

Queensland



Parliamentary Debates
[Hansard]

Legislative Assembly

WEDNESDAY, 11 DECEMBER 1867

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY.

Wednesday, 11 December, 1867.

Address to His Royal Highness the Duke of Edinburgh.—
Crown Lands Sale Bill.—Omission of Debate from
"Hansard."

ADDRESS TO HIS ROYAL HIGHNESS
THE DUKE OF EDINBURGH.

The COLONIAL TREASURER moved—

1. That a select committee be appointed, with leave to sit during any adjournment of the House, for the purpose of preparing an Address to be presented by the Legislative Assembly to His Royal Highness the Duke of Edinburgh, on his visit to Queensland.
2. That such committee consist of the following members:—Mr. Macalister, Mr. Fitzgerald, Mr. Douglas, Mr. Clark, Mr. Pugh, Mr. Garrick, Mr. Ramsay, and the mover.

The motion was agreed to.

CROWN LANDS SALE BILL.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS moved that the Crown Lands Sale Bill be now read a third time. In doing so, he said that at first he intended to postpone the third reading of this Bill until after the consideration in committee of the Pastoral Leases Bill; but he had since changed his intention, because it was thought that the business of the country would be expedited if the Land Bill were read a third time, and sent to the Legislative Council to be discussed at once. In the meantime, the House could deal with the Pastoral Leases Bill in committee.

Mr. WALSH said he would like to know if the Government pledged themselves to go on with the Pastoral Leases Bill.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS said he could assure the honorable member that he had only moved the third reading of the Land Bill at that time, in order to expedite the business of the country. He would pledge his word of honor that the Government intended to go on with the Pastoral Leases Bill.

Mr. WALSH: Did the Government intend to go on with the Bill, or was the present course adopted as one way of getting rid of it?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Yes. Decidedly, the Government intended to go on with the Bill.

Mr. MACALISTER said he was somewhat astonished at the observations the honorable the Minister for Lands had just made; because he thought the two Bills were concurrent measures, and that the one would not pass from the House till they knew something of the other, or what it was likely to be—for there was no doubt in his mind that the Pastoral Leases Bill must present a very different appearance after passing through committee from what it did when it was first introduced, and for the simple reason that the Bill for the alienation of the Crown lands was a different Bill from what it was when it came into the House; so that, instead of providing for lengthened leases and reduced

rents, it would become a question whether the leases should not be reduced and the rents very much increased. He thought, when glancing over the Bill, that the honorable the Minister for Lands would have moved for the re-committal of it; because a glance at a number of the clauses would shew him that several of them were contradictory. He could not at that moment refer the honorable gentleman to many of them, but he would refer him to the third clause, where he would find that the railway reserves were taken out of a run before the run was divided, while there was another clause that stated the reverse—he thought it was the forty-fifth clause. But the Bill had undergone so many phases, that, until the present moment, it was exceedingly difficult for him to take any particular view of the principles that now appeared in it. However, the Bill had got through the two readings in that House, and now presented itself for the consideration, for the last time, of honorable members of the Assembly. He felt he could not allow the Bill to go through its third reading without expressing the opinions which he had formed upon what were its leading principles. There was no question of greater importance to the future interests of the colony than a correct settlement of the land question. It was a question which was not only regarded with the deepest interest on the part of the people out of doors, but it was one any interference with which it was also desirable should carry along with it the influence of the public mind, and the sympathy of public opinion. Such, he believed, had been the case in the colony on previous occasions, and certainly had been the case in every colony in Australia where the land question had presented aspects of importance. How much more important, therefore, was it that such should be the case now, when they regarded the great interests that were involved in the Bill before the House. The Bill did not come before them as one of an ordinary character. Setting aside every principle that had hitherto been recognised in the land legislation, not only of Queensland, but of every colony in Australia, the Bill proposed to deal with the public lands in a manner, and on principles, more striking for their novelty and for their experimentalising tendency than for any strength of argument which had been advanced in their favor. It was very important, before they came to a conclusion upon the Bill—before they finally took farewell of it—that they should, at any rate, have before them the precise position which they occupied with regard to a measure which proposed to alienate the public lands of the colony at a nominal payment of sixpence per acre. And here he would observe, that he was justified in asking—by whom had this Bill been demanded? Had the public out of doors asked for it? Had there been any

appeal upon the subject of the measure? And had anything of the kind been responded to? He thought he was justified in stating, in answer to all those questions—No. There was another point in connection with the Bill, that induced him to say something with regard to it before it passed its third reading, and that was that the Government had not taken up any defined position with regard to the measure, as they introduced at one time a Bill containing one set of principles, and afterwards adopted a Bill containing another set of principles. At one period they expressed an opinion that no Land Bill was necessary, and yet they now took upon themselves to father a measure which was to alienate the public lands at a nominal figure. It therefore became not only a question of the highest importance, but it was a question which they were bound at that moment to inquire into, in the form in which the Bill now presented itself—how far it would affect the financial position of the colony, as well as the other interests of the country? He believed the honorable gentleman at the head of the Government stated, on one occasion, that he had a precedent for the course of action which the Government intended to pursue with regard to the measure now before the House, and that that precedent was the Reform Bill which had lately gone through the House of Commons. But the course which the Home Government pursued with reference to that Bill had no analogy with the Bill that was now before the House. The Reform Bill did not involve the financial policy of England. It did not involve any question connected with the revenue, and therefore was not a question the Government required to regard in connection with the revenues of Great Britain. This Bill, however, was one of a very different character. It was one no Government could regard without looking at it in a financial point of view. That was the first question which must present itself to them; and, therefore, it was the duty of the House to regard the position which the colony financially occupied in connection with a question like that. Now, what was the position which they occupied. Let them glance for one moment at the main features of the financial statement, as delivered by the Treasurer. That honorable gentleman announced to the House that the deficit in the general Estimates for the present year would amount to £160,000. Now, instead of submitting to the House any proposition of retrenchment that would meet that deficiency, one of the most helpless propositions was made—that they should go on increasing the deficiency until next year, and then come down with a Loan Bill, and endeavor to get the money by loan, provided they could get any one to lend it to them. He would like to know whether the honorable the Treasurer, at the time he made that statement, had any

figures to shew what the land revenue of the colony would be next year by the sale of the public land, at the nominal sum of sixpence per acre; or if he had them not then, had he got them now, and was he prepared to tell them what they were likely to get in the shape of land revenue out of this Bill during the next year? He should like to point out to the House that they had at that very moment no less than, in round numbers, £100,000 of land orders out. The moment—the very day—on which this Bill became law those land orders would become four times more valuable than they were the day before. If that were the case, then those land orders would be capable, at five shillings per acre, of purchasing 400,000 acres of land under this Bill, and if they were to be required for an annual payment, they would be able to purchase for five years no less than 800,000 acres. It was a remarkable circumstance in connection with the lands of the colony, that although year after year there had been an increase in the revenue from land sales, yet the whole of the land that had been alienated since the time Queensland was established as a colony, up to the end of the year 1866, did not exceed 620,000 acres. Looking at it in that light, he was anxious to know whence they were to derive the revenue. If those land orders were to be used in the way he presumed they would be, then not only would all the lands of the colony be swept away, but they would be swept away without one sixpence of money being paid into the Treasury. They had been told that the revenue to be derived from the Bill would be something enormous—that in all probability it would be £300,000 or £400,000 a year. Now, he took the liberty of stating, in direct opposition to that, that it would not yield as many shillings, and that, instead of being an assistance to the Treasury, it would be the ruin of the land fund of the colony. That was the position in which they would find themselves when this too-liberal Land Bill became law. The Bill appeared to him to have but one object; and that object was to be traced to the fact that two or three run-holders in the neighborhood of towns had evinced a determination to oppose free selection, and, in their attempts to do so, every other interest in the colony was to be thrown to the winds. He regarded the Bill as anything but a liberal Land Bill. He looked upon it as being as uncalled for as it was unwarrantable. He regarded it as nothing else than a gigantic fraud. There was too much in it, for him, of the celebrated resolutions of last year, to be at all a Bill that, in his opinion, would commend itself to the country. In the present position of the colony, and in any position of the colony, with the trust which they held of the public lands, they had no right whatever to sacrifice them for an annual payment of sixpence per acre, particularly when they knew that that sacrifice would yield nothing. But the liberality of the Bill was not to be

denied. The too great liberality of the Bill was not to be disputed. In point of fact, in order to get support for the measure, an attempt had been made to please everybody, if possible, by humoring the prejudices and whims of every one who had any amendments to propose. If honorable members would take the trouble to read the Bill for themselves, they would find this remarkable feature in it—that one individual could, in three characters, take up the public estate without paying a sixpence. He could take it up as a land-order immigrant; he could take it up under the homestead clauses; and he could take it up by serving as a volunteer. These three characters could be occupied by one individual; and, under them, without paying a single sixpence, he could help himself to the public lands. But there was one feature in the Bill that was probably more remarkable than any other. He referred to the encouragement—the license which it offered—to parties for swindling. In order that he might be understood on that point, he would point out to the House that the homestead clauses, if they were taken advantage of as largely as honorable members supposed they would be, would exhaust a very large quantity of valuable land. It was most desirable, therefore, that, in disposing of the land under the homestead clauses, everything should be done above-board—that there should be no room for any one who entered upon the homestead areas to swindle his creditors. Now, what was the clause that followed the homestead clause? It was the seventy-seventh clause of the Bill, and provided that no debt contracted by a conditional purchaser under the homestead clauses, during the five years previous to the issue of the grant, should be recoverable either during those five years, or at any time thereafter. What was the position that that would place parties in? They had had leases at sixpence an acre proposed, and forfeitures under it; and, in this Bill, the Government had not been bold enough to adhere to those forfeitures. They had abandoned them, and allowed the parties to go in; and it was not unreasonable to suppose that, under the seventy-seventh clause, they would have the refinement of roguery. What was required to be done? A man having selected his 160 acres of land had simply to get some person to put up a house for him. He would take care that it was of the best description. He would have his land enclosed with the finest fence he could obtain, and get his garden planted with choice trees and shrubs. He would live luxuriously for the five years, none daring to make him afraid; and all that he would be under the necessity of doing would be to turn round to those persons who had done so much for him, and say to them—“Gentlemen, I am very much obliged to you—that is all the law allows me to give you. I intend to remain in your debt, for the law will not allow you to touch this

property during five years, or any time thereafter." Was it possible that morality in legislation could descend lower than that?—and the clause was one that applied to all conditional purchases. Now, he maintained, that in a moral point of view, that was the adoption of a course with regard to those conditional purchases that must be absolutely ruinous to the well-being of society. But they were told that the Bill would promote settlement, and that it would encourage immigration. He must take the opportunity of respectfully denying both propositions; and he would here observe, that he did not find any fault with the covenants of the Bill. He would rather see the conditions abolished than see the perjury, for it was nothing short of that, that had taken place under the dummifying system. But there was no condition in the Bill that the veriest speculator could not comply with. He would have ten years to fulfil the conditions, and if he did not fulfil them within that time, the Government would not dare to forfeit his land. That had been proved by the Bill itself, for there were hundreds of parties whose leased lands had been forfeited, but who were permitted to come in under the Bill, and renew their leases for five years longer. He would say one or two words with regard to the land boards provided for under the Bill. When the Bill was before the House at its second reading, he expressed an opinion favorable to elective land boards; but he never had, and would not now, willingly accept the land boards provided by the Bill. By the Bill they were handing over the public estate to boards they knew nothing about—to boards not yet created—to boards that would have full power under the Bill, if they chose to exercise it, to make "ducks and drakes" of the land. They would have the power, if they chose, for there was nothing in the Act to prevent it, to help themselves to the land; and for that purpose, so classing the lands as to be able to buy them at the lowest price.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: Look at the penal clauses.

Mr. MACALISTER: The penal clauses do not affect the land boards. They have nothing to do with them.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: Don't they; you try.

Mr. MACALISTER: He was much obliged to the honorable and learned gentleman for his opinion; but he would take the liberty of informing him that he considered his own opinion was as good as that of the honorable gentleman in a matter of this kind. He maintained that in adopting this course, and in handing over the public estate to be dealt with by irresponsible land boards, they were not only adopting a course of which they knew nothing, but one which, so far as the Australian colonies were concerned, had never been adopted by any of them—and it could not be shewn that this was a step in

advance. They had no right to hand over the lands of the colony to be dealt with by irresponsible land boards, for the purposes of being dealt with as they might think proper. They had no security as to the action of those land boards. It was all very well to say that the Government would be responsible for them, but they all knew very well what that amounted to. They knew very well what responsibility was on the part of boards that were not responsible to the House. He observed some honorable members laughing, but this was a question which might yet cause those honorable members to laugh on the other side of their mouths. He maintained that they had no right to hand over the lands of the colony to any irresponsible land boards, to be dealt with as they might think proper. The land boards would have no duties under this Bill—none, whatever. If they should have anything to do it would merely be to carry out the regulations of the Government, which, by this Bill, were given in no less than six different clauses. Under six different clauses there was authority given in each to the Government to frame regulations on every conceivable subject. Now, if that was to be the case, how were they to know that the Bill was to be carried out at all, or that the reverse of it might not be carried out? If the Bill was to be administered by regulations, he wished to know what guarantee the House had for the carrying out of the Bill at all. If the regulations were of importance they ought to have been provided in the Bill. If they were to be only departmental, he would not object, for then they would only go a certain length; but if they were to hand the Bill over to land boards, who would be guided by regulations framed by the Government, by six different sets of regulations, it was impossible to say what might become of it. They had been told that the Bill was an experiment. It was an experiment that had already ruined the land fund of the colony, and there was not a redeeming feature in the Bill that would bring back that fund. It was an experiment that would come to a close after the best of the lands had been disposed of. But they had no right to experimentalise upon a subject so important as the disposal of the lands of the colony. If they were to do so, they ought to do so from the experience of the working of the laws of this colony, as well as those of other colonies; and after the deepest consideration. Now, this Bill had not been considered. It had certainly been a long time before the House, but it had been hurried through in some clauses which had never had that deep consideration which those clauses in a Bill of such enormous magnitude were entitled to. He would be no party to the passing of the Bill. He would be no party to its being read a third time. He believed that the Bill was a compromise—a compromise with the supporters of the Pastoral Leases Bill. He believed that the

Bill, amounting, as it did, to a public confiscation of the lands of the colony, would be denounced as execrable, once its operation was seen, by expressed public opinion. He did not intend to divide the House upon the third reading, but he felt bound, holding the opinions he entertained, and with the convictions he had arrived at with regard to the Bill, to express his views to the House, so that they might go forth to the country along with the measure itself.

The question, that the Bill be now read a third time, having been put,

Mr. WALSH rose and said he was astonished that no member of the Ministry had considered it necessary to answer some of the objections to the Bill that had been put forward by the honorable member for Ipswich, Mr. Macalister. He thought that some of the objections that had been urged by the honorable member shewed that there had been great blundering in dealing with the Bill. All the objections the honorable member had made were, he thought, worthy of notice; and he did not agree with the Government attempting to treat any honorable member with contempt. He thought the objections that had now been urged to the Bill would have had greater force if the honorable member, who had just addressed the House, had attended in his place when the Bill was in committee, and had brought forward his objections then. Though he might not have agreed with all those objections, yet, as he also had objections to the Bill, he felt that he had cause to complain that the honorable member had not afforded him the assistance which he was entitled to receive from him. He did not intend to let the Bill go to a third reading without a division. He considered it was the duty now of every honorable member to furnish to his constituents the means of ascertaining his grounds for supporting or opposing the Bill. When the Bill was first brought forward this session, it was because it was thought it was time the Crown lands of the colony should be more equally distributed amongst the people; and he desired that the question should be approached with that object; and, believing that to be the intention of the Government, he went heartily into the question at the commencement. But when he found that the Bill was not for the alienation of the Crown lands of the colony generally, but only of a certain portion of them; and when he saw that two or three interests had combined to pass a sham measure, and to delude the country, then he left the party he had been acting with, and took up the position he did in opposition to the Bill. The cry, when this Land Bill was first discussed, was that small pastoral holdings should be encouraged, and that large pastoral holdings should be reduced, and that the country should be populated, instead of being merely occupied by stock. Now, what had they done? No small pastoral holdings

would benefit by the Bill; and it would not have the effect of adding one to the number that already existed. Not one small pastoral sheep-owner would be able to exist, under the Bill, except, perhaps, on the Darling Downs. He had gone over the map, and he found that, in three-fourths of the country brought under the operation of schedule B, the Bill would not add a single pastoral holding to those already in existence. He did not believe that ten sheep stations in the country would be affected by the Bill, except on the Darling Downs. In the Burnett District there was no country that would carry sheep brought under the operation of the Bill. All the country in the Burnett District, brought under the operation of the Bill, had been already occupied with sheep, and had been found unsuitable. The country had been abandoned for sheep, and was now occupied with cattle. The whole of the Burnett District on which sheep were running—and he believed there were about half a million of sheep in that district—was excluded from the operation of the Bill. Now, that being the case, he asked if he was not justified in describing the Bill as a sham. But he found that many of the runs in that district were not operated upon by the previous Bill—the Bill that was originally introduced. He found that the Minister for Lands' run was not touched, nor those of the honorable member for the Leichhardt, Mr. Sandeman, nor the Colonial Secretary's. All the runs of the honorable the Colonial Secretary were notoriously well adapted for running sheep, but they were not touched by the Bill. On the contrary, the Bill was made to protect them, for it removed all probability of those runs being brought within the category of Schedule B. Now, that was what he objected to—that those honorable members who had been holding themselves up as so very liberal in their land policy had so specially guarded their own runs, as not to give up an acre of them. But, what had they done to him and others of those poor individuals inside the boundary fixed? They had done this: They had said—"In order that we may be liberal, we will give up half your runs, and we will double your rents." But they had not allowed any one to get a slice of their runs, or to double their rents. From him and others the Bill proposed to take away half of their runs, and to double for the remaining half the amount of rent they had hitherto paid for the whole; and it gave them an indefeasible title for five years over the half that was left, but which the House could take away at any time. Now, what did the Ministry propose in their Pastoral Leases Bill. They proposed to give themselves fifteen or twenty years' leases, and the leases were to be utterly indefeasible, and there was to be no right to take away any portion of the run. They did not propose to offer half of their own

