

Queensland



Parliamentary Debates
[Hansard]

Legislative Council

WEDNESDAY, 15 NOVEMBER 1876

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LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

Wednesday, 15 November, 1876.

Assent to Bill.—Resumption of Runs.—Victoria Bridge Bill.

ASSENT TO BILL.

A message from the Governor was received, informing the House that His Excellency had assented to

The Oaths Act Amendment Bill.

RESUMPTION OF RUNS.

On the Order of the Day being called for the consideration in committee of the message from the Legislative Assembly, No. 5, of the 25th October, respecting proposed resumptions of runs,

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL moved—

That the House be now put into committee for the consideration of this message.

The Hon. F. T. GREGORY said he thought it would save the time of the House, as he believed there was a majority of honorable members present who were disinclined to consider the matter of the message before other important measures bearing upon it were further considered, if the resolution for the resumption of runs should be postponed until Friday next.

The Hon. G. SANDEMAN: Hear, hear.

The Hon. F. T. GREGORY: Of course, the House could go into committee and make some progress, and the Chairman could then be voted out of the chair; but that would be a waste of time; and he preferred to move—

That this Order of the Day be discharged, and stand an Order of the Day for Friday next.

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL: This was the first time he ever heard of a motion to postpone an order of the House without some reason being assigned. It was distinctly understood, when the message came on for consideration on Friday last, and was postponed until to-day, that it should take precedence of all other business; a resolution to that effect was carried, and no division was called for. Why the consideration of the message should now be postponed without some good and sufficient reason given, he could not see. The resumptions proposed had been before Parliament and the country for a considerable period; the resolution passed by the Assembly had been before the Council since the 25th of October—it lay on the table for a week, after it came up from the Lower House, and then it was referred to a Select Committee, in pursuance of the Standing Orders, and the committee brought up a report, which was passed unanimously, approving of the resumptions.

The Hon. H. G. SIMPSON said he thought the Postmaster-General was taking too strong a view of the subject, when he held it to be necessary that the subject before the House should be settled off-hand. As he understood the Minister for Lands, when he introduced the resolution for resumptions in another place, it was intended to form

a link of the chain of measures connected with the land now before the country—the Crown Lands Alienation Bill, the Pastoral Leases Bill; and, as the resolution was a natural sequence to those two Bills, it was rather premature to ask the House to settle definitely the resumption of lands while those Bills were, like Mahomet's coffin, suspended between heaven and earth, and when no one knew what was to become of them. If the Council settled the resumptions, he could not tell what would be the fate of those Bills to provide for dealing with the land resumed; and he thought it was pushing matters a little too quickly, for the Government to demand the land while the measures providing for its administration were undecided.

The Hon. T. B. STEPHENS said he did not see the connection of the measures in the order in which the Honorable Captain Simpson had put them. The resumptions would come first into operation; and the Pastoral Leases Bill would not take effect until the existing leases of the runs had expired. He quite agreed with the speech of the Postmaster-General that a reason ought to be given why the resolution should be postponed until after the other questions were settled. That the honorable mover of the amendment said that that was his reason for his action was no reason at all. It had been definitely proved that there was a demand for land. That could not be denied. Were honorable members to say that they would not give the land to meet that demand? Were they to be at liberty to propose a "deal"—to give the land on certain conditions that something must be given to them? It was an undoubted fact, and the Honorable Mr. Gregory himself stated it to the House the other day, that the land would be all taken up in twelve months. Yet he would starve the public. The object was plain. Now, he (Mr. Stephens) objected to the tactics adopted; he objected to making a deal. The public wanted land, honorable members admitted. They would let the public have the land; but, in exchange, they demanded something for themselves. He had an objection to the Honorable Mr. Gregory coming forward as the mouth-piece of a majority of the House. He did not know what caucus had been held, and he did not care; but the honorable member should not tell the Council that a majority out of the House had settled the question. It was incumbent on him to be more respectful to the Council—to ask the House as assembled what its decision would be; not to tell it that a self-elected majority, meeting together, had settled a certain thing; but to abide by the will of the majority of honorable members present to consider the question as legislators. But, let the House know all about the caucus that the honorable gentleman spoke of. Was it to be said plainly by the "majority" of honorable gentlemen opposite—"We will not pass this resolution unless

you give us so and so—a renewal of the leases?" or, was the House simply to understand that that was the meaning of their action? If they could not say more, the House ought to go on with the business at once.

The Hon. F. T. GREGORY rose to correct the honorable gentleman opposite. He did not say that it was a decision arrived at by a majority of the House; but he did say he believed it would be found to be supported by a majority. He did not make any statement as the mouth-piece of others; it was a matter of private opinion.

The Hon. A. H. BROWN: There was a wide difference between what the honorable member said and what the Honorable Mr. Stephens attributed to him. The latter was disingenuous, at any rate. He (Mr. Brown) entirely objected to the reference to a caucus; as he did not know anything about it. He could, however, offer one practical reason for the postponement of the message; and, in connection with it, he wished to have some explanation from the Postmaster-General. A month or two ago he moved for a return describing the various areas that were still unalienated from the resumptions of runs in 1868; he asked for it repeatedly since; and he desired to have it prior to considering further resumptions. A manuscript was laid on the table—probably it was printed now—but as an individual he had not received it.

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL: The return was printed and circulated last week.

The Hon. A. H. BROWN: It was his misfortune that he had not received it. Perhaps it was a matter of indifference whether the House should now consider the message or not; but he thought he was giving a valid reason for not doing so. If the return had been distributed, he must say that he had not received it.

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL: Other honorable members got it amongst their papers.

The Hon. A. H. BROWN: He had not seen it. Perhaps it might have been amongst a bundle of papers that came to his home: he had not seen it. [*The Postmaster-General handed a printed copy to the honorable member.*] The paper had been handed to him; but he could say he never received it. If the Postmaster-General told him it was circulated, it must be so, of course. But he (Mr. Brown) rose to give that particular reason. He did not care if the House considered the message now. He entirely repudiated that he was one of the gentlemen who formed a caucus alluded to by the Honorable Mr. Stephens.

The Hon. T. L. MURRAY-PRIOR denied that the Honorable Mr. Gregory had any idea of putting himself forward as the mouth-piece of any caucus. There was no doubt that honorable gentlemen who happened to meet one another would talk on political business. He had given his opinion that there were several matters connected with

the land yet to be decided by Parliament, and that he thought it was right that the Council should put off its determination upon the resolution for the resumption of runs until one or other of the Land Bills was passed, and he should certainly try to defer a decision until something definite was arranged about those Bills which bore upon it. He thought that, at least, until the Pastoral Leases Bill was disposed of, the House should postpone the resolution.

The Hon. H. G. SIMPSON explained, in reference to what the Honorable Mr. Stephens had said, that until about ten minutes before the meeting of the House he never spoke to a member about the resumptions. At that time he met the Honorable Mr. Gregory, and they spoke together. That was the whole of the caucus meeting he had heard of.

The Hon. W. F. LAMBERT: He could go further; he had not spoken to a single person with respect to the matter now before the House.

The Hon. G. SANDEMAN: The Honorable Mr. Stephens requested that honorable members on the Opposition side would give a reason why the question should be postponed. One reason that the honorable member would admit was a fair one should be now given:—By the Railway Reserves Bill, in the Wide Bay and Burnett Districts Railway Reserve, was included the settled district lands, which, hitherto, were alienated under the Act of 1863, and the funds from which were devoted to the payment of the interest on the public debt and the construction of public works other than railways. Now, in the discussion of that Bill which took place the other evening, the Council eliminated the provisions for conditional purchase within the reserves, and until the Bill, as altered, had been considered by the other House and returned to the Council, it was not fair that honorable gentlemen should be asked to go into the question of the resumption of runs; and, therefore, they asked for the postponement of this very important question.

The Hon. F. T. GREGORY said he rose to reply, having moved the motion for postponement.

The PRESIDENT: The honorable member had no right of reply.

The Hon. F. T. GREGORY: With the permission of the House, he would add, in explanation—as he had been called to account because he had not given reasons why the order should be postponed—that his motion was simply based on the fact that other measures had to be matured before the House ought to go into the question of the resumptions. And he intended to move, when the House should go into committee, that the consideration of the runs be taken *seriatim*, which would open up an altogether new aspect of the land question, as to what land would be required, and, if required, for what particular class of occupation it should be

limited—limited in one or two districts, while in others the requirements would be for an enlarged area and description of alienation. The decision of the Council would, of course, be very materially modified, as to whether the whole of the runs should be resumed, or only a portion of them, by the fate of those measures to which he at first alluded.

