; and they knew nothing of the Bill, except the intimation conveyed on the face of the notice paper. The honorable member for Maryborough was imputing too much in what he had said.

Mr. PUGH, as a point of order, called attention to the fact that the House had consented to accept the motion of the honorable and learned member for Fortitude Valley as a formal motion, under the new sessional order, which directed—

“That no debate shall be allowed upon any such ‘formal’ motions or orders of the day, or upon the further proceedings following the reading of such orders; but the House may proceed to division thereupon, without amendment or debate, as in the case of the motion for the first reading of a Bill.”

The honorable member for Maryborough had got up a debate on the present question, and it was contrary to the sessional order.

Mr. WALSH did not quite yet understand that, because a Bill was allowed to be introduced on a “formal” motion the further

course of that Bill was accordingly to be treated as a formal matter. If the dictum of the Chairman of Committees was to be taken, he must understand that even the motion for the second reading of the Bill was a "formal" one.

The COLONIAL TREASURER said that, agreeing, as he did, with all that the honorable member for Maryborough had advanced against the Bill, and assuring him that he would stand by him on the motion for second reading, he must still call his attention to the fact that there was another sessional order—

"That on Thursday and Friday in each week, Government business take precedence of all other business."

It appeared to him that, on those days, after all the Government business was over, the question of "formal" motions should be put—not before. Honorable members had come to think that they could proceed with their formal motions at once on Government days. The consequence was, that last Thursday two or three hours were lost, when Government business ought to have proceeded; and, now, the House were in a fair way to cause the loss of more time on a Government day. He put it to the honorable member whether he could not suspend his objections at present, seeing that a very important debate was pending.

Mr. LILLEY proposed to relieve the honorable member for Maryborough from any difficulty, by withdrawing his motion, and giving notice that he would to-morrow move that the second reading of the Bill stand an order of the day for a future day to be named. He was very sorry to be the means, however innocently, of taking up the time of the House, and of the Government, uselessly. He was not afflicted as the honorable member was; and, for his interminable garrulity, if talking was a contagious disease, the Bill would be one of the best ever brought into the House.

Mr. WALSH said if he were paid for his fluency of language, as the honorable and learned member for Fortitude Valley was accustomed to be, he should perhaps be as silent as he generally was in the House, and reserve his eloquence for other places. He spoke in the House for the good of the country; he wished to prevent the Bill appearing on the records of the House; and, if the second reading were fixed, he should make a motion that the Bill be thrown under the table; and he should, as was done in another place, move that it be swept from the floor of the House. He objected to the second reading being fixed for Thursday next, or any other day.

The COLONIAL TREASURER asked for the Speaker's ruling on the point he had raised.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL observed that when he mooted the point, last Thursday, he was told he was wrong; but he could not think so, without the ruling of the Speaker

to that effect. With great deference to the chair, he thought that the arguments of his honorable colleague were correct. There was a sessional order of old standing, that Government business should, on two days, take precedence of all other business. The business which took precedence under such an order must be extraordinary business. Then there was the sessional order agreed to subsequently, on the motion of the honorable member for North Brisbane—"that before the ordinary business of each day" should be entered upon, a certain course in regard to "formal motions" should be taken. Therefore, he said, that on days for general business, the last order applied; but it was not applicable on Thursdays and Fridays, until Government business was over. There might be a difference of opinion, and it would be well for the Speaker to distinctly rule in the matter.

Mr. BELL argued that it had been clearly laid down by the Speaker, after the matter was put before the House, that, by the sessional order introduced by the honorable member for North Brisbane, Mr. Pugh, no discussion could arise on a motion which the House had settled was a formal one. While agreeing with the spirit of the honorable member for Maryborough's objections to the Bill, he thought there should be no discussion at this stage.

Mr. MACALISTER suggested that the honorable member at the head of the Government should give notice to amend the sessional order. He could not think it had been intended to allow even formal motions to take precedence of Government business on Government days. But, as the Speaker had ruled in favor of that view, it would be well to get the order altered. He agreed with the honorable and learned Attorney-General, and the honorable member at the head of the Government, that it would lead to great inconvenience and loss of time if the Government business should be prevented advancing by discussions such as the present.

Mr. PUGH, in explanation, said it appeared to him that all this discussion had arisen out of an infringement of the sessional order. The honorable member for Maryborough had not given way to the Speaker's ruling upon that order. The order was an exact copy of the one in force in Sydney, which the honorable member for Maryborough himself said he knew worked well there. He (Mr. Pugh) had introduced it to expedite the public business, and to facilitate the clearing of the business paper daily. He maintained that if the order were strictly adhered to, and no discussion allowed to take place after the House had decided that a motion was "formal," it would work effectually. The honorable member at the head of the Government took up more time last Thursday objecting to it than would have been occupied in going through all the formal motions.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL said he was not aware that the point of order raised by his honorable colleague had been ruled upon by the Speaker.

The SPEAKER said he had no doubt that the sessional order did apply, every day, to all business. He thought, at the time it was brought forward, that it was not definite enough. He thought the Government business ought to be allowed to take precedence—that it ought to be taken in the first instance; and he was surprised that honorable members did not see that themselves, and object to the order in that respect. He thought the honorable member for Ipswich, Mr. Macalister, was quite right, that it should be amended. On the point raised by the honorable member for Maryborough;—no doubt the motion of the honorable and learned member for Fortitude Valley was, in the first instance, a formal one; but he (the Speaker) doubted very much if any motion coming afterwards could be regarded as a formal motion; and he could not see, if an honorable member chose to speak upon the question of what day the second reading of the Bill should take place, that he could be stopped on the ground that that was a formal motion. He thought the honorable member was in order, so far; although it would have been far better if the honorable member had not raised the point. The third paragraph of the sessional order was obscure.

Mr. LILLEY concurred with the Speaker as to the obscurity of the clause, and, to facilitate business, he withdrew his motion.

CROWN LANDS SALE BILL (RESUMPTION OF DEBATE).

Mr. GROOM said that he, like the honorable member for Maryborough, represented a purely agricultural constituency, and he should like to make a few observations on the Bill. He might premise them by stating, that while he agreed with a great deal which had been said by that honorable member, he also disagreed with a great deal. He believed such observations as the honorable member had indulged in, last night, were calculated to stir up bad feeling between the pastoral occupiers of Crown lands and the agriculturists. It was extraordinary, whenever the land question came up for discussion, to hear that honorable member urge that sympathy and consideration ought to be extended to that class designated pioneers. It was strange, that, although representing an agricultural constituency, not a single word escaped him of sympathy with the agricultural class. He (Mr. Groom) maintained that very great consideration had been extended to the pioneers—the objects of the honorable member's large interest and sympathy—by the fourteen years' leases in that magnificent district, the Darling Downs, which were held at a nominal rent. It was a fact that nearly one-half the first pioneer squatters of

England, in princely splendour, compared with the pioneer agriculturists. That was from the profits of their runs. And, yet many of them spoke in disparaging terms of the colony. The honorable member for Maryborough had said that there were not half a dozen prosperous agriculturists living in East Moreton. The same remark might be applied to the pastoral occupants. Although many of them were living in the style he (Mr. Groom) had stated, there were very heavy liens upon stock, and upon its produce at the same time. Referring to the Bill before the House, he must express his dissatisfaction with the distinction which was drawn between the lands in the northern and southern portions of the colony; he was at a loss to understand why such a distinction should be drawn. He should suppose, from what he had heard, that portions of the land in the north were richer and more fertile than those in the south; and, yet, while southern lands were fixed at £1 per acre, he could not see why the northern lands should be "blank," or 5s., an acre. If he were asked the question, he should say, unhesitatingly, that the northern lands were more valuable than those of the south. But while the House had heard of the rich arable lands of the north, they had not heard of the mineral wealth of the northern lands, from those who advocated the division. He should like to know whether they proposed that the land on the gold fields and copper fields was also to be sold at 5s. per acre. It was, he thought, very well known why Sir Charles Nicholson, in London, was getting up a company, with the intention of taking up the lands, when they should be placed in the market at five shillings an acre—after the gold discoveries! With reference to the past land legislation of the colony, it had gone almost the reverse way of doing good; for the arbitrary restrictions which had trammelled the farmers, had materially militated against the settlement of the lands which were highly adapted for agriculture. No doubt, if the proclamation issued by the present Government had been given effect to in 1865, when thousands of people were pouring into the colony—when large sums were being expended on railways—instead of those people leaving Queensland, and going back to the mother country again—he alluded more particularly to those who had been brought out by Messrs. Peto, Brassey, and Betts—many of them would have settled down on the agricultural lands. What did they find? That, if they went on to a farm, they would be overwhelmed with very severe and unnecessary conditions: bound as to the quantity of the land they could take up; bound as to the quantity to be cultivated—one-sixth or one-tenth; in the first twelve months, they must fence in their cultivation; and in five years, they must fence in their leased portion. Going into calculations, they found the restrictions of so arbitrary and harsh a nature, that it would

never do for them to invest their money in this colony. Those men were now lost; and he very much doubted if the measure before the House would ever bring them back again, or accomplish the good which could have been effected before. He was afraid that the attractions offered by the other colonies would beat this colony in any competition for immigration and population. After what had been stated in *The Times*, which had called forth rather a sharp rejoinder from the late Colonial Secretary of this colony. Queensland was not likely to induce many people to come here for forty acres of land, when the Government of the United States would give every man one hundred and twenty acres. No doubt, as the honorable member for Rockhampton had said, the United States Government never attempted to make a revenue out of the land, but to encourage population. But he (Mr. Groom) was unconvinced when the honorable member said that the country never was so well off as when the land revenue was most. In the financial year ending 30th June, 1866, the United States Government had been enabled to pay off twenty-five millions of the national debt; yet, during that year, the land revenue was only eight hundred thousand dollars. So that, evidently, the object of the United States Government, in passing the Homestead Law, was to establish an agricultural population in their midst. He thought the House could not do better than embody some of the clauses of the Homestead Law in the Bill before the House. It was absurd to expect an agricultural population to establish themselves in the outside districts, unless some provision was made for them to convey their produce to market. The means of internal communication must be provided. There was no use disguising the fact, that on the Darling Downs a large amount of produce was now lying almost useless, because it could not be conveyed to market—because it would not pay to convey it to market for sale. Oaten hay was now selling in Brisbane at £8 per ton, and on the Downs, though offered, it could not be sold at £4 per ton—there was no market; while the charges for carriage on the railway were so high as to prevent farmers from employing it as a means of sending their produce to Ipswich and Brisbane. The same might be said of maize. There were hundreds and thousands of bushels of maize on the Downs which could not be sold, and yet he saw by the newspapers that a large cargo of maize had been imported from the Clarence. The House must encourage farmers, not only by letting them have good land, but also by affording them every facility for bringing their produce to market. With reference to commonages, he was perfectly convinced that the honorable member for Warwick, Mr. Clark, had not given utterance to the views of his constituents on that subject. It had always been a very sore subject with the inhabitants

of the towns of Dalby, Toowoomba, and Warwick. The want of a common in the neighborhood, where settlers might turn out their cattle; and the impoundings which took place some time ago, had given rise to that bitterness of feeling between the squatters and agriculturists which was shewn in the last election. It was nothing but the impounding cry which had brought about the defeat of a late member of the Assembly. Commonages were required. He had not given full attention to the Bill, and he had to take the statement of the honorable the Minister for Lands for its liberality. If he took the statement of that honorable gentleman, he had some five millions of acres of land in the homestead areas. What difficulty could there be in giving two or three hundred acres to the inhabitants of the towns for commonages, so that they might keep clear of the squatters.

THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: There was provision.

MR. GROOM: Yes. But it was trammelled with conditions that the commonage might be resumed by the Government at any time.

THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: The same as in New South Wales.

MR. GROOM: No. There commons were given and absolutely vested for ever in trustees. The towns were not so numerous in this colony, and they should have commonage areas given to them; and as it was desirable, he should submit a clause in committee with that object. For his own part he was willing to agree with the honorable member for Western Downs, Mr. Ramsay, that there was an ample field for all classes. It would be well, now Parliament had met, that honorable members should mutually give and take, and that they should settle the land question. He was not one to agree with the cry of "Down with the squatters!" The House were not to yield to that cry for popularity, or for any other purpose. The time had arrived when the relative rights of both agriculturists and squatters should be considered; but there was, as the honorable member for East Moreton, Mr. Francis, had pointed out, a certain vein of suspicion running through the Bill, that the feeling was not mutual to encourage the *bonâ fide* agriculturists, and that there was a strong desire to give the preference to the pastoral occupants. He agreed with the Government in the conditions of cultivation and residence; and he was somewhat sorry to disagree with the honorable member for Kennedy. He took it that the object of the House was, not that the land should be taken up for purposes of speculation in the agricultural areas, but that it might be taken up for settlement—for agriculture and for the establishment of those who could combine agriculture and grazing; and he felt convinced that the condition of residence and all other conditions must be carried out, to prevent wholesale speculation. He did not know whether honorable

members were aware of it; but he had heard that under the "dummy" system a very large extent of land, 16,000 acres, had been taken up in the neighborhood of Warwick. If the residence condition had been kept up, it would have prevented that land being sold, not for settlement, but to keep people away. He believed, with the Government, that the condition of residence should be rigidly adhered to. If anything would put down land speculation, that would most effectually do so. On the whole, he should support the second reading of the Bill, and would assist the Government in passing it through committee, with judicious amendments. By strenuous efforts, and mutual concessions from agriculturist and squatter, the House might succeed in restoring the colony to its former prosperity, and in settling a large and industrious population on the waste lands.

Mr. G. THORN observed that the Bill had been fully discussed already; but he must refer to one or two points that had been advanced in the course of the debate. When he addressed the House upon the address in reply to the Governor's Opening Speech, he remarked that all the outcry and clamour about the lands had been caused by the maladministration of the law by the late Government. He was glad to see that the present Government had taken time by the forelock, and opened up some of the best land in the colony for agricultural occupation. As far as the district he represented was concerned, the regulations of the Government worked admirably. As regarded Warwick, he could say nothing, except that a great deal of the land taken up there—about one-half—had been taken up by persons residing in Brisbane, but not with the view of cultivating it. With respect to the question of commonages, alluded to by the honorable member for Drayton and Toowoomba, in the other colonies commonage was allowed to twice the extent of the land taken up; but, then, that commonage could be re-selected by any person paying down the required amount of purchase money. It was found there, even, that the squatters had encroached on the farmers, and fed stock over the commonages. To lock up the land in commonages, was, he thought, folly. It must be sold some time, and the sooner the better. With regard to the condition of residence upon selections, he did not think that if it had been insisted upon, 1,000 out of the 12,000 or 15,000 acres would have been taken up in his district. He would not, however, oppose the residence clause, in so far as it applied to the agricultural reserves. It could be evaded, he knew; for Grant's Act was evaded, in Victoria, where the purchasers put old men on the land to reside in huts, and fed them and paid them a few pounds yearly. Nothing pleased the squatters better than the residence clause. But, if the condition of cultivation was insisted upon and properly enforced, it

might be productive of good in the agricultural areas. The difference between the Land Bill of the late Government and the present Bill might be summed up in this way:—The former provided for the small men and the large capitalist; the latter provided for small men and middle men, not for the capitalist—it provided for small men on the agricultural areas, and middle men on the grazing areas. He was in favor of classifying the lands and making a reduction in the price of the inferior lands. Some were worth one pound an acre, and others not worth one shilling. Some of the thickly timbered land might, he thought, be given away to farmers if they would cultivate it. A great portion of the land in the agricultural areas in the West Moreton district were altogether unsuitable for agriculture. He considered that the classification of the land should be entrusted to local boards in each district where reserves were made, as they would be the best judges of its value. The honorable member for East Moreton appeared to legislate only for his own district, and seemed to think Queensland was only about the size of Moreton Island. He only advocated the interests of one particular class, instead of considering the interests of all classes of the community. The great dread which that honorable member seemed to entertain was, that of a large landed proprietary in this colony. He did not agree with the honorable member; he thought inducements should be held out to men of that stamp to settle in the country, and that the country would never thrive until that was done. If no such inducements were held out, men with capital would go to New Zealand and other countries where they could get land readily. He believed the land laws in New Zealand were working admirably. A great deal had been said about posterity, but he thought posterity should look after itself, and that legislation was required for the benefit of the present state of the colony. The honorable member for Maryborough had made allusion to the large amount of deposits held by the banks from shepherds and men employed on stations. He could indorse what that honorable member had said on the subject, for he knew that many of those persons had over £200 deposited, and he should be only too glad to see them becoming settlers, as they might if suitable inducements were held out to them. At present land orders were only offered to immigrants who came out direct from home, while those who were already in the colony had no such privilege. He thought a clause should be inserted in the Bill to place the latter class in the same position. There might also, he thought, be a clause providing that volunteers, after five years' service, should receive a grant of eighty acres of land, as was done in New South Wales. He would support the second reading of the Bill, and should be glad to offer some suggestions in committee.

MR. LILLEY: Sir—I have listened with great interest to the various opinions on the land question expressed by honorable members in the course of the debate. Several able, thoughtful, and eloquent speeches have been delivered, and if no advance in intelligence and ability has been shewn, it is at least clear that the colony is not going back in that respect. I listened with great pleasure to the address of the honorable member for Rockhampton the other evening, the more so because the opinions expressed by that honorable member coincided to a great extent with my own. It is well known that in the outset of my career, my opinions on the land question were very much the same as those which have now been advanced by northern members; and I would point to the printed address—the first which I issued to my constituents—as the best evidence that my views as a politician at that time were very much in accordance with those now advocated by those honorable members. I then held the opinion that, provided a man was prepared to make use of the land, he should be allowed to have it for the cost of survey. I believe there is no magic in the one pound an acre. I have never been able to satisfy myself that there is anything peculiar in the sum of twenty shillings, which can be looked upon as a guarantee against monopoly. I have always been, and am still, an advocate for allowing a man to get possession of the land with as few restrictions as possible. The Bill before the House, should it pass the committee in its present state, will not, in my opinion, be a measure sufficiently advanced for this colony, looking not only to her debt, but to her position among the other colonies. Unquestionably, the first object should be to put the land to its best use—to put it into the hands of those who would use it to advantage. The State should part with it under proper safeguards, but it should be remembered that Queensland has to compete, not only with America, but with the other colonies, who possess greater attractions to the immigrant, in some cases in the quality of the soil, and in others in the distance from home. To uphold the same price which obtains in those places would be to compete with them at a great disadvantage. The gold fields in the other colonies are a powerful attraction; for a man can go to them, and by turning up the soil, on easy terms procure the means of settling on the land. The case is different here. In the first place, the gold fields in this colony are not nearly so rich; in the next place the climate is much hotter, besides other disadvantages. Yet the same price is asked for land, and the consequence is there is, in reality, no inducement for people to come into Queensland. I maintain, then, that the lands should be thrown open in such a way as to offer the greatest possible attractions to immigrants from all quarters—not only from Great Britain, but from the neighboring colonies,

I would not—and that is one of the principal features in the Bill—restrict the quantity of land to forty acres; and I would not restrict the offer to the immigrants from Great Britain, but extend it to all the Australian colonies—to all, in fact, who, either from the love of adventure or for other reasons, may wish to come out here and settle. It may be said that this proposition does not accord with the Land Bill framed by the late Ministry, of which I was a member. I should not like to pin any member of the present Ministry to the opinions of his colleagues. It is well known how I assumed the office I held in the late Government. I became Attorney-General and was the legal adviser of the Government; but I was an independent member before that, and I beg to say that I am still as independent and as free from party feelings as I was then, and as free to give my opinion upon the question as any member of this House. I am glad to see it has been broached, and not as a party question. I am open to a venture that even among the present Ministry there are not two members who agree upon it; indeed, I should like to see any Bill brought in embodying every member's views on the subject—a pretty piece of patchwork it would be. When I say I am free from party feeling or bias, I wish to say also that I am free from every feeling of dislike to the squatters; and I believe the squatters of this colony will admit that I have never been hostile to them as a class. I have always advocated equal rights to them, and I affirm that I was the first to introduce into a Land Bill in this colony a provision to value their improvements, and to make allowance for those improvements. I am not inimical to the squatters, and I hope honorable members will not allow any influence to exert itself from the fact that the Government has been supported or brought into power by one particular class. The honorable member for East Moreton, Mr. Francis, seems to view the squatters with great suspicion, and to watch them with great vigilance; but I can only say that if I saw the agricultural party in the same strength in the House, I should watch them quite as jealously. But now that the squatters are willing to accord justice to all parties, I hope all ideas of class-feeling will disappear. As I have stated, I feel myself free to exercise my own judgment, unbiassed by any considerations as to what my colleagues or anyone else may think of me. I find that at the outset of my career, my opinions on the subject of the land question were these:—

“With regard to my own opinions on the land question, I hold that the State is not a merchant selling land, but a trustee holding it for equitable distribution among the people, so that it may be occupied and cultivated.”

I have listened to a great many discussions on the land question, but nothing has occurred to make any alteration in my early

opinions. There ought to be a plain and simple legislation upon it, and I believe a great deal of muddling has occurred from the want of it.