runs at any time during the term of their long lease. And he would like to know what kind of rental was to be paid for that tenure. If the honorable the Minister for Lands proposed to take away half the runs and double the rental of one section of the pastoral tenants, he would like to know what rental he was to charge from those who were to have long leases without any reduction of their runs. He would like to know what rental the honorable the Minister for Lands was to give for his run, which was one of those that were to be so specially protected. He could assure the House that he would willingly offer ten times the rent for it that was now paid by the honorable member; and then he would rather have it than have the miserable piece of country that had been left to him, and have to pay only the rent he had to pay now. The honorable gentleman had told the House that he intended to pass the Pastoral Leases Bill; but he (Mr. Walsh) would venture to assert that the Government did not intend to pass the Bill; and he knew that, if their rents were to be quadrupled by the Bill, they would not pass it. For his part, he meant to see that that Bill was not a sham measure, but that it was a real and an earnest one for leasing purposes. He was anxious to see the Bill brought forward, for he wanted to see if the Secretary for Lands would propose to double the rent for the half of his own run; and if the honorable gentleman did not propose to do that, he would ask the House to quadruple the rent for the whole of it. To the Bill now before the House he objected *in toto*. It was altogether an unjust Bill. It was unjust to the people, and unjust to the Crown tenants. It was unjust to the people, because it deprived them of what he believed they had a perfect right to. Those people who wanted to purchase land had a perfect right to roam over the country, and purchase land wherever they liked. He had never upheld the principle that the Government or the people had a right to constitute another class of tenants; for the present pastoral tenants had an inherent right to the occupation of the land till it was wanted for better purposes, or till some one came forward to purchase it. He had a perfect right to go into the Maranoa, or the Darling Downs, or any other district in the colony, and if he saw a piece of land he might desire to purchase, he had a right to purchase it. If he had been instrumental in inducing any one, friends of his own, to come out to this country, under the idea that they could come and be small sheep farmers, he should feel that he had duped them by this Bill; for, unless they threw open the Peak Downs, the country at the head of the Burnett, the Fitzroy, and the Dawson, they would not attract a single individual into sheep farming on a small scale by this Bill, or if they did, they would ruin him. Now, he should like to see the right accorded to every one to go and purchase land wherever

he chose. At the same time, he would respect the rights of those who occupied the land as pastoral tenants, and allow no one to interfere with what he considered to be their right—to occupy the land till it was wanted for purchase. He objected to the Bill, on the score that it withheld the country from those persons who, it was pretended, were to be benefited by it. He objected to it, because there were many clauses in it which he did not believe could be carried out. He repeated what he had said the other evening, that he would defy the pastoral tenants in some districts to survey their runs within the prescribed time. They would find that there would not be surveyors enough to do it; and if there were, they would not be able to pay the exorbitant charges which those surveyors would put upon their services. The Minister for Lands had afforded no explanation in answer to the objections he had made on that score. Another thing had been totally overlooked. The squatters in the settled districts held their runs under an Act passed by that House, which provided that the leases should exist for ten years. It did so in this way: it stated that every lease should be for five years, but it also distinctly provided that they should hold them for another five years; and he affirmed that they were as much entitled to the second five years as they were to the first. What regard had the honorable the Minister for Lands shewn to that Act of Parliament? He had frequently heard the honorable gentleman, when he sat on the Opposition benches, declaim against the honorable member for Ipswich, for not respecting Acts of Parliament; and he was one of the loudest to protest against the proclamation of reserves in the Darling Downs; while now he produced a measure which not only broke an Act of Parliament, but which broke covenants made under that Act. It was as clear as could be, that the covenants made under the Act of 1863 were broken by the Bill before the House. He was aware that it stated “It shall be lawful,” &c., but “shall” meant “may,” and “may” meant “must,” unless the Government could shew some good reasons for not carrying out the instructions of the Act.

THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: If the honorable member will read the “Acts Shortening Act,” he will see the meaning of the words “It shall be lawful.”

MR. WALSH: It stated that “it shall be lawful for the Governor, with the advice aforesaid, to grant renewed leases for five years;” and therefore he affirmed that the squatters were as much entitled to the lease of their runs for the second five years as they were for the first five years. That being the case, where was the political honesty of the honorable member who denounced the honorable member for Ipswich, Mr. Macalister, for violating Acts of Parliament? If he (Mr. Walsh) had enter-

tained no other objection to the Bill, he would have objected to it on the ground that the House had made certain bargains, which they ought to carry out faithfully. He agreed, to a certain extent, with the remarks of the honorable member for Ipswich, Mr. Macalister, respecting the constitution of the land boards. The way of constituting those boards was clumsy in the extreme, and he did not see how they could possibly work. He objected in the first instance, to the Government having the power to appoint and dismiss the members of those boards. He thought it would be better to leave it to the Minister for Lands himself, who was responsible to the House. Another objection to those boards was that the Bill said the board should sit at the principal land office of the district, which might be five hundred, and frequently three hundred, miles distant from the other side of the district. Was it likely that persons would travel all this distance to have every little matter decided? He had no hesitation in saying, that within twelve months from this time a large number of persons who would be affected by this Bill would be in the Insolvency Court. And all this was to be done in order that a few large squatters should be saved from the ruin which they thought was overtaking the squatting interest in this colony. He should be told that the squatters would be able to retain one-half of their runs, but he contended it would be impossible for them to do this if they had neighbors of a certain kind. A sheep-owner, for instance, in a wet season would only be allowed to run one-third of his stock on the resumed land, and a fortnight or three weeks would in that case be enough to ruin his prospects for the year. Take, again, the cattle-owner: in nine cases out of ten he would have to remove two-thirds of his stock, and he might bid farewell to his fat stock and farewell to his prosperity, if his neighbors chose to be litigious; and the iniquity of this was, that probably the resumed portion of his run would not be required for settlement the next fifty years to come. Take the Wide Bay District, for instance; not one-third of the fat stock would be produced in that district under this Bill which was now produced. A great noise was made about the liberality of the gentlemen who introduced this Bill. He believed that if it were carried it would make their fortunes. He could tell the honorable member for the Kennedy that his fortune was in a fair way of being made, if the Bill passed; and he could tell the honorable member for Rockhampton, that he knew he would have his fortune made at once, for it would immediately add £10,000 to the value of the Gracemere Run—that run, which was now literally unsaleable, would then be cheap at the figure he had named. A gentleman who, although not a member of that House, had been famous for his land schemes—a

gentleman well known to honorable members of that House, who had, he knew, been closeted hour after hour with the honorable member for Kennedy, and week after week with the honorable member for Rockhampton, during the framing of this Bill,—wrote to him, a few days ago, and told him that he would have to take away one-half his stock from his present run; and then said he had a very nice run in the Kennedy District, which he could let him have at a reasonable rate. If, in the framing of this Bill, he had seen that the gentlemen who took so active a part in it would have been affected by it to the same injurious extent as others were, he should have been disposed to regard it more favorably, but such was not the case. There was not, so far as he could make out, a single instance in which they would be affected, except by the improvement of their properties. He maintained that the Bill would preserve intact all those enormous squattages which they were told were to be done away with. Except in East and West Moreton, and the Darling Downs, he did not know a single old squattage which would be interfered with; while a few new runs, which had been taken up ten or fifteen years after these, were to be sacrificed—sacrificed as a kind of peace-offering to the country. He should certainly divide the House on the third reading of this Bill. As he had before said, it would not encourage settlement—it would not have the effect of introducing a desirable population, in the shape of small sheep-farmers or cattle-holders—it would not conduce to the prosperity of the colony, and certainly would not settle the land question. He was persuaded that, if the Bill passed, before twelve months they would have to make amendments in it. The Bill had not done, and could not do, any good; except, perhaps, that the discussion of it had convinced honorable members that the time had arrived when it was necessary to reduce the upset price of land. But this reduction was not carried out in a definite and practical form. It was hampered with conditions of improvement, and the like, which nobody could define. Who was to tell, for instance, at the end of ten years, whether a man had spent ten shillings per acre or five shillings per acre upon his land during that time? The Bill was one of those clumsy attempts at legislation, which shewed how little statesmanlike ability had been exercised in framing it. It was unjust in principle, and he denounced it. He should look upon it as a lucky thing for the country if it were rejected in another place. There were no hopes of its being modified; because, if any modification of consequence was made in it, it would be no use sending it back to this House. In the temper they were now in on the subject, they would never agree to it. Therefore, he hoped it would be rejected; and, by rejecting it, those honorable gentlemen would win the gratitude of the country.

Mr. DOUGLAS said he thought it would not be unbecoming in him, at this last stage of the Bill, to make some remarks upon its general features, and the history of its passing through the House. He had frequently deprecated the course which had been pursued, but he had never offered any factious opposition to the Bill; although, at the same time, he had not hesitated to express his disapproval of some of its leading principles. The prime defect in it was, that it was not a Government measure. It had not been brought forward, as such a measure should have been, with the authority and strong support of the Executive of the day. The honorable gentleman at the head of the Government had always alluded to it in a mild and deprecatory manner, but had never advocated it as desirable or necessary. Then, again, the Attorney-General had told them that, as the Bill proceeded on its way, he was getting more and more into a fog respecting it, and the further it went the less he was able to see through it. The Colonial Secretary had told them that there was no real intention of carrying the Bill, and, in the strongly illustrative tone of the honorable member, that it had been only thrown down on the table for honorable members to worry. He supposed the honorable gentleman thought the dogs had to be bled, and that if they did not have something to worry, they might turn round and bleed their masters. The honorable the Minister for Lands, he would do him the credit to say, had very considerably met every suggestion which had been offered him from either side of the House; but, during the passage of the Bill through the House, there was not a single vital principle in it which he, Mr. Lamb, was not prepared to say had no vitality in it. That was the way in which it had been introduced; therefore he might safely say the Government had displayed the greatest indifference to the Bill, and the House, as a whole, had done the same. He believed there were not more than half a dozen members in that House who felt a deep interest in its passing. Certainly, there was the honorable member for the Kennedy and the honorable member for Rockhampton, both of whom he thoroughly believed felt a great desire to see it pass. The honorable member for Warwick, too, had interested himself in the measure; and there were the honorable members for South Brisbane and Fortitude Valley, who had also displayed considerable anxiety respecting it, although these two latter gentlemen had not gone the length of fathering the Bill. But, beyond that, he denied that there had been anything like a unanimous desire for the Bill to pass; and, as these gentlemen had taken the interest they had in the measure, he contended that they ought to have been sitting opposite on the Treasury benches. A number of members seemed to be under the impression that a Land Bill was required, and that a Bill of some kind must be passed this session; but

he affirmed that outside there was no desire for any such Bill as this. There was nothing like a pressure to force any such measure through the House. No such Bill represented the opinions of the people; and, for all these reasons, the Bill did not deserve to pass its third reading. He should like to know how the honorable gentleman at the head of the Government could reconcile it to his conscience to agree to such a Bill, opposed, as it was, to all his previous convictions upon the question. In the session of 1863 and 1864, he (Mr. Douglas) had made so bold as to bring forward certain fugitive measures on the subject. They did not contain any comprehensive scheme, but were intended as modification of some portions of the existing law, but they were met with most determined opposition by the honorable member, as being of a most revolutionary character. When he proposed that half a million acres of land should be secured on the Darling Downs for agriculture, he could not get even a respectable minority to support him. In the year 1865, the honorable members for the Leichhardt, Mr. Sandeman and Mr. Dalrymple, brought under the notice of the Government the difficulties which pastoral tenants of the Crown labored under in the taking up of new country under the existing law; and the honorable member for Ipswich, who was then in power, promised that in the following session what was called a "comprehensive" measure should be introduced. While this measure was in process of being hatched—he (Mr. Douglas) had then lately joined the Ministry—the Ministry were waited upon by an influential deputation, who laid before them certain resolutions which had been arrived at with respect to the mode in which the Crown lands should be dealt with. One of those resolutions was to the effect that no reserve should be proclaimed in any run except by the sanction of both Houses of Parliament. That was so preposterous, that no Ministry who had any regard for its own dignity would even accept it. After all, a comprehensive Land Bill was introduced to the House, and the honorable member at the head of the Government was at that time in office under the honorable member for Ipswich. He (Mr. Douglas) believed that the Bill was a most admirable one, and the best which had ever been brought into that House. It was a measure which the honorable member who had then presided over the land office for two or three years conceived was a desirable and practicable measure, and one suitable to the circumstances of the country. It provided that reserves should be made all over the country, under certain conditions. It passed the second reading after much discussion; but the financial difficulty which then overwhelmed them prevented its passing. There was only one point in reference to the provisions of that Bill on which the Ministry were not agreed, and that was with reference

to the upset price of land, which the honorable gentleman now at the head of the Government strongly objected to have reduced. Now, he found him submitting to far more dangerous principles, and going to an extraordinary length in reducing the price. The next year the Leasing Bill was introduced, and this, too, was an admirable measure, although it required some modification to make it more workable. The leading principles of that Bill were, that extensive surveys should be made, and afterwards sales of a large quantity of land by auction; and in the meantime the formation of large reserves, so that the land should not be alienated in such a way as to hinder the settlement of the country. Unfortunately, these reserves were not carried out, and the country became discontented; and, desiring further changes in the land laws, these were embodied in a Bill drawn up by his honorable friend the member for West Moreton, Mr. Bell. The two cardinal principles of that Bill were—first, free selection within specified districts, and limited really to the purposes of the settlement of the country; and, secondly, he proposed to invade the rights of pastoral tenants only so far as was really necessary for agricultural settlement. Then, they came to the measure which was introduced this session by the Minister for Lands, which was a further carrying out of the same principles, and another leading principle of which was, that they had two classified districts, namely, leasing areas and homestead areas; and free selection was to pervade all these. Well, he infinitely preferred that Bill; in fact, he preferred all previous measures to the Bill before the House. He would admit that there were two features which recommended it to his mind, the one was free selection, clogged, certainly, with all sorts of restrictions; and the second was those homestead clauses which had been introduced, which really recognised the principle that the land was to be given to those who were prepared to settle upon it and improve it. But those were both experimental, and they would be carried out with difficulty; and he very much doubted whether they would prove the great attraction to the working classes in the mother country which it was expected they would be. There were other features of the Bill, however, which required their most serious attention; the most glaring of these was the proposal to give leases of ten years to the holders of runs on the Darling Downs, who had already held their runs for twenty-five years. And these new leases were to be indefeasible leases, too. It was true, the Parliament had the power to resume portions of the land held under such leases, but it would be found difficult to carry this out. They would, by the granting of these leases, create a sort of vested right which they would not easily get rid of. He asked honorable gentlemen, could it possibly have occurred to them at the be-

ginning that they were to grant leases for ten years for any portion of the Darling Downs? He believed, if it had been proposed on the second reading of the Bill, it would have horrified honorable members. As far as the northern portion of the colony was concerned, the Bill was fair and just, and would, he believed, work satisfactorily, because there runs had only recently been taken up. But that men who had held their runs for twenty-five years, at a merely nominal rent, should now have them for ten years more, was preposterous, after the expenditure which had taken place in those districts in order to render them available for the settlement of a large population. Then, again, honorable members could scarcely believe that the numerous conditions in the different clauses could ever be complied with. They might be in some cases, but very few persons would comply with them, except when it was clearly to their interest to do so; and in the matter of selections with deferred payments, it was left to the selector to please himself, at any rate for nine out of the ten years, whether he made any improvements or not. He had lately had an opportunity of seeing how lightly these declarations were made. Then, again, if the Bill passed, they must at once make up their minds to give up the land revenue for the next two or three years. He believed they would not realise a single sixpence from the land during that time. Was it necessary for them to do this? What was to complete their railways, and pay the heavy burdens which they now had to bear? Were they justified, under these circumstances, in giving up the easiest and most approved mode of raising a revenue? He could tell honorable members opposite, the great pastoral leaseholders of the Crown, that the public burdens were now heavy enough; and if the land revenue was stopped, they themselves must prepare to have greater burdens laid upon them, either in the way of increased assessment, or an export duty upon their produce. He had never approved of the Bill, from the first. He had attended the committee with a sort of *dilettante* indifference, and had occasionally suggested amendments, when he thought they were necessary, in the hope of correcting some little inaccuracies which might have crept into the Bill; but he denied that he had given any support to it. Then, there was another serious objection to the Bill, and that was, that it was only part of a measure which was to deal comprehensively with the Crown lands of the colony. They were told, that in the unsettled districts there were to be fifteen and twenty-one years' leases. It was wholly unnecessary that such a length of tenure should be given, because, in all probability, it would prove an effectual bar to the settlement of the country. It was absolutely unnecessary to legislate for such a lengthy period, and such a lengthy tenure might prove an objection if the popula-

tion of the country were much increased. That was a sound reason why they should not pass the Bill; but there was a still further objection, and a very vital one. It was this, that the Minister now in office as Secretary for Lands had no heart in the Bill which he would be called upon to administer; and the first law officer of the Crown had stated that he was in a perfect fog as to the legal consequences which would be entailed by the passing of it.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL denied that he had made such a statement. When he was asked, in committee, his opinion of a particular clause, before the Bill had been gone through, he did say that he was in a fog on the subject; because he could not see how that clause might be modified by subsequent amendments to other clauses. But to state that, after reading the Bill through, he was in a fog about it, was a very different thing.

Mr. DOUGLAS: Well, the Ministry did not believe in it, and only half understood the Bill. A further objection might be urged, with regard to the administration of the Bill. At present, there was almost an insuperable barrier to its proper working in the head of the Survey Office. That gentleman was a highly competent, trustworthy, and deserving officer, but he was one who had so thoroughly identified himself with the great squatting interest, that it would be almost impossible for the Bill to be properly administered, unless they had a Minister for Lands possessing greater strength than he thought the present Minister did, and one, also, who had some knowledge of the practical details of the office. He could understand a gentleman, like the honorable member for the Kennedy, administering the Bill with the present Surveyor-General; but he could not see how it could be done with the honorable member now at the head of that department; nor did he think the honorable member for Ipswich, even, with his experience of the office, could exercise a proper supervision over the Surveyor-General of the colony. He said this, because he believed that gentleman, Mr. Gregory, had inveterate prejudices which would stand in the way.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Then why did you not get rid of him when you were in office?

