

Queensland



Parliamentary Debates
[Hansard]

Legislative Assembly

WEDNESDAY, 9 JUNE 1875

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY.

Wednesday, 9 June, 1875.

Continental Railway Bill.

CONTINENTAL RAILWAY BILL.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS
moved—

That the Speaker leave the chair, and the
House resolve itself into a Committee of the
Whole for the further consideration of this Bill.

The question was put and passed, and the
House went into committee accordingly.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS moved, that clause 5, as follows, stand part of the Bill:—

"5. Whenever the whole or any part of a run within the said reserve shall be resumed from lease by virtue of the fifty-fifth section of 'The Pastoral Leases Act of 1863' such resumption shall have the effect of withdrawing from lease the lands so resumed to the extent next hereinafter provided but not further or otherwise and the lessee shall have and be subject to the following rights and liabilities that is to say—

- (1.) The land resumed shall be subject to reservation for township reserves and public purposes under the provisions of the laws in force for the time being relating to such reservation and shall also be subject to selection and alienation under the provisions of this Act
- (2.) The lessee shall until such reservation selection or alienation be at liberty to occupy the whole of the land so resumed and shall continue to pay rent for so much thereof as shall not from time to time have been so reserved selected or alienated
- (3.) Upon such reservation selection or alienation his right to occupy the land so reserved selected or alienated as the case may be shall cease and determine and he shall be entitled to a reduction of rent proportionate to the area from time to time so reserved selected or alienated
- (4.) The lessee shall have and may exercise the right of pre-emption conferred on him by the fifty-fourth section of the said Act over any part of his run that shall not for the time being have been so reserved or selected or have been proclaimed for sale by auction or as a homestead area."

Mr. C. J. GRAHAM said that his object in rising was to propose as an amendment that the following sub-clause be inserted before sub-clause 1:—

The lessee of each run or portion of a run so resumed shall be entitled to a lease of one-half part thereof on the same terms as the whole was held by him before resumption and such part may be called the "leased half."

He believed that, on the previous evening, he had put it pretty plainly before the committee why such a division should be made by the Government; but, before entering into the question, he wished to take an opportunity of deprecating the conduct of some honorable members opposite in treating every amendment which was made by honorable members on his side of the committee as being brought forward for the purpose of favoring the pastoral lessees. No matter whatever he and honorable members near him might consider for the good of the country, there were honorable members opposite who appeared to suffer from squatter on the brain, and to think that all was done for the benefit of the pastoral lessees. He deprecated any such intention on his part. He considered that as legislators for the colony they were bound to consider every class in it, particularly the producing

classes, whether they were manufacturers, miners, graziers, farmers, or what; it was the duty of the committee to consider first of all the main benefit of the country, and then how far it was benefited by making the various classes as prosperous as possible. It was to the interest of that committee that every class should be as prosperous as possible; such was his object, and there was no reason why the pastoral lessees should not be as prosperous as possible; as to their rights, he had always contended that their rights were to be found in their lease, and nothing else. As regarded the tenure of the pastoral lessees, he was very anxious that some Minister for Lands should take the matter in hand and improve it; for they were constantly hearing on the one hand of the squatters holding land for an almost nominal rent, and from the lessees themselves, that they were not willing to make improvements upon their lands, as their tenure was so slight. He hoped some Minister for Lands would see his way clear in the interest of the country, as much as in the interest of the lessees, to give a better tenure, and to exact, on the other hand, a better rent.

HONORABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear.

Mr. C. J. GRAHAM: He wished the committee to understand that he and honorable members near him were not actuated by any feeling for individuals in the amendments they brought forward, but simply by a desire to promote the welfare of the colony at large. Now the Government by their Bill intended to resume the whole of the runs within the Railway Reserve mentioned, and having resumed them, to give a new tenure until the lands were required; and it was agreed, that having decided to sell a large portion of those lands, that would be the best method of dealing with them; but by his amendment it would be seen that he was of a different opinion. The great objection he had to the Government proposition was, that whilst they would resume a large tract of country they would give a worse tenure to the pastoral lessees than they had at present, whereas he thought that instead of that they should give them a better tenure. He proposed, therefore, that instead of taking away the whole of a run at once, and putting it into the market, only one half should be taken, as it would always be in the power of the Government to resume the other half when it was desirable to do so; he thought that only one half should go into the hands of the Government at once, and that the other half should remain as at present. The other reason he had for proposing his amendment was to a certain extent a financial one. The great object of some of the amendments which were to follow that now before the committee, was to prevent the sale of the lands before they had acquired that great increase in their value which it was well known they would acquire after the completion of the railway. The plan he proposed was,

for the Government to sell the land in alternate blocks, say of 10,000 acres each, and then, in a few years, when they had become more valuable, the lands in the intervening blocks could be sold; and also that they should treat the resumed halves of the runs in the same way, and with the division which he proposed in his sub-clause, the tenure would be precisely the same as now. The five sub-clauses merely provided the proper machinery, so that as soon as Parliament had decided upon making the railway, the Government would have some fifteen or eighteen months in which to get all the divisions completed. He thought the proposition would not only be useful to the colony, but would provide for sales of land on terms which were likely to be more advantageous than those proposed in the Bill.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS said that the honorable member for Clermont had put his amendment very fairly before the committee, and had stated very clearly that it was his intention to follow it up with others; also, that one of the principles of the amendments was distinct from those in the Government Bill, namely, that by the Government Bill it was sought to sell the land and make the railway with the money so obtained. If, however, the amendments of the honorable member were carried, the land was not to be sold until the railway was completed. It was not necessary for him to discuss the matter at length, as it had already been debated. There was great force in the argument that the lands would increase in value after the line was completed, but the Government proposed not to commence the railway until there was no risk of its being made a tax upon the country, whilst, if they left the sale of the land until the line was completed, when the time arrived for the repayment of the cost there might be, owing to some unforeseen circumstances, some difficulty in raising the money, and the loan might remain as a permanent burden upon the whole country. He thought that when they were dealing with the revenue of other districts, as well as that belonging to the district through which the railway would pass, they could not be too careful; and it was that principle which had given to the Government a large number of supporters, whose constituents might not otherwise have been favorable to the proposed line of railway. It was a question whether the committee were favorable to the sale of land now, or to a speculative rise in the price of it when the line was completed; he considered the Government plan was the safer one of the two. With regard to the other principle of the honorable member for Clermont, he confessed that the manner in which it was proposed to deal with the squatting leases, was in accordance with the principle always held in regard to those leases, namely, that they should be held by the pastoral lessees until persons were found who required the land for the purpose of settlement

and were prepared to give a better price for them. The rent hitherto paid for those leases had been infinitesimally small, but the ground upon which that had been fixed was, that only a temporary tenure was given—that they were merely tenants until the land was required for the purpose of settlement more profitable to the country. The prices proposed by the Government on the reserves was 10s. per acre; that was the upset price at auction, and it was so small as to be a sufficient guarantee that the land would not be sold until the money was actually needed. But even if the Government got 10s. an acre for those lands, it was to the interest of the country that they should be sold rather than be leased at the present low rental, for it was not likely that the rents would be raised, at any rate for a long time, so high as to pay interest on that 10s. an acre. In addition to that, if it was thought that the upset price of 10s. an acre was not sufficient, and that the mere fact of persons buying at that price was not a guarantee of its value, and that there was a demand for it—if it was thought that it would be purchased by speculators and by persons who were merely desirous of dispossessing the present lessees, without turning the land to account—then it was optional to propose that the upset price should be raised, when the clause bearing on that subject was under consideration. He thought that the principle contained in the Government Bill, which was opposed to the amendment, was, that the Government should not run the risk of constructing a railway, and then trust to Providence to repay the cost of it by the sale of land. With regard to the position of the pastoral lessees under the Bill, he believed it would be that which had always been claimed by the squatters, and that they would hold the land under the same tenure as at present; they would be simply tenants at will until the land was required for settlement, which would be proved by any number of men coming forward and proving that they were willing to pay a certain sum for the land for the purpose of settlement. Therefore, he hoped that the land principles of the Bill would be adhered to. He confessed that there was some appearance of advantage in the amendment of the honorable member for Clermont, yet, when it was examined, it would be seen that the proposition of the Government would be more advantageous to the public, and would leave the pastoral lessees in the same position as they were now in.