"We cannot expect a prosperous national growth until our population are drawing their subsistence and wealth from the cultivation of the land, the natural source of existence. It would be impossible for me, in a brief address, to propound the details of a land measure. I may say, however, that I believe the auction system for country lands to be pernicious."

I am a convert to the modern doctrine of free selection before survey, within areas carefully selected; but at that time I said:—

"I would allow free selection after survey, at a price sufficient to cover the expense of survey. I would retain the auction system for town and suburban land, applying the proceeds to public works under the trusteeship of the corporations."

I may state that I was in favor of this principle in finance, as far as it was practicable—that the revenue raised in any district from the sale of lands should be applied to the purposes of that district, reserving a sufficient amount for the purposes of general administration.

"I would raise our revenue by a direct tax on land, which would check monopoly, and enable us to gradually reduce, and ultimately abolish, all Customs duties, and establish free trade. This land tax must be paid, whether the land be used for agricultural or pastoral purposes. In the meantime, until such a tax can be levied, I would support the present, or a heavier assessment, if required."

That was my object, and to make our ports as free as possible to all the world; and I have seen no reason to alter my opinion in the slightest degree. Well, sir, I was also opposed to deferred payments; and I may say that, holding these views, I was opposed to the present Leasing Bill:—

"I am opposed to deferred payments, believing the cost of collection, &c., would far exceed any advantage that would accrue to the public. A cheap land system would render payment by instalments unnecessary. A man who cannot buy land at the cost of survey, is not in a position to use it profitably. The squatter's pre-emptive right ought to be abolished. The pastoral tenant must make way for the agriculturist whenever the land is required by him. We must deal nevertheless justly by all men, neither despoiling the squatter by refusing fair remuneration for his real improvements, nor permitting him to impede the course of settlement and civilization."

I was also opposed to cotton bonuses; and in fact, when I listened to the speech of the honorable member for Rockhampton, it seemed to me like an old echo. In no respect, sir, have I changed my opinions. I believe there is no magic in the one pound an acre. The honorable member for Maryborough, as I understood him, said that there were men in this House who endeavored to catch the wind of popular opinion, and to trim their sails by it. There may be; but I am not

conscious of having done so. I plead guilty to popular instincts and popular influences; but, at the last election, I took care to tell my constituents that it was the burden of the public debt that prevented us from making a fair settlement of the land question. If we were starting afresh, I do not think it would be possible for any men in their senses to muddle the land question as it has been done. For my part, I would not have these homestead and grazing areas. I would treat the land as it appears before us. The farmer will say "This is fit for agriculture;" and the grazier, "Here is land which will suit me." It is useless to attempt to outrage nature, who tells us that we must classify the land according to its natural purposes and use. Now, sir, I would sell the land cheap; but I would lay the public burden upon it. The burdens of the State, and its administration, should properly be laid upon those who are entrusted with the use of its property. No man who has a tax upon his land will allow it to lie idle; and I believe such a tax will be found the only means of checking monopoly and compelling the holder to make a beneficial use of it. I believe that many of the restrictions laid upon the possession of the land have been mischievous and burdensome, and have prevented occupation. Now, sir, I believe that every honorable member, whatever his opinions upon these matters may be, has the same object in view in reference to this question—to settle a population upon the lands of the colony, and to turn them to their best use. I do not believe that there is a man in this colony dishonest enough to wish to withhold large tracts of land from the public, and to let them lie waste. I believe that the colony is admirably adapted to grow wool, and I do not see why wool should not be grown as well as cotton, or any other product. When a man goes into the wilderness and takes up land, whether he be a farmer or a squatter, he will do his best to turn it to good account. We have all the same end in view, and the opinions I have heard expressed in this House upon matters of detail, do not affect the main question. Everyone is anxious to further the settlement of the country, and to turn the land to its best use, whether by means of artificial grasses for pastoral purposes, or by agricultural pursuits in the growth of tropical products, or cereals, such as are now produced at Warwick—in fact, the general object sought is the settlement of the country and the use of the land in such a manner as to support a large industrial population. Now, sir, my honorable friend quoted largely from McCulloch, and as I know he reverences great names, for the benefit of those honorable members who seem to doubt the propriety of giving the lands into the hands of the Government as a trust, I will quote the opinion of John Stuart Mill. Whether the land in large quantities is, in the hands of

a single individual or the State, the first principle in political economy—the first principle that appeals to human nature—is, that the land is for the sustenance and use of man. It is the foundation and source of our wealth, our life, and existence, and is not so to be disposed of either by individuals or governments, or so locked up as to be diverted from its proper purposes. John Stuart Mills says :—

“The pretension of two dukes to shut up a part of the Highlands, and exclude the rest of mankind from many square miles of mountain scenery to prevent disturbance to wild animals, is an abuse; it exceeds the legitimate bounds of the right of landed property. When land is not intended to be cultivated, no good reason can in general be given for its being private property at all; and if any one is permitted to call it his, he ought to know that he holds it by sufferance of the community, and on an implied condition that his ownership, since it cannot possibly do them any good, at least shall not deprive them of any, which they could have derived from the land if it had been unappropriated. Even in the case of cultivated land, a man whom, though only one among millions, the law permits to hold thousands of acres as his single share, is not entitled to think that all this is given to him to use and abuse, and deal with as if it concerned nobody but himself. The rents or profits which he can obtain from it are at his sole disposal; but with regard to the land, in everything which he does with it, and in everything which he abstains from doing, he is morally bound, and should whenever the case admits be legally compelled, to make his interest and pleasure consistent with the public good. The species at large still retains, of its original claim to the soil of the planet which it inhabits, as much as is compatible with the purposes for which it has parted with the remainder.”

I think the honorable member for Maryborough was disposed to dispute the position taken up by my honorable friend, Dr. Challinor, when he stated that the Government held these lands in trust. The land, as the honorable member for Maryborough says, is undoubtedly the people's land; but the Government are the people, if they truly represent the people, and the land is in their hands for wise and equitable distribution to those who will make a proper use of it. Perhaps I misunderstood the honorable member for Rockhampton, that he proposed to deal with the land simply as with ordinary goods and chattels. I believe he did not intend to place it upon the same basis as goods which pass from hand to hand. I hope I did not understand him correctly, when I understood him to say that a man having once got possession of the land from the Crown, should be allowed to do what he likes with it. I believe the honorable member will agree with the principle laid down by John Stuart Mill, that a man must use and not abuse the land of which he becomes possessed. Now, sir, although I believe that the thirst for land ought to be gratified as far

as possible, upon all reasonable conditions, I think these conditions should compel the profitable use of it. Next to gold, there is nothing a man so much desires to monopolise. All men are anxious to be landholders, and hence there is a natural tendency in reference to land as well as gold, to hoard it up, and perhaps, at times, not to make a profitable use of it. Sometimes he hoards it up for his family; at other times, for the purpose of speculation, or because he has not capital to invest upon it. I think, sir, the conditions upon which land is purchased should embrace some limit as to quantity. To sell unlimited quantities of land at a low price would be dangerous; because it might lead to that very monopoly which we are all anxious to avoid. I do not see why we should put an unalterable price upon the land, but I think there should be some restrictions placed upon it. We must either apply the condition of residence, or if a person entrusts his property to the supervision of another, we must require a higher rate of interest. I think it would not be unreasonable to ask a capitalist to afford some earnest of his intentions, by insisting upon a certain amount of cultivation. I do not think it is necessary to compel a man to be a *bona fide* resident upon his property; he may prefer to live in town and employ labor to cultivate it, and if he chose to purchase land and attend to it in that way, why should he not be allowed to do so? Therefore, I hold that we ought not to place any restrictions upon a man who purchases land and settles upon it by deputy. I think, sir, we should cast off a great many of the fetters which have hitherto encumbered the purchaser of Crown lands, and allow capital and labor to have free sway in this colony. We must see that we cannot get the price we have hitherto put upon our lands. There can be no doubt that capital will take care of itself. We need not make laws for the increase of capital; the man who invests it will take care to do so in the most profitable way. I hold it to be a principle that all Governments should interfere as little as possible with the energies of the people; and if they followed out this principle, I believe they would be much more useful to the community. Our great object should be to give capital and labor full sway in every form of enterprise they choose to pursue. Let them follow the direction they mark out for themselves, without let or hindrance from the Government. Capital is of no use without labor, and labor is worthless without capital, but the two will work together; and all we have to do is to leave them to their own operation, unfettered by restrictions. The honorable the Secretary for Lands has given us very little explanation of this measure; and it seems to me that we need not trouble ourselves very much about it. Every honorable member seems to have some suggestion to make, and it is very likely that we shall see no more of

the Bill. In fact, it seems to me to be very little fitted for its text; and I believe that if the honorable member had brought up the Land Bill of Tiberius Gracchus, it would have answered his purpose as well. I trust, however, in spite of the differences of opinion which exist upon this question, that some Bill will come out from committee, and that we shall decide upon some system of administering the lands before this session closes. The honorable member, the Minister for Lands, made some remarks about the Wakefield system, and he appeared to have some doubts about it. But the principle embodied in that system was unquestionably a sound one, though I think he attempted too much in trying to effect, by artificial means, what would have been effected if he had left capital and labor to achieve it in the ordinary way. I again quote from the writings of John Stuart Mill:—

“Another exemplification of the same principle is afforded by what is known as the Wakefield system of colonisation. This system is grounded on the important principle, that the degree of productiveness of land and labor depends on their being in a due proportion to one another; that if a few persons in a newly-settled country attempt to occupy and appropriate a large district, or if each laborer becomes too soon an occupier and cultivator of land, there is a loss of productive power, and a great retardation of the progress of the colony in wealth and civilisation: that nevertheless the instinct (as it may almost be called) of appropriation, and the feelings associated in old countries with landed proprietorship, induce almost every emigrant to take possession of as much land as he has the means of acquiring, and every laborer to become at once a proprietor, cultivating his own land with no other aid than that of his family. If this propensity to the immediate possession of land could be in some degree restrained, and each laborer induced to work a certain number of years on hire before he became a landed proprietor, a perpetual stock of hired laborers could be maintained, available for roads, canals, works of irrigation, &c., and for the establishment and carrying on of the different branches of town industry; whereby the laborer, when he did at last become a landed proprietor, would find his land much more valuable, through access to markets, and facility of obtaining hired labor. Mr Wakefield therefore proposed to check the premature occupation of land, and dispersion of the people, by putting upon all unappropriated lands a rather high price, the proceeds of which were to be expended in conveying emigrant laborers from the mother country.