Mr. DOUGLAS: He (Mr. Douglas) had no idea of getting rid of him, nor did he wish for it now. It was a very difficult thing to interfere with an officer in such a position. Personally, he was highly respected—professionally, he was not deficient—he doubted if any Minister would take upon himself such a duty, except under very extraordinary circumstances. The working of the land law was a matter of details. There were minute details which, unless constantly watched and checked, would lead to a complete defeat of the objects of the measure. He had no anticipations that this Bill would last long, or that there would be any of that success

attending it which had been promised by its fervent admirers. He looked upon the Bill with considerable alarm. He believed it might affect the country in the same way as the railway measure in 1863. They were then revelling in a sort of financial intoxication, and they were now suffering from the depression which always resulted after all such excesses, and believed they required some further stimulant. This Land Bill was the stimulant fixed upon. Let them take care that this, also, did not prove an intoxication—an agrarian intoxication—which would leave them with a greater lassitude and depression than before. After all that he had said against the Bill, he would only observe, that he fancied he saw two great principles looming out of it, which might, possibly, be adopted, and, he believed, might conduce to the prosperity of the country. There was, at any rate, one great principle, and it was this,—that the country occupied might be made a free gift to those who improved it. There was another principle which, he believed, might arise out of it, and he hoped, some day, to receive the sanction of the honorable member for Rockhampton to it,—and that was the sale by auction for cash. Those were the two leading principles which governed the administration of the land laws in the country, from which that honorable member took his inspiration; and he hoped that after they had got rid of all the nostrums which had been forced upon them, under the mild and persuasive influence of that honorable member, those principles would be accepted by the country. They were found to be as applicable to the shores of the Atlantic as to those of the Pacific; as suitable to the country in the neighborhood of the Gulf of Mexico as to the land in the vicinity of the Great Lakes, on the other side of the continent; and he believed they might be made applicable as well to the Australian Alps as to the country about the Gulf of Carpentaria, stretching into the tropics, and might be the means of inducing the settlement of a large population in the vast territory of Queensland. He regretted that the Bill was not in a shape in which he thought it would pass; and as he did not believe that, as it stood, it would conduce to the prosperity of the colony, he should oppose its third reading.

Mr. PUGH said he rose for the purpose of expressing his dissent to the principles of the Bill before the House. He believed that the Bill, if passed in its present form, would prove to be one of the greatest swindles that the House had ever forced upon the country. He had no doubt that before it had been in operation three months that House would have cause to regret ever having passed it. He believed, in the first place, that the reduction in the upset price of the land was a mistake. He had also viewed with a considerable amount of suspicion the clauses and amendments of clauses which had come

from certain honorable members. He had noticed the honorable member for Warwick, who was quite capable of taking care of himself and his interests with a considerable amount of ability, and the honorable member for Rockhampton, of whom he might say ditto. He thought the honorable member for the Kennedy, more than any other member who had taken an active part in the framing of the Bill, was really desirous of making it what it professed to be—a popular and liberal measure. His own opinion was decidedly adverse to it; and he thought when the honorable member for Warwick met his constituents, he would find that they also objected to it, unless he could manage, with his persuasive eloquence, to cajole them into believing that it was a good Bill. With reference to the homestead clauses, however good they might be, and however faithfully carried out by the Ministry, he felt sure they would fail in attracting population to these shores. They had heard from the honorable Secretary for Lands that the Bill would cost £10,000 to carry it into effect. He should like to know whether, during the first or second year, he was likely to have £10,000 from the land revenue. He believed that they might consider their land revenue gone, directly this Bill came into operation. The Bill was, in fact, just throwing all the Crown lands of the colony into the hands of the very men from whom the public wished them to be kept. Some remarks were made by the honorable member for Ipswich, with reference to the seventy-seventh clause. He (Mr. Pugh) could not understand how honorable members should allow such a clause to pass without some amendment. It would allow any man to snap his fingers at his creditors, because it provided that land taken up under conditional purchase should not be sold for debts contracted before the selector entered upon it.

THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: That is to prevent dummying.

MR. PUGH: He did not see how it would have that effect. He should look forward with considerable interest to the report which was to be brought up by the Select Committee on agricultural reserves, with respect to the mode in which dummying had been carried out, and he had no doubt that some pretty revelations would be made. He thought there would be quite as many malpractices under the Bill before the House; and, as he did not think it would be possible to carry out the regulations, he hoped honorable members would pause before they allowed it to pass its third reading. He objected to the assertion that the people were looking forward with such feverish anxiety for a Land Bill, and that some such Bill must be passed before the session was over. If the honorable member for Maryborough divided the House on the third reading, he should vote with him.

MR. CLARK said he had not intended to address the House on this occasion, because, as the Bill had received so much consideration in committee, he thought that when it reached the stage of a third reading, the House would better pass it or let it alone. He must say that he was surprised to find so many honorable members opposing the third reading of the Bill, when he remembered that a great many of those who did so voted for the Bill clause by clause when it was in committee. He was surprised to find so many of those honorable members now oppose it, and say they would have none of it. He thought that certainly the honorable member for the Eastern Downs, when he told the House that he only gave his aid to the amendment of certain portions of the Bill, was perfectly consistent in saying that he would now oppose it. Still some honorable members, he thought, should have stated their reasons for opposing the Bill when they had individually supported many of the clauses of it. It was hardly consistent of them to do as they had done, and as they now proposed to do. He would not have himself addressed the House, perhaps, on the present occasion, if he had not been personally referred to; but he could tell those honorable members who had alluded to him that he was not afraid to face the responsibility of any slight endeavors of his to bring the Bill into its present shape. He was quite willing to take his share of the responsibility for the Bill being what it now was. He had sat in his place while the Bill was under consideration, and had endeavored to do his duty to his constituents in trying to make the Bill as good a measure as he could, and as he thought would be best for the country. He had not, like some other honorable members, kept away all the time the Bill was in committee, and not helped it forward in any way either by supporting it or speaking against it. He felt that some honorable members, when expressing their own opinions in opposition to the Bill, were not expressing the opinions of the country at large. They had been told that this was nobody's Bill, and, in particular, that it was not a Ministerial Bill. Now, he maintained that it was the people's Bill. It was drawn up by the Ministry in the first instance, and many new and important features had since been introduced into it by members who had not sat in a previous Parliament, but who had come fresh to the House from their several constituencies, and who were, therefore, wholly untrammelled by any proceedings of the past. Had the honorable member for Ipswich not gone to the country at the time he did, the Bill now before the House would not have been heard of. It had been said that the Bill was nobody's Bill, but he could tell those honorable members who now opposed it, that the time would soon come when they would be sorry for having

opposed it. The honorable member for the Eastern Downs, he believed, would at some future day, if he had again the honor of addressing the independent electors of the Eastern Downs from the hustings, take some credit for his share in the passing of the Bill. The honorable member for North Brisbane certainly called the Bill a gigantic swindle. Well, in the opinion of the honorable member it might be so; but he must confess that the eloquent speech of that honorable member did not impress him with the opinion that the honorable member was very well up in the land laws of the colony. Considering the length of time the honorable member had been in the House, he should be well up in the land laws—indeed, he might fairly be expected to have them all by heart, but of the practical working of them he did not seem to know anything at all. He admired the independent and patriotic way the honorable member expressed his opinions, and the way he faced those with whom he differed; but he thought the honorable member rather overstepped the mark when he said the Bill was a gigantic swindle; but he would concede to the honorable member that most of the Land Bills that had been brought forward in previous Parliaments had been gigantic swindles. The honorable member for Ipswich, Mr. Macalister, however, put a stop to that when he dissolved the Parliament and went to the country. The country felt at the last election that they had had enough of those swindles from previous Parliaments, and shewed their determination by the gentlemen they returned to the new Parliament, that they would have no more of them. He and other honorable members who came into the House on the last election, came in for the express purpose of passing a Land Bill that would not be a swindle; and the Bill now before the House, though it was not what he could wish, was the nearest approach that he could make by his slight endeavors to meet what he considered to be the wishes of the people. The honorable member for Ipswich, Mr. Macalister, made a very good speech on the present occasion, he thought, when he considered that the honorable member was fighting with the ground sliding from under his feet. But the honorable member uttered a great many fallacies in the course of his speech. Now, he could not say of him as he said of the honorable member for North Brisbane, Mr. Pugh, that he was not well up in the land laws of the colony. That honorable member, in the course of his speech, asked if the people out of doors had ever asked for this Bill? Now, the honorable member was himself at the bottom of the cry that was got up at the last election for a Land Bill; and if the honorable member had not gone to the country with the cry of a Land Bill on his lips, he (Mr. Clark) questioned very much whether many members who were now in the House would have

been there. The honorable member, in bringing forward his Leasing Areas Bill last year, expressed himself in this way, as reported in "Hansard," Vol. III., page 679, second column:—

"I can only observe that I have introduced it with the view of giving assistance to an interest which has increased, and is still increasing, and comprises two classes. The first class of persons are those who have come to this colony within the last two years, or who have been here longer, and have brought with them capital to the extent of £1,000 to £5,000. It is a well-known fact that many individuals have come here with that amount of capital, who would have gone into grazing operations combined with farming, if there had been a Bill like the one before the House in operation. As it is, they have gone into speculations, or embarked in pursuits, of which they knew nothing, and the consequence is that many of them have been ruined. As far as I can judge from the information I have received, there are persons in the neighboring colonies who are prepared to come to Queensland and take up land under the provisions of such a Bill as is now before the House, and to become graziers and cultivators of the soil at the same time; while I know that this Bill is anxiously looked for by a large number of respectable persons in this colony."

Now, he contended that the Leasing Bill that was then introduced was that which first gave people the idea that farms of from 2,560 acres, for grazing purposes, would pay; and, all through his speech on that occasion, the honorable member said he brought forward the measure to meet the wishes of that class of persons who came out to the colony with a small amount of capital, and who wished to embark it in pastoral or grazing pursuits. He always thought that measure was a great advance on all previous Land Bills; but he maintained that, when the honorable member for Ipswich had, through his own political agitation, caused the cry that went through the country at the late election, he had no right to blame the members who were sent into the House for the purpose of reforming the land laws, for endeavoring to accomplish that purpose; for it was all his own doing. All through his speech on the Leasing Areas Bill, last year, the honorable member advocated the measure on behalf of the class of men who then lived upon twenty or thirty acre farms. On the same page in "Hansard" as he had already quoted from, he said:—

"The second class of persons who are provided for by this Bill are those who take up land in the agricultural areas; because it is absolutely necessary that some further provision should be made in reference to these areas than have hitherto existed. I have had, personally, upwards of five years' experience in the practical working of the Agricultural Reserves Act, and I have no hesitation in stating that the invidious conditions with which they have been clogged have not only proved a bugbear, but have actually resulted in being obstructive to settlement."

Now, the honorable member there stated that the former legislation was a myth, as regarded its practicability for the settlement of a farming population. The previous measure could not be acted upon, and farmers who took up lands under it were ruined. The operation of the Act had to be suspended, and for many months the colony had no Land Bill at all: and why? Because, owing to the way in which the Act was mal-administered, the whole of the lands fell into the hands of the squatters. Now, but for that circumstance, the cry for a reform of the land laws would not have been got up. The land was put up for sale in small quantities; and, of course, the capitalist, finding the purchase was within his means, went in and bought: and he had it all his own way, as there was no one able to oppose him. Now, if, instead of the land being put up in small quantities, which it was within the power of the capitalist to purchase, a whole country side had been put up, the capitalist would have been unable to purchase it all, and the land would then have come to be taken up under selection; and the people wanted land not in small reserves here and there, but all over the colony. Now, with all the cry there had been about poor men's friends, meaning the small farmer's friend, and liberal land laws, and all that sort of thing, there had been very little liberality in the previous land legislation, except where the honorable member provided for deferred payments. However, the people still wanted land all over the colony, and now they would be able to get it. Now, as to the financial part of the question, the honorable member had said that financially it would be a myth. But he took leave to differ from the honorable member on that point, for he felt sure that the Bill would operate to produce a very large revenue from the lands of the colony—at any rate a much larger revenue than had ever been derived under any previous Land Bill; and, he believed, that the only way by which the disposal of the lands of the colony could be made more financially a success would be by adopting the one system of sale by auction; and by that system they would also obtain the true value of the land. Under the late Act the land could be sold at one pound an acre, payable at the rate of half-a-crown an acre yearly for eight years; but the purchaser was encumbered with restrictions that militated against his success. Now, under this Bill, the land would be sold, the payment extending over ten years, at one shilling and sixpence an acre per annum—not at sixpence an acre, as the honorable member for Ipswich had said, without exception, it would be. But the Bill distinctly provided that the respective prices of the several classes of land would be one shilling and sixpence, one shilling, and, only for the third class lands, sixpence per acre, with ten years' credit. Now, he maintained that for every 10,000 acres that

could be sold under the Leasing Areas Act, 50,000 acres would be sold under this Bill if it became law; and, upon that calculation, was not this measure, he asked, likely to be the greatest financial success? Now, so far as finance was concerned, the selector would pay his survey fees and first instalment, which latter would go into the Treasury at once, and would, of course, be so much money derived from the land. It had been denied that the measure would bring any money into the Treasury; but any honorable member who stated that, either wished to misstate the Bill or did not understand it. The honorable member for the Eastern Downs went intentionally to the very root of all the former land legislation of the colony, when he said the old land laws were quite sufficient—that they were all that was necessary, and much better than the Bill now before the House—that they gave selection to the agricultural settler and security to the pastoral tenant quite as much as this Bill did. That was exactly the point at which he was at issue with the honorable member. Neither he nor those who acted with him wanted the land simply to be sold to the poor farmer in such quantities and under such conditions that he would not be able to make a living from it; nor did they want to see immense tracts of land pass into the hands of capitalists, as they had seen, at a merely nominal rate. When the honorable member spoke as he did in comparing the present law with the Bill before the House, he either did not think what he was saying, or he had altogether mistaken the provisions of the Bill. On the hustings, the cry with the honorable member was, that those lands should no longer be left in the hands of the pastoral tenants; and, now, he said they should be left in the hands of the pastoral tenants. The honorable member also said that the Bill would not bring in sixpence to the Treasury, and talked a great deal about agrarian intoxication. All that sort of thing might sound very well, and, no doubt, did sound very well, in the House; but he could tell the honorable member that the people would not have it. They did not want agricultural intoxication; what they wanted was land. He would take the Darling Downs, for illustration—for, after all, this was really a Darling Downs measure; and the land question would always be a Darling Downs question till the Darling Downs had altogether passed from the Crown into freeholds. What did the late Ministry do in that quarter? Why this. From any squatter on the Downs who had offended them, whether as a member of Parliament or not, they took away his run. They proclaimed an agricultural reserve upon it, and encouraged people from all quarters to take up thirty or forty-acre farms and settle upon it; although the honorable member for Ipswich, Mr. Macalister, had expressed it as his conviction that those

men could not live upon those farms. Together with the honorable member for the Kennedy, and the honorable member for Rockhampton, he had been charged with intimidating one member, and talking over another, to secure the passing of the Bill; but he had done nothing of the sort; and such was not the case. The Bill was the result of the voice of the people, and of the votes of intelligent members of the House. The honorable member for Fortitude Valley, and the honorable member for South Brisbane,—though it was far from his expectation ever to see them sitting on the Government side of the House while the present Ministry held office—both those honorable members, he must say, had given very valuable suggestions while the Bill was passing through committee. He was sure those honorable members saw the good of it; and he gave them credit for acknowledging it. The only thing for which the Bill could be cavilled at was, that it came from the present Government and their supporters.

Dr. CHALLINOR said the Bill before the House occupied a most anomalous position; for, if it was not a solecism to say so, it had arrived at its third reading before it had passed either its first or second reading—for it was not the Bill that was read a second time and referred to a select committee. To have been honest with the House the Government should have withdrawn that Bill and brought in the present one; or, if they would not do that, have allowed the honorable member for Rockhampton and the honorable member for the Kennedy to bring in this Bill as their measure. He assumed that a purely pastoral country, or one that was chiefly a pastoral, could not arrive at a great degree of eminence, but must occupy a low position in the scale of nations; and, believing that the effect of the Bill before the House would be to convert the country, permanently, into a purely pastoral country, he would oppose the third reading of the Bill. It was true that he was opposed by honorable members who had this session taken their seats in the House for the first time, and who considered that they were the representatives of the people, and that the old members were not. He was one of those who held that it was necessary to enforce certain conditions in connection with the alienation of the Crown lands of the colony; and one of the first of those conditions was cultivation. He was not alone in that opinion, and he could quote an authority in support of that view for which the honorable member for Rockhampton entertained the highest respect—indeed, he did not know if the honorable member did not consider that authority the highest that could be quoted on any question of political economy. He was now referring to Adam Smith; and as the honorable member for Rockhampton, he knew, entertained such a very high respect for that authority, he would quote, for the edification of the honorable member, a short passage from the

“Wealth of Nations,” Book IV., chapter 7, part 2. It was as follows:—

“In the plenty of good land, the English colonies of North America, though no doubt very abundantly provided, are, however, inferior to those of the Spaniards and Portuguese, and not superior to some of those possessed by the French before the late war. But the political institutions of the English colonies have been more favorable to the improvement and cultivation of this land than those of the other three nations.

“First, the engrossing of uncultivated land, though it has by no means been prevented altogether, has been more restrained in the English colonies than in any other. The colony law, which imposes upon every proprietor the obligation of improving and cultivating, within a limited time, a certain proportion of his lands, and which, in case of failure, declares those neglected lands grantable to any other person; though it has not perhaps been very strictly executed, has, however, had some effect.”

Adam Smith put down that as the first reason why the English colonist had been more successful than the Spanish, the Portuguese, or the French. He then went on to say—

“Secondly, * * * * the plenty and cheapness of good land, it has already been observed, are the principal causes of the rapid prosperity of new colonies. The engrossing of land, in effect, destroys this plenty and cheapness. The engrossing of uncultivated land, besides, is the greatest obstruction to its improvement; but the labor that is employed in the improvement and cultivation of land affords the greatest and most valuable produce to the society. The produce of labor, in this case, pays not only its own wages and the profit of the stock which employs it, but the rent of the land too upon which it is employed. The labor of the English colonies, therefore, being more employed in the improvement and cultivation of land, is likely to afford a greater and more valuable produce than that of any of the other three nations, which, by the engrossing of land, is more or less diverted towards other employments.”

