

Queensland



Parliamentary Debates
[Hansard]

Legislative Council

THURSDAY, 16 JULY 1874

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LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

Thursday, 16 July, 1874.

Official Record of Debates—"Hansard."—Audit Bill.—
Proposed Resumption of Runs.—Appropriation Bill.OFFICIAL RECORD OF DEBATES—
"HANSARD."

The Hon. A. H. BROWN moved—

That the Legislative Assembly's message of the 9th July, with a report from the Select Committee on the system of the publication of the official record of debates in Parliament, be restored to the paper.

Question put and passed.

The Hon. A. H. BROWN then moved—

That the report from the Select Committee of the Legislative Assembly, and the minutes of evidence, be printed.

Question put and passed.

The consideration of the Message was made an Order of the Day for to-morrow.

AUDIT BILL.

On the motion of the POSTMASTER-GENERAL, the House went into committee for the consideration of the Legislative Assembly's message with reference to the Council's amendment in this Bill and objecting to the insertion of new clause 30, as follows:—

"The Auditor-General shall have full power to make from time to time orders or rules for the conduct of the internal business of his department and to promote or suspend any of the officers clerks and others employed therein and to prescribe regulations and forms for the guidance of public accountants in making up and rendering their periodical accounts for confirmation. Provided always that all such regulations and forms shall be approved by the Governor in Council previously to the issue thereof."

The words "for confirmation," before the proviso, were omitted; and the word, "promotions," was inserted between "such" and "regulations," and the clause, as so amended, was agreed to, and reported to the House.

A Select Committee, consisting of the Hon. F. H. Hart, H. G. Simpson, and the Postmaster-General, was appointed to draw up the Council's reasons for amending their new clause 30, "with a view to meet" the wishes of the Legislative Assembly, and upon the committee's report to this effect, a message was sent down in the usual way to the Lower House.

PROPOSED RESUMPTION OF RUNS.

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL laid on the table of the House—Schedule of land proposed to be resumed from runs in the settled districts of Darling Downs, Moreton, Wide Bay, Port Curtis, and Kennedy, in pursuance of the powers conferred on the Legislature by the 10th section of the Act 31 Victoria, No. 46, and moved that it be printed.

Question put and passed.

The following message from the Legislative Assembly was received and read:—

"Mr. PRESIDENT,

"The Legislative Assembly having agreed to the following resolution, viz. :—

"That in order to encourage the settlement of population in the settled districts of the colony, and in pursuance of section 10 of 'The Crown Lands Alienation Act of 1868,' this House resolves to resume from the leases of the undermentioned runs the areas hereinafter specified, as described in the schedule, laid on the table of this House, of the lands proposed to be resumed from the runs in the said district.

SETTLED DISTRICT OF MORETON.

Acres.	To be resumed from the
9,580	Beaudesert Run.
17,990	Bromelton Run.
38,742	Buaraba Run.
91,520	Colinton Run.
30,824	Cochin Cochlin Run.
80,000	Cooyar Run.
57,147	Cressbrook Run.
29,760	Crow's Nest Run.
30,999	Dugandan Run.
68,320	Durundur Run.
96,000	Emu Creek Run.
76,800	Eskdale Run.
62,720	Fassiferun Run.
85,820	Franklyn Vale Run.
30,485	Grantham Run.
59,880	Helidon Run.
65,920	Kilcoy Run.
34,560	Melcombe Run.
71,817	Mount Brisbane Run.
120,320	Mount Stanley Run.
24,280	Nindooimba Run.
22,400	Palen Run.
38,780	Tamrookam Run.
17,974	Tarampa Run.
33,000	Taromeo Run.
47,560	Telemon Run.
42,300	Tent Hill Run.
9,445	Undullah Run.
6,601	Waverley Run.
19,490	Wivenhoe Run.

SETTLED DISTRICT OF DARLING DOWNS.

44,436	Beauaraba Run.
44,045	Canal Creek Run.
53,306	Canning Downs Run.
78,479	Cecil Plains Run.
15,614	Clifton Run.
49,920	East Prairie Run.
14,086	Ellangowan Run.
36,500	Irvingdale Run.
18,370	Eton Vale Run.
29,440	Goombungee Run.
17,700	Goomburra Run.
23,054	Gowrie Run.
179,480	Jimbour Run.
25,994	Jondaryan No. 1 Tract Run.
6,316	Jondaryan No. 2 Tract Run.
6,624	Jondaryan No. 3 Tract Run.
11,680	Lagoon Creek Run.
32,300	North Branch Run.
14,980	Peel's Plains or Felton Run.
21,417	Pilton and Haldon Run.
74,560	Rosalie Plains Run.
36,060	Rosenthal Run.

Aeres.	To be resumed from the
10,768	South Toolburra Run.
40,060	St. Ruth Run.
13,864	Talgai Run.
68,743	Tummalville Run.
10,560	Warra Warra Run.
31,401	Westbrook Run.
11,094	West Prairie Run.
116,500	Yandilla Run.

SETTLED DISTRICT OF WIDE BAY AND BURNETT.

9,627	Tantitha Run.
53,500	Gin Gin Run.
18,660	Miva Run.
15,900	Gutchy Run.
8,881	Dunmora Run.
23,350	Curra Run.
38,400	Bingera Run.

SETTLED DISTRICT OF PORT CURTIS.

50,720	Barmoya Run.
42,880	Booroon Run.
9,920	Carrara Run.
34,560	Glenmore Run.
17,600	Cawarral Run.
102,120	Gracemere Run.
33,920	Mount Larcomb Run.
26,240	Meadow Flats Run.
14,400	Riverston Run.

SETTLED DISTRICT OF KENNEDY.

14,400	Abington Run.
28,160	Balnagowan Run.
32,000	Greenmount Run.
51,200	Hamilton and Hopetown Run.
20,920	Homebush Run.
49,920	Lanecost Run.
14,000	Plain Creek Run.

" Beg now to present the same to the Legislative Council for their concurrence.

" WM. HENRY WALSH,
" Speaker.

" Legislative Assembly Chamber,
" Brisbane, 16th July, 1874."

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL, by leave,
moved—

That this message and the resolution be now
taken into consideration.