“This salutary provision, however, has been objected to, in the name and on the authority of what was represented as the great principle of political economy, that individuals are the best judges of their own interest. It was said, that when things are left to themselves, land is appropriated and occupied by the spontaneous choice of individuals, in the quantities and at the times most advantageous to each person, and therefore to the community generally; and that to interpose artificial obstacles to their obtaining land, is to prevent them from adopting the course which in their own judgment is most beneficial to them,

from a self-conceited notion of the legislator, that he knows what is most for their interest, better than they do themselves. Now this is a complete misunderstanding, either of the system itself, or of the principle with which it is alleged to conflict. The oversight is similar to that which we have just seen exemplified on the subject of hours of labor. However beneficial it might be to the colony in the aggregate, and to each individual composing it, that no one should occupy more land than he can properly cultivate, nor become a proprietor until there are other laborers ready to take his place in working for hire; it can never be the interest of an individual to exercise this forbearance, unless he is assured that others will do so too. Surrounded by settlers who have each their thousand acres, how is he benefited by restricting himself to fifty? or what does a laborer gain by deferring the acquisition altogether for a few years, if all other laborers rush to convert their first earnings into estates in the wilderness, several miles apart from one another? If they, by seizing on land, prevent the formation of a class of laborers for wages, he will not, by postponing the time of his becoming a proprietor, be enabled to employ the land with any greater advantage when he does obtain it; to what end therefore should he place himself in what will appear to him and others a position of inferiority, by remaining a hired laborer when all around are proprietors? It is the interest of each to do what is good for all, but only if others will do likewise.

“The principle that each is the best judge of his own interest, understood as these objectors understand it, would prove that governments ought not to fulfil any of their acknowledged duties—ought not, in fact, to exist at all. It is greatly the interest of the community, collectively and individually, not to rob or defraud one another: but there is not the less necessity for laws to punish robbery and fraud; because, though it is the interest of each that nobody should rob or cheat, it is not any one's interest to refrain from robbing and cheating others when all others are permitted to rob and cheat him. Penal laws exist at all, chiefly for this reason, because even an unanimous opinion that a certain line of conduct is for the general interest, does not always make it people's individual interest to adhere to that line of conduct.”

Now, sir, there was an observation which fell from the honorable member for West Moreton, Mr. George Thorn, in which I agree to a certain extent. I do not see why a man, who has spent the best years of his life in this colony, should not be placed in the same position as an immigrant newly arrived. If he be willing to comply with the same conditions as a man who has just arrived from the other colonies or from Europe, why should he not be entitled to the same advantages? Is he not worthy of equal privileges with the immigrant, or is it that the land is worth nothing, and is offered as a bait to attract a population from other countries? I wish, sir, to establish sound principles upon which we may base a good Land Bill; and I am disposed to think that we have now in this House members who are prepared to go back to first principles, and

who will endeavor to enact such provisions as will prevent monopoly and abuse. Unless we can agree upon some scheme which will have the effect of attracting labor and capital to the colony, we shall retrograde instead of advance. It is useless to go on muddling over land laws. What gold is to other colonies, our land must be to us. Our land must be the means of producing staples to enable us to go into the markets of the world, and compete with other countries. We must be able, in order to hold our position among the other colonies, to point to our sugar, our cotton, and other products, and to shew that we can surpass them, if possible. When I was in Victoria, I had a long and interesting conversation with some leading men in that colony engaged in squatting, mercantile, and mineral pursuits. Their attention was strongly directed to this colony, and they all asked what inducements we offered in the shape of investments in land. There was one thing frequently mentioned, and that was the position of the squatters in Queensland; and I was constantly asked whether it was intended to give them any greater security of tenure. Now, sir, I do not think there would be any objection to that. For my part, I uphold this principle—I do not care how long they occupy their runs, so long as they make the best use of the land, until it is needed for the settlement of an agricultural population. That, I believe, is the principle of the Orders in Council, that when the land was required for agricultural purposes, the pastoral tenant must give way; and it is that very principle which has prevented the squatter from growing anything on his land. But if a man is in possession of land for pastoral purposes, and finds any portion of his run suitable for agriculture, I do not see what harm he could possibly do by cultivating a portion of his leased land. He must have capital, and he must employ labor, and I would permit him to do anything he chose on his run, so long as it did not prevent persons who chose to purchase the land from doing so. My opinions may seem heterodox, but I am an independent member, and shall express them freely. I maintain that our lands should be as free as possible to all, encompassed only with such safeguards as will prevent monopoly. In this way only shall we have a chance if not of paying off our debt, at any rate of reducing it considerably. The best way to pay our liabilities is to spread as many people over the land as we can. If we can but succeed in passing such a measure as will conduce to the investment of capital, and the prosecution of enterprise on the public lands, the debt of the colony, although it may remain in form, will decrease in substance. I have expressed my opinions, sir, on this important question without hesitation, because I believe them to be sound; and if I have remained silent when other Land Bills have been introduced,

it is because I have felt, like the honorable member for Rockhampton, that I was alone in my views. I have never believed that this House would pass a Land Bill to suit all parties; but I think the measure before the House may be so framed in committee that the country will accept it, and I shall, therefore, not oppose the motion to read it a second time.

Mr. ARCHER, in explanation of his remarks on this measure on the previous day, said that he had only talked of general principles, and referred in no way to the particular method of carrying out such a Land Bill. That was the reason he had not mentioned restrictions. He was perfectly willing to assent to restrictions, both as to the area and use of the land; but it was no use imposing restrictions which would compel a man to use his land for a purpose for which it was not fitted. He merely made this explanation to prevent the impression that he was totally opposed to restrictions.

Dr. CHALLINOR said: I wish to preface the remarks I have to make on the Bill now under consideration by stating that, although I have often been charged with being an enemy to the squatters, I have never been an enemy to squatting. A man must be devoid of common-sense who would object to the waste lands of the Crown being devoted to pastoral pursuits till they could be more profitably occupied. What I have complained of was, that the squatters had the best of the bargain, being permitted to hold their leases on terms which were not equitable so far as the public interests of the colony were concerned. I was much pleased to hear the Secretary for Lands state that the circumstances of the United States were not at all analagous to those of this colony; and therefore that we could not infer that, because certain land laws had worked well there, they would work equally well here. The honorable member for West Moreton, Mr. Bell, forcibly illustrated one of the differences in the two countries, by pointing out the inability, in the United States, to fold and depasture sheep in the open air during the whole of the year, as is done in this colony. I saw nothing to laugh at in the Secretary for Lands comparing Palestine with the Darling Downs; but I was sorry he did not give us the intervening history, between the time when the patriarchs merely grazed their flocks and their herds in Palestine and when it sustained millions of people. He might have told us that, when the patriarchs left Palestine for Egypt, they numbered only seventy souls, all told; and that when their descendants returned, they were upwards of a million, including women and children. It was not until they were able to cultivate the soil that they got it in possession; for Abraham, as he himself stated, was only a stranger and sojourner there—acknowledging the freehold of the then inhabitants by purchasing a sepulchre therein for the burial of his dead.

And even when they returned from Egypt, God refused to drive out the whole of their enemies till they were sufficiently numerous to occupy it beneficially, lest it should become a wilderness, and the wild beasts, rapidly multiplying, would devour them. He might have told us also that Joshua had the land surveyed and mapped out, that it might be divided by lot—first to the tribes, and then be subdivided in the same way amongst their respective families and households, so that each might have an equal share. We may learn a lesson from this equitable distribution of the country. The honorable member told us that, in New South Wales, the lands at one time were classified—the price varying with the situation; but he has not told us that any advantage had been gained thereby. He also informed us that more land was alienated in that colony when the upset price was low than when it was high; but he had not shewn us that the greater alienation had led to greater cultivation of the soil. The assumption is that the alienation was for speculative purposes, and that in consequence of the most easily accessible lands having been purchased, when population increased, small capitalists had either to buy at second-hand, or become tenants. But persons will not emigrate to become tenants. The thirst for land is all but universal, and the hope of obtaining a freehold is the great incentive to emigration; and it is not likely, therefore, that men with small means will direct their steps to a country where land is only to be had at second-hand. As speculating capitalists only buy land where there is a probability of its being most wanted for settlement or re-sale, it is necessary to insist upon cultivation, if we would always have a plentiful supply of good and available land for new comers; just as it was found necessary to insist upon stocking new country to secure pastoral occupation, and put a stop to that system of run-hunting under the Orders in Council whereby hundreds of miles often intervened between the country actually occupied and that which was open for tender. I am certain that under the provisions of this Bill the great bulk of the choicest portions of the agricultural and grazing areas would be purchased at five shillings per acre, if what has been termed the Dutch auction system became law, and I shall therefore oppose it. I think the Bill is also defective in not defining what is to be deemed cultivation; the definition of it ought to be so framed as to prevent its terms being evaded. I am also surprised that the Secretary for Lands should have brought in a Land Bill at all, having so recently stated, when out of office, that legislation on the subject was unnecessary. I still maintain that the Crown lands are held in trust by the Government—and so far from that trust being a fiction of law, it was conferred by an Act of the Imperial Legislature—the Act which remitted to us the control of our waste lands; and the purposes for which

they are held in trust are—to assist in the maintenance of good government, the protection of life and property, the settlement of the colony with an industrious and virtuous population, and the carrying on of necessary public works; and in parting with any portion of this source of revenue, it is the duty of the Government so to alienate it as to make it as productive as possible to the State, in some other way. Reference has been made by several speakers to some remarks of the honorable member for West Moreton, Mr. O'Sullivan, respecting inferior lands; but I am sure the cases are comparatively rare where it is desirable to purchase bad land for consolidating, as it were, other purchases. And I am equally confident that if a board were appointed to classify the lands, it would abuse its power unless it differed from the generality of boards, especially Government boards. But I cannot understand why such efforts should be made for the alienation of inferior lands at a reduced upset price, and having the lands classified for that purpose. For it is as expensive to fence in bad land as good land; and, generally speaking, it is far more expensive to clear it. Besides, if an acre of good agricultural land will sustain one sheep, and it will take four acres of ordinary pastoral country to do so, it would be cheaper to give one pound for good land than five shillings for inferior; because it is less expensive to fence in one acre than four, and the purchase money would be the same in both cases. I must say that this debate on reducing the upset price of inferior lands, reminds me of an ancient proverb—"It is naught, it is naught, saith the buyer, and when he goeth away he boasteth"—for it appears to me the real object sought is to acquire facilities for obtaining superior land at the price of inferior. A great onslaught was made upon the honorable member for East Moreton, Mr. Francis, for stating that he considered a reduction in the upset price of land was the first step towards the repudiation of our public debt; but since the late Premier shewed that the present Premier uttered the same sentiments in the session of 1866, we hear no more of this idea being outrageous, but it is quietly allowed to pass unchallenged, although it had never been propounded by the member for East Moreton. The honorable member for Warwick, and the honorable member for Western Downs, Mr. Ramsay, have spoken strongly in favor of establishing a class of pastoral farmers; but I do not think that the present price of sheep, as an article of food, would pay the cost of feeding them upon cultivated grasses and roots, as is the case in Great Britain. Nor can we reasonably suppose that the large squatters would like to see their runs cut up into small pastoral farms. It is contrary to what we know of human nature, and contrary to all our past experience of the squatters of the Darling Downs. The honor-