That was the opinion of Adam Smith, and he was not ashamed to confess that he entertained it fully. As some honorable members were not in the House when he addressed it on a previous occasion, he would, at the risk of being considered tedious by some, direct attention to what Earl Grey said in his work entitled “The Colonial Policy of Lord John Russell’s Administration.” In Vol. I., page 317, he found the following:—

“Two very important objects have been gained by thus avoiding the premature disposal of these lands; in the first place, the sacrifice of the future receipts from the land sales has been averted, and the public will thus hereafter have the benefit of a very large fund, applicable to immigration or to other objects of general utility, which would otherwise have been lost; in the second place, the still greater advantage has been obtained, of preventing the available lands of the colony from being engrossed by speculators, and thus securing to future settlers the power of obtaining land within a reasonable distance of the seats of trade and population, at a moderate price. This is, in

my opinion, by far the most important object to be gained by maintaining a comparatively high price for land. There can be no doubt that, by reducing the price as much as would be necessary to meet the views of the chief opponents of the existing system, a powerful impulse would be given to the spirit of land-jobbing,—the curse of countries of which the settlement is in progress. Speculators would soon buy up (if it were sold at a very low price) the land eligible for the occupation of settlers; and thus persons hereafter proceeding to the colony to settle would be compelled to pay for land the highest price which the greediness of the land-jobber could extort, instead of paying a moderate price for land purchased direct from the Crown, with the advantage of having the money so paid expended in the introduction of labor, in the construction of roads, or in other works of utility, and thus virtually returned to them in the increased value given to their property.

“Both the mother country and the colonies are deeply interested in preventing the improper and premature alienation of colonial lands; since it is the interest of both that every possible facility should be given to those who may be disposed to leave this country for the purpose of seeking a new home in our colonial dominions. And it is on this account that it seems to me both just and wise that the Imperial Government and Legislature should not, at too early a period, transfer to the local authorities the power of determining under what regulations the Crown lands in the colonies should be disposed of. These lands constitute a vast estate, which has been acquired, and to which all the value it possesses has been given, by the very large expense which has been incurred by the mother country in establishing, maintaining, and protecting its colonies. This estate the Crown holds as trustee for the benefit of all its subjects, not merely of the few thousands who may at this moment inhabit a particular colony, but of the whole British people, whether resident at home or in the colonies; and it is the duty of the servants of the Crown, and of Parliament, to take care that the magnificent property thus held in trust for the good of the whole empire shall be wisely and carefully administered with a view to that object, and not improvidently wasted, or sacrificed to the rapacity of a few individuals. But if the power of altering the regulations under which the Crown lands are disposed of were given too soon to every colonial legislature, nothing is more probable than that the small society of a young colony might think it for their interest to share among them, to the exclusion of the other inhabitants of the empire, the lands which properly belong to all; and it is still more probable that, in such a colony, a few rapacious speculators might have sufficient influence to carry changes, which would conduce to their personal gain, under the plausible but delusive pretence of promoting the interest of their fellow-colonists.”

Earl Grey, it appeared, was not alone in that opinion, for at page 312 of the same volume, he said:—

“An opinion was also expressed by the committee, that the upset price of land, which was then twelve shillings an acre, might be raised with advantage.”

And he then went on to say:—

“Having been myself one of the committee from which this recommendation proceeded, I can vouch for the great care with which the subject was investigated by its members, amongst whom were Lord Derby, Mr. Gladstone, Sir William Molesworth, Sir George Grey, Mr. Vernon Smith, and Sir Henry Wood, who had all been accustomed to take great interest in colonial questions. The latter was the chairman of the former committee on the disposal of colonial lands (1836). By the committee thus constituted, the recommendation I have mentioned was agreed to, with little or no difference of opinion; and, in accordance with it, the Land Sales Act was afterwards passed by Parliament without any opposition, on the recommendation of Lord Derby, who had then become Secretary of State for the Colonies in succession to yourself.”

Honorable members would thus see that there were very high authorities for their not being in too great a haste in alienating their lands, and that at such a price that the most available and the most valuable would be appropriated by a few individuals, while the *bona fide* settlement of the country would be delayed thereby to a considerable extent. Those were the views he had always entertained, and had always advocated in that House, as the records of the House would be able to prove. He felt convinced that the Bill, by whatever name it might be designated, would be most ruinous to the colony at large. He saw there were many provisions in it to enable the transfer of land to be made at an earlier date than ten years; and he was of opinion himself that that was to enable persons, trafficking in lands, at a more early date, to dispose of them to their own advantage, but not to the advantage of the colony at large. It was somewhat like taking up Crown lands under the Orders in Council. The occupiers of the lands would hold them at a small outlay till they saw there was a convenient opportunity of disposing of them at a profit. They would then pay up the balance of money and the so-called charge for improvements, and dispose of them to good advantage. Under the Orders in Council, persons tendered for country, knowing that as soon as they put their finger on it in that way, though they paid no rent for it, no one else could touch it; and as soon as they could find a purchaser for it, they knew how to get the commissioner to report upon it, and then sell it. Now, that would be, practically, to a great extent, the working of the Bill before the House. The honorable member for Warwick had complained of the honorable member for Ipswich, Mr. Macalister, speaking of the land being sold or leased at sixpence an acre; but he did not see that the honorable member had much ground to make objection to such a view of the case; because, although some portions were to be leased at one shilling and sixpence an acre, and other portions at a shilling an acre, there was to be a third

class which could be leased at sixpence an acre. Now, what were the relations these rates bore to each other? When honorable members considered that question, they would see that the honorable member for Ipswich, Mr. Macalister, was justified in making the remarks complained of by the honorable member for Warwick; because the relation which the land at sixpence an acre bore to the land at one shilling and sixpence an acre was as seventeen to one; and the relation which the land at one shilling an acre bore to that at sixpence an acre was as four to one—for the quantity that could be taken up at sixpence an acre was 7,680 acres, or 17 square miles, while the quantity that could be taken up at one shilling and sixpence an acre was only 640 acres, or one square mile, and the quantity that could be taken up at a shilling an acre was 2,560 acres, or four square miles. But even that was not the worst of it; because the Bill had been so arranged that one person could take up the maximum of each kind, making a total of 10,880 acres, at a comparatively small outlay—between £3,000 and £4,000, with ten years to pay it in. Now, that would make a very nice family estate, and there were plenty of people who would like to invest their money in the purchase of such a property. He was of opinion that unless there were very many persons in the colony willing to take up homestead areas, those who might come to the colony by-and-bye would have to go a great way into the interior before they could get any lands to take up in that way, and the colony would ultimately fall into the position in which the Natalians found themselves, when all the best lands, agricultural and pastoral, had passed out of the hands of the Crown. The colony, in fact, would come to a standstill; because those who wished to settle on the land would have to do one of two things—either pay an enormous price to those who had purchased up the lands, for such lands as they might wish to possess, or go and take up lands at a very long distance from towns; and it would then become necessary to repeal this Bill, or to bring forward a Bill, such as the Natalians had to bring forward, to make a compulsory repurchase of the lands, that the Government might re-sell them for agricultural purposes. The Queen might hesitate to assent to the Bill when it was sent home, but that was only a stronger reason why the House should now hesitate in passing a Bill that might bring about such a state of things. There was no reason, however, he thought, why the Queen should hesitate to assent to the Bill for the repurchase of lands; because every Bill for resuming lands in England for railway purposes was exactly of the same character, and proceeded upon the principle that private interest must give way to public interest. He thought there were a great many things in the Bill

which shewed, that if it was a people's Bill, it was one for throwing sprats to the people, in order that some other parties might be able to get all the herrings. Reference had been made to the extent to which the Bill would have the effect of enriching the Treasury. Well, it might, to some extent, do so, but certainly not to the extent the honorable member for Warwick seemed to think it would; because, as honorable members were told, there was a large number of land orders out at the present time, and, as honorable members knew very well, no one would pay money who had land orders to pay the rent with. That, it might be said, would only apply to the first year, but those who said so must not suppose that all the land orders would disappear in the first year, or the second either; and those land orders could not be considered as revenue, though they might be so accounted for in the statement of public accounts. It had been said, in favor of the Bill before the House, that it was something new in the land legislation of the Australian colonies; and some honorable members would take credit to the colony for having introduced such a change—that, while this was the youngest colony, it had been the first to bring about a revolution of the land laws. But if the principles of the Bill were new in the Australian colonies, they were not new in other British colonies. As he had already stated, in Natal, the Legislature had adopted exactly the same legislation as it was proposed by this Bill to adopt, and the Natalians had seen cause to repent of their doings. The honorable member for Rockhampton spoke about the advantages of the Bill, and stated that one of them was, that the inducements to settlement under the Bill were so great, that it would cause, not only an influx of immigrants from the mother country, but would also cause colonists from New South Wales and Victoria to come here. Well, he would admit that the Bill might do so, and there might be nothing morally wrong in that; but it struck him very forcibly that the game was one that two could play at; and, if New South Wales and Victoria found that the Bill tended to divest them of their population, it was just possible that they might go in for something stronger than this Bill, and so not only get back the people who had left, but induce many of the present inhabitants of Queensland to leave the colony. The system would, therefore, be injurious to their neighbors in the first place, and, subsequently, injurious to themselves. That was altogether a downward policy: it was like working on an incline with sand under their feet, or it might be marbles, and they would go down all the quicker. He did not know it was necessary for him to enlarge on the subject, but he was confident that the views he entertained were those that were entertained by some of the soundest thinkers on the subject;

and, therefore, he did not think that he should change his opinions. He had all along opposed the Bill, which was something that was brought up from a select committee. He opposed the Government measure, and he had all along opposed this measure, which was not the Government measure. It was, no doubt, founded upon it; but it was a hybrid measure. It was not, perhaps, the pure merino; but if not, there might be about seven-eighths of the blood in it; and it would soon be found that it would breed back and become pure stock. However, he would do his best to prevent the passing of the Bill into law.

Mr. FITZSIMMONS remarked that the honorable member for Ipswich, Dr. Challinor, had quoted from very valuable works to make it appear that the price of land should be kept at a very high figure; but if that were done, the land would never be taken up, or the colony, in any reasonable degree, settled. Even the capitalist was kept off the land, by the high prices that now existed. The object for which the Bill was introduced, he believed, was to secure the settlement of a large and industrious population on the lands of the colony; by cutting up the land into small farms, and offering them at a price which would place them within the reach of the small capitalist. Now, if the land was not kept at a cheap price, it would be impossible to expect that people would purchase it and settle upon it. He was in Sydney last week, and, while living at the clubs, had had the opportunity of hearing the opinions of many of the merchants there, with respect to the settlement of the land question in this colony; and he could assure honorable members that the passing of this Bill was looked forward to by the merchants of Sydney with great interest. The people there wanted to purchase land in Queensland; and he could assure the House, that the very vessel by which he returned from Sydney brought a large sum of money to be invested in this colony, in the purchase of land, and its investment was only delayed for the passing of this Bill. The people who brought up the money were prepared to leave Sydney and settle in this colony. One gentleman who came up in the vessel, and who was well known in Brisbane and on the Darling Downs, had brought up large sums of money with him to purchase lands for people in New South Wales, who were anxious to come and settle as small farmers in this colony. The honorable member for Ipswich, Mr. Macalister, had said a great deal in favor of a Land Bill, but now he turned round and spoke against the Bill before the House, and said it was not required at the present moment—and that, after he had himself prepared a land measure for the consideration of the House. The honorable member, ever since he (Mr. Fitzsimmons) had had a seat in the House, had been promising a comprehensive Land Bill. No doubt it would not be for

the interest of some honorable members that a Land Bill should be passed during that session. He could quite understand the reason why some members of the Opposition were unwilling to allow the Land Bill to pass. As long as the question remained unsettled, some persons could make £1,000 a year political capital out of it. The honorable member for Eastern Downs had condemned the Bill, to a certain extent; but, in opposing the Bill at this stage, he seemed not to recollect that he had introduced what might be called the leading feature of the Bill—that which established the different upset prices, and dealt with the mode of payment. He thought that the sooner the question was settled the better; political capital had been made out of it for too long a time. He hoped that honorable members would not refuse to pass the Bill that night. He should support the motion.

Mr. FITZGERALD: Sir—I must confess that I have been in no small degree puzzled this afternoon at hearing the extraordinary attacks made upon this Bill from honorable members on both sides of the House—or, rather, from the same side of the House, for the honorable member for Rockhampton ought properly to take his seat on the Opposition benches; and I am very much puzzled to ascertain what principle of interpretation those honorable members apply to the measure in question. On one side, we hear that it has been introduced altogether for the advantage of a few large squatters, who are still to be allowed to retain possession of the land; and the honorable member for East Moreton, Mr. Francis, I am sure looks upon it as the very worst measure possible. On the other hand, those gentlemen who are engaged in squatting pursuits denounce the Bill and declare it will be ruinous to them—that it strikes at the very root of the system they have been trying to establish. One honorable member stated that so long as he applied for a renewal of his lease, so long was he entitled to have it; and that, I believe, is the general opinion. Again, sir, I was not a little surprised at the exhibition made by the honorable member for Ipswich, Mr. Macalister; and I certainly cannot compliment that honorable member upon the success of his endeavors upon this occasion. He went out of office, although he had a majority of two, on the pretence that his party was not strong enough to carry a liberal land measure through the House—he who advocated the passing of a liberal Land Bill as a necessity of the country. The honorable member who has abstained throughout from all interference with the Bill before the House, now comes forward at the eleventh hour and attempts to damage it. He comes forward, not as one who possesses a real interest in the welfare of the country, but as the leader of a factious opposition; for I can scarcely designate his conduct by any other term, more especially when I recollect that,

having been consulted on several points during the progress of this Bill, he gave his approval to two of its leading principles—the classification of the lands and the reduction in price. Those honorable members who did take an interest in the Bill demurred to his opinions, and would have been glad if he had taken a more active part in their deliberations; and I venture to say that, if the honorable member had met them in a fair and candid spirit, they would have been glad to have adopted all his suggestions, so far as they were not opposed to the real design and intention of the Bill, which is to prevent the lands of the colony from being locked up, or its occupation trammelled, with conditions impossible to fulfil. And, sir, in view of the anxiety evinced by all classes outside this House for some settlement of the land question, I think it comes with a very bad grace from the honorable member for Ipswich, to ask where is the pressure for the passing of this Bill. From north to south, throughout the length and breadth of the colony, the greatest anxiety has been expressed by all classes that some measure of this sort should be passed this session, in order that an industrious population may be settled on the land, and the country be profitably occupied. For, however well the price of two shillings and sixpence per acre for eight years might suit the squatter on the Darling Downs, it is absolutely prohibitory to persons taking up land in the northern parts of the colony. There, the land is not worth the upset price, and if we wish to encourage the settlement of men who will make freeholds for themselves, we must allow them to take possession upon easy terms of land which is of no use except for grazing purposes. I scarcely like to travel over the various subjects which were debated when this question was before the House on a former occasion; but I think it would not be out of place, especially in defence of the measure, to refer to previous legislation on the subject of the Crown lands, and to shew the position we were in when we undertook to reconstruct this Bill. Going back twenty years, to the celebrated Orders in Council of the 9th March, 1847, what do we find? It will be necessary for honorable members to recollect that those were not Orders of the Executive Council—the local Council of New South Wales—but Orders passed by Her Majesty's Council, which were practically the laws of this colony up to the time of Separation. Under those Orders in Council, very liberal provisions were made, not only for the squatters in the unsettled districts, but for the freeholders in the settled districts, and they were shortly these:—In the unsettled districts, leases were granted for fourteen years, with the right to the holder of purchasing the whole or any portion of his run during the currency or at the end of his lease; so far the lease was indefeasible. But at the end of fourteen years it was com-

petent for the Government to put up any part or the whole of the run so leased for sale, in case the lessee did not choose to buy it. Now, there we have a clear view of what the English lawgivers meant. They meant to give persons holding runs in the unsettled districts good leases for fourteen years at low rates, and at the same time to give them the power to purchase the fee-simple, so as to keep their stock on freehold land. And they gave them no right to a renewal of the leases unless there were no other persons to bid for the land. If there were no bidders and it was not sold, then the leases could be renewed; but if one equal fourth of the whole of a leased run was sold, the remainder could not be leased, and would be open for sale. Now, that is a distinct enunciation of the policy which it was intended to carry out, and entirely opposed to the principle of renewals from year to year, which has been advocated by some honorable members, the honorable member for Maryborough among others. Well, that was the provision made for the unsettled districts. In the intermediate districts it was provided that leases should be issued for eight years at higher rates, with the proviso that, at the end of each year, it should be competent for the Government to sell the whole or any part of a run, by auction, at the upset price of one pound an acre. That was another illustration that the original tenures never intended that the leases should be renewed from year to year, and from one period to another, in the hands of the original holders. I maintain, sir, that the lease of the lands at a low rate in the unsettled districts, for fourteen years, was simply a patent to occupy. The holders had the chance of making their pile in that time, and then they were to give way to the public. Then, under these Orders in Council, in the settled districts, leases were only granted from year to year, and I think at a very reasonable rate—at first I think it was ten shillings, and was subsequently altered to one pound, per square mile, with the proviso that at any time during the twelve months the land might be sold on the holder receiving sixty days' notice. And, moreover, commonage rights were reserved to freeholders within these settled districts. It was competent for the holders of land in fee-simple to claim three times the amount of their land for grazing purposes, paying a very small rate—something like ten shillings per square mile, or about one-fifth of a penny per acre. This, sir, was the legislation in force in 1860, when the colony obtained free institutions. Unfortunately for the colony, the power fell into the hands of one class, and the intent and purpose of these Orders in Council, which did not contemplate any perpetuity of tenure, was not carried out. There were three different Acts passed in 1860. Under one of them, the Crown Lands Alienation Act, all the occupied Crown lands

in the settled districts were leased for periods of five years, and provision was made at the same time for leasing other lands—unoccupied lands—for much longer periods. Provision was also made, in a very niggardly spirit, for freeholders, by making agricultural reserves, and giving them also the right of pasture at sixpence an acre. Instead of adopting the course pursued in New South Wales, where they hold the right of grazing at something like one-fifth of a penny an acre, they made these people pay at the rate of sixpence an acre, certainly with the right to purchase such leased lands, but with conditions of fencing, and other restrictions, which gave them no chance at all. Well, then, under the Unoccupied Crown Lands Occupation Act of 1860, leases for fourteen years were granted in the unsettled districts—for four years at £12 10s. per square mile, five years at £25 to £50 per block, and five years at £30 to £70, which were the rates retained in the Pastoral Leases Act of 1860. Under the Pastoral Leases Act of 1862, stocking was required; and under the Pastoral Leases Act of 1863, the same rights were reserved as were maintained in the Act of 1860. Well, sir, had these rates been adhered to, I believe no person could have objected to that Act; but we find that, in 1864, an entire alteration took place, and, under pretence of an equal assessment, it was provided in the Act of that year that if a person does not pay £5 per block for the re-assessment of his run, which he is pretty certain not to do, seeing that he would incur a very large penalty by it, he is to be let off on condition that he pays £2 10s. extra. Now, sir, I maintain that was the first deviation from the great principle of which the people of Queensland had to complain—the first concession made to the squatters. Then, we find that the occupation of the country is intended to be restricted altogether to those who had the original right of run over the country, and everything in the shape of occupation by smaller squatters, or persons who might turn their squattages into freeholds, and get a living by grazing, is discouraged. We all know what great things the honorable member for Ipswich calculated upon from the Pastoral Leases Act of 1866, and he must certainly have been much disappointed at its results; and in blaming us for introducing certain restrictions into the Bill before the House, that honorable member must certainly have forgotten that they were a legacy we received from him.