Mr. IVORY said he was glad to hear the honorable member express a hope that the land principles contained in the Bill would be adhered to, as the committee had hitherto been told by the Government that the Bill was a Railway Bill, and not a Land Bill. Honorable members on his side of the House had always been of opinion that it was as much one as the other, and, therefore, he was glad to hear, at

last, that it was to be the notable Land Bill of the session, and that they need not expect any other during the session. He was quite willing that the Government should carry that Land Bill in the way in which it was being done. He quite approved of the amendment of the honorable member for Clermont, which, he thought, was a great improvement to the Bill; and, although he had always been called by honorable members opposite the champion of the squatters, he utterly deprecated anything of the kind. Although his views with regard to the public lands had been rather antagonistic to those of the Government, who had adopted measures for benefitting those of their own party views, still, he utterly deprecated being viewed in the character of an ultra-squatting representative. Although, being as yet a new member, some utterances of his might have given rise to such a charge, he hoped that ultimately it would be found to be incorrect. He thought that the opposition from his (Mr. Ivory's) side of the committee had been carefully fostered by the antagonism of the honorable Minister for Works to the pastoral tenants of the Crown, a class from which the honorable member was a renegade; and it was well known that renegades were always the most bitter opponents. It appeared to be the opinion of honorable members opposite, that nothing good could come from his side of the House; but he, for one, must utterly deprecate anything of the kind being held up to the country, as all the Opposition were desirous of doing was to legislate for what they conceived to be the benefit of the country. With regard to the clauses which had been brought forward as amendments by the honorable member for Clermont, it had been asserted by the Ministerial side of the House, that if the division of the runs was agreed to, the Government would be "done"—that that would be the result; but he wished to know whose fault it would be if they were "done," as they had their bailiffs and officers, and should take very good care that they were not "done." Therefore, he considered that that was the most futile charge to bring against the amendments, which had right stamped upon the face of them—and merely showed signs of weakness on the part of the Government. The country proposed to be resumed by the Bill was of such vast area, that even at the price of 10s. an acre, there would be a sum of £32,000 for each mile of railway, derived from the land; whilst, according to the estimate of the Engineer-in-Chief, the line was to cost only £3,000 a mile. So that, if only one half of the runs were resumed, there would be a sum of £16,000. For his part, he would much rather see an extension of the area than the resumption of all the runs at once, as that would do away with any favoritism on the part of the Government. Seeing that very ample powers were given to the Government, he thought that, rather than be exposed to the accusation

launched against them, it would be better if they first made the resumptions proposed by the honorable member for Clermont, and then resumed the remainder when necessary. They had the power, and he did not see why they should not proceed cautiously, as, after all, the whole thing was merely an experiment. The honorable Minister for Works stated that the safest principle was to sell the land in the first instance, and then to construct the line; but he joined issue with the honorable member on that point, as he did not consider it was a judicious principle, and as the representative of a district in which very little public money had been spent, he viewed, certainly with very great suspicion, the construction of the Western Railway on such a principle. He had opposed the construction of that line hitherto, because he thought that, if a measure of the kind was introduced, the country should have some guarantee that it would at all events be based on a principle which would be applicable generally. He believed that the principle on which the Western Railway was to be constructed, and for which they were, in the first instance, to have a credit balance of a quarter of a million, would be a failure. They all knew that when once a public work of that character was commenced, it was bound to go on, for the country could not see it come to grief, nor did he conceive that any Government would ever dream of its being stopped until it reached Roma, which was the terminus proposed by the Government. The Government seemed to think that the country was to stand as security for that money; but, as one of the public, he had a suspicion that that quarter of a million would not be the end of the matter; and in saying that, he had in view the case of the Darling Downs, about which there had been such an outcry, the land on which had been parted with long ago when it possessed an infinitesimal value to what it possessed at the present time, and when it was sold precisely in the same way as was now proposed with regard to the country between Dalby and Roma—although even that land was sold nominally at a higher price than that which had been called very superior land away in the Western district was to be sold for. He contended that if the Government were going on the principle of belying their own professions as a liberal Government, believing that they had not at the present time a large population to be held in check by, they would perpetrate the same folly which had been perpetrated in regard to the Darling Downs by what was a squatting Government. They were going into the country to sell lands for the benefit of the squatters, for who else, he would ask, would think of purchasing them?—certainly not the farmers on the Downs; for, however much they might be disposed to follow a railway, they certainly would not go in advance of it. He thought the best plan was to construct the railway by loan, or otherwise,

and, after the line was completed, and the land became valuable, then to sell the land.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS said honorable members had referred to the large area of land proposed to be reserved, and he might state that the total area of the railway reserve, as originally shown on the maps placed on the table, was 42,000 square miles, and of that only about 21,000 square miles were leased. There was about one-half the area so worthless that it was not considered worth taking up under pastoral lease, and there was good reason to believe that more than a fair proportion of worthless land was included in the tract between Dalby and Roma. That would reduce the area the Government could hope to dispose of by one-half; because, if land were so worthless that it would not be taken up for grazing purposes, they could not expect it would be taken up to be put to other uses.

Mr. DE SATGE thought the statement of the honorable the Minister for Works that the pastoral tenants were given a perfectly insecure tenure on account of the infinitesimally small rent they paid in most instances, was a great mistake, and that if it went forth to the public in this and the neighboring colonies, it would be one of the greatest blows that could be aimed at pastoral enterprise in this colony. He thought a more injudicious and unstatesmanlike statement had never been uttered by any Minister. The pastoral tenants themselves knew in what position they stood, but surely it was quite unnecessary to state publicly and send it forth all over the colonies that they had no tenure at all. The pastoral interest was still, and must be for some time to come, the chief interest in the colony, and he thought, if the case was as it was represented by the honorable the Minister for Works, the sooner they raised their rents and gave them at least some slight security of tenure, which must be founded on the good faith of that House and the legislation of the country, the better. He considered the proposition for the resumption of one half instead of the whole of the runs was a liberal proposition which ought to have come from the other side of the House. He had no personal interest whatever in the Bill, because he did not hold any property in or near the proposed reserve; but he spoke in justice to the interest he represented, and in justice to his position as an independent member of that House. He had worked in the unsettled districts for twenty years, and if he spoke on the subject more frequently than other honorable members it was because he thoroughly understood the position of the pastoral tenants; and he thought the proposal of the honorable member for Clermont was not in their favor, but that it was a mere matter of justice. As he understood the amendment, if it were adopted, the moment the Bill was passed, the resumption of one half the runs was absolute. The pastoral tenant from that moment had nothing

to hope for or to fear, so far as that portion of his holding was concerned; he might, on the good faith of that House, expect to hold the remaining portion for a few years, and carry on those improvements which were absolutely necessary to success in connection with pastoral pursuits. He would then have some feeling of security, but if the proposal of the Government were carried he would not know what block might be taken. It might be his homestead itself, and he might be absolutely ruined. He contended that it was essentially necessary, in view of the general prosperity of the country, that some security should be given to the pastoral tenants; and pointed out that, by agreeing to the amendment, they would put them out of their doubt and misery, inasmuch as they would let them know which portion of their respective runs would be taken from them. On that ground solely he would support the amendment.

Mr. HODGKINSON said that under pre-emptive right the pastoral lessee would be quite able to secure his homestead, and to a certain extent the more valuable portions of his run; and pointed out that it was characteristic of that class throughout the colonies to oppose the demand for land for settlement, and provoke a spirit which might result in their tenure being as insecure as the honorable member had represented it to be. With regard to the amendments, he pointed out that they dealt with a most important interest, which was unrepresented in that House—the interest connected with the district of Cooktown. There was a measure coming on, providing for the representation of that district, and he submitted that no one holding the principles of constitutional government, would attempt to legislate for the vast area of country in that district until it was represented. If they adopted the amendment they would put no restriction on the amount of money that might be raised for the construction of this railway; but if they adopted the Government Bill they would know that the extreme amount of expenditure to which the country could be exposed was £250,000. He had no hesitation in saying that if the Government agreed to construct the railway by loan, the Northern members, who were now their independent supporters, would withdraw that support from them. He believed that should this experiment prove successful, the Government would be able to construct, not only railways, but many other public works by the sale of land; and he had no hesitation in saying that if they carried the principle out, they would dismiss all ideas of separation; but, if, on the contrary, they continued taxing the North for works from which they derived no benefit, they would revive that cry, which would not be easily stifled, and such a course would be fatal to any Ministry that persisted in it. He was quite prepared to give the most serious consideration to any proposition coming from the other side of the House, and more es-

pecially from the honorable member for Clermont; but, at the same time, a large section of that House would feel it their duty to at once oppose any Government that would accept such an amendment as that proposed.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL said the honorable member for Clermont based nearly the whole of his arguments against the Bill on the assumption that it deprived the pastoral tenant of some tenure he had now; but it did nothing of the kind. He quite believed the honorable member when he disclaimed having given any new tenure to the pastoral tenant; but at the same time he would point out that if the amendment were carried it would have that effect. The 7th clause of the Bill, which it was not proposed to amend, provided:—

“Crown lands in the said reserve shall not be leased or otherwise alienated except in accordance with the provisions of this Act.”