able member for the Western Downs, Mr. Ramsay, also advocated the alienation of Crown lands without any conditions as to quantity or cultivation, for the mere purpose of raising revenue. But if we alienate all our choicest land without securing their cultivation, how are we hereafter to provide for public works and immigration, except by increased taxation? There is this difference between alienating the land for purely pastoral pursuits, and alienating it for the cultivation of sugar, cotton, and other agricultural products. In the former case, the improvements effected upon the land diminish the demand for manual labor, and so impoverish the revenue. In the latter case, the improvements increase the demand for such labor, and thereby enrich the revenue by increasing the consumers of dutiable goods. I also demur to his statement that it is to the capital and perseverance of Captain Towns that this colony is indebted for bringing the experiments in cotton growing to a successful issue; for I believe it is more indebted to the honorable member for West Moreton, Mr. Bell, and myself, than to Captain Towns. I may say, more especially to myself; for it was well known that neither my cousin nor myself had been accustomed to farming, and, when it was seen how well we had succeeded, others were encouraged to enter upon it; for the results at Yamahuto would bear favorable comparison with any farm in Queensland—and it will not be denied that more cotton has been grown in the district of West Moreton than in that of East Moreton. That honorable member likewise stated, the other evening, that, if it were possible for us to alienate at once 4,000,000 acres of our Crown lands at one pound per acre, we ought to do so, as by that means we could immediately liquidate our obligations to the public creditor—the interest of which, in sixteen years, would amount to that sum, and, after we had paid it, the debt would still remain wholly unextinguished. My *sotto voce* denial of its enabling us to do so, provoked quite a torrent of laughter. I now repeat that denial, and explain the grounds on which I make it. Our ability to buy up our debentures would not only raise them to par, and above par, but would render them absolutely unprocurable; for the holders would reason thus: “The colony that is able to buy up its debentures is able to pay the interest as it becomes due, and we must hold it to its bargain; for why should we realise upon our six per cent. securities when we can now only get two per cent. for our money in the market.” What, then, should we do with our large surplus funds? No statesman amongst us would be bold enough to propose to establish with it a national bank of discount; we may therefore dismiss that mode of dealing with it from our consideration. If we converted it into bullion or specie, and interred it in the vaults of our Treasury, if we have such, the half-yearly payment of interest out of it would reduce it

to nothing in sixteen years, and our debt would still remain unpaid. The only other way to dispose of it would be to buy with it £4,000,000 of the English debt; and even then we should have to pay out of the taxes the difference between the six per cent. we owed, and the three per cent. we received—less the additional interest accruing to us from investing in the English public securities below par. The Government of Natal adopted the principle of carrying on their public works and immigration by alienating their waste lands at a low upset price, till at length they found it necessary to re-purchase them, with debentures bearing interest, for the purpose of re-alienating them, but with conditions for cultivation; for it was found that the colony could not progress while the lands continued in a state of nature devoted to mere pastoral occupation. It is true that our territory is larger than theirs, but whatever its extent, when all our available lands are sold we shall practically have none to sell—for we shall have none that the people will buy. I have never reduced my views on the alienation of Crown lands to such a concrete form as to carry a land law of my own in my pocket—but it appears to me that if we could stringently enforce a given amount of *bond fide* cultivation in a given time, we might safely leave the extent of a man's purchase to the extent of his ability to cultivate that given amount—say, a tenth. In this way the capitalist who was able to cultivate 1,000 acres would be placed on the same footing as the small man who was only able to cultivate four acres. In the one case he would be able to take up 10,000 acres, in the other forty. But, however correct this view may be as a theory, I am afraid it could not be practically carried out, and that to effect the *bond fide* cultivation required, some other restrictions would have to be imposed. The property of the colony depends so much upon the proper cultivation of the soil, that I would not object, under a well devised scheme, to remit the rent for every acre kept under continuous *bond fide* cultivation for a given time.

Mr. G. THORN rose to order. He wished to ask if the honorable member was in order in reading his speech!

The SPEAKER: Every honorable member is entitled to use notes when addressing the House, for the purpose of assisting his memory.

Dr. CHALLINOR: I am not surprised to hear such questions asked by so young a member of the House. I might characterise such interruptions as is deserved, but, to be within parliamentary usage, I will say they proceed from presumption and ignorance. The honorable member has been brought to task on more occasions than one in this House; and he would be better employed in studying the Standing Orders than rising to put such foolish questions to the Speaker. I have been too long a time in the House to be taken to task by so young a member. I was glad

to hear the honorable member for Maryborough say that population was the true source of revenue—but I differ from him in the opinion that the farmer ought to have his land free because it is his labor alone that makes it valuable;—for what does that statement amount to, but to one of the common principles laid down by political economists—

“That nothing is valuable without labor expended on it.”

Of what value, I would ask that honorable member, is gold itself until labor has discovered and removed it from its matrix or from alluvial deposits? Who discovered so much country, say, in Africa, as Dr. Livingstone? Yet we never heard him make any claim for land. The mere discovery of new country can give no claim to the pioneer squatter to its possession. If such had been the case, there would have been no occasion to apply to the New South Wales Government for an annuity for the widowed mother of Leichhardt, in recognition of that celebrated traveller's discoveries of valuable pastoral countries in the Australian territories. The opinion laid down by the Imperial Government, in relation to the Crown lands in the colony of the Cape of Good Hope, when Lord Glenelg was Secretary for the Colonies, was—

“That cultivation alone gave an inherent claim to the soil—and that that was the only claim the Government would recognize.”

In this respect, the person who merely depastures acclimatised stock upon the natural grasses has no greater claim to the soil than the aboriginal who merely hunts thereon the wild animals indigenous to it. We have had many notable examples that the conversion of the pastoral leaseholds into freeholds does not attach the owners thereof to the soil, amongst whom may be mentioned the Leslies, the late Secretary for Works, Mr. Watts, Mr. Hodgson and Mr. Marshall. It is no argument against agriculture that many farmers have lost every shilling they possessed—for we have been told, over and over again, that most of the squatters have not only lost their all, but that they are also overwhelmed with debt. Some of the most successful cotton growers are small farmers, their crops having averaged year after year two bales to the acre. Though the strictures of the honorable member for Maryborough on the remarks made by the late Premier as to the mode of assessment were very just, it must not be forgotten that the appraisalment as a rule is made by persons more or less, directly or indirectly, interested in squatting, and therefore that they are liable to see the matters referred to them chiefly from a squatter's point of view.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS said that, as Chief Commissioner of Crown Lands, he never had anything to do with the appraisalment of the Darling Downs runs, which

were the only runs appraised. He was appointed umpire in many cases, but the Surveyor-General had everything to do himself.

Dr. CHALLINOR: The commissioners of Crown lands were appointed appraisers on the part of the Government; another appraiser was appointed by the squatter who was invariably a squatter too. And the umpire was the Chief Commissioner for Crown Lands.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS, in explanation, said it was not a commissioner who had been appointed, but a surveyor, Mr. Francis Gregory, who was appointed in the first instance.

Mr. TAYLOR: The Government did not, and had not, to appoint the umpire.

Mr. G. THORN wanted to know what this had to do with the debate.

The SPEAKER: The honorable member must not interrupt the debate. There were too many interruptions altogether in the debate.

Dr. CHALLINOR: The Colonial Treasurer has endeavored to justify his change of opinions since the session of 1866, by referring to the conduct of English statesmen in times of great political excitement. The case of Sir Robert Peel has been specially referred to; but the circumstances under which that eminent statesman changed his opinions, in reference to the corn laws, left no doubt as to the sincerity of his convictions; for he knew that the adoption of them would occasion the loss of his political friends and supporters. It was far otherwise with Mr. Disraeli, and the honorable member for the Burnett, Mr. Mackenzie;—and when we see a politician's views change at once with a change in his position, we entertain anything but respect for the man, or belief in the reality of his conversion to the new opinions he professes to entertain. We can well understand why the Colonial Treasurer can now see why it is desirable to reduce the upset price of land in the north, though he could not see it in 1866. The reason is obvious: the northern members are in power now, and they were not then. I am far from giving the Government the credit it desires to take for limiting the power of the Executive as much as possible in the matter of regulations; because, judging from some of the provisions of the Bill, the Government seems anxious to secure for the class it represents certain advantages, and, at the same time, to place them beyond the power of any subsequent Government to annul by Executive action. The honorable member for the Kennedy objected to the imposition of conditions within the homestead areas; and said, moreover, that much of the land of the north, which would be brought under the operation of the Bill was unfit for agriculture, and therefore that it was unjust to the present pastoral tenants to bring it within such areas. But that is just the reason why the con-

ditions should be enforced, for no one would take up land for agriculture which would not pay for cultivation. I cannot understand the position he lays down, that money spent in compulsory improvements is to be reckoned as so much rent paid to the Crown; but I agree with him that the Pastoral Leases Act of 1863 gives to the squatters a very valuable tenure, and that it requires but little amendment. I am sure there is not a squatter on the Darling Downs who would not be willing to pay for half his run the amount he is now required to pay for the whole, if he would be secured by that extra payment in undisturbed tenure of his lease; but I should strenuously object to such terms being granted to them. The honorable member spoke highly of the provincial councils of New Zealand; but a gentleman who recently resided there assures me that in the province of Canterbury the upset price of land has always been retained at two pounds per acre, that that province has always been the most flourishing in the colony, and that it has now the best public credit; that in the other provinces, such as Marlborough and Nelson, the upset price of land has constantly varied, being assessed by the Provincial Executive Councils, that it has sometimes been sold as low as five shillings per acre, that those provinces are in a very depressed condition, having neither money nor credit, that the best lands have been sold, and that persons endeavor to get returned to the Executive Councils for the purpose of assessing the upset price of lands in which they are personally interested. The honorable member for Rockhampton said he had refused to stand for a pastoral constituency, because he was persuaded that if he would effect any good in this House he must represent a town constituency; but it has always appeared to me that it was an anomaly for a squatter to represent a town electorate: and this is one reason why I object to give a member to rising towns such as Roma; because it would increase the representative power of the squatters. That honorable member was in error in supposing that the doctrines propounded by him the other night are new in this House, for the present Attorney-General made that gentleman's lecture at Rockhampton the ground-work of his speech on the land question in 1866, though he did not acknowledge the source of his inspiration, and most of the quotations from Edmund Burke, Bentham, and others, contained in that lecture, will be found in the report of that debate contained in "Hansard;" which report I would commend to the perusal of that honorable gentleman, as he will there find that the views advanced by him have been fully answered, if not to his satisfaction, at least to the satisfaction of those honorable members who controverted his opinion on that occasion. Much has been spoken in praise of the homestead law of the