Honorable members had seen the resolution on the paper of the Assembly, and knew what it was. They could not object to proceeding with it at once and adopting it, seeing that the other House had passed it. As the Council had accepted the resumption clause of the Land Bill which, owing to their amendments, had been shelved, there could be little difficulty in their arriving at a conclusion upon the resolution without further delay. The Government deemed it expedient, in the interests of the public and in the interests likewise of the people who were flocking to these shores, not only from the mother country but from the other colonies, to bring forward the resolution for the resumption of lands named in it; and they did this in accordance with the tenth section of the Crown Lands Alienation Act of 1868, which authorised the resumption from the runs held under the ten years' leases in the settled

districts of areas not less than eight square miles, upon approval of both Houses of Parliament. The resolution included all the available land in East and West Moreton and Darling Downs districts, with the exception of some little bits under eight square miles in area, which could not be strictly resumed under the Act of 1868. The Government asked for all, because they should not be accused of partiality, as they would be, if they took some runs and not others. Honorable members would say that they were trying to save their friends and to act badly towards their enemies. In the Wide Bay, Port Curtis, and Kennedy districts, the Government deemed it right to take only certain runs which were likely to be settled upon; and, of course, in those districts, there was only a partial resumption proposed—where the people demanded land for settlement. He might state, for the information of honorable members, that, at the present time, on only four of the halves of runs in Darling Downs District resumed under the Act of 1868, could a selector take up the maximum of 10,000 acres—Jimbour, Rosalie, Canning Downs, and Tummalville; and, there, most of the land was either broken ridges or wallaby country; it was useless—the grass was eaten down by wallabies—the country was of such a rocky, bouldery nature, that it would be many years before it would be settled upon. It would be thrown in his teeth, doubtless, by a certain class, that there was no demand for land. If such a statement should be made, he had to deny it *in toto*. With regard to the homestead areas under the Act of 1872, he had to say that around Toowoomba, Warwick, and Ipswich, the whole of the land was taken up *bonâ fide* by selectors. The only place where the homestead areas were not taken up was Dalby; and he granted that very few selections had been made there. The reason was, that the land was not adapted for agriculture. But, in the other districts that he had named, and particularly at Rockhampton, and other places in the neighborhood of towns, where the Government proposed to resume additional land, the land was absolutely needed; and he had no hesitation in stating that it would be all taken up; and a much larger area than was proposed would be taken up by conditional purchasers. If ten times as much as had been resumed under the Act of 1872 had been available in Moreton and Darling Downs, it would all have been taken up as homestead selections, and it would have been settled by *bonâ fide* residents. That being the case, honorable members would have very little difficulty in coming to a determination that the land named in the resolution was really required for settlement. If the House should not agree to the resolution—he did not care to use threats—if some land was not given to the public, at the present time, there would be such a clamor before Parliament should meet again, that, in his opinion, no Government would be able to

exist forty-eight hours, unless they brought in a measure to throw open the whole of the land in the settled and the unsettled districts.

HONORABLE MEMBERS: Oh, oh! and Hear, hear.

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL: Gentlemen in the unsettled districts of the colony had better take warning in time! No Government would be able to stand against the force of popular opinion that would be brought to bear upon them in favor of opening the whole of the Crown lands of Queensland to selection. Consequently he hoped that honorable gentlemen would see that it would be as well to stave off the evil day as long as possible, by giving up the land where he was anxious that resumption should take place. He did not know whether it was necessary that he should state anything further. He had before him a list of the runs: on many of them there was not, at the present time, eight square miles left to be resumed under the Act of 1868. He did not refer to the Homestead Areas Act. It was not necessary for him to read the list. Honorable members were as well aware of the facts as he was. He hoped they would agree to the resolution, in the interests of the public, to satisfy the demand which existed for land in the settled portions of the colony. If they could not see their way clear to pass all the resumptions proposed, he hoped they would, at all events, agree to some of them; that was, to those bordering on towns—Ipswich, Toowoomba, Warwick—where more land was absolutely needed for settlement by the people.

The Hon. H. B. FITZ said he should make a few remarks with reference to the resolution. There was no doubt whatever that a very great responsibility had been thrown upon the Council, and, he must say, by a great want of moral courage on the part of some honorable members of the Legislature, when he found that the resolution was passed unanimously by the other House. Of course, the Assembly would have the credit of having passed the resolution. It now rested with the Council either to adopt the resolution or to reject it. He was opposed to it. As he had told the Government indirectly, and several members of Parliament, if a resolution was brought forward for the resumption of land required by the public, he should support it; but the present resolution was an attempted repeal of a certain portion of the Act of 1868, to place the power of resumption in the hands of the Minister for Lands instead of the Parliament. He had suffered severely for taking that power out of the hands of the Minister; the idea of doing so had originated with him, because that power had been greatly abused; hence the tenth clause of the Act of 1868. The House must not lose sight of the fact that if the resolution was carried, the Government would get possession of the land by proclamation, and the resumption of it from the present tenants would take place.

He found in the list that much land was included which was not required. The Government ought to have come up to the House with a map showing where the land was actually required. The House were perfectly aware that on many runs the land open to the public had never been touched. About three years since, when the Palmer Government were resuming land, he maintained that it was unnecessary to resume land from runs where a large amount was still open for selection, and he moved for a return to show the areas open and the selections which had been made up to that time. The return showed that there were several runs on which not an acre had been taken up. If the Government had shown that land was required, and where it was required, he should have been prepared to support this resolution for resuming it; but they had not done so. He did not think the House would shirk their responsibility in the present case, but they should throw out the resolution; unless the Postmaster-General chose to leave it to honorable members to amend the resolution, and select those runs where land was required by the public, and to leave out those where it was not required.

HONORABLE MEMBERS: No, no.

The Hon. H. B. FITZ: By the return to which he had referred, it was shown that in 1871 the land open for selection was:—

“Rosalie Plains, 72,274 acres.”

He believed that, up to the present time, none was taken up:—

“Goombungee Proper, 6,670; Portion in Toowoomba Agricultural Reserve, 22,760; ———, 29,430; Gowrie, 11,800; Westbrook, 6,100; Lagoon Creek, 5,290; Eton Vale, 100; Felton, 532; Beauaraba, 15,080; Clifton, nil; Cecil Plains, nil; Yandilla, 3,000; North Branch, nil; Haldon, 360; Pilton, nil; East Prairie, nil.”