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL: He saw no force in the honorable member's remarks. The Council had practically decided that the whole of the lands should be alienated under the provisions of the Crown Lands Alienation Bill; and except one small matter between the House and the Assembly which could be very easily arranged, that measure might be said to be passed. He did not see how any other Bill could bear upon the present question. It was possible that one clause in the Settled Districts Pastoral Leases Bill might have an effect on the resumptions; but it was essential that the House should come to a decision at once whether any land should be resumed or not, in order that, should that Bill not be passed—he gathered from honorable members that they thought it would not become law this session—provisions of a somewhat similar character to that in the Bill should be brought forward;—because he took it that the House would not, in the face of the recommendation of the Select Committee, who found

“that there is a large and pressing demand for land for settlement in the districts within which the lands proposed to be resumed by the resolution referred to them are situated,”

and who decided that the demand could not be met, and that the resumptions should be made;—the House would not, he repeated, do an act of injustice by withholding the lands. The best thing would be to pass the resumptions at once, and honorable members could look forward to the necessary legislation for dealing with them.

The Hon. W. F. LAMBERT rose again.

HONORABLE MEMBERS: Spoke, spoke.

The PRESIDENT: The honorable member had spoken already.

The Hon. J. F. McDUGALL: When the motion was made the other evening that the message should be postponed and take precedence of all other matters this evening, he, foreseeing what might come of it, took exception to it; but he was advised to allow it to pass, because honorable members could take any formal proceedings with reference to the order of the day, when it was called on. Now, however, he found, when a motion was proposed for postponing the consideration of the resumptions, there were a strong opposition to it. He thought that the reasons given by the Honorable Mr. Stephens were perfectly worthless; and he would tell the House why. That honorable gentleman said the resumptions had nothing to do with the Bills which were before the Council so recently, which had not become law, and possibly might not, as far as he (Mr. McDougall) could judge.

Well, they had to do with one another, and one was as important as the other; and it was highly necessary, in the interests of the country, that the consideration of the resumptions should be postponed until the Council knew how the Bills returned with amendments to the Assembly would be dealt with. He did not see why that was not a sufficient reason for the motion for postponement, especially as no honorable gentleman had given any reason on the other side. What was the hurry? Why should the House proceed immediately with the resolutions? Was there any necessity for so doing? As he knew of none, he should oppose the original motion.

The question was put on the amendment, and the committee divided:—

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The Honorables T. L. Murray-Prior, L. Hope, W. F. Lambert, J. F. McDougall, F. T. Gregory, J. Taylor, H. G. Simpson, and G. Sandeman.

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The Honorables A. H. Brown, E. I. C. Browne, W. Thornton, W. D. Box, F. H. Hart, T. B. Stephens, J. Mullen, W. Hobbs, J. Gibbon, J. C. Heussler, D. F. Roberts, and C. S. Mein.

Resolved in the negative.

The original motion was then put and passed, and the House went into committee.

The message was as follows:—

"MR. PRESIDENT,

"The Legislative Assemb having this day agreed to the following resolution, viz:—

"(1.) That, in order to encourage the settlement of population in the Settled Districts of the colony, and in pursuance of section 10 of "*The Crown Lands Alienation Act of 1868*," this House resolves to resume from the leases of the undermentioned runs the areas hereinafter specified, as described in the Schedule laid on the table of this House on the 19th October, of the lands proposed to be resumed from the runs in the said districts.

'SETTLED DISTRICT OF MORETON.

		To be resumed from the
94,080 acres	Colinton East and West Run.	
120,320 "	Mount Stanley East and West Run.	
107 sq. m.	Kilcoy Run.	
120 "	Eskdale Run.	
127 "	Cooyar Run.	
59,670 acres	Cressbrook Run.	
150 sq. m.	Emu Creek Run.	
6,601 acres	Waverly Run.	
33,000 "	Tandary or Taromeo Run.	
About 22,100 "	Coochin Coochin Run, as per description marked A.	
" 17,000 "	Nindoomaba Run, as per description marked A.	
" 38,000 "	Telemon Run.	
" 34,000 "	Durundur Run.	
" 11,600 "	Bromelton Run.	
" 11,000 "	Grantham Run.	

		To be resumed from the
About 18,000 acres	Tarampa Run, as per description marked A.	
" 72,000 "	Mount Brisbane Run.	
" 26,000 "	Buaraba Run.	
" 11,500 "	Undullah Run.	
" 35,000 "	Helidon Run, as per descriptions marked A, B	
" 52,000 "	Fassifern Run.	
" 58,500 "	Melcombe Run.	
" 58,000 "	Franklin Vale Run.	

'SETTLED DISTRICT OF DARLING DOWNS.

About 46,000 acres	Canning Downs Run.
" 21,700 "	Westbrook Run, as per description marked A.
" 51,600 "	Cecil Plains Run, exclusive of 29,400 included in the Western Railway Reserve.
" 5,200 "	Ellangowan Run, as per description marked A.
" 11,000 "	St. Ruth Run, exclusive of 20,000 included in Western Railway Reserve.
" 35,000 "	North Branch Run.
" 83,000 "	Yandilla Run.
" 54,000 "	Tummalville Run.
" 11,000 "	Talgai Run, as per description marked A.
" 5,600 "	Pilton Run.
" 74,560 "	Rosalie Plains Run.
" 40,624 "	Jondaryan Run, as per descriptions marked A, B, C.
" 46,500 "	Canal Creek Run.
" 7,800 acres	Peel's Plains or Felton Run, as per description marked A.
" 7,200 "	Eton Vale Run, as per description marked A.
" 37,000 "	Beauaraba Run.
" 81,000 "	Jimbour Run, as per descriptions marked A and B, and exclusive of 92,000 acres included in the Western Railway Reserve.
" 8,740 "	Clifton Run, as per description marked A.
" 70 sq. m.	East Prairie Run.
" 30,000 acres	Irvingdale Run.
" 128,380 "	Rosenthal Run.
" 7,500 "	South Toolburra Run, as per description marked A.
" 10,094 "	West Prairie Run.

'SETTLED DISTRICT OF WIDE BAY AND BURNETT.

28,500 acres	Conandale Run.
54,300 "	Tahiti Run.
14,350 "	Toweran Run.
54,080 "	Kolonga Run.
72,080 "	Molangul Run.
50 sq. m.	Moolbooloman Run.
17,280 acres	North Kenilworth Run.
16,000 "	Cambroon Run.
58,000 "	Teebar Run.
46 sq. m.	Glenbar Run, as per descriptions marked A and B.

		To be resumed from the
About	12,870 acres	Warrah Run.
"	107 sq. m.	from Gigoongan Run.
"	5,480 acres	Tantitha Run.
"	25 sq. m.	Sarahanna and Agnes Vale Run.
"	6,000 acres	Lower Doongal Run.
"	32 sq. m.	Toomolongyore Run.
"	66 "	Stanton Harcourt Run.
"	20,200 acres	Doongal Run.
"	67 sq. m.	Yabba Run.
"	39,000 acres	Walla Run.
"	14,000 "	Toogoom Run.
"	8,360 "	Tagigan Run.
"	69,300 "	Kolan Run.
"	34 sq. m.	Imbil Run.
"	63,300 "	Munduran Run.
"	23,350 acres	Curra Run.
"	8,300 "	Killogum Run.
"	10,960 "	Clifton Run.
"	43½ sq. m.	Bingera Run.
"	43,000 acres	Widgee Widgee Run.
"	34,000 "	Gin Gin Run.
"	38,900 "	Kilkivan Run, as per descriptions marked A, B.
"	16,500 "	Wonbah Run—

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

"H. E. KING,
"Speaker.

"Legislative Assembly Chamber,
"Brisbane, 24th October, 1876."

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL moved—

That the Council do concur in the resolution of the Legislative Assembly.

He should not, he said, weary the House by discussing the question at any length, because, as honorable members were aware, the Council had provided by special Standing Order for inquiry into the necessity for resumptions of land when proposed, and the committee, to whom the question had been referred, reported that the present resumptions were necessary—that there was a demand for land in the settled districts, that there was no land to meet that demand, and that it could not be satisfied unless the resumptions were made. Under the circumstances, the House would not, he trusted, interfere with the resolution proposing the resumptions, especially as the committee elected by the Council and representing the House had given a decided expression in favor of the resolution.

The Hon. F. T. GREGORY: Consequent upon the House having been called upon to go into committee at once, he felt it incumbent on him to move what he stated his intention of doing before—

That the consideration of the runs proposed to be resumed be taken *seriatim*.

His object was the same as he had in moving that the whole question should be deferred. If the House could have awaited the progress of the other land measures, honorable members would, on a future day, be in a proper position to judge of what lands were neces-

sary to be resumed to meet the requirements of the country; but as it was, they were to do their best in that respect. He had his own views in regard to the resumption of the whole runs proposed; and he knew that many honorable members thought as he did. He was able to state, from his own knowledge, that while in many instances it was desirable to resume a portion of the runs, there were others in which he was quite satisfied the resumptions were quite unnecessary, because they would not meet any public requirements in any way. It would be undesirable in all respects that lands should be resumed before they were wanted.

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL: He must oppose the Honorable Mr. Gregory's motion for one very good reason. The Council was not to legislate for particular runs, but for the whole colony. It was a singular fact that the honorable gentleman, as a member of the Select Committee to whom was referred the consideration of the whole question, did not avail himself of the opportunity of providing evidence or eliciting information, before the committee, whose report was unanimously agreed to.