United States, but that law requires residence and a certain amount of improvements; and residence on those homesteads involves one of two things—cultivation or starvation. The honorable member also thought that forty acres of lands was too small a quantity to give an immigrant who came to this colony at his own cost. But if we reckon his passage at £18, and that half of it is fairly chargeable for his board and lodging, the actual cost of his transit—say £9—reduces the price of land to him to 4s. 6d. per acre; and if he gets the same quantity of land for his wife, and for every child over twelve years, and half that quantity for every child under that age and over one year, I am sure he will have as much land as he and his family will be able to cultivate. That honorable member likewise said we had no right to tell a man what he must do with his land when he had bought it; for we never thought of compelling a merchant to deal in such and such articles only. True; but we said to him—"If you deal in such and such articles, you must pay such and such duties before we will allow you to dispose of them." When he sells in bond, he only sells his interest in them—the goods are still retained in custody by the revenue officers till the duty is paid. The law does not define what any man shall eat, or drink, or wear; but it will not allow him to consume certain commodities without paying the taxes imposed upon them. The advocates for the condition of cultivation in the alienation of Crown lands do not wish to impose upon the buyer the kind of crops he is to grow; we leave him to judge what will pay him the best to produce: all we insist upon is *bond fide* cultivation. I am thoroughly imbued with the principles of free trade, and maintain that we ought not to grow anything which we cannot grow profitably without aid from the revenue. Hence I am opposed to the continuance of the cotton bonus beyond the prescribed period, as it has answered the purpose for which it was granted—the demonstration of the cotton-growing capabilities of this colony. Many honorable members have descanted upon the fertility of the lands in the United States, and the low price at which they can be obtained; but they did not tell us that they are situated at such a distance from a market—that the price they get for their wheat is so small, that it would not cover the cost of spreading manure upon the land, though it were obtainable on the spot. The consequence is, that when they have exhausted the soil by continual cropping, they have to commence afresh with new country, every removal westward diminishing their profits by increasing their distance from the markets. In many places the return for their labor is so inadequate, that it pays them to grow maize for their own fuel. Things have not yet quite come to this pass in Queensland. Great objection has been taken to an observation made by the honorable member for East Moreton, Mr. Francis—that, in his

opinion, God made the earth to be cultivated, and that we ought to legislate accordingly. It was said, in reply, that though it might be the opinion of that honorable member that the land ought to be cultivated, he had no right to fortify that opinion by stating what he considered was the intention of the Deity in reference to it; and that, though that honorable member had a perfect right to express his opinions in this House, they would carry more weight with them if he could shew that they were supported by men of acknowledged authority in the science of political economy. Now, I will produce an authority for the cultivation of the land which, I think, none will venture to deny—for it is the authority of the Suzerain of all kings and all peoples—for He created both them and it, and surely He who made the land has a right to ordain what shall be done with it by those He has placed upon it. Before quoting from that authority, I would observe that, with the exception of the first session, I have been a member of this House since Separation, and no one can justly charge me with attempting to thrust religious sentiments upon its attention, or interlarding my speeches with religious phraseology—in fact, I have carefully avoided doing so; but there is a time for all things, and it can scarcely be considered out of place in a Legislative Assembly which has decided to open its daily sittings by prayer to the Divine Being for counsel and direction, occasionally to refer to that volume in which alone he has enunciated the principles which are to guide our actions. In that volume, I find these words, respecting our first parents—"And God"—not Mr. Francis—"And God said: Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and *subdue* it"—and to subdue the land must certainly be to cultivate it. One of the great principles which should guide us in legislating upon the alienation of Crown lands is to be found in the following extract from a work written by a gentleman of equal authority on political economy as that of any author from whom the honorable member has quoted—I mean, John Stuart Mill ("Principles of Political Economy," book ii., chap. 7, sec. 16, column 2):—

"When the 'sacredness of property' is talked of, it should always be remembered that any such sacredness does not belong in the same degree to landed property. No man made the land. It is the original inheritance of the whole species. Its appropriation is wholly a question of general expediency. When private property in land is not expedient, it is unjust. It is no hardship to anyone to be excluded from what others have produced: they were not bound to produce it for his use, and he loses nothing by not sharing in what otherwise would not have existed at all. But it is some hardship to be born into the world, and to find all nature's gifts previously engrossed, and no place left for the new comer. To reconcile people to this, after they have once admitted into their minds the idea that any moral rights belong to them as human beings, it will always

be necessary to convince them that the exclusive appropriation is good for mankind on the whole, themselves included."

I am sorry that I have occupied so much of the time of the House, but it is admittedly a most important question, and one that demands at our hands the most earnest attention. I have given it my best attention, and I do not think that I have trespassed upon the forbearance of honorable members by bringing under their notice anything which was not fairly the subject of debate, or that I have introduced any new matter of discussion into it. I shall not oppose the second reading of the Bill, but in committee I shall strenuously oppose some of its provisions.

Mr. TAYLOR said the honorable member who had just sat down had deceived him in one respect: he had given him two hours and five minutes, and he had spoken three hours. He thought the question should, by this time, be well considered, as, in the course of the debate, honorable members had travelled over a very wide range—from Tiberius Gracchus down to Bentham. Ancient and modern history had been ransacked for authorities; and he felt sure the pastoral tenants of the Crown would read the different speeches with great interest. He had noticed, for some time past, that there was something weighing on the honorable member's mind. The papers had been too full of the speeches of northern members, and the honorable member had resolved to make the balance a little more even. Before he proceeded further, he must express his regret that the honorable member in his remarks in reference to the reassessment of runs, should have cast any slur upon the Government appraiser, Mr. Gregory, for a more fair and impartial officer than that gentleman he had never seen. With regard to the Land Bill brought in by the honorable Secretary for Lands, there were some features in it which he liked very much, and there were others to which he objected. He strongly objected to the arbitrary manner in which it was proposed to apportion the colony into districts. He could not see what right any Minister had to assert that a small portion of the southern districts contained the only land fit for homestead areas, with the exception of a small strip along the coast. The land around the Peak Downs was equal, if not superior, to any in the Darling Downs. Why then was some of it not reserved? Why were not reserves made at Warrego, Charleville, or wherever there was good land?

AN HONORABLE MEMBER: Where are the facilities for carriage?

Mr. TAYLOR: There were no facilities required. If free selection had not been proclaimed all over New South Wales, would any one have settled at Albury?

Mr. ROYDS: There is water carriage there.

Mr. TAYLOR: There was no water carriage where some of the settlers had taken up land at Albury. If all the best land in the colony were

once reserved for agricultural purposes, and no one was to be allowed to buy it up for anything else—if the Government would go in for that, then he would support the new Bill. But to say that the Darling Downs contained the only lands fit for reserves in the colony was absurd.

THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: There are 135,000 acres which could be taken up in the next two months under this Bill.

MR. TAYLOR: He wanted to see them taken up now. That was his great objection to the homestead reserves, for he knew that capital crops could be raised on the Peak Downs if the farmers got a season, but there was the difficulty. There was the Cumkillenbar reserve. He ventured to say that not a man who had land there, but would be ruined, and leave the place if there came a bad season. Finer land there was not in the country, but a good season would not be obtained once in three years. The crops might look well to-day, and in three days a hot wind would utterly destroy them. As regarded the grazing areas, why was only a small part of the colony to be converted into grazing areas? Why was not the whole of the colony to be proclaimed one grazing area? Why were certain runs on the Darling Downs to be taken from their present proprietors and made into grazing areas; while the runholders in the north were to remain in peaceable possession?—

AN HONORABLE MEMBER: Because there are railways in the south and none in the north.

MR. TAYLOR: He did not consider the reason valid; the run holders had been sufficiently punished by the railway scheme without needing to be still further punished by having their runs taken from them and made into homestead and grazing areas. But he objected to grazing areas altogether. He objected to a run being taken from one man and given to another to be used for the same purpose. He would even go as far as to say, that a man who depastured 50,000 sheep employed more labor and paid more to the revenue in customs duties than would be employed or paid if his run were cut up into twenty different portions. If a run were to be cut up, let it be for agricultural purposes, and he should not complain; but if a stranger were allowed to buy 10,000 acres in a run, why not allow the occupier of the run to do so also? A good deal had been said in the newspapers about him, and what he had stated regarding agriculture. He maintained that it was an unprofitable pursuit. Some years ago he had rented a farm, and worked upon it like a nigger, and at the end of the year found that, after he had paid his landlord and his laborers, nothing remained for himself. He then came into this district, where he found intelligent men, and entered upon a profitable occupation. He had no objection to agriculture, and he trusted he should see thousands and thousands of acres taken up

for agricultural purposes, and thousands and thousands of families settled down upon the soil; but felt certain, that in a few years, great misery would come over every one of them. The recent proclamations would be found ere long to have caused a great deal of misery; for he knew of cases where men who had taken up land under them, had borrowed money to pay the first year's rent. If the present weather continued during the remainder of the season, there would be no help for any of them. Agriculture was a very hazardous pursuit; it would be far better to carry on a newspaper than to take to farming. He was glad to learn one thing from the Land Bills of the present Government, viz., that something was to be done for the outside squatters. At present they were hardly dealt with. There were many of those runs which he would not own if he got them for nothing; not because they were bad in quality, but in consequence of the expensiveness of working them. The cost of labor and carriage were serious matters to the outside squatters; and when his greasy wool only fetched fivepence halfpenny a pound in Sydney, the price was scarcely sufficient to pay the carriage of it, if the distance of the run from the coast was great. What these outside squatters wanted was a positive tenure for a term of years. The length of the term was not of so much moment as the certainty of the tenure. If an outside squatter received a parchment under the hand of the Governor, giving him possession for a fixed period, possession which neither the Government nor the House could interfere with, then he would be able to raise money on reasonable terms on his leasehold. But under existing circumstances, when he was liable at any time to be deprived of his run, the outside squatter was laughed at when he went to the banker or money lender, or merchant for a loan, and could not raise sixpence on the strength of his lease. There was no honorable member's views with which he coincided so much as those of his honorable colleague in the representation of Western Downs, Mr. Ramsay. He regretted that that honorable member had not been consulted by the Government when they framed their measure, and hoped that the Bill would not pass until some of his views had been embodied in it. He thought they were giving too much land to the immigrant. It was an injustice to the man already in the colony to give him who came from England forty acres of land. He did not see why men who had been in the colony for years and years—the old hands, who were really better colonists than the new men—should not be put on an equal footing with future immigrants. But he thought there was no necessity for immigration at present. He was bold enough to stand up in that House, and declare that he was that fool who did not want to see any more immigration to the colony. Let those who were