That showed clearly where the land was not required. The Government had no right to try to repeal by resolution the law in force—to try to get the whole of the runs into their own hands, so as to exercise the power of resumption in an arbitrary manner. Was it not monstrous that the power should be placed in the hands of one Minister? He (Mr. Fitz) trusted that such an improper authority would not again be vested in a Minister; that while lands were held on lease in Queensland, the power of resumption would be left in the hands of Parliament, which was the only protection which the Crown tenants had. If the Postmaster-General chose to move in the matter, for the amendment of the resolution:—

HONORABLE MEMBERS: No, no.

The Hon. H. B. FITZ: He should agree; but he should vote against wholesale resumption—wholesale repudiation! It was nothing less than repudiation. There were one or two runs left out of the list, it was true, but that did not alter the fact. In West Moreton runs were left out.

AN HONORABLE MEMBER: No, no.

The Hon. H. B. FITZ: Upon the principle of wholesale resumption, why had not the Government taken the whole? If his suggestion was not acted upon, he should vote against the resolution. The people must have land if they required it. He thought that no land should be leased around towns, within a certain distance, if it was required for cultivation. But, why go away west to take up land which was not required for cultivation? It was very clear to him that the country could not have better evidence to show that the Government were not sincere, in the first instance, about the Land Bill, than the resolution now before the House. The introduction of the Bill was merely a political move. Why did not the Government bring forward some memorandum or return to show where land was required? That should have been their first step. If the resolution should not be passed, the Government would say to the public—"See! we did what we could to get you the land; the Assembly voted with us, but the Council voted against what the voice of the representatives of the people asked for; therefore, there is nothing at all to be done but to get rid of the Upper House." Never mind that. For himself, he thought there was nothing for the House to do but to reject the resolution.

HONORABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear.

The Hon. H. B. FITZ said he should hope that some honorable member would move the consideration of the resolution this day six months, and that the House would not shirk their duty, notwithstanding the responsibility of throwing out the resolution.

The Hon. T. L. MURRAY-PRIOR said his honorable friend who had just spoken had proposed to the Postmaster-General that the House should amend the resolution, and that honorable members should pick out the land where it was necessary to be resumed. He could not see how the House could do that, under the circumstances. For himself, he should be one to vote against the resolution. If the Government had been sincere in bringing forward the resolution, they could have brought it forward in another place, long before this, and before many honorable members of the Assembly had gone away. True, as appeared, it was passed by an unanimous vote in the other House; but, in fact, it was not an unanimous vote. Had not a large number of the party opposed to the Government left town for their homes, it was very likely that the discussion would have been fuller than it was, and that a very good show of opposition would have been made to the resolution; but it was useless for a few members to divide against the whole of the Government forces. The Palmer Ministry, of whom he had had the honor to be a member, when they found it necessary to bring forward a measure for the resumption of certain land, gave sufficient proof that they and their party were not selfish; and the result showed that the Council were not the selfish individuals

that they sometimes got the credit of being. If they had been, they would not have passed the Act of 1872. The Government knew, at that time, where land was required; they brought forward maps and laid them on the table of each House. There was not a member of Parliament who could not but choose to see the exact localities in which the resumptions were proposed. It was true the Government had resumed some runs where it was unnecessary to resume land, but there existed very good reasons for their doing so. The Postmaster-General said that all the homestead areas were taken up.

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL: No; in certain places.

The Hon. T. L. MURRAY-PRIOR: It was a pity that the honorable gentleman had not named the places where they were taken up. He knew a good deal of West Moreton, and he had no doubt that the homestead areas situated close to the towns were all selected—where a selector could go in and out in a day; but he could name two stations, not far from Ipswich, where, to his knowledge, not a single selection had been taken out of the eight square miles which had been resumed from each of those runs. That was a proof, and no one could deny it, that homestead areas were not required.

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL: The whole of Franklyn Vale was gone.

The Hon. T. L. MURRAY-PRIOR: Yes; Rosevale and other runs near centres of population were the very places where it might be necessary to resume land. Had the Government not been so malicious in their intentions—had they been more prudent—and had they played their political game in the manner that they ought to have done—they would be able to pass a resolution through the Council. They should have brought forward plans to show where selections had been made for homesteads and for conditional purchase, and where they required to resume additional land for selection. However it might have affected them, he, for one, believed that the Government would have secured support in the Council, and that they would have been able to pass what was required for the public. But after the way in which the amendments of the Council in the Land Bill had been rejected, to bring forward next day such a resolution as that now before the House showed the *animus* that influenced Ministers. Even if the Council allowed that the proposed resumption was necessary, that *animus* being shown, it would be their duty to reject the resolution. The Council had shown their willingness all along to deal justly with the country. It was the peculiar function of the Upper House to see justice properly administered. Why was not the Postmaster-General prepared with a return to show the Council where the land was required?

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL: He should show the honorable gentleman presently.

The Hon. T. L. MURRAY-PRIOR: The honorable gentleman might have shown it in his speech in moving the resolution. Afterwards, he (Mr. Murray-Prior) should not be able to allude to the information that might be given. Ministers never intended that this Land Bill should pass, and they knew that the resolution would not pass; but they wanted to make it appear that the Council were obstructing legislation on the land. The Council maintained the principle that compensation was due to those persons from whom the existing leases should be taken. After fighting for that, how was it possible that they could vote for the wholesale resumption of the runs now proposed? The passing of the resolution would do more harm to the bulk of the lessees than the Bill, because there were certain portions of the Bill which were good; but the resolution was all evil, with nothing to counterbalance it. The *animus* of Ministers was most clearly shown in the resolution. The Postmaster-General said that if the resolution was not passed, such a clamor would arise from the people that no Government could last any time who would not open the whole country to free selection. Well, whatever clamor might arise, honorable members were in the Council to do what was right; and he (Mr. Murray-Prior) trusted that the House would show by their vote that they would do right under any circumstances. He had thought it would be unadvisable to make an amendment that the resolution should be considered this day six months, and that it would be better if the Council said merely that they would not concur in the resolution; but, on further consideration, it seemed to him best to dispose of it in the manner first mentioned. He had not spoken to any honorable member on the subject, nor had he been asked to bring forward the amendment, and he was not aware if any other honorable member had an intention to do so. Having acted as the representative of the Government in the Council when resumptions under the Act of 1872 were agreed to, and having conducted them through the House; and having been, also, concerned in passing the good Act of 1868; he thought it was his duty, without being asked, to come forward and take upon himself any onus that might attach to the action he now deemed to be called for. They had all spoken a great deal lately on the land question, and it was hardly necessary to go into that question now; and, therefore, he presumed that this debate would not take up a long time. There was one thing he had to say, and he thought he should be in order in saying it now: he was sorry, last night, for several reasons, that he was unable to do what he wished. He did not think the country was aware what the Council, if put to a division, were prepared to do, so that the Land Bill might have passed. In three places the House had established that there should be compensation. He believed they

would have conceded five per cent. of the ten per cent.