The 9th clause provided for the mode of dealing with the land in the reserves, and these two clauses taken together provided the only means of dealing with lands in the reserves; unless they were dealt with under the ninth clause, they could not be leased or alienated at all. The effect of the amendment was; that the land might be taken from the lessee on certain notice, but with the proviso that if it were taken from him nothing would be done with it, which was a good way of saying he should keep it; because no Government would be mean enough to take land from a pastoral tenant, when there was an Act in force to prevent it being dealt with in any other way. The honorable member for Clermont said that was not his intention, and perhaps it arose from a verbal inaccuracy in the amendment. The question was—should they take the whole or half the runs? He believed it had been found that the subdivision of runs in this way had not been a success; no one could shut his eyes to the fact that it had not been successful on the Darling Downs. Honorable members should also remember that in every block of country there was a right of pre-emption over four square miles; so that if, out of twenty-five square miles, only half were resumed, that would be twelve and a half square miles, and four would be taken under pre-emptive right, which would continue up to the time the land was proclaimed open for selection. Therefore the lessee would, under the provisions of the Act, have at least one year and nine months from the present time to make his pre-emptive selections, and out of the block there would be only one-third left; and, judging from experience, that portion would be probably worth very little. Then, according to the wording of the amendments, so much time would elapse in carrying out the various provisions that it would be nearly two years before any land could be sold. It seemed to him that if they did not sell the land until the money was spent in the construction of the

line, it was not building the line by the proceeds of land; because they could not borrow money from day to day unless they had an overdraft at the bank, which would not be at all desirable; and if they borrowed the money they could not repay it from time to time as they got a few thousand pounds from sales of land. It was, in fact, forming a sinking fund to redeem the money expended in making the railway, and was entirely different from the principle of building railways by sales of Crown lands.

Mr. C. J. GRAHAM said, with regard to the amendment creating a new tenure for the pastoral lessee, he could not see that it did anything of the sort. One-half his run would be taken from him, and he was to have the other half on precisely the same terms as he held it before. There was, therefore, no new tenure; and with regard to clause 9, he did intend, following on his other amendments being carried, to move an amendment in that clause which would meet what was pointed out by the honorable the Attorney-General. If the division he proposed were carried out, there would be a leased half and a resumed half, and the Government could not do anything with the leased half, simply because it was leased; but there was nothing in the amendment to prevent the House from taking the resumed half. The whole object of the honorable member appeared to him to have fallen to the ground. He tried to induce honorable members to believe that he (Mr. Graham) had some dishonorable intention—and that the result of his action would be to give a new tenure so far as these resumed halves were concerned.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL assured the honorable member that he did not intend to impute anything dishonorable to him.

Mr. C. J. GRAHAM: If the honorable gentleman said he (Mr. Graham) had no such intention, surely it would have been competent for him, as the Attorney-General of the colony, to have pointed out any words which appeared to be antagonistic to his avowed object, and not condemn the whole of the amendments because they contained words which had an effect he did not intend them to have. The honorable member made no substantial objection to the amendments, but merely objected to the drafting of the clauses; and, if the words did not express what he (Mr. Graham) meant, it would have been more to that honorable gentleman's credit if he had suggested an amendment which would give them the effect he intended. The honorable member also said that 2,560 acres would be taken from each block under pre-emptive right, and they all knew that; but he did not add, as he might have done, that this land would be paid for at the rate of ten shillings per acre, the very price the honorable the Minister for Works proposed to put on the land, and the proceeds would go to the trust fund. As to the amendments putting off the sale of land for some time,

that could be easily amended; and he hoped, when the committee came to a division, they would not forget that they were not going to divide on the question of paying for the railway by sales of land before or after it was constructed, but on the question whether the runs should be divided or not. That was the question before them; and he hoped, when they came to a division, they would express their opinion by their votes on that and nothing else.

Mr. THOMPSON also explained that the amendment did not create a new tenure, but merely provided that the lessee should have the right to have the unresumed portion of his run on the same terms as he held the whole previous to the resumption of one-half under the Bill.

Question—That the words proposed to be inserted be so inserted—put.

The House divided.

AYES, 15.

Messrs. Palmer, C. J. Graham, Thompson, Ivory, Buzacott, McIlwraith, Miles, J. Scott, W. Scott, De Satgé, Amhurst, Royds, Morehead, MacDonald, and W. Graham.

NOES, 22.

Messrs. Macalister, Griffith, Fryar, Fraser, King, Hemmant, Pechey, Beattie, Foote, Edmondstone, Low, Kingsford, Dickson, Stewart, Macrossan, Grooin, Black, Lord, Douglas, Hodgkinson, Thorn, and Pettigrew.

Clause 5, as amended, was then put and passed; and clause 6 was agreed to without discussion.

Mr. DOUGLAS said he now proposed to bring under the notice of the committee a new clause, which he considered was worthy of some thought. The clause he had drafted was with a view of encouraging, as he thought it might encourage, the sale of land through, in the first instance, their immigration agency. He thought it was desirable that they should have the power of selling land elsewhere than in the colony; and he would point out that it was only the other day their Agent-General, Mr. Daintree, in his correspondence, which had been laid upon the table, on the motion of the honorable member for Port Curtis, called the attention of the Government to the fact that land might be sold in England advantageously to the colony, and that such sales would result, in all probability, in inducing a class of immigrants they all very much desired to see here, namely, full-paying passengers with capital, to come to the country. Mr. Daintree, in a letter dated the 4th of March, 1875, said:—

“Another efficacious way of obtaining full-paying passengers would be to set aside for selection, in England, a certain number of farms in each district; these farms to be previously surveyed, the number of acres of agricultural and of pastoral in each block to be stated, and, in addition, the number of stock each block was calculated to carry.

“The prevailing idea of many wishing to emigrate is to go straight to the land and form a home, and if blocks of various size to suit the means of various applicants were open for selection here, I have no doubt whatever it would largely increase the number of full-payers, who would prove most desirable colonists.”

He had drafted the clause in order to meet what Mr. Daintree had stated, and what he himself knew to be the case. He thought it was only a few days ago that the honorable member for Maranoa, in his explanation of what he had contemplated would have been done if the original proposal of Messrs. Collier and Company had been carried into effect, said that, to a great extent, they would have relied on obtaining capital in the United Kingdom for the enterprise. They would, no doubt, have made immigration a special feature of their progress, and that, to his mind, was one of the great recommendations of Messrs. Collier and Company's project; and it was also a great recommendation to this project, because it might be made to conduce very largely to forward their emigration agency enterprise. American immigration had been chiefly conducted through these agencies. It was they who, under the authority of their principles, induced immigrants to take up land in the far west, ample means being given to the immigrants to satisfy themselves that they would get the land they sought to obtain. The general form in which this was given was a gold bond, which was practically a debenture bearing a certain fixed rate of interest, and the holder had a double security; first, the solvency of the company, and, then if that should be in doubt, the value of the land. In that way a man going to America with that document in his pocket, could convert it into money, or he might go along the line, satisfy himself as to the position in which he would be located, and convert it into the property he desired to obtain. He thought a good deal might be done in that direction here to forward the object they had in view, that object being not merely to provide for a small amount of carriage in connection with the western district, but to settle population in that district. He believed they might make such an agency as he had described instrumental to that effect. He did not say the clause would carry that out; it was in the nature of a suggestion, and he should be willing to accept it from the House in any shape they might think most desirable. He would point out the bearing of the clause itself; it provided:—

For the purpose of encouraging the introduction of European capital and labor.—

Some objection might be taken to “European,” and he was prepared to accept it from whatever source it might come. He had drafted the clause for the purpose of furthering the work of the Immigration Agent, and it applied to Scandinavians, Italians, or others who might be induced to come to this country.

An HONORABLE MEMBER: Chinese.

Mr. DOUGLAS: It did not apply to Chinese; but he did not say he should regret to see Chinese permanently domesticated in this country, if they could be induced to come with that view, but their characteristics were migratory; and Europeans were more desirable from their customs, their habits, and their laws. However, his primary object would be to encourage, by this system, European immigration; and the clause proceeded:—

It shall be lawful for the Governor in Council to cause to be surveyed and set apart for sale under the provisions of this Act any portions of land being in the aggregate not more than twenty thousand acres in every one hundred thousand acres which may be surveyed for sale and the said reserves for special settlement may be sold on such terms and at such times and places as the Governor in Council may direct.—

Of course it would be necessary to give power to the Governor in Council to carry out the system. That power would be to sell land, he should say, in the first place, chiefly in London; and if any success attended sales of land there, the principle might be applied elsewhere than the United Kingdom; and it was quite possible that sales might be made in some of the neighboring colonies. Then he had named the mode in which land might be taken up:—

Provided that an annual payment of not less than one shilling per acre be made for land selected in such reserves and that the price of any freehold to be acquired in such reserve be not less than twenty shillings per acre.