The Hon. T. B. STEPHENS raised an objection to the form of the amendment.

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL: There was only one resolution before the committee, and the committee must deal with it in its entirety. It was an unheard-of thing to take a resolution word for word—to deal with it in a fragmentary way. He should like to have the ruling of the Chairman whether it was competent for the committee to deal with the resolution piecemeal.

The Hon. T. L. MURRAY-PRIOR asked if the Postmaster-General thought it just to take hundreds of thousands of acres away from the lessees at one swoop, and as a matter of course? Justice could not be done to the country by following out such a system as that. Very likely there were many honorable gentlemen present who would cordially support some parts of the resolution, and take exception to other parts of it. He took it that every line was not only part of the resolution but a resolution in itself, and could be dealt with separately. For his part, he objected to the Government making everything they wanted to carry like the Appropriation Bill, which the House could not alter, but must pass in its entirety or reject altogether. The committee had power to say that the resolution should be taken in any way it might choose to consider it.

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL: The resolution was sent up to the Council for its concurrence, and should be dealt with as a whole, not as affecting each district or each run. It proposed the resumption of land in certain runs. If honorable gentlemen objected to the resumption of any particular run, let them move an amendment to that effect; and, if the committee so decided, it could be omitted, or a portion of the area omitted from the

resolution. That was the way to deal with it, and thus the object aimed at, if those honorable members had any in view, could be legitimately attained. It was impracticable and unprecedented that a resolution *per se* should be cut up in pieces for separate consideration and discussion. What object but delay could be secured by the amendment that could not be gained by taking the resolution as it stood?

The Hon. A. H. BROWN said he was present to support the resolution in its integrity; but if he could assist honorable gentlemen who wished to put the runs *seriatim*, he should be happy to do so. He charged the Postmaster-General, as a member of the Government, with what he considered to be an unconstitutional course in bringing forward a resolution in such a manner as made it so difficult for the Council to deal with it. Most certainly, it would have been far more sensible to have brought it forward so that the runs could be dealt with *seriatim*. He was one of the members of the Select Committee who considered the resolution, and he concurred in the necessity for the resumptions, as shown by the testimony of the Under Secretary for Public Lands. He was quite satisfied that there was not an honorable gentleman on his side of the House who was not perfectly willing to let the resumptions take place whenever land was required; but he should be sorry to assist in establishing a precedent such as that proposed to be established by the Postmaster-General, because he considered it very undesirable and injudicious.

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL: If any honorable member wished to exclude any run from the resolution, he should move that the words be omitted. The Honorable Mr. Brown accused the Government of acting unconstitutionally. He (the Postmaster-General) appeared in the Council as the representative of the Government, and one of his primary duties was to see that the business of the House was conducted in a practical and orderly manner. He observed that it was entirely out of order that a resolution should be taken to pieces in the manner proposed by the mover of the amendment. He had pointed out, and he again stated, that the honorable member could gain what he wished in an orderly way, by moving an amendment or amendments on the resolution; but he objected to the resolution being dealt with in a fragmentary manner, which was unheard of and disorderly.

The Hon. J. C. HEUSSLER observed that the committee had entered upon a very unnecessary discussion about form. If the Honorable Mr. Gregory, or any other honorable member, had an amendment to make, he could make it, that such a run be excepted, or such an area be reduced by so much; and the committee could get at the point, and come to a decision upon it just as easily as by taking each run *seriatim*.

The Hon. T. B. STEPHENS expressed a hope that the honorable mover would withdraw his amendment. He agreed with the Postmaster-General that it was not in order; for he never before heard of a proposal to take a resolution line by line. He had heard, when obstructive tactics were adopted, of moving amendments on a Bill line by line. Honorable members opposite wished to raise a distinct discussion upon every run. Let them do so upon those runs to the resumption of which they had objections; and, in the order in which each occurred, let them move its omission. They could discuss the general question, and deal with each special case too, without unnecessary waste of time. He would point out one reason why it was extremely advisable that the resolution should be taken as a whole, and the resumptions dealt with as proposed. The amendment was intended to define where a man should or should not select, and it would deal in an invidious manner with the several lessees, by picking out certain runs for resumptions and leaving others free. The principle of the resolution was to deal with all alike; not to resume the run of one, and leave the run of his neighbor untouched. He had known a squatter object to the resumption of runs on that very ground—that selection was directed to one run while another was undisturbed. Now, the resolution did not do that; but left it to the selector to judge where he would select over all the runs, not on a particular run; and there was no partiality in dealing with the lessees; so that if the land was not required in any locality, it would not be selected. There were lands which were resumed in 1868, which were not touched yet; consequently, the lessee had the use of the whole. The principle of the resolution was to sacrifice nobody, but to deal with all the lessees equally; to act justly to every one without distinction; and the resolution should be dealt with as a whole in the form in which it was sent up from the Assembly.

The Hon. T. L. MURRAY-PRIOR: There might be some portions of the runs which would be utterly useless if they were resumed. If the Postmaster-General would look at the Land Act of 1868, he would see that the runs were to be resumed under certain restrictions—by resolution of both Houses of Parliament. If a run was of such consequence as that it could not be resumed except by resolution of both Houses, it was apparent that justice demanded that each area should be dealt with separately. He thought the Postmaster-General would have done better, if he had not allowed any objection, even for form's sake, to interfere with the wishes of honorable members who favored the amendment.

The Hon. T. B. STEPHENS: The honorable gentleman who spoke last had forgotten that the subject was considered last session; when the House, feeling the difficulty of dealing with individual cases, and of personal discus-

sion, passed a Standing Order that resumptions should be referred to a Select Committee for inquiry and consideration. With that view, the resolution had been referred to the committee, who had brought up their report in favor of it. But, now, the honorable Mr. Prior wanted to throw on the House the responsibility of deciding which runs should be resumed, and which not. That was a duty which belonged to the Select Committee. Under the circumstances, the House had nothing to do with acting partially as between the lessees. He hoped the resolution would be taken as a whole, and accepted or thrown out.

The Hon. H. G. SIMPSON said, whether the runs were taken *seriatim* or the resolution was dealt with *in globo*, he must object to the assumption that as the resolution was sent up from the Assembly, so it must be dealt with. It was known pretty well that a strong effort was made in another place to deal with the runs separately; but, of course, as the Government commanded a majority there, those who favored that course were unable to carry their point. The Council was not to submit itself to the forms adopted in another place; and, therefore, he could not agree with the Honorable Mr. Stephens or the Postmaster-General. The Council was at perfect liberty to deal with the resolution in any form it chose. He saw no harm in going through the runs *seriatim*, and he saw no good to be got from it; but he protested that honorable members were bound to deal with the resolution in the form in which it came up from the Assembly.

The Hon. E. I. C. BROWNE agreed that the Council had a right to take the runs *seriatim*; but, having delegated that duty to a Select Committee, who had reported in favor of the resumptions to meet the existing demand for land, he did not see that the House should now consider it necessary to enter upon it. The Honorable Mr. Gregory was a member of that Select Committee; he agreed to the report, based upon the evidence, and without seeing that any further evidence was necessary. While on the subject, he (Mr. Browne) wished to explain what seemed extraordinary in connection with the proceedings of the committee. On four days running there was "no quorum" recorded. That must not subject honorable members to a charge of neglect. The reason of it was, that under the Standing Order the committee were to sit *de die in diem*. When they concluded their work, on the 2nd November, they all came to the determination that no further evidence was necessary, and they had only to bring up their report to the House; yet they delayed for some days to close the proceedings, as possibly something worthy of attention might arise. The House having delegated that inferior work to the committee, and the committee having reported, he wanted to

know why, in the exercise of its parliamentary right, it should do the work over again.

The Hon. J. F. McDougall asked the Postmaster-General under what Act the resumptions were proposed to be dealt with?

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL: Under the Crown Lands Alienation Act for the time being. If the Bill which was before Parliament should not pass, then under the Act of 1868. The land could not be alienated, except according to law. The difference between the Legislative Assembly and the Council on the Bill now lay in a very small compass, and was on a very trifling point, regarding which the Council would possibly give way and with a good grace. The Bill would become law, he believed, in some shape; so that if the resumptions were passed the land would be alienated subject to its provisions. Unless the honorable gentleman wanted a special Bill introduced providing for the alienation of the resumed lands, he ought to be satisfied.

The Hon. L. HOPE said, if the resumptions should take effect at once and be brought under the operation of the Act of 1868, the door would be opened to dummyping of the most intense description until the 1st of March next, when the new Bill would come into operation.

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL: He knew the Act had been used as the means of perpetrating large frauds, and was glad to hear that the honorable gentleman at length admitted the fact.

The Hon. L. HOPE: Persons were waiting for the purpose of taking that advantage.

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL: The resumptions would not take effect until after proclamation by the Governor in Council; and the Government could not proclaim them until the new Act came into force.