in favor of immigration look at the number of persons who were unemployed in the large towns of the colony; and let them think of the number of men who would be thrown out of employment when the railway works were finished. What were they to do with those men? The few industries that were in the colony would not be able to absorb them. He maintained, therefore, that there was no need for further immigration at the expense of the State; though he had no objection to as many people coming as liked, if they paid their own passages. He knew what was the state of the colony at the present time, both as regarded the means of employment and the supply of labor; and it was because of that, he was opposed to any more immigration. They might have as many immigrants as they liked, but they would not obtain labor a whit cheaper. He knew that from experience. Notwithstanding all the immigration that had taken place, he had never been able to get labor any cheaper. It was only within the last six months that he had been able to get labor cheaper than formerly, but it was not owing to immigration. The reason was that, three or four families who had left his employment, with from £300 to £400 each, and gone into farming, had lost all their money, and were glad to come back to him at lower wages. He was not one of those who wanted to stop people from going on to the land. On the contrary, he should like to see the colony crammed with farmers. But in the towns, in the interior, and he could speak for Toowoomba, farm produce was so abundant already, that it was not saleable, except at a price that was ruinous to the producer. Corn was down to eight pence a bushel, and hay was unsaleable. The supply, in fact, far exceeded the demand. If the railway were completed to Brisbane, so that the farmers might be able to find a market for their produce, then there might be some good in farming. But it was no good for the farmers about Toowoomba to take their produce to Ipswich, for the people there had no money. He did not agree with the Bill before the House, but still he hoped it would come out of committee a good Bill—but an extraordinary number of amendments would have to be made on it. He fully expected that honorable members would have to sit there till Christmas to deal properly with the Bill. He would warn the Government to take care and not commit the same fault in legislation as they accused the late Government of committing. They must take care and not shew too much partiality for one class. He saw something of that kind in the Estimates, and also in the Bill now under discussion. He would warn them against that, and he warned them in a friendly spirit, though he would willingly vote tomorrow to turn them out. As a parting advice to them, he would say—take care and not be too partial to your friends, but let us all have fair justice.

Mr. MILES said he fully agreed with the honorable member who had just sat down, in believing that there was no need for grazing areas. Nor could he, any more than that honorable member, see why the land should be taken from one person and given to another. He could not, however, go any further with him. He was sure the honorable member could not have expected, when he assisted with all his power to carry the railways through the Darling Downs, that he would continue to hold the lands there in possession for ever. He must have seen that the lands contiguous to the railway lines would have to be sold to pay for the making of the railways. It came with a very bad grace, he thought, from the honorable member to come now and complain about the lands being sold to pay for such public works. The honorable member also found fault with the Government for not reserving lands for agricultural purposes at Peak Downs. But what would be the use of making reserves there? Agricultural lands were no good three or four hundred miles from a market. With reference to the immigration question, he quite agreed with the honorable member for the Western Downs. He thought it was a perfect farce to hold out forty acres of land as an inducement to people to come out here. He would like to know what a man was to do with forty acres, when he arrived in the colony. A man, on arriving here, was not capable of judging as to how he could turn his forty acres to any profitable purpose, even though he knew at once where to find good land. The honorable member, Dr. Challinor, had said that he was not brought up to farming, and that he, notwithstanding, succeeded in growing cotton. The honorable member seemed to argue from that, that a man was capable of going into agriculture at once, although he had not been brought up to agriculture. Well, he would not dispute that. But what was a man to do with forty acres of land if he had not the means of putting it to use? and, besides, what was the good of forty acres to any man? The honorable member for Ipswich, Dr. Challinor, had stated that he had made the cultivation of cotton a success. He was very glad the honorable member had said so, as it was a sort of assurance that he would not come to the House and ask for a bonus. The only bonus that should be given to any one, was the bonus that should be given to every one, and that was cheap land, and plenty of it. He did not agree with the honorable member for the Kennedy, in believing that the people of Brisbane had not profited by the railways. He believed they had, and he was certain they would to a much greater extent, for he presumed that a large population would settle along the line, and, as producers and consumers, would necessarily carry on a good deal of business with Brisbane. With reference to the Land Bill before the House, he felt himself very much in the same position

as many honorable members who had addressed the House on the question. It was not a Bill that he approved of; but, at the same time, he did not mean to condemn the Government for not bringing in a Bill of a different shape, for he believed that if they had attempted to bring in a different Bill, the House would not have listened to it. If the Bill had been any way different from what it was, it would, he believed, have been kicked out. He was glad the Government had come to the decision not to treat the Bill as a party question, and he hoped that honorable members would deal with the measure in committee, so as to make it one that would be acceptable to the country. If the land question were to be treated as a party question, the result would be that there would be no Bill, for the Bill before the House would be kicked out; and he would like to see the party that could bring in a satisfactory measure. He was glad, therefore, that the Government did not propose to make this a party question; and that they were prepared to accept amendments from any side of the House, so long as the principles of the Bill were not interfered with. He had a great many objections to the Bill, and the first of them was, as to the conditions. He did not believe in conditions; and the great error, as it seemed to him, that honorable members had fallen into in dealing with the question was, that they considered this to be an agricultural country. He had no hesitation in saying that it was an utter fallacy to compare Queensland with the United States. He did not mean to say that the land in the colony was not equal to the land in the United States, or that it was not fit for cultivation; but the difference lay in the climate with which, in this colony, they had to contend, and the want of water. Now, till some means were devised for irrigating the lands, agriculture would be a failure. Another of the conditions which he objected to was that one by which a tradesman living in town would be prohibited from purchasing land. If he understood the Bill rightly, no man would be allowed to purchase land unless he resided on it. Now, why should a professional man, or a man who was engaged in business in town, who wished to make some provision for his family, be prevented from investing his money in the purchase of land? It might be said that it would not be beneficial if the land were not cultivated, but the House had the means of inducing people to cultivate the land, by imposing a land tax upon all unimproved lands. People would then find it to their own interest to cultivate. But he did not think that any capitalist would be found willing to lay out a large amount of capital and allow it to remain unproductive. Another objection he had was, that people should be restricted to from 40 to 640 acres. Why should not any man be allowed to buy as much land as he could pay for? That was a

restriction which, in particular, he thought ought to be abolished; so that people might be induced, as much as possible, to settle on the lands. If the price of the land was sufficiently reduced, there would be no need to offer people forty acres of land by way of inducing them to come here. He also objected to the State introducing labor to the colony for the benefit of any class. Those who wanted laborers should be allowed to import them at their own expense. If the price of land were reduced, they would have people flocking to their shores, and settling on the land, and cultivating it. He should, for one, be very sorry to see any more immigrants brought here of the stamp that came out during the last two or three years. With reference to the classification of lands, he believed there was a great difference of opinion on that point. He decidedly objected to any board being appointed to specify what should be agricultural lands, and what grazing lands. He believed the simplest way to deal with the land would be to put it up at a low price, and let its value be arrived at by auction. If the land was good, it would be sure to bring its full value in that way. It might be said that the capitalist would then come in and buy the land up, but that could be checked, if not altogether put a stop to, by putting on a land tax. Reference had been made to Sir Charles Nicholson and his land company. For his part, he had no objection to such a company. On the contrary, he must say, he would like to see such a company come into the colony and buy up four or five millions of acres of land. The colony was at present greatly in want of money; and the sale of a large tract of country would be one of the best things that could happen to the colony. As to security of tenure to outside squatters, he had no doubt, it would be very beneficial to the pastoral tenants of the Crown in outside districts to have some security of tenure, as it would go far to enable them to improve the lands. But that was a matter which, personally, he cared very little about. He did not care whether there was security of tenure or not. He was glad to be able to say that he had never had occasion to borrow money from the banks or any one else, therefore, he did not need to care what Government was in power, for they could not deprive him of the land he occupied except for the purpose of settlement. He did not need to care, so far as he was concerned, whether the lease was for one or for twenty years. Those, however, who had gone far up the country to the frontier, had had to encounter great difficulties. They were at great expense, too, on account of long carriage, and the high price they had to pay for labor, and they had in that way got into the hands of the bankers, and were a long way in arrears. To them it would be a most beneficial thing to get a long tenure. He believed, also, that a long tenure would be beneficial in another

point of view. It would induce capitalists to lend money freely if there was the security of a long tenure, and the colony would greatly benefit by that. The honorable and learned member for Fortitude Valley made some remarks with reference to the squatters being prevented from cultivating the soil. He thought that was a very proper provision, as it protected the purchaser of the lands from the competition he might be subjected to by the leaseholder cultivating. Orders in Council, however, so far provided to meet that, by requiring the squatter to purchase not less than 140 acres under his pre-emptive right, so that he might cultivate. But at the time the Orders in Council to that effect were issued, it was looked upon as a great hardship that the squatter should have to purchase in order to be able to cultivate. He would not occupy the time of the House any longer; and would only repeat, that he would support the second reading of the Bill.