The alternative was, he thought, deserving of consideration, because there might be many who would prefer paying one shilling per acre annually, than twenty shillings cash. Exception had been taken that he had placed the limit so high, and it was asked, "If you are prepared to sell land at auction at an upset price of ten shillings, why fix the price at twenty shillings?" He had done so for this reason:—Exception might be taken to the exclusion of this land from competition, which honorable members might think ought to be allowed to persons resident in this colony; and he was willing to admit that, as these lands would be set apart for special purposes, special value should be supposed to attach to them. He had therefore fixed the price at twenty shillings per acre, but he was willing to accept whatever the House should think wise in that respect. The last portion of the clause referred to commission on sales:—

And it shall be lawful for the Governor in Council to pay to any persons approved for the sale of such lands a commission of five pounds per centum on the gross receipts of the sale of lands sold under the provisions of this clause.

That, he thought, would have the effect of making the matter a mercantile transaction. They knew that sales of stations and properties in the hands of the Government were effected in this way, and there was no reason

why the same system should not be carried out in connection with sales effected under this clause. Of course, it would be right that the power of sale should not be committed to any person; the choice of proper persons should be placed in the hands of the Executive. He thought by proceeding in this way it would result in the settlement of a large population, which would be most profitable to the colony. Many families in England, who resided in the same county or parish, liked, when they came to a new country, to settle down together, so that former associations might be perpetuated—and, under this system, they would be able to do so. With regard to commission on sales, he might mention that the practice was in force in New Zealand, where certain commission was granted to persons for securing sales of Crown lands. He might also mention that he had frequent applications—he had only the other day an application from a company in England who were prepared to give certain terms if the Government were prepared to give them a grant of certain Crown lands. The application had reference to a portion of country on the coast, which was not under lease or occupied under any form of tenure, but the offer being to take it up at a lower price than the Government were authorised at the present time in receiving, it could not be entertained, and the Government properly refused it. He mentioned this simply for the purpose of showing that there were persons who were anxious to take up land in that way, and it would probably be advantageous to the colony if the Government had the power to come to terms with them. They were persons with influential connections in England, who would undoubtedly throw themselves into the cause of immigration, and provide for people leaving the old country, and forming new homes in the colony. He hoped that the Ministry would seriously consider the proposal, and that some provision of the kind, if not in the same form, would be embodied in the Bill. He now moved that the clause stand part of the Bill.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS said that the new clause which had been introduced by the honorable member was one of very great importance, because it introduced a mode of conducting the work of colonisation in its broadest sense, by means of the alienation of Crown lands. It was a subject which had been frequently treated by writers, and he believed it was a system which had been carried out to some extent by other colonies, but the Government felt that at the present time there were reasons which would prevent them from inserting the clause of the honorable member in the Bill now before the committee. In the first place, they did not see that there was any special connection between the construction of the Dalby and Roma railway and the general question of disposing of the public

lands for the purpose of colonisation, or that it was an amendment which could be appropriately inserted in the Bill. The Bill was for the special purpose of making a railway between Dalby and Roma, and of reserving lands for sale for the purpose of raising money to defray the cost of making that railway; and if the principle of the amendment was applicable to the lands within the railway reserve, it would be equally so to the whole of the colony. Again, if it was brought into operation, and was attended with any success to the district through which the railway passed, the Government would be doing an injustice if they did not extend the same principle to the whole of the colony. He thought, also, that the principle, if adopted, might tend to produce confusion, as honorable members who were in favor of the construction of railways by the sale of Crown lands, might be opposed to the provision contained in the amendment of the honorable member. He would go further, and say, that although the amendment might be a very appropriate one to propose when the Crown Lands Alienation Act was under consideration, yet, even then, it would be debateable whether it would be a principle which it was desirable to adopt. If they had all the lands free in their hands, then there might be something said in favor of selling some of them in England; but, if they were to set apart only limited areas of land to be sold in England, they would be risking the good name of the colony in the eyes of the people at home, especially if those areas were not properly drawn out. Honorable members were all aware how America had suffered by a somewhat similar system, and how graphically the evils of it had been described by Dickens, in his "Martin Chuzzlewit." If the amendment was carried, and land was sold by an agent in England, it was quite possible that the character of it would be somewhat highly colored, and that the persons who bought it would, on their arrival, find that it was most unsuitable; and, consequently, the reputation of the colony would suffer. They all knew how dissatisfied immigrants frequently were on their arrival, as they found everything very different to what they expected on leaving home; and the colony had to suffer from letters being written to the newspapers by those persons, bitterly complaining of their being misled. An English farmer, on coming to the colony, would be quite at sea as regarded the soil and the seasons; and the probability was, that if agents were to be allowed five per cent. on the sale of the land, they would not be particular in coloring things rather highly. He thought that the best plan for attracting people to the colony was to give ample facilities to people within the colony to settle upon the lands, and to let it be known in England that such was the case, and that any person requiring good land for settlement could obtain it; at the same time, the land

should not be sold in England. He would ask honorable members to consider what would be the effect upon educated men, such as retired military and naval officers, if that amendment was carried—supposing such men came out to the colony and happened to arrive upon the land purchased by them, during a bad season; supposing the land was in the Roma district for instance, and those men found that there was not a blade of grass upon the land, and that there was not a drop of water, although creeks were shown on the map at the time of purchasing the land in England. What would be their opinion? Why, being men unaccustomed to Australian life, and the bush, they would be disgusted, and consider that they had been swindled by the agent in England. For that reason, he thought they would be risking the reputation of the colony if they attempted to sell land in England in the manner proposed by the amendment. He thought they could sell as much as they required to sell in Australia; and, if that was not the case, there was no occasion to risk the good name of the colony by employing agents to sell it in England. He did not wish to discuss the amendment at length, because he hoped the honorable member who proposed it would consider that, if he wished to have it discussed, the more appropriate time for doing so would be when the Crown Lands Alienation Bill was before them. He thought also, that the committee should not adopt such an important amendment without having more time to consider it, and what the effect of it would be. He therefore trusted the honorable member would withdraw it for the present, with the view of bringing it forward on some future occasion.

Mr. DE SATGE could easily imagine, if the amendment had been brought forward by an honorable member of the Opposition, what a cutting up it would have received, more especially from the honorable member who had just sat down, and who then would have been able to give his opposition to the amendment, which he (Mr. De Satge) was certainly surprised should have been brought forward by the honorable member for Maryborough. If the honorable member had brought forward such a proposition when the Act of 1868 was under consideration, there would have been some sense in it; but he would defy any man to settle down, with any prospect of success, to grazing upon 10,000 acres of land. There was no country that would carry more than a sheep to an acre; in fact, the greater part of it would not carry one sheep to two acres. Supposing a man took up 20,000 acres under the terms of the amendment, he would have from 10,000 to 20,000 sheep; and, under the present system of fencing, those sheep would require about four or five men to look after them; so that, after all, the work of colonisation would not make so much progress. As for agriculture, the land between Dalby and Roma was utterly

unfit for it; and even, with all the coloring which a former Emigration Agent, Mr. Jordan, gave to the land and seasons of the colony, he believed it would fail to attract companies. The honorable member for Maryborough was an optimist, always wanting to get something better; but he considered that they should be contented with the buyers of land they already had in the country.

Mr. PALMER said he did not very often agree with the honorable Minister for Works; but he thought the honorable member had put the matter in a very proper light. He considered that the proposition, if put into law, would tend to mislead; and on that account alone, if for no other, he should oppose it. Supposing the proposition to be carried, land would be sold to people who knew nothing about it whatever, and the consequence would be, that they would be disappointed on arrival. It was, he thought, quite enough for people to buy land after they had come to the colony, and seen it.