The Hon. A. H. BROWN, referring to the remarks of the Hon. Mr. Stephens, said it was satisfactory that a change of opinion was coming over that honorable gentleman—perhaps it was from a feeling of repentance—and that there were hopes of his regeneration. When the honorable gentleman was Minister for Lands, last year, certain resumptions of runs in the Wide Bay district were brought under his notice and recommended by the commissioners and other officers of the Government:—Widgee, Widgee, Mivah, Curra, Gutchie, and Imbil. While resumptions from the others were made, Curra was omitted. He (Mr. Brown) had some idea of the reason for its omission; but he should like to have an explanation of that flagrant case. The land was in the vicinity of Gympie, and it was required to be thrown open for selection; but though the late Minister for Lands made a tour in that direction, he did not see the propriety of throwing it open. The honorable gentleman now pointed out that the whole of

the runs should be resumed, and he spoke so virtuously about it, that he (Mr. Brown) agreed with him. But he hoped the honorable gentleman would explain that case.

The Hon. T. B. STEPHENS said he did not know that he was in the House to be catechised; but he would answer the question put to him. In fixing the resumptions, he felt the invidiousness of the task so much, that he would never consent to do it again. The reason why the runs named were selected he would state. When he was in Gympie, a deputation of about twenty persons waited on him requiring land to be resumed. They did not want any on Curra. The land agent and every one else said no land would be taken up there, if the run was resumed. There was some very nice land there; he saw it himself;—but twenty or thirty feet above his head were flood marks; and when he got rid of the flood marks, he found he had left the good land. That was a reason for none being resumed. He did not take as much as the people wanted from Widgee, though a large slice was taken. He trusted that the House would not go into personal discussion!

The Hon. J. F. McDOUGALL: Surely, if the Postmaster-General got the resumptions passed, he would have another resolution to propose. He took it for granted that the honorable gentleman would never ask the Council to pass the resolution without giving some compensation!

The Hon. A. H. BROWN: Though the committee considered the resolution and thought that it was necessary to resume land, yet he should never consent to act as sponsor to the House.

The Hon. F. T. GREGORY contended that it was not because the Select Committee had no evidence before them to induce them to alter the form of the resolution, that honorable members should be prevented now from taking another view of it, or amending it if they should see fit. Had individual cases been brought before the committee it would have been competent for them to have dealt with them. The report showed that they made no specific recommendation. As he was led to believe that an amendment would be desirable, and that for certain individuals it might be a matter of justice, he desired that the resolution should be considered with a view to justice being dealt out to all parties. He should, with the permission of the House, withdraw his motion, because there were objections to the form in which he had put it; and he should leave it to individual members to advance any objection to any specific run being resumed *in globo*. Before sitting down he should like to mention one or two matters that had come to the notice of honorable members since the Select Committee had sat. When the committee were sitting they had no list showing the areas of land unalienated from previous resumptions; but now a return was in the hands of honorable members, showing im-

mense areas unalienated. He would pick out a few:—From Emu Creek run, in the Settled District of East Moreton, it was now proposed to resume 150 square miles; while there were unalienated no less than 72,000 acres, resumed on a previous occasion. He asked, what was the use of resuming 150 square miles of that run, when there was nearly the same area open to selection? From Taromeo it was proposed to resume 33,000 acres, while there were 32,800 acres unalienated from the previous resumption. Again, he took Durundur, where there were 62,720 acres unalienated; and it was proposed to resume 34,000 acres more. On Melcombe run there were 63,720 acres unalienated, and it was proposed to take 53,500 acres more. The same might be said pretty well of Canning Downs, Rosalie Plains, and many other runs that he could name, on which land had been resumed, and was yet unpurchased, almost equal in area to what was proposed to be resumed by the resolutions. He could not see the object of disturbing those runs until the land was required. The Select Committee did not have that information before them, or he should have called attention to the facts, and probably have moved some definite resolution in reference to the matter to amend the report. He should now leave it to honorable members to make some specific motion.

Amendment, by leave, withdrawn.

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL: The honorable member had committed a slight error in stating that the Select Committee was not directed to the question of the resumed land unalienated. It was very directly brought before them; and if the honorable gentleman would turn to Mr. Tully's evidence, he would find this:—

"6. And the object of the proposed resumptions is, I take it, to place all the runs upon an equal footing? That was one of the objects, to deal with all alike, as far as the law permits. Another was, that of opening out large and extensive areas, so that a greater choice would be allowed for selection, whereby the individual interests of leaseholders would not be so likely to suffer as they would by the Government selecting particular portions of the districts for resumption."

He quoted this to show that one of the primary objects was to inflict as little hardship as possible on the lessees. It would be seen further on that the question was very pointedly brought under the attention of the committee:—

"13. By the Hon. A. H. Brown: There are very large areas still open to selection from previous resumptions? There are; but the lands are of a very inferior character. On the Downs, half-a-million of acres are still open, but no one will look at the land.

"14. And does the same refer to Moreton? I think there is still a large area in Moreton; but no large areas could be selected. There are per-

haps isolated patches. Small farms could still be found.

"15. I suppose there are, in some cases, the whole of the resumed halves of runs untouched? Only in one or two instances, in those districts.

"16. Wide Bay and Burnett—is that the case there? In Wide Bay and Burnett some of the runs are almost still untouched; with the exception of the selections made by the lessees themselves; I do not know any others that have been made.

Going back to the third question, this evidence came out:—

"3. Has it come under your notice that there has been any demand for settlement within the districts affected by the proposed resumptions? I am aware there has been a large and pressing demand for land in those districts."

In answer to the Honorable Mr. Gregory himself, who asked Mr. Tully if he had formed "any estimate of the demand for selections,

"based on your previous experience of the rate at which the lands have been taken up?"

the evidence was to this effect:—

"Judging by previous experience of the alienation of lands on the Downs, I should think that very little time will elapse before they are all taken up."

"32. In fact, probably, on the Downs, nearly the whole of the land will go within the first twelve months? I should think so."

There was proof that the subject was pointedly brought under the notice of the officer of the Government who was best acquainted with it, and who was entirely removed from prejudice or feeling in connection with it; and who stated as facts that, notwithstanding the large areas open for selection, much of the land would not be looked at, and that there was not sufficient good land to meet the "large and pressing demand" for settlement, that it was necessary that the runs should be resumed in the districts named in the resolution, and that by the proposed resumptions no invidious distinctions would be made, and that they would press as lightly as possible on the lessees.

The Hon. T. L. MURRAY-PRIOR: What sort of land was Colinton East and West?

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL: The Government put all leaseholders in the same position, and showed no preference to any, but left the public to make the selections. If they singled out particular runs for resumption, the House would say they were acting partially to individuals, and that they should treat all alike. They were treating all alike.

The Hon. A. H. BROWN: By the Bill passed lately, it would seem that there was little land open for conditional selection except in the North. Would the Postmaster-General tell the House whether it was the intention of the Government to throw open areas where they were available in the districts which were now termed unsettled? He referred to spots some distance back; because

it was presumed that they were eligible for pastoral pursuits, while those nearer at hand were more appropriate for agriculture. Was it the intention of the Government to throw open the whole areas for selection, or would they simply supply the demand gradually, or as it occurred?

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL: Of course, some of the runs affected by the resolution would be dealt with under certain clauses of the Crown Lands Alienation Bill, which provided that they should be restricted to homestead areas. He could not say positively whether the Government would throw open the whole for selection at once: but he could say that the object of the Government would be to throw open the land for selection, doing as little injury as possible to the pastoral lessees. If there was a demand for land in the outside districts, the Government would do all in their power to meet it.

The Hon. A. H. BROWN: Hear, hear.

The Hon. T. L. MURRAY-PRIOR: The committee has had considerable discussion on the resolution, and it was the intention of some honorable members to bring the runs forward *seriatim*.

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL: The Honorable Mr. Gregory had withdrawn his amendment.

The Hon. T. L. MURRAY-PRIOR: Then he would move one; and it would much expedite business if the Postmaster-General would consent to what he should propose. He should be very sorry, indeed, if objection was offered to it. In the first instance, he should move—

That the Chairman do now leave the chair, report progress, and ask leave to sit again on Friday.

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL: The question was put to the House—to postpone the Order of the Day until Friday—and negatived by a large majority. He was surprised that an honorable member with the Honorable Mr. Prior's experience should, after a question was honestly and fairly decided, take it up in the manner he did. There was no progress. The proceeding was what he called factious.

The Hon. E. I. C. BROWNE: The House had, in fact, decided that the question should not be put off until Friday, and he doubted whether it could now be put.

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL: He took it, that it was not an amendment on the resolution, and it was out of order. The honorable gentleman could, of course, move that the Chairman leave the chair, but that would not be an amendment.

The Hon. T. L. MURRAY-PRIOR: He should ask for the Chairman's ruling.

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL: He was sorry to see the honorable gentleman act in such a way. The House was one of the most numerous assembled this session, and it had solemnly decided by a large majority that the question should be gone on with this afternoon.

