

Queensland



Parliamentary Debates
[Hansard]

Legislative Council

WEDNESDAY, 11 AUGUST 1869

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PREMIUM FOR EXPORT OF UNCOOKED
FRESH MEAT.

The Hon. F. E. BIGGE moved—

That this House approves of the Governor granting three thousand acres of country land, situated within fifty miles of the coast line, to any person or company who shall, within two years from this date, export from Queensland, under certificate of the Collector of Customs of the port of export, and sell in Great Britain, not less than twenty-five tons of uncooked fresh meat, preserved by any process which shall render it fit for food on its arrival in that market;—a committee, for the purpose of testing the food, in Great Britain, to be appointed by the Governor, and their report to be laid before Parliament.

He said that, with the permission of the House, he would amend the motion, so far as to increase the quantity of meat to be exported, from twenty-five tons to fifty tons.

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL said he would have been glad to hear from the honorable gentleman some reason stated for the motion he had brought forward. No doubt some of the unoccupied lands of the colony were looked upon as not of very great value, still they belonged to the State; and he thought it would not be wise that so large a quantity of land should be granted, as proposed, without some further conditions. For instance, he would like to point out to the honorable gentleman that the motion, as it stood, would admit of any one in another colony sending uncooked preserved meat to this colony, exporting it hence to England, and then claiming the proposed premium. Again, he was opposed to the motion, because of the quantity required to be exported. He thought that in consideration of such a generous grant of land, there should be such an export of meat required as would justify the conclusion that a permanent trade of the kind had been established;—that the export was not a fanciful experiment, but an undertaking for the permanent supply of a foreign market. The honorable gentleman, he was aware, had taken much interest in this matter, and had brought it before the House on a former occasion, by Bill, by which the export was required to be a hundred tons. That was certainly more satisfactory than the present proposition; but he would, for his own part, prefer that the quantity should be fixed at a thousand tons, at least. He hoped the honorable gentleman would withdraw the motion, and substitute one that would be more likely to meet the object he had in view. As a matter of fact, there had been more than fifty tons of fresh uncooked meat exported from the colony already; but it yet remained to be seen whether the adventure had been attended with success. It was, no doubt, a very proper thing to encourage the establishment of native industries; but, in doing so, they must see some probability of those industries being permanent. He hoped the honorable gentleman would withdraw the present motion, and

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

Wednesday, 11 August, 1869.

Return of the President.—Premium for Export of Uncooked Fresh Meat.—Suspension of Sessional Order.

RETURN OF THE PRESIDENT.

The PRESIDENT said that before calling on the business for the day, he desired to tender his thanks to honorable members for their kind consideration in allowing him to be absent, on private affairs, for so long a period as he had been.

bring it forward on a future day in an amended form.

The Hon. F. E. BIGGE said, that as the honorable the Postmaster-General had stated, he brought this matter before the House, by Bill, in a former session. The Bill passed the Legislative Council; but before it passed through its several stages in the Legislative Assembly the session came to an end. In that Bill it was proposed that a grant of 10,000 acres should be made to the person who should export a hundred tons of fresh uncooked meat. In the motion now before the House, he had reduced the quantity of land to be granted by about three-fourths, though he proposed to reduce the quantity of meat by only one-half. Now, the House having agreed to the Bill containing the larger proposition, he did not see that the quantity now proposed could form a good ground of objection. The honorable gentleman, he understood, thought that the quantity of meat should not be less than a thousand tons; but if he would calculate the cost of preparing such a quantity, he would find that three thousand acres of land would scarcely suffice to induce any one to embark in the enterprise. It was only by such a proposition as this that they would be able to get the export of meat established here; and he thought that, considering the great benefit it would be to the colony to have such an industry established, it would be most advisable to make such a grant of land, for the purpose, as he proposed. As to withdrawing the present resolution, he would willingly do so, if the honorable the Postmaster-General would promise him his support to another proposition increasing the quantity of meat to be exported, and requiring that it should be preserved in Queensland.

The PRESIDENT said that taking into consideration the present circumstances of the colony, and the depreciation in the value of wool, in the English market, and also the danger that seemed to threaten the pastoral interest in that respect, it must be evident that some steps were necessary to be taken with the view of establishing an enterprise that would be an equipoise to the depression of that industry. The great demand that had sprung up in England for Australian preserved meat, would have the effect, in some degree, of restoring prosperity to the pastoral interest. It was, therefore, of the highest importance to this and the other Australian colonies, to encourage the establishment of preserved meat as an article of permanent export. There were several projects in existence for taking fresh meat from Australia to England; and it would be necessary they should discover which was the most successful. The honorable gentleman proposed that there should be a committee, in England, to determine the success of any experiment that might be attempted, and that their report should be

laid before Parliament, previous to the proposed grant of land being made. Now he must say, for his own part, that he thought it would be wiser to resort to the large premium mentioned in the Bill which the honorable gentleman, Mr. Bigge, brought forward last year; and that he should adhere to the quantity of land therein named. That, he thought, would meet with the concurrence of honorable members, for there could be no doubt that the establishment of such an industry would be of the greatest benefit to the colony; and they must also remember that unless some new industry or other was discovered, the colony would, at no distant period, suffer great distress. He did not think that, under those circumstances, the quantity of land originally proposed was too large; for, to send the meat home in a frozen state, which, he believed, would be the best way, would involve the expenditure of a very large sum of money at the outset. He would certainly increase the extent of land, and would suggest that the grant should be made to the discoverer of the most successful scheme within the next three years. This was not at all of the character of class legislation, for if the experiment should be successful, the effect would be to avert disaster, and to occasion great benefit to the colony generally.

The motion was then, by consent, withdrawn.

SUSPENSION OF SESSIONAL ORDER.

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL moved that the sessional order relative to the days of sitting be suspended, so as to admit of the House sitting on Tuesdays and Fridays.

Agreed to.