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL: That was not the question.

The Hon. T. L. MURRAY-PRIOR: Perhaps it was irrelevant. He should not go into it, though he should like to have it placed on record. He was aware that it would be interesting; but there were other means of bringing it forward. He moved, by way of amendment—

That the word “now” be omitted, with a view to add, at the end of the question, “this day six months.”

The Hon. W. WILSON said he was very sorry that he was not able to support the resolution. He was sorry because he was aware that a resumption was necessary in some quarters. It was a great pity the Government had not brought forward a measure more palatable to the Council and to the country in general. He objected to the resolution on many grounds; amongst others, because it would make the Council actually “resume” the land, which appeared to him to be against the Act of 1868, under which the land was “resumable” by resolution of both Houses of Parliament. But the resumption lay with the Executive Council. Two other grounds of objection to the resolution were, that it was proposed to resume land in many quarters where it was not required, and that no compensation was to be allowed to those whose land would be taken. Parliament was a court of appeal between the leaseholders and the Executive, and Parliament was bound to take into consideration what was beneficial for the colony at large; and, of course, whether it would be well for the leaseholders to be subjected to the loss they would sustain if their runs were resumed, and whether the public would gain any advantage by the sudden withdrawal of the land from profitable occupation. He did not for one moment hold that the Government ought not to resume land. He quite agreed with the Postmaster-General that no Government could exist for any time that would neglect to keep the market properly supplied with land, not only in homestead areas, but for conditional purchase, and for sale by auction; and he saw no difficulty in the present or any other Government keeping the market supplied, provided that they took the proper course. As had been observed, he held that some information ought to have been laid before the House to show that land was now required. Doubtless, considering the hurried manner in which they proceeded, it was impossible for the Government to give information that would satisfy the House that land was required, and that the whole of the runs should be resumed for the benefit of the public. It was the duty of the Council to see that full justice was done to the lessees. It was never contemplated, he thought, that the House should be a mere

voting machine, to give their sanction to any act of resumption that might be proposed by the Executive, without taking into full consideration the wants of the country and the interests of the lessees. If the lands were resumed, it was to make a large profit out of them—or why resume them?—by the changed occupation; and he did not see why the Government should refuse to give a fair and reasonable compensation to the lessees from whom the land would be taken. It appeared to him that the Minister for Lands did, in another place, admit that compensation was desirable; and, in fact, the objection was made more to the nature of the compensation and the amount stipulated for by the Council, than to the principle. However, it was wrong in the Government not to have come forward with some reasonable scheme of compensation for those who would sustain loss from the resumption of the runs, if the resolution or the late Bill were carried. The resolution had been introduced without any previous notice, and it was the duty of Parliament to say "No" to it. He saw no other course for the Council to take. It was not their duty, now, to say what the compensation for the proposed resumption should be; and they must wait until the proposal was put before them in some reasonable shape. He should be happy to agree to the resumption of land on a large scale, all over the country, provided that the interests of the lessees were taken into consideration. The Government had made a great mistake in managing their land business. They had tried to accommodate themselves too much to some of their supporters, who seemed to be actuated more by a desire to do an injury to the lessees than to do good for the country. He should, therefore, support the amendment.

The Hon. F. T. GREGORY said, in addressing himself to the question before the House, he should really be very sorry so far to insult the intelligence of honorable members as to assume for one moment that they were going to entertain the message now before them. He said this at once, not from any spirit of extreme hostility to a measure of resumption, but taking into consideration what had transpired during the past month, and that, in the discussion of the Land Bill carefully in all its bearings, reasons had been given, full and apt, to show that that measure was not called for by the country, and would not be beneficial, how the Council could be expected to believe in the necessity of the sweeping resumption of the remainder of the runs in the settled districts now proposed, passed his comprehension. It was a mere assertion that land was wanted. Not one genuine argument had been addressed in support of it. True, areas of the country which had been resumed under the Homestead Act of 1872 had been taken up entirely, in certain localities; but, at the same time, there were large tracts

elsewhere untouched. It might be argued that the good land had been taken up, and that only inferior land remained open, and that it was the better class of land which was required. Without attempting to go over the statistics which he so recently brought forward in the Council, to show the limited amount of land appropriated for any useful purpose except depasturing stock, he should ask, if the sweeping resumption now proposed should be carried, what was to be done with the hundreds and thousands of sheep and cattle now in the hands of the pastoral lessees? He knew it had been argued that, if the land was not wanted, the present lessees would continue to occupy it. There was a great fallacy in that, because, when once the runs were resumed, those lessees would have no absolute right to the land, and if they had no such right they could not keep their stock on it, even if the Government, by some power, chose to say that they should occupy it. He must call to mind that if only two or three selectors took up 200 acres each on a resumed run, and resided there, the remainder was practically useless for the pastoral occupant. The lessee might be able to keep his stock on it for a few months; but the inevitable result would be that he must hurry that stock away into the interior for pasturage; and the country would not derive any benefit from the change. The two or three selections would bear an infinitesimal proportion to the interest which sustained Queensland as one of the foremost colonies of Australia at the present day. The time would come, and we were progressing towards it, when the agricultural occupation of the country would make it far more useful than it was even at present; but to take the country now from the pastoral lessees and sub-divide it, merely to give it to small selectors, would not result in the material advancement of the agricultural interest in Queensland, which was what was professed to be encouraged by the proposed resumption. He had shown before how little was the amount of agricultural settlement. Now, he need only refer to Darling Downs. To the west of the Warwick railway, unless it was close to the town itself, there was hardly a single farm of any sort under cultivation. There might be a few patches of maize, here and there; but the promises which had been made, year after year, to grow crops out of the immediate skirts of the Main Range had been a complete farce. On Cumkillinbar Reserve was some of the richest land in the district. It was set apart years ago; every effort had been made to pursue agriculture there; farm after farm had been taken up; but the wretched, unfortunate selectors had pined away, year after year, and had either had to sell their selections to the adjoining lessee or to pledge them, to exist. At the present moment he believed there was not one left. Not only was no reason given for the resolution, as re-

garded the requirements of the country, but the interests of the country did not admit of so serious an injury being done as the proposed resumption would inflict. Already the immediate prospects of Queensland had been damaged by the introduction of the Land Bill; and yet, only twenty-four hours after that measure was defeated, the resolution was brought forward. Sufficient stress had not been laid upon the real injury which the country was likely to sustain by the introduction of such a measure at all. It was very fortunate for the colony that the Bill had been thrown out. He should feel it to be his duty to support the amendment.