Enough time had been wasted in attempts at legislation—not so much in the Council as elsewhere;—and when the time for action came, he was anxious that the public business should be proceeded with. It was necessary that the resolutions should pass at once, in order that, as he had already explained, full justice should be done to all parties; as it was the desire of the Government that justice should be done. Even in the contingency that honorable members thought was likely to arise, it was highly expedient that the present question should be decided. Therefore, the House should go on, as they had resolved to do. It was quite possible that some honorable gentlemen who were present at an earlier hour might have been compelled to leave; so that, if the committee went to a division, there might not be as fair an expression of opinion as had been given before. Therefore he hoped the honorable gentleman would not take advantage of such a circumstance as the absence of honorable members. If the honorable gentleman or his friends had any real objection to the resolution, let it be brought forward; but he should not attempt to burke the question, or avoid it by a side-wind.

The Hon. T. L. MURRAY-PRIOR: He was an old member of the Council. He felt that injustice would be done if the resolution should be proceeded with and passed to-day, *in globo*. He stood up for justice, and he disagreed with what the Postmaster-General said. If by the forms of the House, and no other way would he adopt, he could give effect to his views, he should do so. Though the present proceeding might be exceptional, he felt that he was doing right. If he could possibly prevent the resolution passing to-day, he should do so; and he would stick to his amendment.

The Hon. W. D. Box said he felt bound to give time for the House to consider the resolution, so that no injustice could be done. He did not know how the honorable Mr. Gregory, after being a member of the Select Committee, could ask for time for fuller consideration of the resumptions, without having some good reason for their being taken *seriatim*.

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL hoped that the Honorable Mr. Box was not under a misapprehension that he wanted to stop discussion. He should be glad to hear any objection to the resolution, if honorable members had any to advance. Let honorable members get up and state their objections, and move their amendments upon the resumption of any particular run. That was what he asked from the first; but nothing was done beyond wasting time.

The Hon. W. D. Box had understood the Postmaster-General to object *in toto* to the discussion of the matter.

The Hon. J. C. HEUSSLER: An hour and a-half had passed since he last spoke about the time of the House being wasted on mat-

ters of form; and he could only repeat his words, that the way honorable members were going on was foolish and childlike squabbling, with which he had no patience. The House has decided that the question should be considered; then let honorable members move what amendments they had to make in the resolution.

The Hon. G. SANDEMAN said he should support the amendment, for the simple reason that he understood it was made in order to allow other measures that were now in progress in the other chamber to come up to the Council before the resolution was passed.

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL: They were returned, and were now before the Council.

The Hon. H. G. SIMPSON: There seemed to have been some misunderstanding with regard to the position taken up by the Postmaster-General on the question. He understood the honorable gentleman to oppose distinctly the putting of the runs *seriatim*; if he was wrong, he was prepared to go on. If the Postmaster-General was not prepared to take them *seriatim*, he (Captain Simpson) should vote for the postponement of the resolution.

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL: He felt bound to object that the resolution should be taken line by line; but he had most distinctly stated that if any line were objected to, an honorable member had only to move an amendment, and he should be prepared to deal with it as was proper. The motion for taking the runs *seriatim* had been withdrawn.

The Hon. H. G. SIMPSON objected to the thing being put in the way that the other House dealt with it, as one resolution.

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL: The resolution should be dealt with as it was sent up to the Council.

The PRESIDENT: The Postmaster-General put his case so clearly and so cleverly before the House, that he rose with great diffidence to say a few words on the other side. It was true that the House had decided on division that it should go into committee on the resolution; but that decision amounted to no more than this—that it should be discussed in committee, and that whatever the committee decided should be reported afterwards to the House. He looked upon the question as one of very great importance; because, taking up the schedule of runs, what did one understand from it? It involved interests representing several hundreds of thousands of pounds of capital invested in this country, he might hope, at any rate, profitably. The resolution, when passed, would affect the bank account of owners of runs; and the bankers and merchants who had made advances upon runs would feel doubtful of their security, and their action might tend to throw affairs in the colony into some confusion, privately and publicly. There was this particularity about the resumptions: they did not affect all districts of the

colony, but those especially in the South. Districts which, fortunately, as he was told, were represented by members elsewhere who supported the Government, had land thrown open for occupation;—it might be a premium held out to constituencies to return members favorable to the Government. There was a great public principle involved, if the land laws of the colony were liable to such a means of corruption. It was high time, certainly, that the Council looked to measures of correction. It had been suggested to him that such might be the case in this instance; whether it was or not, he was unable to say. Honorable members knew that a very large amount of private property was affected by the proposed resumptions, and that the same measure was not meted out to one portion of the colony as to other portions. Therefore, it struck him that it would not be unfair to give more time for consideration of the resolution. He confessed that he dealt with the subject very unwillingly himself; but he saw that whatever opposition was offered to the desire of those members of Parliament who on his side were anxious that each separate resumption should be considered on its own merits, it would be quite impossible to defeat their object, because they would find some form of the House to enable them to carry on the discussion *ad infinitum*. He agreed with honorable members who preceded him, and with the honorable gentleman who said he nearly lost all patience, that the committee had wasted a considerable time; and honorable members would waste a great deal more, unless the Postmaster-General would come to a compromise.

THE POSTMASTER-GENERAL: He was sorry the President should have suggested the motive of corruption for the action of the Government; and he must say, that he thought such a suggestion came with a very bad grace from an honorable gentleman in his position. Certainly, he should be the very last in the House to speak as he had spoken. He had referred to the possibility of those districts in which the resumptions were proposed being treated with favor—to their being fortunate in having representatives in the Assembly who supported the Government. He had not alluded to the misfortune of the districts having members in the Council who were personally interested in the subject in dispute. That was a greater calamity than anything to be seen elsewhere. Honorable members in another place had been returned by the voices of the people. It was their duty and their privilege to enforce the rights of the people. If the President had read the report which had been brought up by the Select Committee, he would have refrained possibly from introducing the subject of resumptions and partial administration; he would have seen that the object of the Government in introducing the resumptions was to avoid doing

injustice to anybody. He (the Postmaster-General) had not attempted to avoid discussion on each run that was required to be discussed. He had told honorable members that if they had any amendments to make, or exceptions to take to any particular item or any particular run in the resolution, to bring them forward, and he would discuss them fairly; but let them not deal in vague generalities. He objected to deal with a resolution line by line, because to do so was unprecedented and undesirable. He had waited patiently for honorable members to bring forward amendments—to propose anything really bearing on the question. It was impossible for them to show a single instance—he defied them to show one—in which a run was improperly dealt with. On the contrary, he alleged, the report was correct, that no possible injustice could be done by the Council acceding to the resolution of the Legislative Assembly.

HONORABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear.

THE HON. T. L. MURRAY-PRIOR believed that a gross injustice would be done by passing the resolution before the Crown Lands Alienation Bill and the Pastoral Leases Bill were settled. He was perfectly aware that if any amendments were brought forward and carried on the resolution, they would be rejected by the other House, and have to be gone over again. One remark the Postmaster-General was not right in, and the honorable gentleman must know it—that honorable members of the Council had a personal interest in the resolution. Whatever interest they might have, no honorable member would vote for his individual interest; but he would rather go the other way. That was proved by the whole dealings of the Council with the lands of the colony from the beginning.

THE HON. J. F. McDougall: He never called for line by line or *seriatim*, because he believed that the Government in taking all took the honest course; but he objected to going on with the resolutions until the House had the other measures dealing with the land before it. He should go further, and say that when those measures were before the House, the Government should have his entire support in dealing with the resolutions.

THE HON. T. B. STEPHENS: It was now clearly put before the House that honorable gentlemen opposite were quite prepared to make a deal with the Government: "If you give us our amendments in those Bills—give us the renewal of our leases; we will give you your resumptions." That was a humiliating state of things for the Council. It had been repeated over and over again—honorable gentlemen were willing to enter into a compact for their own advantage.

THE HON. H. G. SIMPSON held that the Council was in a very different position from that put by the Honorable Mr. Stephens, who could only justify himself for his statement on the supposition that the House could

not insist on its amendments except by making a compact.

The question for the Chairman to vacate the chair was then put and negatived on a division:—

CONTENTS, 9.

The Honorables Sir M. C. O'Connell, H. G. Simpson, J. F. McDougall, W. F. Lambert, L. Hope, J. Taylor, F. T. Gregory, G. Sandeman, and T. L. Murray-Prior.

NOT-CONTENTS, 11.

The Honorables C. S. Mein, A. H. Brown, W. Thornton, W. D. Box, J. Mullen, W. Hobbs, T. B. Stephens, J. C. Heussler, J. Gibbon, W. Yaldwyn, and E. I. C. Browne.

The Hon. T. L. MURRAY-PRIOR: Honorable members would now commence—

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL: A system of obstruction.