Mr. DOUGLAS, in reply, said he was quite satisfied that the idea contained in his amendment would grow, because he knew that there was a great deal in it. It was all very well to say that it would redound to the discredit and disadvantage of the colony, but he did not believe it would. The objection which had been taken to it by the honorable Minister for Works would not hold good, inasmuch as he (Mr. Douglas) had had ample opportunities of seeing how the same system had worked in America with great success, and it was a notorious fact, that the western districts of that great country had been mainly settled on that principle during the last twenty years. Of course, settlers in the large prairie districts of Western America were quite as much subjected to disappointment as the same class would be in this colony; in fact, people must be disappointed sometimes. But what was the working of the system in America? Why, that the Americans appointed persons to inspect the country, and report where locations could be made—in fact, to give every information concerning those locations which was necessary. That, as he said, had been done for the last twenty years, and had been the constant practice in America, although of late not upon the same large scale, as from some cause or other, there had been something like a check to emigration to that country. In many of the Western States of America, the country was not more suitable for settlement than it was in the interior of this colony; it was further from land carriage, and, in some cases, from water carriage. Such being the case, he saw no reason why a principle which had been found effective in America should not be equally effective in this colony. He was not surprised that there was opposition to it, because it had never been tried in the colony; but that it could be carried out, he had no doubt, and, at any rate, there was no reason why it should not be tried, in the first instance, on a small

scale; in fact, he would much prefer that it should be carried out on a small scale, at first, rather than on a large scale, and then fail. Of course, some immigrants would always be disappointed, as they formed all sorts of erroneous ideas about the country to which they were coming, and, consequently, were seldom in the country a few days before they gave expression to the disappointment they experienced, and said that the place was not equal to their expectations. But they had to buckle to work—

Mr. DE SATGE: To work at what?

Mr. DOUGLAS: To work at whatever the country would justify them in doing. He knew there was just as much country fit for cultivation westward as on the Darling Downs, so that it was just a matter of time and determination to do the thing: it could be done, and the sooner it was done the better. He was quite happy to have had the opportunity of bringing it before the House, and in receiving even the qualified approbation which had been given by the honorable Minister for Works—namely, that the principle might find a place in a Land Bill. At the same time, he believed it could be embodied in the Bill before the committee, the principle of which was, that land should be used to pay for the construction of a railway; therefore, it was merely a question of applicability and practice. He contended that any Minister for Lands who understood his business, and had his heart in his work, would have no difficulty in carrying out such a principle as that which was contained in the amendment, and having it embodied in some Bill. He hoped it would find a place in legislation, and he now submitted it to the committee with that hope.

Mr. IVORY saw no reason why the clause should not be incorporated in the Bill, as it would be a great improvement to it, and it could then be called the Great Continental Railway and Immigration Bill. He thought the Government might accept the amendment, inasmuch as the Bill before the committee was quite as much a Land Bill as a Railway Bill. Moreover, as the Government professed to be so desirous of promoting settlement, he had been rather surprised at the manner in which the honorable Minister for Works had sat upon the amendment. The honorable member for Maryborough, however, who had only recently re-entered political life, might live to find that the Government did not exactly carry out their professed intentions. Even with his (Mr. Ivory's) short experience, he had found that they made large boasts, and gave great promises, which they had not the slightest intention of performing.

Mr. MILES recommended the honorable member for Maryborough to withdraw his amendment, and not to place the slightest reliance upon the statement of the honorable Minister for Works, that it might find place in some Land Bill. He looked upon the

scheme as about the wildest that had ever been brought forward; but he was not surprised at its being brought forward by the honorable member, who, it was well known, was rather addicted to bringing propositions forward for the purpose of having them ventilated, and then withdrawing them. All he could say was, that if such a clause was introduced into any Land Bill, he should oppose it; the mere fact of the price of the land being fixed at 20s. an acre, whilst the Government proposed an upset price of 10s. an acre, was, to his mind, sufficient to condemn it.

Mr. J. SCOTT thought the amendment was a most excellent one, with the exception that it did not go far enough. It should have been worded so as to include all the land along the proposed line of railway, as he was quite certain that that land would look better the farther away the purchasers of it were from it.

Mr. MOREHEAD characterised the amendment as a species of political fireworks which the honorable member had let off for the purpose of airing his eloquence on his re-entering political life. He trusted that the committee would teach the honorable member a lesson by rejecting the amendment, and not allowing him to withdraw it.

Mr. HONGKINSON deprecated the remarks of the honorable member who had just spoken, as he could not see why the honorable member for Maryborough should not re-enter political life, and endeavor to obtain that high position which was occupied by the honorable member for the Mitchell. If the honorable member had let off a political firework, which, it seemed, had singed the honorable member for the Mitchell, it was not let off at that honorable gentleman in particular. It had, however, evoked the ire of that honorable member, which invariably showed itself when any member entered the House whom he thought was likely to be equal to himself in political eminence. He trusted, that whatever the merits of the amendment might be, the honorable member would confine his attacks to somebody of more weight and standing than the new honorable member for Maryborough, who, however, might some day be in the high position of that honorable member; at any rate, he could but try.

Mr. DOUGLAS could assure the committee that, so far from having any intention of letting off political fireworks, he had never set about advocating any principle in a more serious humor than he was at present in; because he had had absolute proof that there was a substantial foundation of fact in what he had stated, and that there were people at home who were prepared to carry out a scheme of colonisation on some such foundation as he had mentioned. He had only a few days ago received a proposition from a company of gentlemen to carry out colonisation by means of land grants; but it was not within the scope of law, so that the

Government could not accept it. He could also point to a somewhat similar system which had been carried out in New Zealand, where a company interested in emigration in England had succeeded in locating a large population, where only a few years ago there was not a single inhabitant. He contended that the same thing could be done in this colony, for it was at the very root of the principle which was demanding the attention of the country at large, and which was occupying the attention of the House at the present time—namely, to open up the lands along the lines of railway. If the persons who took up land in England were disappointed, let them accept the alternative of paying one shilling per acre instead of purchasing a freehold; that, he considered, was perfectly fair. He knew that the amendment would be opposed by honorable members opposite, as they were personally interested in opposing the settlement of the country, and he had been perfectly conscious that he would not be able to carry it without great opposition. After all, the proposal was to set aside for sale only one-fifth of every hundred thousand acres which might be surveyed for sale, and he proposed that, first of all, the principle should be tried in an experimental manner. He considered it was worthy of the experiment, and that he should have received some greater encouragement than he had received.

Mr. LOW said that he could not altogether agree with the clause which had been proposed, for during the long time he had been in the colony, he had been connected with a good many companies, and had invariably found that he made nothing out of them. He believed that, if they went into the matter, it would be as great a failure as the Ipswich cotton and other companies. It was very well to see statements on paper, but it was different to realise those statements; in short, he did not see that any good was likely to arise from the system proposed by the honorable member in his clause.

Mr. MOREHEAD was surprised to hear from the honorable member for Maryborough that he had a scheme in his pocket by which gentlemen at home were willing to take up land if the clause was adopted, as he considered that such a scheme should have been made known by the honorable member before, and not have been kept back until the matter was in the last stage of discussion. That honorable member had accused honorable members on the Opposition side of the House with being personally interested in opposing the clause; but might not the same charge be made against the honorable member himself, as he would like to know what connection the five per cent. commission had with the scheme in the honorable member's pocket. Allusion had also been made to a similar scheme in New Zealand; but he understood that that scheme was not at all a success, so far as that colony was concerned, and he

believed there was an honorable member in that House who was fully acquainted with the working of that scheme.

Mr. BAILEY said he should be sorry to see such a plan as that proposed brought into operation in the colony, as he was decidedly opposed to any such scheme, from the fact that every one he had known to have anything to do with those land companies had been ruined; inasmuch as the immigrants, after working for the companies for some years, found themselves poor men. All the agents sought to do was, to put money into their own pockets, no matter what the result was to the men they brought out.

Mr. W. GRAHAM believed the honorable member for Maryborough had been actuated by good motives, and by a desire to benefit the country; and he also thought that there was a great deal of what was good in the clause. He could not help thinking, however, that the one shilling per acre looked very much like a scheme to delude people at home, and to pay some person five per cent. to do it. The clause might be suitable to either a Land or an Immigration Bill, and he would strongly advise the honorable member to withdraw it for the present, as it was quite out of place, and was only widening out the debate on the measure before the committee.