The Hon. J. F. McDougall said he concurred entirely in the remarks of the three honorable gentlemen who had preceded him. He should not go over the same ground, but merely refer to what he considered to be an inconsistency of the Government in bringing forward the resolution. Only yesterday, the Council dealt ignominiously with a measure providing for the lands of the country to be taken up in small areas, and no sooner had they done so than the resolution was brought forward for the resumption of nearly the whole of the runs in the settled districts, to be thrown open to free selection under the Act of 1868. Where was the policy of the Government? Consistency, they had none. It struck him that the Council had no other course left but to vote for the amendment. Had the resolution been put before them in a different shape, providing for the resumption of certain land where land was necessary to meet the wants of the people for settlement, he had not the slightest doubt the House would have been prepared to support the Government in the same spirit as such a proposition should be made. But such was not the case. The Government should know where land was required. It was not for the Council to take on themselves the responsibility of amending the resolution, and he for one should object to such a course being taken, as it would be a very invidious task for honorable gentlemen to select the runs which should be resumed. He should not, however, shrink from voting against the resolution.

The Hon. H. G. Simpson said he must confess that he was never more utterly and thoroughly disappointed in a political matter than by the way in which the resolution had been brought forward. He had been an advocate always for proceeding by resolution for the resumption of land, and for resuming land in the utmost quantity necessary for the public requirements; and he did hope, on the withdrawal of the Land Bill in consequence of the amendments made in it by the Council, that if the Government thought it necessary to proceed by resolution they would not put before the House such a proposal as could hardly be concurred in. He was sorry to say that it was impossible for him to agree to the resolution. If it pointed out the runs

in the different parts of the country where land was required for settlement, he should support it heartily. The House knew that the resolution included runs where land was not required, now, but where a considerable area had been open for many years and remained untouched. There was no reason given for the resumption of the whole of the runs in certain of the settled districts. The only pretext of a reason that he could make out was, that the Government proposed to resume all the runs for fear they should be open to the imputation of partiality. But, so far as that went, he feared they could not escape the imputation of partiality. As far as he understood it, in Moreton and Darling Downs districts the runs were selected in a manner that must, at all events, give color to envious individuals who were inclined to impute motives to the Government. He did not mean to say it was actually so, that the Government had acted partially; but there was a very fair starting point for those who were inclined to make such an imputation. In resuming the land in such a wholesale manner, it must be remembered that there must be an enormous sacrifice of revenue.

HONORABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear.

The Hon. H. G. Simpson: He had heard it stated by honorable members to be £15,000, and by others double that amount. He rather thought it was about, say, £25,000 a year. That was a medium.

The Hon. H. B. Fitz: £28,000.

The Hon. H. G. Simpson: That was something to sacrifice for a crotchet; and he looked upon the proposal of the Government as nothing but a crotchet. It was an arrangement invented, so to say, for the Council, to punish the House for having dared to make amendments in the Land Bill sent up by the Government. That the Government wished that Bill to pass, he did not believe, from the beginning to the end of the proceedings in connection with it. Their intention was to get rid of it, and to put on the shoulders of the Council the burden of getting rid of it. He thought the Council could bear it. The bringing forward of the resolution as a punishment to the Council for having dared to make amendments in the Land Bill was a thing the House should not submit to. He was sorry that he was compelled to advocate such a course, because the proper way to resume land was by resolution of both Houses, as it was required by the public. He could not conclude without making a reference to the statement of the Postmaster-General, that it was impossible for the Government to resume certain special tracts of country in different runs, because, if they did so, they could not give selectors 10,000 acres apiece. That was, he thought, rather a curious reason to come from an honorable gentleman who, the other day, advocated the passing of a Bill to give only 1,280 acres to selectors.

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL: He did not say that at all. He might explain to the honor-

able gentleman that he had stated that there were only four runs in Darling Downs district at the present time on which selectors could take up the maximum of 10,000 acres—Canning Downs, Rosalie Plains, Tummaville, and Jimbour; and that all the land there was rubbish, and not fit to be taken up.

The Hon. H. G. SIMPSON: It was used as an argument against those runs being resumed, that 10,000 acres could not be selected on any of them; whereas, originally, the main principle of the Land Bill which was before the House only yesterday, and which was supported to the best of his ability, and well supported by the honorable gentleman, was to confine selectors to 1,280 acres. The resolution was brought before the House in such a manner that the Council could not possibly accede to it without forfeiting their dignity.

The Hon. W. F. LAMBERT: His honorable friend, the Postmaster-General, must think honorable members of the Council had a wonderful appetite for land when such a sweeping resolution was brought forward for their approval. He was aware that it would be necessary to resume land. When it was wanted, it must be given up; and he should be ready always to vote for its resumption when it was required for settlement. But the land comprised in the resolution was not wanted. A portion of it was wanted, certainly, as he could speak for the district he came from wanting land to be thrown open to selection.

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL: You vote for it.

The Hon. W. F. LAMBERT: But, before going in for such a resumption as 3,300,000 acres, some stronger argument than the Postmaster-General had advanced must be brought forward. According to the Government regulations for stocking country, every square mile was supposed to carry 100 sheep; or, about six acres a sheep. The land proposed to be resumed represented 550,000 sheep, supposing that it was all sheep country; or, it would carry an equivalent of cattle. Sheep, he believed, at the present time, yielded something like 6s. 8d. per head per annum from wool and increase of stock; so that 550,000 would give a return of £185,000 per annum. He was of opinion that £90,000 of that would be spent in the colony, for labor, carriage, &c., with the rent. If the resolution should be carried, that amount, nearly £100,000 a-year, would be lost to the country—upon the expectation that some of the land now so profitably occupied would be taken up by selectors! That, he thought, was a very strong argument against the resolution, if argument was necessary; and he should vote against it.