The Hon. T. L. MURRAY-PRIOR: He tried to get the resolution postponed. His duty was now a plain one. He saw there was a very large area in Colinton, and he presumed that the whole was to be resumed. He had travelled over its mountains, and he knew that a portion of it was not fit for cultivation. He should therefore propose that in the first line of the list of runs in East Moreton given in the resolution,

That the figure "9" be omitted with a view to the insertion of "6."

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL said he did not intend to discuss the merits of the amendment, because no reason was urged in its favor; but he rose to congratulate the mover on having achieved the distinction of being the first in a nominee chamber to introduce obstruction on behalf of a minority.

The PRESIDENT: He thought the Postmaster-General was what men called "chaffing" honorable members. The honorable gentleman was rather hard upon the Legislative Council—a nominee chamber, as he called it. No doubt the House ought not to copy bad manners from other places; and he thought it very seldom did so. But as rules were proved by exceptions, the Council might be allowed to make an exception. He thought a nominee chamber might well consider the vast amount of property involved in the resolution, which well deserved the serious consideration of honorable members.

HONORABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear.

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL: He asked them to consider it.

The PRESIDENT: They might well hesitate to dispose of thousands of pounds worth of property *in globo*; and, therefore, if they were sometimes driven to have recourse to what the honorable gentleman called obstructive tactics of a factious opposition, they must trust that the cause would justify them. He had seen such obstruction carried out when he thought there was no cause to justify it. But he did not think that, this evening, those honorable gentlemen who took that view

of the question could be accused of not being influenced by thoughts, or by considerations, of the highest importance to the country.

The Hon. T. B. STEPHENS was rather surprised to hear the President come forward as an advocate for obstruction. He could thoroughly believe that the honorable gentleman would not do anything of the sort, if he did not think he was right; but from the honorable gentleman's approval of the present course, it followed that in his view all obstruction was right, as never did a man go in for obstruction but he professed to believe he was right. He never thought the Council, much more its President, would approve of obstruction.

The Hon. A. H. BROWN did not think the Honorable Mr. Stephens' remarks justified. The President defended the Council as an independent body, but no word fell from his lips approving of obstruction.

The Hon. J. TAYLOR congratulated the Honorable Mr. Stephens on his recovered health, which enabled him to deliver fiery speeches; and he also congratulated the Postmaster-General upon having a first-class lieutenant in the late Minister for Lands.

The debate proceeded at length, honorable members avowedly talking against time. Eventually,

The Hon. W. D. Box tried to effect a compromise by suggesting that the committee should sit again next day.

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL: Would honorable members opposite do so?

The Hon. T. L. MURRAY-PRIOR: The difficulty would not be solved to-morrow.

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL pointed out that the Bill about which honorable members were so anxious had been returned to the Council; and that in the Crown Lands Alienation Bill there was but one amendment to which the Assembly refused to agree, and that it involved no principle. He had not the slightest doubt that one way or other it would pass. On the Bill relating to pastoral leases, the House knew what the feeling of the Assembly was. The Bill was sent back, and the amendments were dissented from. If the resolution was postponed, the Council would not be one step nearer to the point that honorable members pretended they were aiming at than they were now; but it would be likely that at least a week would be lost, and the session be unnecessarily extended. The proposal to postpone the resolution was practically to shirk a decision upon it.

The Hon. T. L. MURRAY-PRIOR and the Hon. F. T. GREGORY suggested that an additional sitting day, Tuesday, should be appointed.

The debate was further continued, and the committee divided on the amendment for the omission of figure "9":—Contents, 9; Not-Contents, 12.

The Hon. F. T. GREGORY suggested that progress be reported, to enable the other business on the paper to be cleared.

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL: He was quite willing to move it, if honorable gentlemen who had been opposing the progress of business would discuss business afterwards dispassionately.

The Hon. T. L. MURRAY-PRIOR had not the slightest intention of giving up what he had begun, if the committee resumed. He moved—

That the Chairman leave the chair, report progress, and ask leave to sit again.

When the question was put, and a division called for, the tellers returned, Contents, 10; Not-Contents, 10.

The CHAIRMAN gave his casting vote with the not-contents.

Question resolved in the negative.

The Hon. T. L. MURRAY-PRIOR moved another amendment, for the omission of the second figure "4," with the view of substituting "3," and this was again negatived on a division: Contents, 9; Not-Contents, 12.

Finally, on the motion of the Honorable F. T. GREGORY, it was resolved on division—Contents, 11; Not-Contents, 10;—to report progress.

The House resumed, and leave was given to the committee to sit at a later hour.

At a subsequent stage of the sitting, the Order of the Day was again called, and the committee resumed; but shortly the Chairman reported progress, and asked for leave to sit again on Friday.

A motion to this effect was put and passed.

VICTORIA BRIDGE BILL.

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL said the proceedings in connection with the construction of the Brisbane Bridge had achieved a history with which he had no doubt honorable members were perfectly familiar. He should not inflict any portion of it upon the Council, except such as was necessary to explain the Bill which was now before the House. It appeared that in 1861, the legislature conceived that the time had arrived when a bridge should be constructed across the Brisbane river, in order that proper means of communication should exist between the capital and the southern and western districts of the colony. A Bill was accordingly introduced, providing that a bridge should be constructed by the Corporation of Brisbane at a site approved of by the Governor in Council, with certain restrictions; and, as an inducement for the Corporation to undertake the work, it was provided that not more than two-thirds of the existing unsold lands in South Brisbane and two-thirds of the unsold suburban lands should be given to the Corporation to enable it to procure funds for the construction of the Bridge. After the Bill was passed, the Municipal Council called for tenders for the work. Several tenders were sent in, and an effort was made to accept a tender

to the proposed plans and specifications, and nothing came of the negotiations until 1864, when the Municipal Council, with the approval of the Government, accepted a tender from Mr. John Bourne to construct a bridge for £52,559 8s. The work was then proceeded with. Up to a certain point, the Bank of Queensland provided funds for the payment of Mr. Bourne. As the work was in progress, it appeared that the Government took exception to the provision that was being made for the transit of vessels through the swing; and they compelled the Corporation to make alterations in the design that involved an expense of at least £16,000. He had mentioned that the Corporation had borrowed money from the Bank of Queensland to pay the contractor, and it had given a mortgage to the bank to secure payment of the advance. The bank got into difficulties, and was unable to continue to make advances to the Corporation; and the consequence was that the construction of the bridge was stopped for some time. In 1870 overtures between the Bank of Queensland and Mr. Brassey, to meet the Corporation—which was indebted to him to £25,000, for iron work for the bridge—were made with the view of completing the bridge; and the account between the Bank and the Corporation was adjusted and fixed at the sum of £75,000, being something like about £25,000 less than the bank had hitherto insisted upon as its claim. It was found then that the bridge would require, to complete it, an expenditure of £21,250 additional. That sum, together with the assessed amount due to the bank and the amount due to Mr. Brassey, made a total indebtedness of £121,250. The bank had previous to this held a mortgage to secure its advances of £70,000; and it was now arranged that it should advance sufficient for the completion of the bridge, £21,250, and that the Corporation should give a mortgage to the bank to secure the full amount of its indebtedness to the bank and to Mr. Brassey; and also, in order to assist the bank in carrying out the undertaking, that the Corporation should give to the bank debentures amounting to what would be the total amount of its liability, £121,250, payable to bearer, of £50 each, redeemable in 1891, and meanwhile carrying interest at the rate of five per cent. Parliamentary sanction was necessary to that arrangement; and accordingly a Bill was introduced in 1870, authorising the Corporation to carry out the arrangement, to issue debentures, and to give a mortgage for the purpose of securing the payment of the debentures. On the 6th of April, 1871, the mortgage was given. The instrument was a curious one, and would repay an attentive perusal by honorable gentlemen. No doubt, they had considered it already. However, there was one oversight in it. Although the mortgage was to be given for the purpose of securing the payment of the debentures,

there is nothing whatever in the covenants about the payment of debentures, but they simply provide that the Corporation shall pay £121,250 on the 1st November, 1791, with interest in the meantime at five per cent. Debentures were issued to the bank in pursuance of the arrangement. He (the Postmaster-General) understood that the debentures had got into the hands of the shareholders of the bank, and probably Mr. Brassey had assigned his share of them to other persons. The question now before the House was, that the Brisbane bridge being really a national work, should be placed on the same footing as all other bridges over navigable rivers or elsewhere in the colony, and that the public should have free access over it unrestricted by the payment of tolls, or any impost whatever. The bridge was regarded as in no way in a different position from any other bridges in the colony. Although it might accidentally happen to be within the four corners of a municipality, yet it was considered that it should occupy the same position as the Maryborough bridge, which had been constructed out of public moneys at a large cost, and in the same position as the Ipswich bridge, on which, also, was expended a very large sum, and which had been free to the public ever since it was erected. Other bridges throughout the colony had been constructed out of public funds, and were free to the public without charge. Therefore, it was considered an anomaly, that the bridge over the Brisbane River, which was constructed originally by the authority of Parliament, certainly under the direction of the Corporation of Brisbane, should not also be free. The object of the legislature at the time the work was projected was that the Corporation should not be charged with any debt in respect of the bridge, lands being given to the Corporation to enable it to provide sufficient funds for carrying out the work. He had heard objections to the Brisbane bridge being proclaimed free, on the ground that the railways might just as well be made free throughout the country. He could not see any analogy between the two cases. Railways were special works which required special supervision, and could only be travelled over under peculiar circumstances, in a vehicle provided by the proprietary of the road—indeed, carriage and haulage must be provided. Though, as it was said, the bridge over the Brisbane was a work constructed to enable communication to be complete between one portion of the colony and another, any person might choose his own mode of going over. For years past, the legislature had affirmed the principle that all persons should have free access over all bridges and similar means of communication throughout the colony, and he did not see why on the quarter of a mile of bridge constructed over the Brisbane River, the State should insist upon travellers paying toll. It was a public highway of the colony, and should be