Mr. MACALISTER: I did not complain of the restrictions in the Bill.

Mr. FITZGERALD: Well, the honorable member spoke of them in terms which certainly did not imply any unqualified admiration of them; and yet these restrictions and conditions, which we were unwilling to put into the Bill, are far less onerous than those which the honorable member himself put into his Bill of 1866, which has been found to be

a failure. In reviewing the previous legislation on the lands of this colony, and seeing how the provisions of New South Wales had been annihilated by the class who were dominant in the early days of Queensland, and seeing that the Act of 1866 was a failure on account of the high price put upon the land, and the conditions attached to its occupation, we were induced to draft a few alterations, which are embodied in the Bill before the House. In defence of this Bill, which we are now debating, I would say, that my own impression is—it is not a perfect measure by any means, or even such a measure as I would wish to see; but, sir, it is a step far in advance of any previous legislation on the land question. In my belief—and I speak from actual experience of the working of Land Bills—it is a workable Bill; and I fully believe that its operation will bring about the rapid occupation of the settled districts, and that, by its means, a large amount will be added to our revenue. The honorable member for Ipswich has expressed his opinion that all our anticipations of revenue from this source will prove a myth; but I think experience will shew that he has made a mistake, and not the framers of this Bill. For while carefully preserving existing rights, and not touching upon rents derived from pastoral resources, we propose that one-half of the runs shall be thrown open for selection and we can calculate upon a large amount of money to be paid in instalments for land taken up under it. I know of many cases where people are anxiously waiting to take possession of land under this Bill; and I am quite sure that if I, as one member, can cite so many instances, every honorable member must have friends who have the same expectations, and that a large number of names could be collected, even within the limits of this House. It must be recollected, too, that the highest rent derived from the present lease of lands, under the Pastoral Leases Act of 1863, is only equivalent to the price of sixpence an acre invested at six per cent.—I mean to say, if we were to sell all the lands at present under lease at sixpence an acre, and invest it at six per cent., it would just bring in the money we now get from the lands in the unsettled districts occupied for pastoral purposes. We shall get as much under this Bill from the second-class pastoral lands, as we should get now for the interest of the money for the next seven years. Then, again, the auction clauses at the end of this Bill appear to have been altogether overlooked. I believe they are the real revenue producing clauses of the Bill. If we get as much money from the settlement clauses as will pay the working expenses of the Bill, and, perhaps, a little more, I think we ought to be satisfied; but the real revenue producing clauses are the auction clauses. And although I heard some honorable members making a curious sort of noise—it certainly did not convey approval of what the honor-

able member for Clermont said about money being sent up for investment, I believe that is the very thing we want—we want capital. We want money to be brought into the colony to relieve our artisans and others from the heavy burdens in the shape of taxation which are weighing them down—the consequence of previous thoughtless legislation. Before, when it was proposed to carry out this measure, there were three points which were considered necessary. The first was, to give some reasonable security to the squatters, who have vested interests in the settled and unsettled districts. Now, sir, looking to the legislation, for which the honorable member for Ipswich is himself partly answerable—to the acts of '63 and '64, and viewing the fact that these squatters had interests which we could not ignore, we thought the best way was to make a compromise, by giving them half their runs at double the rent, and to throw the rest open for selection. They will not have the right of impounding, and the free selectors will be allowed to graze over it. I believe that feature in the Bill has been satisfactorily accomplished. It is only necessary to point to the different opinions entertained by members, to shew that the Bill proposes to carry out a medium course. Then, the next point was, to allow the settlement of the middle class of farmers, without putting any obstruction in their way, to make some provision under which these persons could occupy the land, without stripping them of the means they possessed to utilise it. In fact, we wanted to put them in the position of small squatters, to allow them to have cattle and sheep to increase, and to assist them in paying off the balance of their purchase money, instead of ruining themselves by following agricultural pursuits only, which have proved ruinous in every case. I affirm that there is not a single community, or section of the community, in this colony, who have depended solely upon agriculture, who have prospered. I admit that in the vicinity of the railway, some few persons who have attempted to scratch up the earth on the Downs have managed to eke out a living; but I maintain that it has been the large railway expenditure which has chiefly enabled them to keep their heads above water, in the face of difficulties enough to break the heart of the stoutest farmer. I believe, sir, that under this Act a large immigration will take place from the neighboring colonies, and we ought to be proud to welcome such immigrants among us; for the new hands from the mother country are not always the best to send without experience into a wild and new country. Another great advantage which will be gained by the passing of this Act will be the breaking up of that fictitious price which has been so long held over the lands of Queensland. It is really time to act like sensible men, and not to put the same upset price upon barren ironbark ridges that

we do upon good agricultural land; that is an absurdity which I hope will never again be recognised in this colony. We have heard it stated, that in all probability the expense of working this measure will be very great—that the money derived from the leasing clauses will be absorbed by the expense of putting them into execution. Now, sir, this is not my opinion. I sincerely and honestly state my conviction, that the proposed land boards ought not to cost the country more than £1,000 a year each. Say, a Chief Commissioner, at a salary of £400, with another £100 for forage and travelling expenses; £100 for other expenses connected with the board—there would then be £400 left for unforeseen expenditure. I think the boards would not cost more than that sum; for it must be recollected that the principal expense of the survey is to be borne by the purchaser. It will, perhaps, be necessary to appoint eight boards, in different parts of the colony, and I think the expense need not exceed £8,000 a year; which, if this Bill be properly administered, will be a mere fraction of the amount which will be obtained by the settlement clauses. But, under the auction clauses, the Government will have power to put up any quantity of land they please. I am myself very much in favor of the auction system, and I view with considerable distrust that part of the Bill which provides for deferred payments. I was not the advocate of that principle in the Bill. I certainly proposed, in the first place, that there should be deferred payments for persons selecting land; but, concurrently with that, I made a proposition that would have neutralized it—that of leasing lands to persons with the right of purchase at the low rate of twopence, fourpence, and sixpence per acre, but not taking anything from them in the shape of instalments, but asking rent from them, and a high rent, because of the right to purchase. I believe that would have been a less dangerous holding than one which allowed payment by instalments; because in this way people do acquire a certain right over the land, and it may be found difficult to make them pay the seventh or eighth instalment, especially if they are careful to register their votes every year. But by paying for the land in the form of rental, they would be in the same position as the squatters alongside them, and if they did not pay they could easily be turned out. I believe that would have been the better plan, but I accepted the compromise of the honorable member for Eastern Downs, because I did not wish to check the progress of the measure in its general sense. However, it is not yet too late. This Bill has to undergo the consideration of more dispassionate judges, and they may think fit to make the alteration. I think, sir, the measure is deserving of consideration. The tone adopted in reference to it by the greater portion of the press of this colony is favorable to it. The Ipswich papers,

the *Darling Downs Gazette*, and the northern papers, are in favor of it. The *Courier*, also, has spoken well of it, and also the *Sydney Morning Herald*, which is no mean authority on the subject. I can also instance the opinions which the honorable member for Clermont heard expressed in Sydney, by gentlemen who are competent to judge of its merits, to the effect that the terms it offers to the public are very fair. Nor does it deserve the accusations made against it by the honorable member for Ipswich, as I think I have succeeded in shewing. I hope, sir, this Bill will pass. If it does not, we shall have to retire to our northern constituencies with but a sorrowful account to give of our proceedings in the south, and they will be very much disappointed to find all progress stayed for another twelve months, or perhaps more. It is very disheartening indeed to travel through the northern districts, and to see millions of acres lying idle, which might be taken up and occupied, but for the high price put upon them. One of the great defects of this measure, I think, is, that the settled districts are too limited in extent. I think they should embrace a much wider area; but, for the sake of getting in the thin end of the wedge, I have been glad to take what has been offered. I state my conviction, however, that before twelve months have expired, there will be a clamor throughout the colony for an addition to the settled districts, and I think the appeal will be one which this House will not reject. At the same time, as this Bill is, to a certain extent, an experiment, it is, perhaps, as well to confine it at the outset to a limited area, in order to prevent the mistakes which might otherwise be made. I shall not, sir, reply to the attacks made by several honorable members, and especially by the honorable member for Maryborough, as I look upon them more in the light of special pleading to support their own case than the interests of their constituents. For if that honorable member, in talking of his constituents, means the majority of voters in his district, I do not think he represents them; but, if he means a few squatters, resident in that district, then I believe he does represent them, and represents himself especially, otherwise he would not have advanced the arguments he has used.

Mr. ARCHER: Sir—There has been a great deal said this evening of which I shall not take particular notice, because a great portion of it has been nothing more nor less than personal attacks upon those honorable members who have supported this Bill during its passage through the House. I am aware that the honorable member for Maryborough alluded to me personally in this debate; but I am not at all inclined to defend myself from the attacks of that honorable member. I can leave that to my friends, and I will only say that, in his late addresses to this House, he has appeared more as an Ishmaelite than any honorable member I have seen—his

hand is against every man. It does not signify whom he finds fault with, so long as he finds fault with somebody. I am, therefore, not at all surprised that he should have attacked me in this way; and I will only observe, that if I wished to retort in the same way, I could say something which would reflect much more upon that honorable member than he has said of me. But I am not going to recriminate, and I shall pass over his remarks with this slight notice, and deal with the Bill before the House and the objections which have been made to it. Several honorable members have expressed some remarkable opinions. The honorable member for Eastern Downs, in his address to the House this evening, stated that he had only paid a sort of *dilettante* attention to this Bill. Sir, I was surprised to hear that remark, for I doubt whether this is the kind of measure which any honorable member who has the honor of a seat in this House, and the confidence of his constituents, should treat in this way; and for an honorable member, who has taken a full share in the consideration of the Bill to come down here and speak of it in such terms, is almost an insult to the House, who have listened to him patiently and often. The honorable member said that if this Bill had been confined to the northern districts of the colony, he would have had no objection to it, because, he thought, the northern squatters ought to have a great deal of attention. But he considered it objectionable, because it included the south as well as the north. Now, sir, however long the Darling Downs has been occupied, and however much it may have been improved, the present possessors of that country are not the original holders. They bought their stations with all the improvements upon them, and they stated their willingness to come under the Bill, as it was first introduced into the House by the Ministry. It was the honorable member for Eastern Downs and others who contended that the Bill should be made general; and I think it is rather too bad now to complain that the Bill serves out the same justice to the south as it does to the north. I think the honorable member also stated that the Bill would be calculated to create a mania for land speculation which would finally result in another monetary depression. But there is this difference between those who spent money upon railways and persons who will take up land under this Bill, that the latter will get some return for their money, and will not ask for any assistance to pay the interest upon it. The honorable member should also recollect that the country is now paying some £80,000 or £90,000 beyond the money which the railways are producing. We hope that under this Bill persons who come out here will increase and not diminish their capital. I am not afraid that there will be any such relapse as has occurred from the inflation of 1864 and 1865. That was caused by the introduction of foreign capital, upon which

we were not prepared to pay the interest; but we anticipate a very different result from the investment of money in land under the operation of this Bill. For my own part, I can see many defects in it; I could myself, I think, have easily concocted a better measure. But it is admitted that in every representative House people must make compromises, and this Bill is decidedly a compromise. I stated, when I took my seat in this House, the first evening the Land Bill was introduced, that I came down with a pledge to my constituents to try and cheapen the land; to try and ease the burdens under which the people were laboring; as well as to try and give some security to existing interests. And, therefore, all the aspersions which have been cast upon me, and the charges that I have been actuated by selfish and interested motives, I throw aside without the slightest feeling. As I have stated, this measure is not a perfect one, but, I believe, it is the best which has been introduced in any of the Australian colonies. The honorable member for Ipswich, Dr. Challinor, has read us some very excellent extracts from two works on political economy, one of them being from the writings of Adam Smith, and no one can have a higher respect than I have for the author of that work. I believe he is the greatest authority on political economy, and I am happy to say that his advice has lately been followed in the old country with great advantage. I therefore shall not shirk the question which the honorable member has brought before us this evening, as to the choice of the lands; and I can simply say this, that land varies greatly in different parts of the world. In some countries, if I were asked what was the most profitable use to put the land to, I should undoubtedly say cultivation; but I should not say so in every case. I could point out many places which are utterly unfit for tillage; and the honorable member must know that Adam Smith would never, for instance, recommend cultivation in the Great Desert of Sahara. But we recognize, as an axiom, that every man should exert himself, in his own way, to get interest for the capital he employs, and that no one has a right to interfere with him, whether he use the land for cultivation, or grazing, or any other purpose which he may find to be the most profitable. Now, Adam Smith lays it down as a rule, that cultivation is the most profitable pursuit in the United States of America, and he is right there. And on some of our rich lands on our coasts and rivers, no doubt it will pay better than any other industry. But neither Adam Smith nor any other man would attempt to deny that different countries are suitable for different employments, and that the inhabitants are the best judges of the pursuits which will pay them best. I think it would be quite as absurd to lay down a rule that every man should cultivate, as that no man should cultivate. Every person who wishes to try

his skill in raising tropical products should have the greatest encouragement held out to him; but I deny that it is the duty of any legislative assembly to dictate to any person the way in which he is to expend either his money, his skill, or his labor. Sir, although I have been greatly disappointed at what has fallen from several honorable members, I have been especially disappointed in the speech of the honorable member for Ipswich, Mr. Macalister. I had always supposed that the duty of a leader of the Opposition was to remain in the House; to gather his followers around him; to watch the action of the Ministry, in order to see that no measures were introduced which might be disadvantageous to the community; and to exert all his talent to prevent injury to the country, and to further its prosperity. I may be rather Quixotic in believing that to be the duty of a leader of the Opposition. No doubt, it is much more pleasant to come down to the House occasionally, and deliver a speech for the newspapers, than to attend to the tedious work of the committee; but I do not think that, because that work is tedious, the leader of the Opposition has a right to neglect it; or, having neglected it, as I charge the honorable member with doing, and having absented himself on several occasions while the subject has been under discussion, to come down to the House, and, without having made himself acquainted with the contents of the Bill, to taunt those honorable members who have given their whole time and attention to it. I do not think I say too much when I say that the honorable member for Ipswich, Mr. Macalister, has been less in the House during the progress of the Bill than any other member of the House. Sir, when I heard that honorable member get up this evening to find fault with nearly all the provisions of this Bill—when I heard him predict the ruin of the country, and all sorts of evils, as the consequence of passing this measure—I could not help thinking, while he fulfilled his easy task of making a speech, of the meaning of the American term “bunkum.” I call it bunkum, sir, for the honorable member to come down once or twice to this House to make a speech, and to leave the Opposition benches without a leader, while other honorable members are taking the trouble to watch the Bill from stage to stage, and are lending all their efforts to produce the most perfect Bill in their power. But for the attention which had been given to it by the honorable member for South Brisbane, the honorable member for Fortitude Valley, and one or two others, the Bill would have passed through the House without any of that correction which it is the duty of a strong Opposition to give to every measure. The honorable member for Ipswich harped again and again on the fact that lands were now to be offered at sixpence an acre for ten years. This I consider to be one of the greatest boons offered by the Bill. We have

been trying to govern ourselves for the last eight years. We have an enormous territory, so large that the Secretary for Lands can hardly calculate the number of acres it contains, and a population which is still under 100,000, probably not more than 93,000, souls. Now, sir, I would ask if this is creditable to the country; and if not, what is the reason that Queensland, with all the advantages she can offer, has not attracted a larger population to her shores? And yet for these few persons she has contracted the enormous debt under which we now labor. But the small population now in the colony has not been attracted, a great portion of it, by the advantages we have had to offer—we have paid their passages, and they are here because they were picked up in the streets, and sent here merely to fill ships. Had we held out the advantages we now offer to persons in the old country, not such immigrants as have been sent out to us, but industrious men who want to better their position, we might have largely increased our population. Had such a Land Bill as this, or perhaps a better one, been passed, instead of having a population of some 90,000, we should in all probability have some 200,000 or 300,000 persons in the colony. We should then have been better able to bear the taxation which now presses so heavily upon us. We should not have had the *ad valorem* and stamp duties, which our merchants and men of business find so oppressive; for by dividing the taxation among a large number of people, it would have been easily borne. It is with these views that we have attempted to introduce this measure; and I contend that in offering the land at sixpence an acre for ten years; one shilling an acre for ten years; one shilling and sixpence an acre for ten years, we are holding out inducements to persons to come out to the colony who are able and willing to work when they come; men who will settle among us, and add to the prosperity of the colony—a very different class from those who come out by the Black Ball line. Another class of people has been spoken of in the course of the present discussion as likely to come here if the Bill now before the House for a third reading should be passed, and that is the class of people in Victoria and New South Wales who are looking for inducements for the investment of their capital. The honorable member for Ipswich, Dr. Challinor, seems to think that though it might not be immoral to induce people to come from the other colonies, yet there would be something not quite right about it; but I think the honorable member has no need to trouble his conscience about that. If the other colonies do not pass liberal land Bills, that is no reason why this colony should not, and thereby increase its wealth and population. Every colony is at perfect liberty to pass such laws as seem best for itself, and without considering the effects they might have upon other colonies. But I hope the other