Dr. O'DOHERTY said it had been repeatedly asserted, both in the House and out of it, that it was a matter of the utmost importance to the well-being of the colony that a comprehensive Land Bill should be passed by the House this session. To a young member like himself, who would be glad to record a silent vote, after so able and so protracted a discussion as had taken place on the Bill, it was, on a question of so much importance as the one before the House, a sort of duty on his part, notwithstanding the desire he might have to give a silent vote, to express his views on the matter, in the hope that, possibly, some idea he might put forward might find an echo in the House, and might find a resting place in the Bill under discussion. He confessed that, to his mind, the passing of a measure of this kind at the present moment was of the greatest possible importance. If they only considered for a moment the grave facts that had been stated over and over again in that House during the late sittings of Parliament, and the fact that this young community, numbering scarcely 40,000 heads of families, had succeeded in contracting a debt amounting to £4,000,000, on which they had to pay an annual interest amounting to about a quarter of a million—if, in addition to that, they reflected that the only possible way of relief they could look to was that which would be afforded through the means of a Land Bill such as that they were now considering—he thought that, in view of those great facts, their first consideration in discussing a Bill of this kind should be in direct opposition to what had been stated by the honorable member for the Western Downs. The first condition should be to solve the problem of how they were to bring the people to the colony. It did seem to him, in view of the condition of the colony at the present moment—the stoppage of immigration, their enormous debt, and the unproductive nature

of the works on which the money had been expended,—that it was ruinous to put forward the doctrine that immigration was not wanted. He held that the House should regard a return to immigration, an instant return to immigration, as a first consideration, if they wanted to make the Land Bill a successful one; and the object could not be better attained than by a return to the old system of immigration that existed between 1862 and 1864. He excepted, specially, the immigration of the last two years, for the simple reason that that immigration, bad as it was, could not be attributable to the system under which the immigrants arrived in the colony during the time he spoke of. Those immigrants he had never heard complained of; but, on the contrary he thought it had been stated over and over again that that immigration was of the greatest benefit to the colony. The immigrants who came out then were of a good class, and brought capital with them; and the only fault there was in the system,—a fault he hoped not to see repeated—was, that whilst they took measures to bring those people to the colony, they were mad enough to take no measures to retain them in the colony. They sent an eloquent agent home to England to tell the emigrating class what a magnificent colony this was, and that people had only to settle in it to get all they desired; but when a string of them came of the most advantageous kind, they shut the door in their face and compelled them to go to the neighboring colonies and seek for the home they expected to have found here. Now, in considering a measure that he conceived to be of the great importance and magnitude of the land question at the present crisis, he confessed that to him, as a young member, it had been quite refreshing to find that the veteran members of the House—the section that might be called the fighting brigade—had mutually agreed for once to bury the hatchet, and discuss the question on its merits, and not on the merits of the honorable members on the other side. He thought it was well for the measure, and he hoped that the same spirit would be exhibited in committee. As it seemed to be tacitly understood that the second reading of the Bill should be allowed to pass without question, there was little reason that he should occupy the time of the House in speaking with reference to the details of the Bill. Therefore, in the few observations he would address to the House, he would confine himself altogether to a few statements on the leading principles of the Bill. He had heard it stated that the Bill had no principles; and that if it were considered, as the Bill itself stated it should be, concurrently with another Bill that had been laid before the House—that, taken together, the two Bills were anything but what would meet the popular wishes. At present he was only disposed to consider the principles involved in the Bill now under

discussion; and, in the first place, he must say, that he did not coincide in the view that this Bill was a step backwards, or that it exhibited a want of proper principle. He thought, on the contrary, that it exhibited clearly on the face of it, that the honorable the Minister for Lands had in view to take an unquestionable step in advance to meet the popular wishes—as widely expressed in favor of a measure of improvement in the present land system of the colony. The main principles of the Bill seemed to him to be threefold. The first or main object was the division of the colony into two great areas of settled and unsettled districts. Though that was not new altogether, yet it was so widely different in extent from the division that had hitherto existed, that it might be said to constitute a new principle in the Bill. He was gratified to see such a division as that; and if he were disposed to flatter himself he would say that, in his first address to his constituents, he stated that he considered the first principle of any Bill that would seek to settle the land question in Queensland for some time, should be the drawing of a line of demarcation, such as the Bill drew, from the north to the south of the colony—a line that would mark off, on the one hand, the western lands, the prairie lands, for the squatter; and mark off, at the same time, a vast tract that for years to come he hoped would be suited to agriculture. He confessed he could have wished to see the subsequent divisions in the Bill left out. He particularly agreed with the objection to the arbitrary division that had been made in the settled districts of homestead and grazing areas. The north and south divisions were quite arbitrary. He thought that everything would be attained to meet the wishes of the framers of the Bill, if a simple division were made into the unsettled or squatting districts, on the one hand, and the homestead or freehold districts, on the other. Judging from the various practical speeches that had been made in the course of the debate, there seemed to be an opinion, that, within the settled districts, the first principle should be to establish homestead tenure, in contradistinction to the insecure leasehold tenure of the squatting districts. Whether the homestead occupation should be a grazing or an agricultural one, the first object of the Bill should be to foster and encourage in the settled districts a comfortable class of freeholders, each living on his own homestead. Now, he thought everything would be gained that was sought for, by a line of demarcation of that kind. The second object that seemed to be sought by the Bill seemed to be to accede to the popular cry of free selection. Now, so far as the Bill went in that respect, it was unquestionably an advance on the previous Land Bills of the colonies; for though of late the Land Acts had been construed to admit of indirect free selection, yet this was the first Bill in which free selection had been boldly

advanced over a large portion of the colony. Whilst they recollected those two points, they should also recollect that the honorable the Minister for Lands had sought to foster the growth of an important element in the prosperity of the colony—the growth of a class of pastoral freeholders, a class of industrious settlers, whose existence had been ignored in previous Land Bills. For those reasons, he was inclined to give the honorable the Minister for Lands credit for good intentions in framing the Bill; and credit to the Government for a desire to meet the wishes of the country, in framing a Bill to meet the exigencies of the times. As far as he was concerned, he agreed with the views of the honorable member for the Kennedy, when he considered that the objects of any Land Bill that would be valuable to the country should be threefold—first, to settle an industrious population on the soil; second, to protect the vested interests of the squatters; and, third, that the Land Bill should be made an instrument of finance—an instrument by which they might hope to relieve the colony of its great burden of debt—and in that way relieve themselves from the present burden of taxation. The able and practical speeches of honorable members who had preceded him had so exhausted the subject, that he confessed he felt there was but little left for him to say, in addition; especially as in the practical and able speeches of the honorable member for the Western Downs, Mr. Ramsay, and other honorable members who had left a marked impression on the House, he felt running through those speeches views that he had long entertained on the land question—and he was glad at seeing that those views he had long entertained had found such powerful exponents in those honorable members. With regard to the principle proposed to be adopted, with a view to arrange for the adoption of free selection under the Bill, he thought that the principle was a bad one—that of arbitrarily dividing the country into grazing and homestead areas; especially for the reason, as he knew from having visited the districts marked off in the southern portions of the colony, that in the grazing areas there was a considerable amount of agricultural land, and that in the agricultural areas there was a great amount of grazing land.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: There was power given in the Bill to bring grazing areas into agricultural areas.

Dr. O'DOHERTY: He was also opposed to the plan, for a different reason. In any useful measure, he thought it would be of the greatest consequence for the Legislature to direct any stream of *bond fide* immigrants where they would be sure to find the description of land they might be in search of. He did not believe in throwing a stream of free selectors over the colony, to settle where they liked; and very few of those who might be thrown broadcast over the country would

be likely to find the land they were in search of. He thought the course that was previously adopted would be found to be the most beneficial to the immigrant as well as to the colony. It was left, formerly, to Mr. Hill to select lands for agricultural areas; and wherever *bond fide* agriculturists were settling with advantage to themselves, they were following in the footsteps laid down by Mr. Hill himself. At any rate, he could say that there were in West Moreton few thriving farmers in places outside the agricultural areas marked off by Mr. Hill. Now he could not but think that the same principle, more widely carried out—and he was glad that it had been advocated by the honorable member for the Kennedy, and the honorable member for the Western Downs—would be far more likely to work efficiently in favor of the agriculturist, as well as protect the vested interest of the squatters, than the plan suggested by the Bill. In dealing with a question of this kind, the first object should be to protect the interest of every squatter in the colony, as well as to give the fullest opportunity to the settlement of agriculturists. At the present time they could not afford to lose a single interest. The land board suggested by the honorable member for the Western Downs, or the series of land boards suggested by the honorable member for the Kennedy, should fulfil, in a practical way, the object Mr. Hill attained, to a certain extent, in marking out the reserves in West Moreton and the Darling Downs. He had only a few more remarks to make, with reference to the most important question of making the Land Bill an instrument of finance—an instrument of relieving the colony from the load of debt that had been incurred. It had been held that it could only be made so by being made an active instrument of immigration—an instrument of bringing people directly to the colony. With that view, he heartily coincided with those honorable members who had protested against the old system of holding up the land at the value of a pound an acre all over the colony. He coincided with them in the opinion that they should not only have a classification, such as the honorable the Minister for Lands had suggested, into settled and unsettled districts, and agricultural and non-agricultural areas; but he held, also, that they should have a classification according to the value of the lands, and not a classification, such as had been suggested, between north and south, and east and west, that would give greater advantages to one place or another, but a classification that would have an equal effect over all the settled districts marked out under the Act. The principles put forward by the honorable member for the Kennedy, in the propositions he made in reference to classification, seemed to him to embrace two main points, and one was that the Government should receive improvements in part payment for the lands—should acknow-

ledge improvements on the land in lieu of cash payment. He thought that would be an excellent principle to adopt in this Bill, with a view to bring population to the colony. It was the same principle as had been extended to the coffee and sugar cultivators; and if it were carried out in the case of other settlers, it would, he thought, have an excellent effect. Viewing this Land Bill as a great measure for bringing people to the colony, and settling them on the soil, he hoped, when in committee, they would so frame the Bill as to be able, in a short time, to bring in a vigorous stream of immigration to the colony, and remedy the errors of the past by freely opening the lands to all who were prepared to come here and invest their capital in them. He was not prepared to restrict capital from being invested in the land. He thought it would be a very great mistake to drive the capitalist, or the small farmer or laborer, away from the colony. All were equally useful; and the only thing there was reason to take any precautions against was, the permitting the capitalist to swallow up a vast track of country for the purpose of turning it into a sheep run. He confessed that if the committee could in any way protect the colony from such a misfortune, he, for one, would be most anxious to see capital invested in the country to any extent. With regard to the unsettled districts, he should not be prepared to throw them open to free selection. He thought that a wise and comprehensive measure, that would embrace the settled districts, and throw them open to purchase, whether by the agriculturist or the grazier, whether in small or large portions—a comprehensive Land Bill that would accomplish that, and so enable much of the land to be taken up by the present occupants, would meet with general acceptance, and would, in its operation, be found beneficial to the colony. He should support the second reading of the Bill.

The SPEAKER having put the question, that the Bill be read a second time,

Mr. SANDEMAN said he wished to be informed if it would be competent for any honorable member to quote, during the discussion on the Pastoral Tenants Bill, from the debate upon the Land Bill, as the two Bills were introduced to be read concurrently? If not, he would move the adjournment of the debate, that he might have an opportunity of addressing the House.

The SPEAKER said that by one of the standing orders honorable members could not allude to any debate of the same session upon a question or Bill not under discussion; but, as the Bill before the House was to be read concurrently with the other, the House, he thought, would allow any allusions to the present debate when the other Bill was under discussion for a second reading.

The question, that the Bill be read a second time, was then put and passed, without division,