open to the public. He should not go into the question of the bungling that attended the construction of the bridge. Although he had not given his mind to the matter, it was sufficiently apparent that both the Government and the Corporation had made mistakes, and that the country had been put to great expense thereby. But there was this satisfaction, that the proposal now was, that the Government should take over the liabilities of the Corporation in respect to the bridge, that was to say, £121,250; and that in consideration of their doing so, the Corporation would reconvey to them the lands that had been before given to the Corporation to provide funds for the bridge. So far back as 1864, those lands were valued by, perhaps, the most competent valuator in the colony, at £53,000. Since that time, situated as the lands were, they certainly must have increased in value one hundred per cent. He had no doubt that by judicious sales the Government would be able to realise—in the event of the Bill passing—certainly £120,000 out of the 185 acres of suburban lands that would re-vest in Her Majesty. Apart from that, the fact should not be overlooked that in addition to the £121,250 to which he had referred, the Municipality of Brisbane would pay as penalty for the misdeeds of the Corporation £21,000, which was advanced out of the revenue from the funds of the ratepayers; the bridge having cost up to the present time over £142,250. He did not think that he need refer to the subject at greater length. The proposition contained in the Bill was that it should be lawful for the Corporation to re-transfer to the Government the land that had been already vested in the Corporation for the construction of the bridge, and that upon that being done and the bank releasing the mortgages that were at present subsisting, the Government should take over all rights and liabilities under the mortgage, and that the Government should guarantee to pay the debentures, which did not mature until 1891. In the meantime the Government might have an opportunity of purchasing the debentures; and provision was made that the moneys derived from the land sales should be put to a separate account which might be applied to buy up debentures. If it was not sufficient, then the balance should be made up of funds that might be appropriated by Parliament for the purpose. That, practically, was the purpose of the Bill. He thought the House should agree to it, the object being simply to place one portion of the highway of this colony in just the same position as other highways, free from toll, and under the jurisdiction of the Government. He moved—

That the Bill be now read the second time.

The Hon. F. T. GREGORY, in rising to speak to the Bill, said, at the outset, that he had no intention of opposing in any way the second

reading of the Bill, and he took this course without any real knowledge whatever of the views generally entertained by the House on the question. The first point to be discussed, was, to what extent would the country be recouped by the sale of land that would be handed over to them as a set-off against the large expenditure which must be incurred by taking over the bridge? Assuming the value put upon the land at the sum estimated, £53,000—

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL: In 1864.

The Hon. F. T. GREGORY: The honorable gentleman assumed that the value of the lands would be very much greater now than it was estimated at in 1864. He (Mr. Gregory) very much doubted, if the genuine valuation was gone into, whether the honorable gentleman would find that land in South Brisbane was worth more now than it was in 1864. In that year everything was at fever heat, and values were higher than at the present day. There had been a considerable depression since, which brought lands down in the interval to one-fifth of what they were estimated at then. His own conviction was that if the lands reached the value they had in 1865, it would be well. Looking at the schedule, he saw that some portions of land were of twenty acres each. It would all have to realise about £300 an acre, which, as it was not like Queen-street property, would be considerably beyond what was likely to be obtained for it. He wished honorable members to reflect, when they consented to the Bill, upon what really would be the financial result of the transaction that it would legalise. The next point was one which the Postmaster-General had already made reference to, that of making the bridge free of toll. He should like, as every other portion of the colony had got a sop, that the citizens of Brisbane should have a share of the good things going. The legislature was making railways everywhere; millions sterling were to be spent; and it would be very hard if the citizens of Brisbane should not have something in the general scramble for the loaves and fishes. While the Corporation was laboring under a heavy burden of interest, it could not have enough money to improve the streets; it was in a state of insolvency; and he did not wish it to be left in that condition. Without going into the question of where the fault lay in the past, he said the Bill would absolve the Corporation of the heavy debt on account of the bridge, and would enable the Corporation to devote the revenues of the city to the necessary work of making and maintaining the thoroughfares. He could not, however, see any reason why the bridge should be declared free of toll. He was quite as willing to travel free as any one else; but he could not see why a work which had cost such an enormous sum of money, and which would require a considerable expenditure to maintain it, should be free. Nothing had been done to the bridge since it was erected; and he knew that a

public work of that magnitude could not be neglected without sustaining very serious depreciation. Under the circumstances, whether the tolls should be maintained at the same figure, or less, he left out of the question; but he conceived that tolls were absolutely necessary, unless the country was prepared for another heavy call on the revenue for the bridge. If a work which had cost £120,000 was to be free to the public, the legislature might as well declare the railway free from Brisbane to Ipswich. The amount those works respectively cost he left out of the question; but the principle was the same. One had cost three-quarters of a million, and the other the eighth of a million sterling. He was quite prepared to concede that small works throughout the colony would present great difficulties in collecting tolls, which would not be worth the expense. But in the present instance, where a large expenditure was involved, the tolls would amount to a very considerable sum; and much would be required to keep a work of the character of the bridge in repair. He heard elsewhere—he did not know whether it was held out as a threat or was a meaningless assertion—that if the Corporation did not get a free bridge, it would not care to go into the transaction. But he did not believe that; because he thought that the Corporation must only be too glad to get rid of the burden of debt and interest. He never belonged to the civic authorities; they had improved a little; but he did not look with feelings of approbation on the way in which they had conducted their affairs. He should be sorry to be invidious, and to name any one member as particularly responsible; but it was quite clear that they did make mistakes, and some very grievous ones. He was quite prepared to support the second reading of the Bill; but when it got into committee he should test the feeling of the House as to whether tolls should not be continued. And he mentioned this now in order that the matter should be fairly ventilated.

The Hon. W. THORNTON said he thought the honorable gentleman was rightly told that the people of Brisbane would not care for the Bill, if it were not to make the bridge free. The necessity to pay toll was looked upon as a great grievance that the people labored under. The Brisbane bridge was the only bridge in the colony that was not free, and it was the only one on a high road that was subject to toll. The principle of charging tolls on roads and bridges was one he did not believe in; it had gone entirely out of fashion, and it was properly abolished everywhere else throughout the colony. It was contrary to the feelings of an Englishman that his movements should be trammelled, and that he should not be able to go over the roads free. Tolls were one of the most objectionable things in the world. The Honorable Mr. Gregory had mentioned his intention

to move an amendment in committee that tolls should be continued on the bridge. It might be that he (Mr. Thornton) would move a new clause to the effect that the Corporation should not charge more than a halfpenny on the ferries. The only reason there was for charging on the ferries, was, that a certain amount of manual labor must be provided, which it was only reasonable should be paid for. With regard to the lands in South Brisbane which the Government would take over from the Corporation, he must say that he did not think their value was over-estimated. The lands had scarcely reached their full value yet; and he did not hesitate to say that an increase of from twenty-five to fifty per cent. would be put on South Brisbane lands by the passing of the Bill, if the bridge should be made free; and the Government would reap the advantage of that in selling their lands. He was glad that there was no intention on the part of honorable members to oppose the Bill.

The Hon. T. L. MURRAY-PRIOR: It might be there was no intention to oppose the Bill. Although he did not feel justified in moving its second reading for this day six months, yet if any other honorable member made that motion he should support it. He looked upon the Bridge Bill as nothing but a swindle; and he did not think he was using too harsh a term in so characterising it. He was one of the oldest members, at all events, as a resident in the colony, at present in that House. He remembered, when he first came to Brisbane, that if he wished to cross a horse, he had to tie the animal behind the boat and have it towed over. Honorable members might think that a humble way of crossing.

The Hon. W. THORNTON: Would the honorable member like to go back to that way?