colonies will also see the necessity for amending their land laws, and passing more liberal measures than those at present in existence; for I do not think that one colony can pass laws of a beneficial nature to itself without the benefits being felt by the other colonies also. The honorable member for Ipswich, Mr. Macalister, asked another question, and it was this: Have the people out of doors asked for this Bill? Now, I have not resided much in the southern portion of the colony, and, therefore, I will not undertake to answer the question; but as I have taken a considerable deal to do with the land question, and have taken so much to do with the Bill before the House, that I have been talked of as partly the author of it, I can say this, that my constituents have sent me to this House for the purpose of assisting to pass a liberal Land Bill. I did not come into the House under any false colors; and honorable members will find, from my published address to my constituency of Rockhampton, that my chief purpose in coming to the House was to cheapen the lands, and to induce people to settle on them. Is there, I would ask, a country in the world so dreary as Australia is at the present time? I maintain there is not, for anyone can ride for miles and miles over the settled portions even of the interior, and not see so much as a bark hut during the journey. Now, is that a state of things that should be allowed to continue? or are we to pass a measure that will induce people to come here and settle and improve the lands, and make a living on them? I hope, before many years have passed away, to see that one of the effects of this Bill will be the settlement of so large a population on the lands of the colony that the promoters and supporters of it will be proud of the work they have done. As to the financial effects of the Bill, I am not at all afraid. If the Bill had commenced, as some honorable members desired, and proposed it should, by lowering the rents of the runs in the settled districts, there might have been some grounds to doubt the financial prospects of it; but considering that there is to be no diminution of the rents, and considering that the rents that are to be paid for the one-half of those runs that are to be cut up will be greater than the amount that has been paid for the whole, I have not the slightest doubt that the income from runs will be immensely increased, and that the Government will be left with large tracts of land to sell wherever they may think fit. I am, therefore, willing to abide by the Bill with all its faults. I never claimed for it that it was a perfect Bill, or that it might not have been improved, if the honorable member who has found so much fault with it had assisted the House with his advice; but, considering the difficulties the Bill has had

to contend with, the long-standing and loud call for cheap land that has got into the heads of the people, and the antagonism that has arisen between the squatting and other classes of the community, it is, I think, as good a Bill as it is in the power of the House, at the present time, to bring in and pass. I have heard something said about the unholy alliances that have been formed in the House between squatting members and town members. For my own part, I am proud that I am able to work with town members. I am not one of those who consider that I should work only with the class to which I belong. I would accept of a good thing from any one, no matter whom; and on the other hand, I would willingly support any one with whom I felt I could agree, whether he was a representative of a town or of a country constituency—whether he was a farmer, a squatter, a grazier, or a tradesman. The question to be considered is, are we promoting a measure that will be for the good of the country? That is the question that has to be asked, and not who are the people that supported the measures. I have, therefore, to thank those honorable members who have given me their support in endeavoring to pass some of my own views through the House, and having them embodied in the measure now before us; and I feel confident that neither I, nor those honorable members with whom I have acted, will ever have cause to regret the passing of this Bill through the House. Having such a confidence, I will vote with the greatest pleasure for the third reading of the Bill.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS said that when he came down to the House that afternoon, he was not aware that the third reading of the Land Bill would have come on that day; and, at most, not till about a quarter of an hour before he rose to move that it should be read a third time. As he had not, therefore, made any great preparation for the occasion, he hoped that honorable members would extend to him considerable indulgence. He certainly was somewhat amazed at the course honorable members had taken in reference to the Bill. It seemed to him that many honorable members had been playing a sort of fast-and-loose game with the Bill. Some who had taken a very active part in dealing with the Bill when it was in committee, and seemed prepared to afford every facility for passing it, now came down and seemed to repudiate everything they had done in committee, and objected in every possible way they could to the third reading of the Bill. It seemed to him that they were playing a sort of double game in the matter. If the Bill was successful, they would refer to what they had done in committee; and, if it was not successful, they would refer to what they had said on the third reading. The honorable member for

Ipswich, Mr. Macalister, had said that he did not like discussing the third reading of the Crown Lands Sale Bill until the Pastoral Leases Bill was considered in committee; as he thought that some amendments would have to be made in it to make it agree in some measure with this Bill. Now, he (Mr. Lamb) could tell the House that he should be prepared to accept amendments which would have the effect of making the Bills have some sort of harmony between the two. The honorable member had also asserted that the Crown Lands Sale Bill was contradictory in itself; but that shewed that he could not have carefully read the Bill—and that was a complaint which he had to make with regard to most honorable members who had opposed the Bill. They had evidently not given the matter their study. When the honorable member for Ipswich objected to the Bill, he appeared to have taken the weakest part of it. He took the seventy-seventh clause, which merely alluded to the homestead areas. It said—

“No lands acquired under the foregoing provisions shall in any event become liable to the satisfaction of any debt or debts contracted prior to the issuing of the Crown grant thereof.”

Now, that clause only alluded to the homestead areas, and it was the one which the honorable member quoted in support of his case. If the honorable member had wished to quote a clause to shew that parties could not claim as creditors, he should have quoted the sixty-fifth clause, which, in his opinion, appeared to be more *apropos*. That clause said—

“No judgment of the Supreme Court or of any district court or court of petty sessions nor any writ of *fiery facias* or warrant of execution issued upon any such judgment shall have any effect upon land selected under the provisions of this part of this Act unless and until a grant of such land in fee-simple shall have been issued.”

That was the clause, he thought, the honorable member should have quoted; but the clause he did quote happened to be one that was in the Homestead Act of America; and its object was to prevent the very system which they all deprecated, and that was dummyming. The sixty-fifth clause was for the same purpose. He was well aware that, if they could get at the fraudulent debtor in some way or other, it would be advantageous; but, at the same time, he could not see how it could be done without encouraging the system of dummymism. It was one of the greatest difficulties in the Bill. Then again, the honorable member for Ipswich had stated that there were six clauses of the Bill empowering the Government to make regulations. But there were only two clauses which gave any power to make regulations. One empowered the Government to issue regulations with reference to the homestead areas, and the other with reference to waste land boards. The honorable member also stated, with respect

to the railway reserves, that in the divisions of the runs they would be lost.

Mr. MACALISTER : He did not state anything of the kind. What he said was, that there was a contradiction between the third clause and other clauses of the Bill.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS : Well, he denied that there was any contradiction. The honorable member also asked, why the Bill had been introduced? Well, the honorable member had, himself, to answer for the Bill being brought in. The honorable member went to the country on the land question; and agitated the country from one end to the other upon it; and it was impossible for any set of gentlemen to carry on the government of the country without bringing in a Land Bill. He would now read, for the information of those honorable members who had not read it before, a passage from the second clause of the address of the honorable member for Ipswich, when he was a candidate for re-election. The clause was as follows:—

“The present is an important period in the history of the colony. We are now engaged in a hand-to-hand fight with those who still desire to retain to themselves the exclusive possession of the fairest portion of what Providence designed for the occupation and support of millions of our race; and the attempt will probably be made, at the approaching elections, to return to the Legislative Assembly representatives prepared to deal with the public lands of the colony for their own purposes, and at their own price.

“The land question, therefore, as it is the most important, is that upon which the Government have sought to appeal to the people.”

Now, after stating that, the honorable member, he contended, ought to be the last to say that the House should not bring in a Land Bill, when he knew that the House was dissolved upon that question—

Mr. MACALISTER : The honorable member was misrepresenting him again. He did not say there was no necessity for a Bill. What he said was, that there was no necessity for this Bill.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS : He believed he was correct in what he had stated, as he took down what the honorable member said at the time; but he would accept the correction. Then, again, the honorable member said that this Bill made no provision for revenue. Now, he denied that such was the case, for the Bill, both as he brought it in and as it now stood, contained every requisite provision for the security of the revenue. He contended, that with respect to the Bill he brought in previously, and the Bill as it had been amended, there was not that amount of difference which some parties would endeavor to make out. In his Bill, as it was originally intended, he proposed that certain runs should be divided into two halves, and that there should be free selection over the one-half, while the pastoral tenant should retain the other half, and that was as near as

possible the provision of the Bill as it now stood. He was willing to admit that the price of land was lower than he proposed in the first instance it should be, and that was the main difference between the two Bills. He was inclined to go for ten shillings and seven shillings and sixpence an acre for land in the northern districts; and he would have gone for a greater reduction for inferior lands taken up in the settled districts under free selection; but he provided in the original Bill for sale by auction, by which the lands went down as low as five shillings an acre. So that, taking into consideration the main features of the two Bills, there was not so much difference between them as some honorable members would wish to lead the country to believe. In the first Bill, under the auction clause, the land was to be put up, first at twenty shillings, then fifteen shillings, then ten shillings, and then five shillings an acre. Now, he contended that there he made provision for revenue; and there was also provision made for revenue in this Bill. The auction clauses were the safety valve, so far as revenue was concerned; and he thought that, with free selection and sales by auction, he would be able to make up as much as the honorable the Treasurer had estimated in his budget would be derived from the land. He was not surprised at the attack that had been made upon him by the honorable member for Maryborough—an attack which was made by the honorable member in his usual style. He considered that the owners of the runs that were included in the settled districts had nothing to complain of. He explained before, that under the Orders in Council, the whole of the lands on the coast board were never leased for more than from year to year; and it was only after Separation took place that the leases for five years was given to the pastoral tenants along the coast board. But he contended that in doing so they made a retrograde step; and that, previous to Separation, the holders of those lands must have expected that the lands might at any time be sold by auction. And then, with regard to the Darling Downs, the squatters there had held possession of their runs for twenty-five years—for no less than a quarter of a century—and they must have expected that their runs would be included in the settled districts, and would be subject to be sold by auction at any time. He certainly was surprised at the speech of the honorable member for the Eastern Downs, Mr. Douglas—but that he had ceased to be surprised at anything that might be said by honorable members in connection with this Bill—from the way the honorable member at one time supported the Bill, and at another time attacked it. The honorable member for the Eastern Downs had said that he supported the Bill in a *dilettanti* manner. Well, he must say that he thought the honorable member went at it *con amore*—that his heart

and soul were in it—till he made his speech that evening. That honorable member was amongst those who were the first to come over in favor of the amendment of the honorable member for Rockhampton, Mr. Archer, and the honorable member for the Kennedy, Mr. Fitzgerald, on the occasion when the division was twenty-five to two; and now the honorable member, with others, turned round and accused him as being the only party who brought this Bill about, whereas it was those honorable members themselves who were the instigators. When the original Bill was before the House, it was denounced by those honorable members as the worst that could be seen; and now, when this Bill had passed through committee with amendments, it was in turn denounced as the worst that could be seen. But in this matter, as in every other, it was a hard thing to please everybody. With respect to what fell from the honorable member for Ipswich, Dr. Challinor, about the lands being bought back at Natal, because they had been sold too cheap, all he could say was that he never saw such a proposition promulgated in the newspapers, and he had taken a great deal of trouble to search for it and to inquire about it. But he could hardly conceive that a Bill for that purpose, if it passed the colonial Legislature, would receive the royal assent, or the assent of the Viceroy; for, as he conceived, it would be nothing but a measure for spoliation.

Dr. CHALLINOR: A Commission was appointed to inquire into and report upon the subject; and that was the effect of one of the resolutions that was passed in the House, based upon the report. He did not say that such had become law.

THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: In the same way, many matters might be brought up in the House of Commons, and not passed into law. The question of marriage with a deceased wife's sister was one; and that subject had come before the House of Commons annually for several years. Many other matters were discussed in the House of Commons; but it was no argument in their favor that they had been discussed. He was also surprised at the unmeasured manner in which the honorable member for the Eastern Downs attacked the Surveyor-General. He certainly was surprised to hear such an attack coming from a member of a former Ministry. All that he could say in reference to the Surveyor-General was, that he had found him an exceedingly zealous and energetic officer in the performance of his duty; and whenever that gentleman had any doubt upon any point of law, he was always ready to refer the matter to the proper authority. He thought the faults and failings of the Surveyor-General, alluded to by the honorable member, might have been more appropriately found out when the honorable member was himself a member of the Government. Then would have been the proper time for the

honorable member to have taken notice of them, and not at the present juncture, when a new Ministry had been inaugurated. He would merely remark further, that in all legislature, as in all business matters, no man could expect that his own ideas, however good they might be in his own opinion, could be carried out in their entirety. Legislation, as well as business matters, was subject to compromise; and in bringing the Land Bill before the House he was prepared, in respect to a Bill of such momentous import, to accept amendments; and he did not think the amendments that had been made were of such a character as to alter, materially, the Bill as it was first laid before the House.

Mr. FRANCIS moved, that the debate be adjourned.

The question was put and negatived.

Mr. FRANCIS then rose and said that he had moved the adjournment of the debate for the purpose of hearing some other members of the Government express their opinions upon the Bill now before the House for a third reading. He thought that on a measure of so much importance, affecting, as it did, the interests of the colony in a way that no other Bill did that had been passed by the Legislature since this was a separate colony, it was not too much to expect that, as the Bill had not had a second reading—this Bill being essentially different from the one that was read a second time—it was not too much to expect that the honorable gentleman at the head of the Government, and the honorable the Attorney-General, who held strong opinions on the subject, would have favored the House with their opinions on the present occasion. He thought they ought to use the greatest deliberation in considering this Bill, which was considered to be revolutionary in its character by those who were its progenitors and fathers—a Bill which proceeded upon principles that were condemned by political economists over the whole world, and which had not a single argument to recommend it to his mind; and, he maintained, that inasmuch as it did not recommend itself to him, while he was, in opinion, along with those men, those great writers—of the great works of whom the honorable gentleman held as high an opinion as he did—he referred to Adam Smith and John Stuart Mill—though he did not require to name them, for they were well known, though their principles had not been greatly adopted in this colony, perhaps, as the House had been told, because the land question in Australia must be dealt with on principles different from those that might be applicable in any other country—it was not too much to expect that the House should use the greatest deliberation in dealing with any Bill that was based on principles that were in antagonism to the opinions of those great men. If he looked around him in the district he represented, he would say that on

this question, though he had had the honor to be alone, or nearly alone, in the debates that had taken place since the Bill came into the House, he did represent his constituents; and, if any member gainsaid that statement, he would only ask him to aid him in persuading the honorable gentleman at the head of the Government to go to the country and try the question, and he would soon see whether those honorable members who opposed the Bill represented the views of the country upon the subject or not. When he looked around him in the district he represented, he found that the colonists generally had rather lost heart under the present aspect of affairs, and the general look of things in the country. Things were not in a prosperous state just now. But a worse calamity had befallen the House, for honorable members seemed not only to have lost heart but also to have lost their heads; for they were proceeding with this Land Bill on principles that were utterly condemned by logicians, and all who had written upon the question, and by all men of thought and culture. The honorable member for Rockhampton—who appeared to be an amiable gentleman enough, most sincere in the opinions he put forward, but at the same time essentially a theorist—whose views, if carried into operation by this Bill, twelve months would shew to be utterly erroneous—what had he said to-night? The honorable member said—“Therefore, the improvement of each individual’s fortune in the country was the improvement of the whole country.” Now, in this colony, there were 30,000 people; so that, if they took the land and cut it up into 30,000 parts, and improved each individual portion, and gave a portion to each of those 30,000 persons, they would improve the fortune of each of those colonists. But by doing so, would they improve the colony, or the future of the colony, or give a single chance to those who were to come afterwards to the colony? The notion was utterly erroneous. It was impossible in that way to benefit the colony, and their past legislation shewed the injurious effects of such a course. They had cut up the Darling Downs, and given large portions of land to one person and another, and secured to them the means of a comfortable living; but, in doing so, they had not acted with a due regard to the welfare and interests of the colony. Yet it was a system such as that which the honorable member for Rockhampton asked the House to perpetuate. Now, it was that system that was the curse of the country at the present moment. By selling the land as it was proposed by the Bill before the House to do, they would make eternal that system of squatting which should be regarded and dealt with as only a temporary occupation of the lands of the colony; and which must always have to give way to the advancing tide of population. To tell him that to reduce the

upset price of land was to give the poor man—the man of small capital—a chance of obtaining a better footing in the colony, was totally to contradict the teaching of all colonial experience. If his constituents were asked—and he represented a poor constituency—if they were asked which system would be most likely to give them a good chance of obtaining a better footing in the colony—lands at twenty shillings an acre, or lands at forty shillings an acre—they would answer, that the probability was, that with the price of land at forty shillings an acre, they would have some chance of getting what they wanted; that, with the price at twenty shillings an acre, they would not have so good a chance; and that, if the price were fixed at two shillings and sixpence an acre, they would have no chance at all. Now, that was the essence of the land question. And what did they see on the Darling Downs at the present moment? Under the so-called Leasing Act of last year, they threw open large areas of good land to any man to take up in sections, at something like thirteen shillings and fourpence per acre, under a system of deferred payments; but did they settle the small men on it? They threw open the lands in that quarter to agricultural occupation, but how much of it had been taken up by small agriculturists? Why the small man had petitioned the House, stating that he could not get an acre of the land, because the large man alongside of him had swept it all away. And so it would be under this Bill, which was a measure that would lead to a scramble being made for the country. The Bill was well suited for the purposes of those who wished to pick out, what was called, the eyes of the country; but the promoters of the measure must not try to persuade either the House or the country that all the advantages and all the liberality was extended simply in the interest of the poor man. Therefore, he maintained that he was justified in looking with suspicion upon this measure, which proposed to deal liberally with the lands of the colony in the interests of the people. The so-called liberality was merely an attempt to throw dust in the eyes of the opponents of the measure, but it would not be allowed to have the desired effect. The opponents of the measure distrusted the liberality that was in it; and the effect of the Bill would be—that which had been the effect of all the past legislation the colony had been cursed with—the tying up of the lands from the uses that nature intended them to be put to, and that was cultivation. Cultivation was a large and comprehensive term. He did not limit it to the growing of cabbages, though the gentleman from the Darling Downs had said they could not grow cabbages there. To tell him that agriculture would not prosper in this colony, was to tell him what his own experience would not allow him to believe. Agriculture had not had a

fair chance given to it in the colony; and he ventured to say that the land in East Moreton had cost the farmers there not less than from fifteen to twenty-five pounds an acre. No one need tell him that land was being cultivated when it was only being cleared. In this colony, a farmer settled down in what might be called a "wood," and it took him three or four years to clear his land. Now, taking that circumstance into consideration, if the good land was given to the farmer on anything like fair terms, it could very soon be shewn that agriculture would be a success in this colony. But what about sugar, cotton, fibres in general, and fruits? There was no country in the world where such a variety of products could be grown, and where, by industry and skill, the natural sources of prosperity were so certain as in this colony. He had always objected to the Land Bill in its progress through the House, because, to his mind, it offered no improvement on the existing state of things in that aspect of it which, to his constituents, was one of its most important aspects. There was another reason why he had always been opposed to the Bill, his main reasons being as he had stated. He had not dealt with the Bill in the way the honorable member for the Eastern Downs had dealt with it. He had not complained of it, and dealt with it in a *dilettanti* fashion. He had, in fact, offered no suggestions whatever for its amendment, because he had felt it would be useless to do so, as honorable members on the Government side of the House had had the power all in their own hands for the time being. He had felt it would be useless to ask the Government to introduce into the Bill any conditions that would make it an acceptable measure to his constituents, and to the class, generally, whom he represented in that House; and he would say to the Government—

"O, it is excellent
"To have a giant's strength; but it is tyrannous
"To use it like a giant;"

and he would tell them again that though they had the power to force the Bill on the country, there would soon be a terrible reaction in the public mind unless they retained the spirit of justice in the hour of their strength. For his own part, he was for moderate measures; but no man could withstand the reaction that would take place if the great interests of the people were to be disregarded. He also maintained that the Bill did not deal fairly with existing interests. He knew that some honorable members supported the Bill, because it would be the severest dig into the squatters they had ever got. Now, he must say that he could not allow himself to deal with any measure in such a spirit as that. He was not for any of that sort of thing. He was for fair play to all—for the squatter equally with the agriculturist. Now, this Bill did not deal fairly with existing interests—the squatting interest.