The Hon. A. H. BROWN: There was one great objection to the passing of the resolution, and for that he should vote against it, even if it was of a different character, and most desirable in other respects. At this late period, when the shadow of dissolution had

fallen upon the session, he objected to have such a resolution rushed through the House. He believed that, to-morrow, the Appropriation Bill would be sent up. The Council had no time to consider the resolution. He could not have imagined that resumptions of such a character would have been proposed and forced upon their attention at the last moment, when they could not have expected anything of the kind. They were asked to resume very large tracts of country, which country was certainly not required for selection. The proposed resumption was entirely different from the practice which had hitherto obtained. In 1872 the resumption was proposed in the most formal way. It was distinctly shown by the records of Parliament that the Minister for Lands then proposed the resumption of certain areas advised by a competent commissioner, and that the areas of eight square miles, or larger, as necessity occurred, were taken from runs where land was required by the public. He could not, at present, see any reason why the large areas now proposed should be resumed by the Government; but he could see very great reasons why they should not be resumed. The spirit of the Act of 1868 was, that as soon as portions of the leased halves of the runs were required for settlement they should be resumed in the regular way, and the rest left for the lessee, and rent paid for it. Now, according to the resolution before the House, the revenue would lose something like £30,000 a year, which was a matter of very serious consequence to the country. The quantity of land proposed to be resumed was something like 3,000,000 acres, in a colony with a population, including every man, woman, and child, of about 150,000. It must not be forgotten that there were large areas of the previously resumed halves of the runs, capable of being applied for at any moment by persons who wanted land. He did not think that there was much under 3,000,000 acres of that land now open for selection, because, in the northern districts, and in other districts, the areas so resumed were left intact. No one had been courageous enough to enter upon such lands. It was only in the most favored districts that land was so necessary. He should be the last to object, and he did not think there was a member of the House who would object, in any way, to necessary resumption for occupation. As honorable members had expressed it, if the resolution was of a simple character, to benefit the public, there would be no hindrance to its passing—not a shadow of opposition; on the contrary, honorable members would have done their best to pass it. The Government had acted unwisely in asking for too large a quantity of land, because it was evident to the whole community that the land was not required, and that its resumption from lease would be a serious loss to the revenue. The Postmaster-General had pro-

posed that they should deal with the list *seriatim*, and exclude such runs as it did not appear to the House to be necessary to resume. That would be very objectionable. For his (Mr. Brown's) part, he should not like to sit as a judge in such a matter; and he should be perfectly incompetent, as a resident of the North, to sit in judgment and to say what should be resumed and what not. The House should refuse to perform such a part, and should throw on the Government the responsibility of bringing forward appropriate resolutions, which could be approved of by Parliament. It appeared to him that the resolution for resuming the land in the mode proposed could not have been properly digested by the Government. They should have appointed a surveyor or the commissioners to visit the localities and to examine carefully what portions of the runs should be resumed, and when the reports from the proper officers came in the Government could act upon them. It might be invidious to refer to a run in the Wide Bay district which was in his occupation; but he referred to it because he could speak of it with confidence; and, certainly, he knew more of the districts of Wide Bay and Burnett than of Darling Downs. He intended to show that the resumption in one case, at any rate, in the Wide Bay District was not necessary. In the report of the Commissioner for Wide Bay District, for 1872, he found the following:—

"At the head of navigation of the River Burnett, and immediately above, there exists a considerable area of agricultural land on the resumed halves of Kolan and Gin Gin, upon which selections have already been made to the extent of nearly six thousand (6,000) acres of mixed classes of land, leaving some three thousand (3,000) yet available for agricultural purposes.

"With reference to pastoral lands, I have to report that since the lands on the Burnett and Kolan have been thrown open to selection, with the exception of the lessees of the runs in that neighborhood, there have been no inquiries or demand for lands for pastoral purposes; and, when the public require such, the areas available for grazing purposes will, for some years to come, be practically unlimited."

Therefore, he looked upon the resolution with some degree of horror, from the fact that it included specially for resumption a run which appeared up to this time to be quite unnecessary. He did not make those remarks because he happened to be the lessee, as, really, so far as his experience went, past resumption had caused no annoyance to him. He should not, as he had said, object to a reasonable resumption. But if there were runs, such as in his own district, which were not required, he might reasonably think that it was the same in other districts of the colony. He saw none resumed near the large towns. Within a radius of twenty miles of Maryborough there were stations, and there was country there which he must say it was as

desirable to resume as any part of Darling Downs. Why that was not resumed he could not conceive. Therefore, it appeared to him that an invidious distinction had been made. The runs of nearly every honorable member of the Council were to be resumed.

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL: Hear, hear.

The Hon. A. H. BROWN: As had been remarked, it might be a punishment to them, for their contumacious opposition. But they must do what they conceived to be their duty. There was one point that the House must not lose sight of. If the large areas proposed should be resumed, and they were offered to the public for selection, the rent paid by the pastoral tenant ceased, of course; and the only advantage would be to the conditional selector, who would have his few acres, while the great proportion of the land would lie useless and unpaid for. The country at large would be a loser. There was nothing in the resolution to warrant his concurrence in it, and he should vote against it.

The Hon. J. TAYLOR said he should detain the House a very short time. Every honorable member should, he thought, say a few words upon the resolution. The Postmaster-General, as usual, commenced his speech with a threat. It seemed impossible for that honorable gentleman to get on his legs without making a threat to the House, as to what the people would do. He (Mr. Taylor) did not know what school the honorable gentleman was brought up in; but the Postmaster-General was evidently a fighting character.

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL: He did not make a threat.

The Hon. J. TAYLOR: The honorable gentleman said he did not do so. Well, he looked very hard, indeed, at the opposite side of the House when he talked of the country clamoring for land and for free selection everywhere: he looked at the two or three honorable members sitting there, who were outside squatters, as much as to remind them that if they did not vote with him, they must look out! It was a fearful stare—it was a perfect threat—levelled at those unfortunate men; and it was a very wrong thing for the representative of the Government! The Government had been in labor a long time, and what had the honorable gentleman brought forth? Nothing at all. He (Mr. Taylor) was very sorry, indeed, for the position of the honorable gentleman. He sat at the head of his bench alone. In the division, to-night, the honorable gentleman would sit alone. He was to be pitied. In the other House Ministers could back up one another in their statements, true or false; but in the Council there was no one at all to take care of the Postmaster-General; and honorable members knew that, at times, a nurse was very useful. But, now to go into the matter before the House. If the resolution should not pass, the clamor would be so great that—there would be a revolution!—a regiment of soldiers would be required to protect the House.

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL: He did not say so.