Mr. PALMER said that there was nothing whatever new in the substantial foundation of the fact that the honorable member had received a proposal from a company of gentlemen at home, as he was certain that there had not been a single Government before which a scheme of something the same kind had not been laid. The honorable member had made a very unlucky allusion when he referred to New Zealand, as the experiment had been anything but a beneficial one for that colony. A similar scheme had been proposed to himself, when in office, but it was against the law. Looking, however, at the Railway Bill now before the committee, he was rather surprised that the Government had not accepted the amendment, as it amounted to pretty nearly the same as selling the lands before the railway was commenced. Now, the scheme of the New Zealand Company was this—that they obtained land from the Government, and sold it at a profit to emigrants. Whereas, if the Government had done the same thing, the profit would have gone into the Treasury of that colony. What had been done there was just what the scheme of the honorable member for Maryborough would lead up to. But, he thought that the profit on the lands should go into the Treasury, and not into the pockets of an English company. The honorable member for Maryborough got a little warm, and had accused honorable members on the Opposition benches of a desire to obstruct the settlement of the country; but supposing the amendment had come from an Opposition member, he would like to know whether

there would not have been a peal of indignation from the Government for obstructing their Bill. Because, however, it had come from one of their supporters, nothing had been said, although it had been the cause of great obstruction in getting on with the Bill before the committee. He thought it had nothing whatever to do with the Bill, and he hoped the honorable member would withdraw it, and let them get back to the business before the committee.

Mr. DOUGLAS said he was quite as anxious as the honorable member for Port Curtis to get on with the Railway Bill; and he thought the statement of the honorable member, that a certain company had obtained land at 15s. per acre, and sold it two years after at £40 an acre, was a strong argument in favor of the system he had proposed. It indicated that those gentlemen had, by the settlement of population, given a certain value to land which previously had been valueless. He was satisfied, for the present, with having brought the matter forward; and, if it was considered an interruption, he was sure it was an interruption which would, some day or another, be looked upon as of great benefit to the colony, if it had been adopted. If it were an interruption, he apologised. He was quite aware that it was very rarely they had such unimportant questions to consider; and he begged leave to withdraw the motion.

Clause 7—"Crown lands in reserve not to be dealt with except under the Act;" and clause 8, "Section 16 of Crown Lands Alienation Act of 1868 not to apply to reserve"—were put and passed, without opposition.

Clause 9—"Mode in which land may be alienated"—was then moved.

Mr. C. J. GRAHAM moved, that sub-section 4—"Under the provisions of the laws in force for the time being relating to the unconditional selection of lands that have been offered for sale by auction and not sold"—be omitted. He explained that the effect of this sub-section would be this: Under the existing law, lands could be offered at auction, and, if not sold, they could be declared open to selection without conditions, at whatever the upset price might have been. Honorable members would see, that in one of his amendments he proposed that in all cases where it should be found impossible to sell the land, or where it was not thought desirable to do so, power should be given to the Government to lease it by auction. He thought it would be better to remove the sub-section altogether; because then, if the land were offered and not sold, the Government would have the power to offer it at auction as often as they pleased. He also pointed out that, although the land might not be bought when first offered, it would necessarily acquire greater value in time; and if it were thrown open to unconditional selection, they would have it taken up by speculators at the lowest price; while, if the same land were kept a few

months longer it might fetch several pounds per acre. There were many ways in which the provision contained in this clause might be abused. Land worth £1 or £2 per acre might be offered at ten shillings an acre, and certain persons might arrange together not to bid for it, in order to get it at a reduced price—instead of paying ten shillings per acre cash, it would be by deferred payments; because, should the proposed Land Bill be carried, that would be a law in force for the time being.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS said, as this particular portion of the clause had no particular bearing on the Bill, and with a view to getting on with the Bill, he would withdraw it.

Question—That the words proposed to be omitted stand part of the Bill—put and negatived.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS said he wished to move a new sub-section in the conditions subject to which lands in the reserve might be leased or alienated. The object of the sub-section was to incorporate an amendment of the honorable member for Clermont, that being a more appropriate place to introduce it than where the honorable member proposed to bring it in. It provided—

“All lands within two miles of the proposed railway reserve except such part thereof as shall be reserved for township purposes shall be set apart for homestead areas under ‘*The Homestead Areas Act of 1872.*’”

Mr. C. J. GRAHAM said the honorable member had taken the wind out of his sails by introducing this clause; but he was glad to see that they accepted, at least, one of his amendments.

Question—That the words proposed to be inserted be so inserted—put and passed.

Mr. MACDONALD would suggest to the honorable the Minister for Works, that it would be advisable to amend the eighth sub-section by omitting “ten shillings per acre,” with a view of inserting “five shillings,” as the upset price of country lands offered for sale by auction. He thought it was a mistake to suppose that, by fixing a high upset price, they would obtain more for land; in fact, he thought it had a contrary effect. It was admitted that there was a great deal of land between Dalby and Roma which was worth very little, and he thought it would be much better that land should be sold at even half-a-crown an acre than it should be allowed to lie idle, perhaps, for years.

Mr. IVORY thought ten shillings per acre was a low upset price for land that had been so praised and belauded as some of this land had been. The best of the land would, no doubt, be sold in the first instance; and the other land, which had not got that value at the present moment, would acquire it when the line was constructed.

Mr. DOUGLAS thought it was a matter for consideration, whether they should not in-

crease, rather than diminish, the upset price. He felt convinced there was a considerable quantity of land about Dalby and Roma which would readily fetch £1 an acre, and he was hardly inclined to give the Government an option of putting any land up below that. His own belief was, that a sufficient price was the best guarantee that the land would be put to really good use; and he supposed the Government would not put any land up at ten shillings per acre, if it were considered worth more than that. He pointed out that the value of land was continually increasing, and maintained that it was the duty of the Government to endeavor to get the highest price for it.

Mr. DE SATGE thought there was a good deal of force in the suggestion of the honorable member for Blackall. The land alongside this line was to pay for the railway, and it was admitted, at the same time, that a great deal of the land between Dalby and Roma could not be expected to fetch ten shillings an acre; and why should it not be sold at whatever it would fetch, to pay for the line? If selectors were able to obtain land on the Darling Downs at five shillings per acre, they ought certainly to be able to obtain it at that price within this reserve. He thought they ought to adopt the suggestion, and reduce the upset price to five shillings.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS said the Government did not see their way to accept the suggestion. It must not be forgotten that the land to be sold was in close proximity to the railway; and if portions of it were so very poor that it was not worth ten shillings per acre, they had better let it remain under the rent paid by the pastoral lessee, until such time as it became worth that price. There could be no doubt, that in twenty years, there would be no land within fifty miles of the line that would not be worth ten shillings an acre; and if they could get sufficient to make the railway, that was all that would be required, and there would be no necessity to sacrifice land at five shillings an acre.

Mr. C. J. GRAHAM said, the next amendment he had to move was in sub-section 9, and it seemed to him to be a very useful provision. Its object was to provide that where those large lots of land were proposed to be sold, there should be an area reserved for roads through them, and that authority should be given to the Secretary for Public Works to open the roads when it was found necessary. He hoped some member of the Government would give them some information as to the amount that had been paid out of the Treasury for repurchasing land for road purposes, because he was sure that if honorable members saw the figures, they would at once see the necessity for this clause, which simply made compulsory what was now the practice, and gave powers about which some doubt existed. He moved that the following words be inserted:—

And each lot so offered shall contain over and above the advertised area thereof sufficient land for a road two chains wide through any part of such lot which may be opened by the Secretary for Public Works in any direction when required and in no case shall more than twelve thousand acres be included in any number of adjoining lots unless the same be surrounded by a reserved road three chains wide.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS said he had not the slightest objection to accept the amendment, and the only reason why he did not insert a similar provision was because it was thought more a departmental matter than a matter which ought to be dealt with by a clause in the Bill. It ought certainly be an instruction to all surveyors in the Lands Department, that sufficient areas should be set apart for roads, so that proper access might be had to all surveyed lands. He did not suppose there would be any harm in inserting the clause; it would probably make the matter more certain, and he would accept its insertion.

Mr. PALMER thought the provision a wise one, and that it would be better to make it law, than leave it for departmental arrangement, because one Minister might take one view of the matter and another Minister might take another. It would be better to make it certain.

Mr. MOREHEAD pointed out that the clause placed power in the hands of the Minister for Lands for the time being, which might be exercised to the injury of small selectors. He quite agreed that some provision should be made for roads, but he could not see his way to support the clause in its present form.

Mr. IVORY also thought the clause might operate harshly with regard to selectors of small lots, and said he would move an amendment, that it should not apply to lots under 500 acres.

Mr. PALMER hoped the honorable member would not press his amendment, because, if a number of small selectors got together, they might insist upon compensation equal to, perhaps, the whole value of their land. The provision applied to small selectors in particular.

Question—That the words proposed to be inserted, be so inserted—put and passed.