For what did it say? The third clause said that every run in the settled district was to be divided in two; but would that be fair in all cases? Were all the runs of equal value, or were all the lands on every particular run of equal value? Honorable members knew that such was not the case. To divide some one run in half might be fair, but to divide every run in half would not be fair. A great many of the present pastoral tenants would be ruined by that. And was that the statesmanship of the present Government? Was that the best thing they could do—they who professed to be the squatters' friends? Such legislation was a disgrace to their statesmanship. The Bill on the face of it, and on the face of every clause of it, shewed that the present Government were incapable. Not only would some of the squatters be injured, but some of them would be ruined. The true principle to proceed upon in the settlement of a new country was this,—take care of the poor man, and the rich man will take care of himself. Now, this Bill was most unjust to the poor squatter. Many of his constituents were poor squatters, and the Bill would operate most unfairly in their case. Then, it was also unjust to the public as regarded the rich squatters; for the public had a right to demand more from them than would be obtained by this Bill. He did not wish to specify any district, but there was one district he might be allowed to mention, a district as large as the whole of Ireland. He referred to the Darling Downs. That district had been settled for twenty or thirty years, and now yielded to the Government the magnificent sum of £22,000 per annum, or £35,000 of rent with assessment included. It was well known—and he did not care how they came at a correct value of the property to the nation, so long as the value was properly arrived at, whether by auction, or by ascertaining the market price and getting a per-centage—but it was well known that those runs would let for sixpence an acre; and they would get a large amount of revenue from that quarter; for the district was vastly benefitted, and the value of the lands greatly increased, by the railways, and they might get almost as much as would pay the interest on the railway debt. But this Bill said that they should not do any such thing, that there should be no legislation to that end, but that the present anomalous and iniquitous system should still continue—that for ten years longer the squatters on the Darling Downs were to have half their runs guaranteed to them, and the other half on sufferance till required—and they all knew what that meant. As he could not now see any more in this Bill to recommend it to his approval than he saw in it some weeks since, though he should be alone, and though it should be attributed to factious opposition, he must record his vote against the measure. The Bill, if it became law, would not stand the test of time, and he ventured

to say that the Government knew that, and were now making use of their opportunity—and that was a course that wise and moderate men would not recommend. There were many parts of the Bill which, but that he did not like to trespass on the time of the House, he would like to mention. He knew, for the honorable member for Rockhampton had told him, and the House might be told again—that they were not to suppose that all the people in the colony were not rogues; and that the members of the land board would all be honorable men. But looking at the facts of the case, he could not think that the Ministry for the time being were the only rogues in the colony, or that the late Ministry were the only rogues in the colony, in their time. Now, this Bill, in allowing the purchaser to judge of the lands he was to purchase—for the land boards were to have two creditable men to say that the value of the land was so and so—would be a premium on roguery and a tax upon honesty. He also objected to the Bill, because it offered a premium on idleness, and proposed a tax upon improvement. The Bill made it worth the while of the purchaser to keep the land in its natural state. The boasted condition to ensure improvement would not ensure fencing; and it was not for the interest of the country that the lands should be cut up and tenanted by a few shepherds to the exclusion of the people. He would ask honorable members not to hurry on the Bill, though they had the power to do so. He was persuaded there were men amongst the supporters of the Bill of thought and penetration, who must see that such a course would not be one that they could look back upon with satisfaction. He had now referred, in brief, to all the objections he had to the Bill; and he must say that he thought, if honorable members would consider the temper of the public mind—its state of confidence in the House, and in its proceedings—the earnest expectations of the people, that the present unhappy condition of the colony was not beyond remedy, and that the remedy lay within the functions of the House—the earnest expectations of the people that the House would devise some measure for their benefit—if honorable members would consider all those things, such consideration would lead them, without any regard to party or personal ends, to ask only such measures as their best wisdom, guided by the light of all experience, and not in the teeth of all experience, taught them would be for the permanent good of the whole colony. He would earnestly warn honorable members that, if they permitted themselves to be operated upon by less worthy motives, the time would come, sooner than they thought, when they would painfully regret it. He now begged to move, as an amendment, that the Bill be read a third time that day six months.

Dr. CHALLINOR, in seconding the amendment, said he did not think there could be

any question that there were different qualities of land in different parts of the world, and that the agriculture that suited one part of the world would not suit another part. When Adam Smith set down that English colonies were better than those of the French, the Portuguese, and the Spanish, there could be no doubt he would, if he had visited Australia, have laid down the same thing as a political principle. To say that the lands, as a whole, in Australia, were not fit for agriculture, was to beg the whole question.

Mr. ARCHER: I never said so.

Dr. CHALLINOR: The honorable member said there might be some lands along the rivers suitable for agriculture, but that the great bulk of the land was unfit for agriculture. Now that was begging the whole question. There was no reason to suppose that the great bulk of the land might not be turned to agricultural purposes. They knew that, in some very barren spots, by care and manuring, almost barren rocks and sand had been made to yield a very large return for the agricultural labor expended upon it. Now, if rocks and sand could be converted into good growing ground, he did not see why the rich lands of Australia might not be made highly productive by agricultural occupation. What did they find in Algeria? Why, that the barren, arid sands there had been made to return a handsome profit, owing to the sinking of artesian wells; and it was possible, that in the desert of Sahara, similar results might be produced; and, indeed, it was within the possibility of imagination, that the time might come when the earth would be so thickly populated, that it would be necessary to cultivate the deserts of Sahara. But they must look at this question from a practical point of view; and, he would ask, how many runs were there on the Darling Downs which, formerly, it was held it would be unprofitable to stock? Not because there was not good grass on them, for there was abundance of grass, but because of the want of water. The pastoral tenants, at the time he referred to, allowed the lands there to go waste. But not long afterwards artificial supplies of water were effected, and, in consequence, where not a hoof used to be found, thousands and tens of thousands of sheep and cattle were to be found. They had been told of the Darling Downs, in respect to their occupation for agricultural purposes, that there was no fault to be found with the land, but that there could be no dependence upon the rains. Now, that objection might be answered by saying that as water had been found for the depasturing of flocks, water might also be found for agricultural purposes. It was, he repeated, a mere begging of the question to say that those lands were not fit for agricultural purposes, and that the best thing that could be done was to sell them for pastoral purposes. Though he was a strenuous advocate that the Crown lands should be alienated for the

purpose of cultivation, he was not one who would dictate to any one what he should cultivate. All that he, and other honorable members who acted with him, said, was that a certain amount of land should be cultivated in a given time; but they did not say whether it should be with cabbages or with coffee, with sugar or plaintains, or anything else in particular. All they asked was, that a certain amount of land should be cultivated. There was no reason that he could see why they should be in a hurry to alienate the best portions of the land, because it was said they were not available for agriculture. In the quotations from Adam Smith, which he had read to the House, it was distinctly laid down that because the condition of cultivation was insisted upon, colonies possessing inferior land had become more prosperous than those which contained richer soil, such as he had previously mentioned. He strongly objected to the Bill, and the arguments used by the honorable member for Clermont would only make him more earnestly oppose its passage through the House and prevent its becoming law. For the Sydney merchants were fully alive to their own interests; they would invest their money, if good terms were offered to them; but there was no reason to suppose that capitalists who came up for that purpose would do much to improve the land they took up. Honorable members had frequently been told that there was plenty of capital waiting to be invested, but it was held by persons who would merely purchase land for purposes of speculation—who did not look for any immediate return, but expected, after a time, to sell the land for ten times its value. He sincerely hoped the Bill, in its present shape, would not become the law of the colony.

Mr. WALSH said he hoped that after the learned and eloquent appeals made to them, honorable members would not think of pushing the Bill to a division that evening. So much new light had been thrown upon the subject, that he thought the decision upon a measure of so much importance, so revolutionary in its character, should be deferred for another night at least. The Bill was one of a most startling kind, and he thought, therefore, it might be read again—not that day six months, but that day week. If the supporters of the Bill did not agree to that, he should then say that day three months or six months. He must say that, notwithstanding the eloquent speeches he had listened to, he had not heard a single argument which would justify him in voting for the third reading. He had heard a great deal which convinced him that it was necessary to act with great deliberation, and for once he agreed with the honorable member for East Moreton, Mr. Francis. He thought that every honorable member who had taken part in the construction of the Bill would, before six months were over, be moving

amendments upon it. He felt quite satisfied that in the northern portions of the colony the Bill would be inoperative for the next twelve months at least; and he feared that the Government, seeing how long it would be before they could bring it into operation, would do as other Governments had done before them,—make regulations which would involve all sorts of complications. The honorable member for Rockhampton had characterised his conduct as that of an Ishmaelite, and had stated that his hand was raised against every man. Well, he freely confessed that his hand was raised against every man who attempted to palm off a measure for the good of the country, which was intended for a totally different purpose. Whenever he felt himself entrapped into taking part in such a course, he should raise his hand against any honorable member, whether friend or foe. He did not object to the third reading of the Bill on the same ground as the honorable member for Ipswich, Dr. Challinor. He did not cherish any such fine schemes for agriculturists. He believed that nine-tenths of the colony was eminently unfit for agriculture, and he was quite sure the soil would be turned to its worst use when it was attempted to cultivate it. He held in his hand some specimens of the agricultural produce of the garden of the colony. It had frequently been stated, particularly within the last three years, that anything could be grown on the Darling Downs, especially wheat. Last year it was actually suggested that there should be something like a restrictive duty placed upon flour, in order that the farmers on the Darling Downs might have a chance to grow wheat for the benefit of Queensland generally, and that portion of it in particular. The specimens he held in his hand were some ears of corn from the only field which was anything like a wheat field near Allora, and the letter which accompanied them stated that Mr. Clark's crop, from which these withered ears were taken, was the only crop in which the corn had come to maturity, the others having either been burned or cut for straw. With that evidence before him, he could not join in insisting that the land should be cultivated. He ventured to say that a similar result would follow the attempt to grow wheat on every three farms out of four in the colony. He had just come down from a very pleasant visit to the Darling Downs, and had met a good many of the farmers about Toowoomba, who had confessed that they were ruined men—ruined whether they got a good crop or no; if they got a good crop they were ruined, and if they did not they had nothing to sell. They regretted that their holdings were not sufficiently large to allow them to run sheep or cattle upon them. The Bill before the House had made no provision for that. Take the homestead clause; no man could make a living out of one hundred and sixty acres of

land, if he attempted to grow stock upon it. He hoped the Bill would fail to attract a population, under the idea that they could make a living out of agriculture, as far as the men of small means were concerned. It was no use for the man of small means to attempt the cultivation of sugar, though he admitted that sugar might turn out a great success to the man of large means, but he would have nearly to ruin himself to bring his labors to a successful issue. With regard to cotton he could not say much, but he knew that the small growers had not succeeded, and the large ones only partially; he did not, in fact, believe it would succeed in this colony. He had listened with great pleasure to the earnest address of the honorable member for Rockhampton. He could not, however, allow that honorable member to monopolize all the patriotism in the House. He had also been a worker, and for a longer time than the honorable member, in endeavoring to get a good Land Bill. Long ago he had advocated a reduction in the price of land; and, therefore, while allowing that honorable member all the credit which he had taken to himself that evening, and believing him to be sincere in the statements he had made, he must tell him that there were other gentlemen in the country who had labored as earnestly as himself, and for a longer period. He believed one of the greatest mistakes in the Bill was that too much was still charged for the land, and another mistake was in restricting the quantity of land; but the greatest mistake of all was in imposing the conditions which had been allowed to creep into the Bill. He feared he should not be able to stop the passing of the Bill; but, in the belief that it would do more harm than good, he should join with those honorable members who opposed it, in attempting to prevent its becoming law. At the same time he warned those honorable members who represented the pastoral tenants, that in supporting this Bill they were assenting to what must prove utterly ruinous to their friends. He would not further take up the time of the House, but would vote against the third reading of the Bill.

Mr. BELL said he would state briefly the reasons which induced him to come to the conclusion that he would best perform his duty by voting against the third reading of the Bill. In his opinion, the principles it embodied were diametrically opposed to those principles which should belong to such a Bill as the House ought to pass. They were prejudicial, he thought, not only to the interests of the public at large, but to the vested interests of the squatters; and he looked upon the Bill as a delusion, and one which ought not to pass into law. To the public, he felt sure it would be found a delusion, because it would enable capitalists to monopolize large areas of land, which was always considered objectionable. He admitted

that some amendments known as the penal clauses, introduced by the honorable member for Fortitude Valley, had for their object the prevention of this system, and the amassing of large areas by a few large capitalists—perhaps a few squatters; but admitting, for argument's sake, that those penal clauses succeeded in effecting the desired object, it would only bring about an alteration from a system of corruption to one of useless interference with certain rights. He had opposed the Bill in its former stages, because it appeared to him to recognise the system of pre-emptive right; but the amendments of the honorable member for Fortitude Valley had made him consider the Bill in a new light. If the object of its promoters was to introduce a number of small farmers, it would utterly fail. He did not believe the resources of the colony, in its present position, were such as would enable a system of combined agricultural and pastoral farms, limited to 2,500 acres, to be profitably worked. He foresaw that it would be an utter failure as far as the general public interest was concerned, while it would be a useless interference with the squatting tenure, and consequently disadvantageous to the country; and he could not therefore be blamed if he withheld his assent to the third reading. He believed that a much more simple measure, giving full liberty to the agriculturists and security to the squatters, was all that the House should attempt to pass. But, in addition to the objections he had stated, he agreed with those honorable members who had expressed their opinion that the Bill, if it were allowed to pass, would bring about that absence of revenue which, in the present state of the colony, was very undesirable. He saw no prospect of raising a sum of money equal to that which he thought the present or a future Treasurer would consider should be raised from the waste lands of the colony. He looked upon the Bill, as a whole, as a measure which could not be worked; though the promoters of it had shewn a special cleverness in meeting almost every honorable member who had spoken against it. It attempted to grapple with every interest; but he did not think the mode of dealing with them was one which the House should adopt. He looked upon the honorable member for Rockhampton as the great seducer of the colony—as the political Lothario of the day; and he regretted that the honorable member should have exercised such an influence on the minds of other honorable members in the House. Town and country members appeared to be alike affected, which was the more extraordinary, as the Bill would not, in his opinion, serve the interests of either. He should not touch upon any of the details of the Bill, because of the objections he had taken to the principles upon which it was framed; but he should certainly oppose its third reading.

Mr. DOUGLAS said that, as reference had been made to the district he represented, he must say a few words about its capabilities. The honorable member for Maryborough had exhibited three or four attenuated ears of corn, which he had stated were fair samples of the corn grown in that district. But it was notorious that the present season had been a very bad one, not only for the crops in the Darling Downs, but all over the colony. Such an unfortunate season had never been experienced by the farmers on the Downs. He had never been an ardent advocate for agriculture, in the sense that it was at present successful, because the energies of the country were turned in another direction. But, after all, it was the old story, which had been rehearsed in every colony in Australia. It was but a short time ago that a cargo of wheat from South Australia arrived in England; and the greatest astonishment was expressed that wheat could be grown in the colonies. It was the same story over again; and it was therefore hardly fair for the honorable member to cite a solitary instance as a proof of the inevitable failure of agricultural pursuits. He believed the honorable member had himself made a few experiments in the arid wastes of the Burnett, and had been very successful in growing whatever he wished. The honorable member, in exhibiting the specimens he had shewn to the House, put him in mind of an anecdote of a temperance lecturer whose brother was somewhat inclined to intoxication, and who, being charged with his fault, and reminded of the bad effect which it must have upon the lectures, replied that his conduct was only "the frightful example." In like manner, the honorable member for Maryborough had only afforded a "frightful example" of an exceptionally bad season in Australia. But there was no ground to suppose that good seasons would not follow. It was notorious that nature alone, unassisted by science and skill, could not be depended upon to produce good crops. In England, agriculture was the most precarious of all pursuits; and it was only by the application of science that it had become profitable; and the honorable member must be aware that the attention of people in this colony had been diverted to other occupations, and that, consequently, agriculture had not yet reached that stage. He could not believe that the honorable member had really expressed his convictions; he believed he was playing with the subject, and was taking an unfair advantage of the position in which that industry was placed at present; and, as a vote was about to be taken on the Bill, he regretted that the honorable member should have made use of such arguments to oppose a measure which they both deprecated, but upon different grounds.

The question was put,—That the word proposed to be omitted stand part of the question. The House divided.