The Hon. J. TAYLOR: He had the words down.

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL: He must object to the honorable member using words as his which he never uttered. He never said a word about a regiment of soldiers.

The Hon. J. TAYLOR: He had them down. The honorable member said the lives of honorable members would not be safe. Well, the Council were an independent body, to use their best judgment in all matters brought before them; and clamor, here or there, would not, he hoped, make any difference to honorable members. He denied that there was any clamor for land. There was always a clamor by two or three political agitators in the small towns, who, sometimes, thereby raised themselves by clamor into a political position, even to become members of Parliament. The very moment the land question was settled, those men would lose their hold of the public, which they had got, no doubt, by their clamor and constant agitation; but, except by such men, there was no clamor for land in the country. The Land Bill had been thoroughly discussed, and a great many amendments had been made carefully in it, and it was sent down from the Council a very respectable measure. In another place, what did he find? That the amendments of the Council were treated with contempt, and they were sent back without the Assembly having deigned to look at them. Then the Council so lowered their dignity as to ask for a conference.

HONORABLE MEMBERS: No, no.

The Hon. J. TAYLOR: And what was the result? That the managers for the Council were treated with contempt.

The Hon. T. L. MURRAY-PRIOR rose to order. The Honorable Mr. Taylor should not make an assertion without he knew perfectly well what he was saying. He (Mr. Murray-Prior) denied entirely that the managers were treated with contempt.

The Hon. J. TAYLOR: Well, perhaps he was very wrong in saying so. He was told outside that one of the members of the Council had been treated with very great contempt.

The Hon. T. L. MURRAY-PRIOR: It was very bad taste of the honorable gentleman to use such expressions in the House.

The Hon. J. TAYLOR: He did not take from the late Postmaster-General his judgment in any matter. He trusted he had as much brains as the honorable gentleman: he could express himself as well. The Honorable Mr. Murray-Prior was only a member of the House—one of themselves;—he did not stand in the position of the honorable gentleman opposite—the representative of the Government, the Postmaster-General, the leader, the chief of the House! He must not dare to get up and attempt to control him (Mr. Taylor), an independent member, and tell him what

to say—him who was as old as the honorable member, probably.

The Hon. T. L. MURRAY-PRIOR rose to a point of order. The honorable gentleman was personal, he thought. What he said he meant.

The Hon. J. TAYLOR: And what he said he meant.

The Hon. F. H. HART: Perhaps he could explain matters. The managers of the conference were treated with the greatest courtesy and respect by the managers for the other House, with one solitary exception. As he said, there was one exception in which it was otherwise;—but not by a member of the Council, he was glad to say. The members of the Council were quite aware of what was due to their dignity.

The Hon. J. TAYLOR: He was thankful to find that the matter was, so far, set right. He maintained that if one member of the conference was insulted, the whole body was insulted. He thanked the Honorable Mr. Hart for having confirmed what he had said.

The Hon. T. L. MURRAY-PRIOR: The gentlemen who were at the conference were now present. Any one who had felt himself insulted would now rise and say so. When his honorable friend, Mr. Hart, alluded to an exception, he did not allude to a member of the Council.

The Hon. F. T. GREGORY said he felt bound to rise in answer to the Honorable Mr. Murray-Prior. He had no doubt that the particular event which took place, and which was presumed to have been an insult to the members of the conference, was pointed at himself. But he did not take it as an insult. It emanated from an individual who was in that state that he (Mr. Gregory) could not feel it to be an insult, whatever it might be. He must say that one and all of the members present at the conference thoroughly expressed their dissatisfaction and disagreement with the way that that one individual acted.

The Hon. H. B. FITZ said he should like to ask the honorable member who that individual was?

The PRESIDENT: No; this really must cease.

The Hon. J. TAYLOR: He had to thank another honorable member, and he felt very grateful to him for what he had said. The Bill was referred to a free conference, and no result came from the conference. The House went carefully through the Bill again in committee, and they did not, as they should have done, take the amendments *in globo*, to save time, but considered them *seriatim*. What was the result? The Assembly would not look at them; they agreed to consider them that day six months. Now, the resolution was brought forward, and it was identical with the Bill, so far as the proposed resumption was concerned. The Bill proposed to resume all the runs under the ten years' leases; the resolution did nearly

the same. How could the Government expect the Council to pass the resolution after the Bill was thrown out? The resumption now proposed included nearly three millions and a half acres of land, yielding a revenue of about £28,000 a year. That was a very serious matter. The land was now worth so much. In three or four years it would be worth thirty-three per cent. more than now. In the meantime, it would yield a good rent, and it was not required for settlement. Why were the Government so anxious to resume it? Well, he had no hesitation in saying that the resolution would be thrown out, and very justly too. As regarded auction sales, nothing of the sort was provided by the resolution, the lands resumed under which would be open to selection; but there was something about them in the Bill. The lands resumed could not be put up to auction. He saw by the Estimates of Ways and Means that the receipts for sales by auction for next year were put down at £18,000 only.

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL: Six months.

The Hon. J. TAYLOR: Only £9,000 for six months. It was a very extraordinary thing that, where there were millions and millions of acres of land, the Government would not sell it by auction. But they were willing to fritter it away by selection at long dates of payment. The Government could raise half-a-million of money by selling land at auction at once, and relieving the country from a large amount of taxation. Let the Government take the land which was required, and not resume the whole country. He had listened attentively, in the other House, to the speech of the Minister at the head of the Land Department, but no argument was adduced in favor of the resumption beyond that extraordinary one that the Government must take up all the runs to show their impartiality. But the late Minister for Lands, Mr. Thompson, had used the same argument, when he took away land from the squatters—he, too, would not be partial. What was the consequence? Only two or three of the runs were touched; and on the others, not an acre was taken up. When the Act of 1868 was passed there were 25,000,000 acres resumed; out of that land, according to the returns, about 3,000,000 acres were selected; and there were left about 22,000,000 acres now open for selection. What had become of all that land? Had it gone below? Yet the House were now asked to consent to the resumption of over 3,000,000 acres! Why the Government persisted, after the fall of the Land Bill, in bringing forward such a resolution, he could not understand. He should vote for the amendment.

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL said he did not think it necessary to reply on the debate, because the arguments that had been advanced in favor of the amendment were very few indeed. In the speech of the Honorable Mr. Wilson, the one argument of compensation

cropped up. That had been argued over and over again on the Bill which was shelved yesterday. The fourteenth clause of the Act of 1868 gave a second pre-emptive right to the pastoral lessees in lieu of compensation for the ten years' leases.