Mr. PALMER said he hoped the honorable the Secretary for Works would strike out the provision relating to the occupation fee payable on application for unwatered runs. The system of unwatered country had done more to check the progress of the colony than any other system had done for years. Any person who had any knowledge of the outside districts, must know that; he was sure the honorable the Minister for Works must know it, and also of the perjury it had given rise to. He moved, that the words "and the occupation fee payable on every application for an unwatered run within the land reserve, shall be at the rate of six shillings per square mile," be omitted.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS said he had no objection to the amendment. He admitted that the provision was not applicable to the present Bill, and he entirely agreed with the honorable member as to the injury that had been done to the colony by the system of unwatered runs.

Mr. MOREHEAD quite agreed with striking out the provision, but he could not agree with the honorable member for Port Curtis, that the existence of such a clause in another Act was necessarily injurious. He believed the clauses referred to had been twisted about; but, at the same time, he knew that a large portion of the north-west of the colony had been taken legitimately and fairly under those clauses, and that great benefit had resulted to the colony in consequence.

Question—That the words proposed to be omitted stand part of the question—put and negatived.

Clause 9, as amended, was then put and passed.

Clauses 10—"new leases to be subject to provisions of section 5," and 11—"Reserve not to be deemed a railway reserve under the Crown Lands Alienation Act of 1868,"—were agreed to without discussion. On clause 12—"Reservation of lands required for railway to be made in all grants and leases of land within the reserve," being moved,—

Mr. PALMER said he did not think the provision in the latter portion of this clause was at all fair or just:—

"And if any such land shall afterwards be required for such purposes the lessee (not being a pastoral lessee) or grantee shall be entitled upon the land being taken to receive in respect thereof the same amount that shall have been paid to Her Majesty in respect of the same land so taken and no more and shall not be entitled to any further or other compensation in respect of the land so taken or by reason of its being so taken."

He did not think that was at all fair to persons who had purchased land in fee-simple and improved it. It might take a man's homestead and all improvements simply at the value he paid for the land many years before. He thought it would be much better to take it in the same way as was provided in other Acts.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Under the provisions of the Railway Act.

Mr. PALMER: Under the provisions of the Railway Act. It was manifestly unfair. A man might build a house, and make gardens and an orchard, and the Government would have a perfect right to take all at the cost price of the land.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL thought the honorable member must be under a misapprehension. All the clause provided for was this: Supposing the line were surveyed from Dalby to Roma, and land was sold at Roma with the knowledge that the line was going there; perhaps, on getting to Roma, a slight deviation might be necessary, and in that case no compensation beyond the price paid

was to be allowed. A slight deviation ought not to be made the subject of compensation any more than in making a road.

Mr. IVORY contended that the clause was a very unfair one, and ought to be struck out.

Mr. PALMER pointed out that another strong reason why the clause should be struck out was, that it was proposed to sell land fifty miles beyond Roma. The land there might be sold at once—stores might be erected, and other improvements made, and when the railway reached there, they would have to clear out of the way, and get nothing beyond what they paid for the land.

Question—That clause 12, as read, stand part of the Bill—put and negatived.

Clauses 13—"Governor in Council may cause railway to be made from Dalby to Roma;" and 14—"Accounts to be kept in Treasury under name of 'Western Railway account'"—were verbally amended, in order to make them consistent with the previous clauses of the Bill, as amended.

Clause 15—"Colonial Treasurer may advance £250,000, out of moneys to the credit of public account, to Western Railway account"—was then moved.

Mr. J. SCOTT pointed out that the clause provided that "any sum or sums of money not exceeding in the aggregate at any one time the sum of £250,000, to be placed to the credit of the railway account," and requested some explanation respecting the words "at any one time."

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS said the meaning of the clause was, that £250,000 might be advanced to the railway fund, and when lands were sold within the reserve, the proceeds were to be devoted to repayment of the sum advanced; and, supposing that after that the fund, in consequence of putting off land sales, or from any other cause, should run short, it would be in the power of the Treasurer to repeat the advance, provided that not more than £250,000 was advanced at any one time. In fact, the railway would have a cash credit in the Treasury to the extent of £250,000.

Mr. DE SATGE thought it would be better for the Government to ask for the sum required to construct the line to Roma at once. They had broken through the principle of constructing the line out of sales of land by asking for £250,000, and they might as well ask for £400,000, which he believed the work would cost. Let them ask for whatever sum was required; he would vote £600,000, if necessary.

Mr. PALMER thought this was one of the most rational clauses in the Bill. It showed that it was intended to construct the railway out of loan, as it ought to be.

The clause, having been amended by the substitution of "Western" for "Continental," was then put and passed. Clause 16—"Disposal of moneys received on alienation of lands within reserve"—was amended in the same way as the previous clause; and, on the

question being put—That the clause, as amended, stand part of the Bill,—

Mr. C. J. GRAHAM said they were now going to divide upon the great principle at issue between that side of the House and the Government, in connection with this question; and he hoped it would be found that a majority would differ from the Government on this point. He had heard several honorable members on both sides, in alluding to the subject, speak more in favor of the new clause he was about to propose than of that proposed by the Government, and the whole thing lay in a nutshell. The Government proposal was, to sell the land and make the railway, and he proposed to make the railway first, and then sell the land, which would thereby have increased value. The new clause provided that, as soon as any section of the railway was opened for traffic, the land might be sold; and when a further section was opened, the land on that section might be sold; and when the line was completed, the whole should be available for sale, in order that the railway should be paid for. £250,000 would carry the line over the first section; and the line must now be completed to Roma. If the land could not be sold, the Government must, nevertheless, carry out the work, and they would have to come down to the House for authority to complete it by way of loan. The result to the country would be just the same in one respect; but, by making the railway first, they would get the increased value of the lands. He should ask the House to negative the clause, with the view of inserting the following new clause:—

As soon as a section of the railway authorised to be made within the Western Railway Reserve shall have been opened for traffic but no sooner it shall be lawful for the Governor in Council to sell by auction or lease under this Act the lands on both sides of the railway as far as it is opened but no farther. Provided that as soon as the whole of the railway authorised to be made within the said railway reserve shall have been completed and the whole of it opened to traffic the whole of the lands within the railway reserve shall be subject to be dealt with by the Governor in Council as provided in clause 9 of this Act.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS said the honorable member had stated the case so very fairly that there was very little occasion for discussion. He could only observe that, under any circumstances, no land could be sold for about fifteen months from that date, and they hoped the work would be in progress, and that a considerable portion of the line would be open before any land could be sold. He had received several letters, from different people, urging that the land should be made available for sale during the time of the construction of the work, in order that the men employed might be able to take up land when they were flush of cash. One gentleman suggested that the pay clerk

should also be made a land agent, and that he should go along the line and exhibit plans of country open for selection, take payment for selections made, and give a receipt for the money. He thought some advantage might be gained, in that way, by having the land saleable when there was a large population engaged in the construction of the line, because it would tend to promote settlement. He thought, if they waited until the line was completed before selling land, in addition to the risk of the colonists having to pay for its construction, they would also be hindering the settlement of the population employed on the works.

MR. PALMER said this was the real question at issue between the Opposition and the Government. He did not intend to take up the time of the committee by using arguments that had been used before, but he would ask honorable members to look at it without any feeling of a party spirit. He thought the Opposition had shown what they promised—that they would make no factious opposition to the passing of the Bill; and that if they could not have it entirely their own way they would do the best they could to enable the Government to carry out the railway to Roma. But the question now was:—Were they going to allow the increased profit to be derived from the sales of land to go into the pocket of the capitalist or speculator, or into the Treasury of the colony? He should vote to negative the clause and insert the amendment, believing that in so doing he would best serve the interests of the colony. Were they actuated by the motives which had been attributed to them they would vote for the Government Bill without the amendment; but he could answer for himself, and for every member of the Opposition, that their only object was to get the best terms they could for the colony, and put money into the Treasury and not into the hands of speculators. He believed the Bill as it stood would have that effect. They would have speculators from the neighboring colonies ready to invest in the very best of this land, and pick the eyes out of the country, and they would make these people a present of the difference between the price they paid for the land and the price they received after the railway was made. He hoped the honorable the Secretary for Works would consider that the amendment in no way affected the Bill so far as making the railway to Roma was concerned. That was conceded, and the only question now was as to the source from which the money for the purpose of carrying it out was to be derived. The Opposition believed in the amendment thoroughly, and he gave honorable members opposite credit, if they voted against it, for believing that they would be voting in the best interests of the country. But he believed they were mistaken if they did so, and that they would live to regret it.