	Ayes, 15.		Noes, 8.
Mr. Mackenzie		Dr. O'Doherty	
" Pring		Mr. Walsh	
" Palmer		" Garrick	
" Lamb		" Francis	
" Archer		" Douglas	
" Fitzsimmons		Dr. Challinor	
" Mylne		Mr. Bell	
" Royds		" Pugh.	
" Stephens			
" Lilley			
" Miles			
" G. Thom			
" Clark			
" Fitzgerald			
" Sandeman.			

Original question put, and the House divided.

	Ayes, 15.		Noes, 7.
Mr. Mackenzie		Mr. Bell	
" Pring		" Pugh	
" Palmer		" Francis	
" Lamb		Dr. O'Doherty	
" Sandeman		" Challinor	
" Fitzgerald		Mr. Walsh	
" Clark		" Douglas.	
" G. Thom			
" Miles			
" Royds			
" Lilley			
" Stephens			
" Fitzsimmons			
" Mylne			
" Archer.			

Whereupon, the Bill was read a third time and passed.

OMISSION OF DEBATE FROM "HANSARD."

Mr. PUGH rose to move the adjournment of the House, for the purpose of calling attention to the fact that in the last number of "Hansard," a debate which had occurred on Friday morning in reference to the portrait of His Excellency the Governor had been omitted altogether. If they were to have a record of the debates, he thought that record should be complete; and as one member of the House, he objected to the cutting out of any debate which might be considered unpleasant to any person in the House or out of it. Honorable members were aware that a debate took place on the question he had referred to. It took place on a motion properly tabled, and he thought the House ought to take some notice of its omission from "Hansard." He noticed that everything which had been said in favor of the Governor had always been carefully reported, but everything to the contrary had been as carefully excluded. He objected to that personally, and he objected to it as a member of the House; and he said that rather than have a partial or incomplete record of their proceedings, it would be better to do away with it altogether. Honorable members did not accept "Hansard" at all as a correct report of their proceedings; they had over and over again heard it disputed; and seeing that a debate of this kind had been cut out altogether, he wished to know by whose authority it was done, and whether the reporters had it in their power to leave out what they chose. He would do these gentlemen the justice to say, that they had exercised, ordinarily, great judgment in reporting the debates of the present session,

and he did not blame them for it. But he did not think a debate of this nature should be omitted from "Hansard," especially as everything that was said on the other side was carefully reported *verbatim*. He had moved the adjournment of the House, in order to call attention to the omission, and if it were possible—if he were not out of order in doing so—he would move, without notice—

That the debate on Friday last, in reference to the portrait of His Excellency the Governor, be inserted in "Hansard" as it occurred.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL said he was not exactly aware why the honorable member should have taken upon himself to move the adjournment of the House in reference to that particular debate. It appeared that the honorable member's speech had been left out of the proof sheet of "Hansard." As far as he understood the management of "Hansard," it was regulated by certain honorable members—perhaps, by the honorable member himself. (No.) Then he would recommend those honorable members, whose speeches were not reported, to see the Shorthand Writers and recommend that they be inserted. He could not see why the honorable member should come down to the House and make such a do about it. He maintained that the honorable member was quite out of order; he did not appear to have made any complaint to the reporters.

Mr. PUGH said he did not wish to be misunderstood. He did not complain of his speech being omitted, but of the whole debate being left out of "Hansard."

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: He drew that conclusion inferentially. He inferred, as the honorable member did not say that he had complained, that he had brought the matter before the House for a certain purpose, and he knew very well what that purpose was. He considered it derogatory to the House to move the adjournment for such a paltry purpose. If the honorable member could not recollect what he had said, and he did not think many honorable members did after they had left the House, that was no reason that he should bring forward a motion on the subject. The honorable member might complain of the debate being left out in its entirety, but if it was an omission on the part of the reporters it could very easily be rectified by each honorable member who made a speech on the occasion, and who felt himself aggrieved, going to the reporters and having it put right. He had yet to learn that the House was to be called upon by means of a motion for adjournment to direct the reporters to insert this or that debate.

Mr. PUGH: I can move the adjournment for anything.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: I know that the honorable member can move the adjournment of the House to make any nasty, dirty speeches, whenever it suits him,

The SPEAKER called the honorable member to order; he had made use of an unparliamentary expression.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL said he would withdraw the word "dirty," but he maintained that it was unparliamentary to move the adjournment of the House to make speeches of that character, when they all knew that the proper way to do it was by a substantive motion. If the debate supposed to be omitted was to form a record of the House, the proper way to take notice of it was by a substantive motion, and no one knew that better than the honorable member himself.

The SPEAKER: The Attorney-General is quite right in what he says, that the honorable member for North Brisbane could not make a motion upon it.

Mr. PUGH: I did not make a motion.

Mr. WALSH said he certainly thought the attack upon the honorable member for North Brisbane was the most unjustifiable attack he had ever heard made in that House. He thought the honorable member had done his duty in calling the attention of the House and the Speaker to the gross omission of the debate in question from "Hansard." It was to the credit of the honorable member that he had done so. A very important question was involved—were they to have a correct or a cooked edition of "Hansard?" Was it to be tampered with by members of the House? for he supposed that was the case. He could not believe that the reporters themselves would have dared to do so of their own accord; if they had, it was time that others should be appointed in their places. There was another question to consider—whether honorable members were to say what they thought, or, if they spoke fearlessly, like Englishmen, were they not allowed to have their speeches published? He was not in the House during the debate in question, but he honored the honorable member for North Brisbane for the speech he so fearlessly made on that occasion. What he stated he (Mr. Walsh) asserted was the opinion of nineteen out of twenty members of that House. (No, no.) He would go further, and say that the language used by the honorable member he had heard used by nineteen out of twenty members. He had heard stronger language used by members than that used by the honorable member for North Brisbane, and if he had been present he should have told them so to their face. He was perfectly ashamed of the way in which that debate had been carried out. It ought to have been carried to a division, in order that the country might have seen who were the men who would say one thing, and vote for another. And he did trust that there would be such an expression of opinion given that night respecting "Hansard," that the House would come to a conclusion either to discontinue it altogether, or publish it in a fearless and correct form.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS said he thought the debate was rather irregular. When speeches were not properly reported, the way to have the matter rectified—

Mr. PUGH rose to a point of order. He had not complained that his speech was improperly reported, but that the whole debate was left out.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Well, he believed the proper course would have been to have reported it to those whose duty it was to go into the matter, who would have ordered the Shorthand Writers to insert the debate in "Hansard." He thought the discussion was rather irregular, because it would appear in "Hansard," and as the original debate would also appear, there would be a species of incongruity in the matter, for there would be a debate referring to another debate, supposed to be omitted, which would, however, be found in its proper place, one appearing about twelve pages after the other. He thought, therefore, if the honorable member for North Brisbane had merely called the attention of the Shorthand Writers to the matter, the whole affair might have been rectified without this to do.

Mr. MILES considered that the honorable the Attorney-General's eloquence was somewhat ill-timed, and his advice unnecessary. He thought his attack on the honorable member for North Brisbane was most unwarrantable. It was particularly wrong of the honorable and learned member to tell honorable members of the House that they were to appeal to the reporters. They should not go to the reporters.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: Yes, yes.

Mr. MILES: He repeated—No, no. Those officers were under the direction of the Speaker, to whom honorable members could go.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: The Speaker said not.

Mr. MILES: He thought he was right;—if not, it was quite time that should be understood. Whoever had taken any part in suppressing the debate, had taken a most unwarrantable liberty. If such interferences could be permitted with "Hansard," he should take care to notice the matter when the vote came before the House. If honorable members allowed themselves to be made tools of, and brought forward motions which they were ashamed of, they must take the consequences; they had no right to have the debates kept out of "Hansard." He (Mr. Miles) had warned the honorable member for Ipswich, Mr. Macalister, not to bring forward his motion; but when a motion was before the House, he should express his opinions freely on it. He had felt bound to express them on the motion for a portrait of the Governor; and he did not wish to go to the reporters to ask them to report his speech, for he did not care whether they reported him or not. He was perfectly satisfied to express himself in the House, and it was

nothing to him whether his speeches appeared in "Hansard," or not. He should take very good care, however, that he would not allow the subject to go by, when the estimate for "Hansard" came before the House.

The COLONIAL TREASURER said he did not see anything in the speech and proposal of his honorable and learned colleague the Attorney-General to raise the ire of the honorable member who had just spoken. He thought it would be just as well for any honorable members who had been communicated with on this subject by the reporters to state so. All he (the Treasurer) could state was, that some time during the afternoon of the day on which the debate took place, one of the Parliamentary Shorthand Writers met him in a shop and spoke to him about the debate, saying that some honorable members had been speaking about the appearance of the debate in "Hansard"—that it ought not to be on record.

Mr. WALSH: Name those members.

The COLONIAL TREASURER: He wanted those members to name themselves. The Shorthand Writer merely said, either that several, or that other members had been speaking about the propriety of leaving the debate out; and he asked his (the Treasurer's) opinion. He had said, in answer, that he thought it ought not to appear. Further than that, he was not ashamed to say that such was his opinion.

Mr. MILES: I thought you had something to do with it.

The COLONIAL TREASURER: He thought the occurrence of such a debate as the House had on Friday was not creditable to the country; nor would its appearance in "Hansard" be creditable. Honorable members, including himself, might have expressed opinions—spoken of an illustrious individual—in private; but that was a very different thing from putting them on the records of the House. He did do his best to have the debate suppressed in the newspapers; but it was not done, to the extent that he wished; for, he maintained, the debate was not to the credit of the House, whatever the fault of the individual might be. If there were any other honorable members present who had expressed opinions such as he had to the reporter, they ought to get up and acknowledge it. Further than getting such expressions of opinion, he believed the Shorthand Writers had acted on their own responsibility in the matter; but, still, he thought that other honorable members who had spoken to them should get up and acknowledge it, as he did.

Mr. SANDEMAN said it was much to be regretted that a great deal said by some honorable members on the occasion referred to should have been expressed. What had been spoken in the House was not creditable to some honorable members, and such a debate did not do credit to their deliberations. There had been a good deal of laxity shewn in

the conduct of "Hansard," lately, which was not before noticeable: in previous sessions, "Hansard" had been conducted better. He believed one cause was, that the amount of business for which the services of the Shorthand Writers were required was too much for the department. Yet, he thought, "Hansard" ought to be put on a proper footing. That was a question which was discussed last session, but nothing came of it. Some honorable members had proposed that it should be continued by a committee; but nothing was decided as to how it should be conducted. There was no doubt about the importance of "Hansard." If "Hansard" was properly conducted, the sentiments uttered in the House ought to be completely given, and it ought to be a reflex of the opinions of the representatives of the country; and, he thought, that any debate which took place in the House on a substantive motion ought to be reported in "Hansard." What was the use of "Hansard," if it was not to be a reflex of the opinions of the representatives of the country? He cared not what the subject was—he thought the report should appear. No interference should be permitted with "Hansard." Proper efforts should be made to place "Hansard" in the position it ought to occupy as a record of the House, and he (Mr. Sandeman) trusted that, looking to the importance of having the debates properly reported, some effectual steps would be taken to attain so necessary an object.

The SPEAKER: I think it was the understanding, last year, that the Shorthand Writers should be under the President and myself: that was my understanding and belief. I must say, for myself, that I knew nothing at all about this suppression until I saw that the debate was suppressed in "Hansard," to-day. I don't say why it was done, or how it was done; the reporters themselves knew they ought to have spoken to us before they did it.

Mr. WALSH: Do I understand, from your remarks, sir, that you will order the debate to be inserted in "Hansard"?

The SPEAKER: Oh! most decidedly—if the House wish it. It ought to be in.

Dr. CHALLINOR said he was not present at the debate, because he was professionally engaged. He thought it was an unfortunate debate; and, it was an unfortunate circumstance that the motion which had given rise to it was ever brought forward. So far as he understood, it was unfortunate in the manner in which it had been brought forward: the general feeling of members in reference to it should have been first ascertained, because, no doubt, there was a very strong feeling held by persons on the subject. Had he been present, on the occasion, he certainly should have voted for the motion; he considered it had not been properly brought before the House, and for that he blamed the Government exceedingly. He

did not see why the individual most concerned in that debate should suffer in consequence of it, and, therefore, he should not have objected to the motion. In that debate the merits or demerits of His Excellency as Governor should have been excluded. Had the matter been properly managed, either the debate would not have come on or it would have had a different result. He was utterly surprised that the honorable the Attorney-General should have attacked the honorable member for North Brisbane and called his speech a "dirty" speech.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: He withdrew it. Mr. STEPHENS: He did not withdraw the "nasty."

Dr. CHALLINOR: He had read a certain correspondence, in which the honorable and learned gentleman's name appeared; he had also read the newspaper report of the debate, and there was not in it, so far as the report of the honorable member for North Brisbane, Mr. Pugh's, speech was concerned, anything more nasty or dirty than the expressions in the letters which were signed by the honorable the Attorney-General. He (Dr. Challinor) did not like honorable members turning round and saying one thing one day, and another thing another day. As he said before, he considered that the circumstances under which the motion had been brought before the House were unfair to the individual concerned; and, therefore, he thought it was not right that he should be made to suffer through the debate in the House and the journals of the colony—and not only in this colony, but in the other colonies, and in Great Britain. On that account, it was desirable that the debate should have been suppressed: the honorable member at the head of the Government was much to blame for the way in which it had been originated. He (Dr. Challinor) had certainly been led to believe, from what he had heard, that the debate would not appear in the public press; and he was surprised when he saw it. Yet, he must maintain that those honorable members who spoke in the debate had a right to insist upon its being reported in "Hansard," without any vote of the House. As a matter of privilege, certain motions could not be put without the consent of the whole House; and, if a single member objected to the debate being suppressed, it should not be kept out of "Hansard."

The SPEAKER: The honorable member for North Brisbane did not put that question to the House; he only suggested it. He did not move that question.

Dr. CHALLINOR: He knew the honorable member did not put it in that way; but expressions had been made use of, that if the House desired that the debate should be inserted, it should be so inserted. He maintained that if any individual member, who took part in that debate, insisted on

its being reported, the House had no right to say it should not be reported.

The **SPEAKER**: The honorable member is aware that no motion can be put to the House, without due notice.

Mr. **FITZSIMMONS** said he was not in the House when the debate referred to took place; but from the few remarks he had heard, it was not very dignified to oppose the question. He was not in a position to speak as to details; but to bring the name of a gentleman before the House who was not able to defend himself, for a personal reason, did not reflect much credit on the House; and he hoped the present debate would not continue.

The **COLONIAL TREASURER**: As the honorable member for Ipswich, Dr. Challinor, had taken upon himself to blame him, some explanation was necessary. The honorable member knew nothing of the debate, but from what he had read in the papers; and he (the Colonial Treasurer) might say, that what had been thus read was very incorrect in every particular. It had been stated that several honorable members had mooted the question to him, and that he had approved of it. One or two honorable members had pressed it on him, and he had declined to have anything to do with it, as a member of the Government. It was then proposed to him to put the matter into the hands of one of the new members. The matter did not take much hold of his mind—he did attach much importance to it;—he had much more important matters to think of than a paltry picture. He subsequently heard that the honorable member for Ipswich, Mr. Macalister, had been mentioned in connection with the matter; and, meeting him on the stairs, he said to him, that he had been bothered about this portrait—that he, Mr. Macalister, knew very well where it came from;—and he then asked the honorable member whether he would take upon himself to bring the matter before the House. He (the Colonial Treasurer) never pledged himself to support it. When the debate on the motion took a personal turn, he got up and endeavored to direct it away from the personal question, and to get the House to deal with it on its merits. He very much regretted that the debate had taken the turn it had: he never anticipated it, and he would much rather that it had not occurred at all.

Mr. **DOUGLAS** said he should not have risen, had it not been for the few remarks of the honorable member who last addressed the House; and he rose now for the purpose of making a further explanation. He thought the honorable gentleman at the head of the Government was hardly justified in treating the question under consideration in the manner he had done. It was not his own question solely; he had involved another gentleman, in a high position, who had long enjoyed the dignity and influence and exercised the functions of that position in this

colony;—and he (Mr. Douglas) might say, that before the Premier went to the honorable member for Ipswich, Mr. Macalister, he had mentioned the matter to himself, and he had, in reply, said that he did not feel inclined to make such a motion—that he thought the proper person to take it up was the honorable member for Ipswich, if it was to be taken up at all. The honorable gentleman at the head of the Government must remember that such was the case, and that, at the same time, he (Mr. Douglas) made the remark that the honorable gentleman must be careful to feel his way, and ascertain the sentiments of honorable members; because, without that, it would not be fair to bring the motion forward at all.

Mr. **G. THORN** was very sorry that the present question had been raised: it might have rested. Considering it over, he could see only one motive that the honorable member for North Brisbane, Mr. Pugh, had in bringing it forward: nothing pleased that honorable member better than having a fling at royalty. On all occasions he did so. When there was any popularity to be gained, he was ready to have a fling. Though the honorable member for Ipswich did not get his motion passed, no one else was to blame for it but one of his colleagues, the honorable member for Eastern Downs. Had not that honorable member risen to address the House on the motion, the honorable member for North Brisbane, Mr. Pugh, would have been the only dissident.

Mr. **PUGH**, in reply, said that after having been accused of being such a thorough red republican by the honorable member for West Moreton, Mr. Thorn, he scarcely knew how to address the House; but he could assure that honorable member that he was just as loyal as he. Indeed, he once had the pleasure of hearing the Premier of the colony stating, in the witness-box, that he (Mr. Pugh) was a loyal subject of the Queen. He regretted, as much as any honorable member, that the debate in question should have arisen; but he thought it his duty simply to call attention to the fact of its omission from "Hansard." He did not feel any the worse from what the honorable and learned Attorney-General had showered on him; and he durst say he would recover from its effects. Something had been said about the power of the Shorthand Writers; and he would call the attention of the House to the report of the Select Committee on the Officers of the Parliament, last year. The report set forth:—

"Your committee recommend that, however many Shorthand Writers may be retained in the service of the Parliament, * * * the presiding heads of both Chambers of the Legislature should be the only recognised heads of the department. And your committee would further recommend, that in all matters relating to the Council, the President should be the sole referee; and that the Speaker should, in like manner, be sole referee in matters pertaining to the Assembly."

As the Speaker had been kind enough to state that he would see into the matter, and take care that the report should be inserted in "Hansard," he (Mr. Pugh) would withdraw the motion; and he could not see that he had any cause to regret having brought it forward.

Motion, by leave, withdrawn.