The Hon. J. F. McDougall: Nothing of the sort.

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL: He was in the Assembly when the Act was passed. With reference to what had been stated by the Honorable Mr. Gregory, about cultivation not having succeeded on the resumed land at Cumkillinbar; he (the Postmaster-General) had over and over again pointed out that the Dalby District was not within the rain-belt; but the honorable gentleman did not tell the House about the Allora selections, and those in the Warwick and Toowoomba districts, where agriculture had succeeded admirably. Of the land resumed under the Act of 1868, on Clifton Run, not an acre was left; on East Prairie, not a single acre; Ellangowan, not an acre; Eton Vale, none. That was, all land resumed under the Act of 1868 was gone.

The Hon. H. B. Fitz: There was none three years since.

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL: On Goomburra, there were 11,000 acres left. That, he presumed, was scrub or desert; he had no hesitation in saying it was. Gowrie, 9,750 acres left. He had no doubt that that was wallaby country.

The Hon. J. TAYLOR: That was wanted in exchange, the other day.

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL: Irvingdale, 6,400 acres left. That was scrub. Jondaryan, 1, 2, and 3, only 200 acres. North Branch, nil; Peel's Plains and Felton, not a single acre left. Pilton and Haldon, only 300 acres. Rosalie Plains, a large amount; he believed a good deal of that was wallaby land, bordering on the Main Range. Rosenthal, nil; South Toolburra, nil; St. Ruth's, 2,400 acres; Talgai, nil. He wanted to find another—Cecil Plains, 100 acres only left.

The Hon. J. TAYLOR: It was a mistake.

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL: West Prairie, not a single acre; Yandilla, not a single acre. From that, honorable members would see that there was a demand for land in all the places he had named. He had no doubt that if, in the back places, all the land was thrown open to-morrow for conditional purchase, it would go; but not as homestead areas. In the Allora, Warwick, and Toowoomba districts, agriculture had succeeded admirably, and the farmers were doing as well as anywhere else in Australia. He had no hesitation in saying that the wheat crops in the rain-belt were unequalled. Last harvest the average was something like thirty bushels to the acre. In South Australia it was only eleven in good seasons; last year it was only seven. The selectors in the places he had named on the Downs averaged thirty to thirty-five bushels an acre. If the rest of the land there was

thrown open to selection at once, he had no doubt the colony would soon do largely with flour what was already done with sugar.

HONORABLE MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL: Queensland would soon be exporting flour, as she was now exporting sugar. He believed that, from what he knew from the small farmers. Of course, he was speaking of the land in the rain-belt. The Hon. W. Fitz called the proposed resumption partial, and said that all the runs were comprised in the resolution. In the two Moretons and in Darling Downs all the runs were included, with the exception of some few on which there were only a few hundred acres which could not be resumed under the Act of 1868, because it was not possible to find a tract of eight square miles:—Gladfield, Greenbank, Maryland, North Tulburra, Strathmillar, and Swan Creek.

The Hon. H. B. FITZ: Where was Watts' run?

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL: There was not a single selection made on it. He knew all about the resumptions;—he knew every selection, either himself or by other means. He was really sorry that honorable gentlemen could not see the question in the light that he did. It was a pity they could not see themselves as others outside saw them;—but the beam was in their own eyes. He knew what the public would say:—"What is the use of our representatives sending resolutions to the Upper House, constituted as it is, at the present time;—it is not likely that honorable members interested largely in the settled districts of the colony will allow selectors to go on their runs, as they would not even allow our members in the lower branch of the Legislature to receive some small compensation for their services to the country; but they compensate themselves in refusing to allow the resumptions to pass."

The Hon. H. B. FITZ rose to call the honorable member to order.

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL: He was merely illustrating the action of honorable members on the present question compared with their action on the Payment of Members Bill, as it might appear to the public. But he should say no more. It was not his intention to go to a division on the resolution. If he did so, he should object to the votes of many honorable members who would vote on the other side. He durst say the passing of the resolution would make a difference of £20,000 a year to the Honorable Mr. Taylor, if the country he held was taken from him. Honorable members might now yield gracefully, and make themselves idolised out of doors. He regretted that honorable members could not see themselves as others, out of doors, saw them.

The Hon. H. B. FITZ: Why was Gin Gin, belonging to the Honorable A. H. Brown, resumed, and not the Speaker's run?

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL: He was not aware of a single acre having been selected out of the run of the Honorable Mr. Walsh; consequently, the Minister for Lands did not take the Speaker's run in his proposed resumption. On the other hand, Gin Gin had been very largely made use of by selectors. If he was rightly informed, the whole of the resumed part of that run had been taken up. Hence the necessity that arose for resuming an additional area on that run.

The question was put on the amendment, which was affirmed, and the resolution was ordered to be taken into consideration this day six months.

APPROPRIATION BILL.

A message was received from the Legislative Assembly, transmitting the Appropriation Bill—No. 3, for the concurrence of the Council.

On the motion of the POSTMASTER-GENERAL, the first and second readings were agreed to, and the Bill was committed.

The Hon. T. L. MURRAY-PRIOR, referring to the item of £30,000 for the conveyance of mails, asked, what provision had been made for the subsidy?

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL: There was £6,000 appropriated for the conveyance of mails by water. The A.S.N. Company got about £4,000 for performing the service to all the northern ports north of Rockhampton, and likewise accommodating all the places at which the Torres Straits mail steamers did not call. In reality, the company got nothing out of it, as they returned the subsidy in light, pilotage, and harbor dues, and the country got the service for next to nothing. If the Government had no contract, they would have to pay so much per letter, which would come to a great deal more than the amount now paid to the company. The Torres Straits mail service cost no more than the colony had had to pay the P. and O. Company. The Imperial authorities handed over to the colony about £5,000 a year, being at the rate of fivepence per letter conveyed from England; and the dues paid by the steamers being taken into consideration, the cost of the service to the colony was about £20,000 a year, or £10,000 for the six months.

The Hon. G. SANDEMAN observed that from the low rates offered it was impossible to get proper men to undertake mail contracts in the outside districts; and he referred to the difficulties in the mail arrangements in his own district.

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL spoke of the difficulty of getting persons to take contracts, which was not, however, on account of the low rates.

The Bill went through committee, and was advanced through all its subsequent stages, and passed.