The COLONIAL TREASURER thought there were two or three substantial reasons why

the amendment should not be adopted. He believed every honorable member would admit that there was a large proportion of good land about Dalby which was now saleable at a fair price, and which would not be enhanced in value by the construction of the line. But there was a stronger objection than that. The honorable member for Maranoa, when he took objection to the principle of the Bill—of selling the land to make the railway—said he could quite conceive circumstances under which such a policy might be a very good one, and his argument was based upon the position of the banks in the colony at the present time, and he pointed out that if the circumstances of the colony were similar to those of New South Wales, which territory was being alienated largely, it might be a desirable thing to do. There was a great deal of force in that argument; and if they adopted the amendment, they should entirely preclude themselves from taking advantage of such a favorable state of affairs when it should arise, and it might happen in a year or two. The prosperity of the colony might go on and become brighter, and it might so happen that there was such a plethora of capital seeking investment that it would be better to sell one or two years in advance for immediate requirements, than to sell the land and carry on the work from hand to mouth. Times would come when it would be much more desirable to sell the land and get a better price to-day, than to wait twelve months, because at the end of that time some forty miles of the line would be constructed. That was a strong objection to the amendment. The hands of the Government would be tied, and they would not be able to take advantage of any favorable opportunity that might arise for the sale of land. It was quite possible that it would be much more profitable to sell the land now than in twelve months time, when forty miles of the railway might be open. There was also the fact to be considered that the knowledge of the line being about to be made would cause a prospective increase in its value. He did not think they ought to be afraid of the bugbear of speculators, and he hoped these reasons, and the reasons advanced by the honorable the Minister for Works, would induce the committee to agree to the clause as it stood in the Bill.

MR. DE SATGE said the honorable the Colonial Treasurer had dealt with the question only from a financial point of view, but there were other matters to be considered. He contended that the lands on the Darling Downs had paid for the Southern and Western Railway over and over again; and that it was a great injustice that land beyond Roma should be made to pay for the line to Roma, five or six years in advance. The security of land-holders in that district was thereby most unnecessarily jeopardized; whereas, under the plan proposed by the honorable member for Clermont, the House was only asked to lend the money for a time. He

pointed out that they had the power, and were in a position, to borrow money; and he suggested that they should borrow £600,000, if necessary, to push the railway on to Roma; and then, if they liked, they could claim the lands round about it.

Mr. C. J. GRAHAM said he must apologise to the House. The new clause he proposed moving would come in after clause 16, and he would therefore allow that clause to pass.

Clause 16, as amended, was then put and passed.

Mr. C. J. GRAHAM then said the honorable the Colonial Treasurer had objected that there was land about Dalby which they wished to sell, but which, under the proposed amendment, they would not be able to sell; but he would point out that the £250,000 would make a portion of the railway before they would require the land, and when that portion of the line was opened, they would be able to sell the land to better advantage. He could quite understand that, before the railway was completed, further advances would be required; but he believed that, when it was completed to Roma, if the land were sold judiciously, it would pay the whole of the advances, and interest on the advances, and everything connected with its construction. With regard to a plethora of capital, it was not often they had that, and he thought that, if there was more capital than could be profitably employed, it would not show a prosperous state of affairs. And, if such a thing should arise, there was nothing to prevent lands being sold in every other part of the colony. He did not look upon speculators as a bugbear. A great deal of the success of America was due to speculators, and it did not follow that, because a man was a capitalist and a speculator, he was, therefore, a bad citizen. As to affording opportunities for laborers on the line to take up land, he intended to provide for that; he wished to offer every opportunity for settlement on the lands, and he should propose to set apart two miles along the railway line, which would be open for selection, during the progress of the works, for men of that class. He would add the following proviso to the clause:—

Provided also that this section shall not apply to the homestead area created by this Act.

Mr. THOMPSON said there could be no objection to men taking up land as they went along the line, and under the proposed proviso, the money of these men could, if they were so disposed, be invested in land for the purposes of settlement. They would be able to take up land at any distance within two miles of the line, and even in advance of the work; and it would prevent the land being rushed into the market, by which speculators would get the benefit of the increased value, instead of the country.

Mr. WALSH said he trusted the Government would pause before they allowed such

an extraordinary addition as that referred to to be made to this Bill. He had had some experience of the danger and the injurious effects of encouraging railway servants to buy land along the railway line. He thought it was not to the interest of the country that they should have men in the Government service who were also land-owners. If he remembered rightly, when in office, he had had to dismiss men who had been deluded into buying land along the railway line, because they were attending to their holdings instead of their duties as railway servants; and he hoped the Government would not consent to such an amendment, to gain nothing more than a little popularity. Again, there was something quite un-English in adopting such a system, which was very much like the truck system which had been so much condemned at home. The honorable the Minister for Works had stated that it had been suggested to him that the paymaster should act also as land agent. In fact, instead of these men providing Sunday gowns for their wives, or comfortable living, the paymaster, who might derive a certain per centage on sales, was to endeavor to induce them to purchase lands; and he objected, most strongly, to anything like a truck system in connection with railway servants. He said they were a valuable class as colonists, and the longer they were kept as railway laborers the better it would be for the colony; but in the position of miserable land-owners—of small farmers, they would be of no benefit to the colony. He trusted the Government would not accept such an amendment.

The clause previously moved by Mr. C. J. Graham as a new clause to be inserted before clause 16, was then put, and negatived on division:—

AYES, 10.

Messrs. Palmer, Thompson, McIlwraith, Ivory, Buzacott, Morehead, Amhurst, J. Scott, De Satgé, and C. J. Graham.

NOES, 21.

Messrs. Macalister, Griffith, Fryar, King, Low, Beattie, Edmondstone, Hemmant, Douglas, Pechey, Stewart, Dickson, Kingsford, Macrossan, Hodgkinson, Groom, Foote, MacDonald, J. Thorn, Fraser, and Pettigrew.

Clause 17—"Moneys to be expended in construction of Continental Railway," was amended by the substitution of "Western" for "Continental."

Mr. J. SCOTT said before the clause was put he would like to ask the honorable the Secretary for Works what the line was estimated to cost altogether?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS said the survey of the line was not yet completed. Fifty-one miles had been surveyed, and the estimate for that portion was £3,000 a mile. Beyond that they had got no estimate, but, judging from the character of the country, he thought it would probably cost about £600,000. That was allowing for the section near Roma

being considerably rougher than that near Dalby.

The clause, as amended, was then put and passed.

Mr C. J. GRAHAM said it appeared to him that, after the construction of the railway and the repayment of all advances, any money unexpended which had been obtained from sales of land properly belonged to the district, and ought to be available for other public works. He therefore moved the following new clause:—

When the railway from Dalby to Roma shall have been completed and the full cost thereof together with interest on all advances made to the Trust fund as provided in this Act shall have been repaid with the proceeds of lands sold within the Railway Reserve and it shall at any time be found that the working expenses of the said railway in any year are less than the net receipts the profits so accruing shall be spent on other public works within the said railway reserve.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS said he thought it was rather premature to propose to dispose of the profits of a railway the first sod of which had not yet been turned. But apart from that, the principle the honorable member advocated was unjust to the rest of the colony. The railway had been made to Dalby, and the honorable member said the greater part of that had been paid for by lands on the Darling Downs. It appeared, therefore, that the settlers in the Western district were to have a railway as far as Dalby by the sale of lands on the Darling Downs; and, at the same time, the rest of the colony was not to benefit by the construction of the railway from Dalby to the West. He thought the proposal was partial and very unjust. The land was the property of the whole colony, and if there were any deficiency between the revenue and the working expenses of the line, it would have to be borne by the colony. He thought it would be time enough to think what they would do with the profits when the line was nearer completion; and he would point out that the clause would necessitate introducing into the department a very complicated system of bookkeeping. It would be the same as if two rival companies were running on portions of the same line—one from Roma to Dalby, and the other from Dalby to Brisbane; and no distinction was drawn between the portion constructed by sales of land, and that paid for by the State out of loans, the proceeds of the land being paid into the consolidated revenue.

Mr. PETTIGREW said, he did not think the honorable member for Clermont need trouble himself that the railway would be made for anything like the money. With the present engineer he was satisfied it would cost a million of money; and he would suggest to the honorable the Minister for Works, that before even he turned a sod of the railway, he should adopt the same course as his colleague the Treasurer did with regard to the Engineer of Harbors and Rivers.

The clause was then put and negatived.

The schedule was, on the motion of the SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS, amended as follows, and agreed to:—

“For the purpose of defining the limits of the Western Railway Reserve created under this Act a straight line shall be drawn from Dalby to the town of Roma and produced thence for a distance of fifty miles and the said straight line shall be the base line of the said reserve which shall extend for fifty miles on each side of the said base line.”

The preamble and title having been amended in accordance with the amendments in the several clauses,

The Chairman, on the motion of the SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS, left the chair, and reported the Bill to the House with amendments and amended title. The report was adopted, and the third reading was made an order of the day for Tuesday next.