The Hon. T. L. MURRAY-PRIOR: No; he should not like to take a valuable horse over that way: he preferred to give the punt-man sixpence. If he wanted to cross the river, he did not object, he should be glad, to pay the ferry. What was the Bill for? His honorable friends would remember that it was alleged that there was a good deal of difficulty, and considerable inconvenience, with the punt. He never felt it, though much was made of it on the part of the inhabitants. He was able to get across in the punt, and managed very well. A proposal was made for a steam ferry. He remembered that a gentleman offered to put a steam ferry between North and South Brisbane for £15,000; but, no, that was not quite advanced enough for the fine Corporation of Brisbane! Next, a proposal was put forward for a bridge; and eventually a bridge was carried across the river. The Government had nothing whatever to do with it; the Corporation did not wish that they should have anything to do with it. The whole matter had been very much mismanaged; double the amount of

money was paid for that bridge which ought to have been paid. At one time the bridge was perfectly unsafe, for, if he remembered rightly, the mail-coach had just passed over it, when the bridge went into the river! He had no doubt the Bill would be passed; and he had only to record his opinions on the subject for hereafter. As for the bridge being free because of its being a highway across the country, it was nothing of the sort. There was a line of railway between Ipswich and Brisbane, and that was the highway into the interior. The bridge connected North and South Brisbane, and he did not see why the persons using it should not pay toll on it. He knew that all the agitation about it was, as the Honorable Mr. Thornton said, to get a free bridge. The Government would, under the Bill, not only take over the bridge and its liabilities amounting to £120,000 odd, but also the expense of managing it and keeping it in order; and the time must come when a considerable sum of money must be spent on it. If he thought he should have a chance of throwing out the Bill, he should make a motion to that effect. He saw honorable members around who would support him.

The Hon. E. I. C. BROWNE: No, no.

The Hon. T. L. MURRAY-PRIOR: There might be some patriotic man who would move such an amendment. He should support the Honorable Mr. Gregory in committee in any action he would take for retaining tolls. The Postmaster-General said other bridges and roads were open without tolls, and amongst others the honorable gentleman mentioned the Maryborough bridge. But he did not say how much it cost.

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL: £40,000.

The Hon. T. L. MURRAY-PRIOR: Well, it was no great advantage after all. Brisbane had a railway, and the expenditure of the public offices, and many other little pickings.

AN HONORABLE MEMBER: Ha, ha.

The Hon. T. L. MURRAY-PRIOR: The honorable member laughed at him;—he had no doubt everyone in Brisbane would laugh at him.

HONORABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear.

The Hon. T. L. MURRAY-PRIOR: The Ipswich bridge had been referred to; but that was made for a railway bridge.

HONORABLE MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

The Hon. T. L. MURRAY-PRIOR: That was the case. But, at present, the Queens-street Ministry, who knew little of the wants of the country, and cared very little about them, as long as they could keep their posts, wanted a free bridge for Brisbane. Formerly an Ipswich Ministry was in office, and Ipswich managed to get a little attention, and the bridge there was made available for ordinary traffic as well as for carrying the railway. If the whole districts of the colony were properly represented—if there was not one honorable member from somewhere whose interests were in one railway, and another

from somewhere else whose interests were in a line in another direction—and if there was not a Ministry in existence, who, against all their previous inclinations, were so devoted to office—

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL rose to a point of order. What the honorable member was saying had nothing to do with the Victoria Bridge. He was imputing motives, and referring to questions which had nothing to do with the question before the House.

The PRESIDENT: It would certainly be out of order for the honorable gentleman to impute motives; but there must be a wide latitude allowed on public questions of great importance, or honorable members would not be able to discuss them. Nothing in the honorable member's observations caught his ear which would lead him to stop his argument. The honorable gentleman was arguing on public grounds only, and so long as the imputations referred only to the policy of the question before the House, he fancied an honorable gentleman was not out of order.

The Hon. T. L. MURRAY-PRIOR: He was only saying that the Ministry were doing much that they did not originally profess to be willing to do, to secure support. He did not think that was imputing motives.

The Hon. E. I. C. BROWNE expressed a hope that the honorable member would keep his observations to himself, and not look at him. He should make accurate statements, and not ridiculous assertions when addressing the House.

The Hon. T. L. MURRAY-PRIOR: He had a right to make what observations he pleased. He was not making any imputations against the Postmaster-General. He was only expressing an opinion which must be patent to everyone, man, woman, and child, in this country; certainly to anyone who studied political questions. He was speaking of other matters which the Queen-street Ministry had as much at heart as the Victoria Bridge; and for that he had sneers and innuendoes cast at him. But he should still assert that the Bridge Bill was entirely a Brisbane affair, and he thought the bridge ought to be paid for by the body that first undertook it. The Government had nothing whatever to do with it. The people of Brisbane, who had a majority in Parliament, would save a good deal of money by a free bridge, and therefore they wanted a free bridge; and, under existing circumstances, he supposed they would get it. But, if the whole colony was polled, and if every member would get up and give his opinion as he (Mr. Prior) did, the bridge would not be free. He had no great wish to pay toll, if he could do without it; but he contended that it was necessary to levy toll for the maintenance of the bridge. It was only fair, if any Corporation would go in for large works, that it should bear the burden; and the city should pay taxes for having made the Council their representatives who entered upon the work.

The Hon. E. I. C. BROWNE said he had not the slightest desire to limit the power of the Honorable Mr. Prior to make observations; but his observations should be correct. The honorable member said the bridge broke down once just after the mail coach went over it. That statement must be set right. The Victoria Bridge never broke down, and never would, in their lives. A temporary wooden bridge, put up by the contractor, for which he did not charge, had broken down.

The Hon. T. L. MURRAY-PRIOR: Honorable members would, of course, know that he referred to the wooden bridge; though, perhaps, he did not state so exactly.

The Hon. H. G. SIMPSON: To go back to the question, and to get away from the little personal discussion, he wished to state that he should give his support to the Bill as it stood. It was simple justice to the city. No one had a less exalted opinion or estimate of the "city fathers" than he had. He believed that in many cases they had mismanaged affairs frightfully; and he always maintained that in the matter of the bridge they had been utterly overweighed from the first to the present moment. At first, there was a bridge designed to cost a certain amount of money; things were in train and arranged, when the Government came down upon them and said they must make alterations. The alterations involved a very considerable delay, which brought on the bad times of 1866, which all remembered, and when prices of material were greatly affected; the construction of the bridge was stopped for years, and a great deal of the work, which was well done in the beginning, had to be done over again when operations were renewed. Some of the cylinders which had been put in position in the river had to be taken up again—all in consequence of the great opening for the swing which was insisted upon by the Ministry of the day, at the instance of the Ipswich and West Moreton members. He thought the Corporation could not be held responsible for that delay, with its consequent trouble. It led to double cost in carrying out and completing the works. It was forced upon the Corporation. One matter was mentioned by the Honorable Mr. Gregory and the Honorable Mr. Prior, which he (Captain Simpson) should like to put in another light. He maintained that the bridge was a public highway to East Moreton and the Southern districts at the present time. He asked the Honorable Mr. Prior what he considered it, when he and the Government of which he was then a member opposed so strenuously the Brisbane and Ipswich Railway? It was a main thoroughfare then. If it was a secondary one now, it was not from the action of the Corporation. The bridge was constructed before the Government of the honorable member reluctantly consented to the Brisbane and Ipswich Railway. All honorable members knew that Ipswich had a free bridge which was constructed at the expense of the

country; and they knew why the Government saw the necessity of altering the direction of the railway: it was for the general benefit of the country, and it was done even at the expense of leaving that bridge over the river as of no more use for a railway bridge. The line ought never to have gone in that direction. It was a local job, done at the time for the benefit of the Ipswich people. But the bridge was there, and it was an Ipswich bridge, and nothing else. No stigma such as that rested on the Brisbane bridge. It was not fair at all to Brisbane to institute a comparison between the Victoria Bridge and the Ipswich bridge. A much fairer comparison could be instituted between Brisbane and Maryborough bridges. He should look at the question of tolls in a utilitarian point of view. If there was no toll on the bridge, in three years the lands which the Government would receive would be trebled in value beyond what they would be if the bridge should not be free. If they were worth £53,000 now, in three or four years they would be worth three times that amount. The Honorable Mr. Gregory considered that the price of property was not so good now as in 1864, when the land was valued. He (Captain Simpson) could not speak of 1864; but he could with very great confidence speak of 1865, and he did not think values were lower in 1865 than in 1864. The collapse came in 1866. In 1865, he bought property in Brisbane, which he sold two years ago, when property was lower than now, at an advance of eighty per cent. He could not see why prices should not be higher now than they were in 1864. Even if the bridge was not a public highway, it could not be said that the people of Brisbane alone were benefited by it; as all the farmers and other persons resident within ten or fifteen miles of the city were benefited by it, and availed themselves of it. The Bill was the best solution of a question of difficulty that long required to be dealt with; and he sincerely trusted that it would pass through the House with very little alteration.

The Hon. A. H. BROWN: He took an advanced view of the question. The time had passed when, in a city of the dimensions of Brisbane, a toll should exist. On that ground he supported the second reading of the Bill. The Honorable Mr. Prior had adduced a few of his personal experiences, which he (Mr. Brown) thought showed that the bridge should be free. The honorable gentleman had described his swimming his horse over the river after the ferry-boat; then the establishment of a punt; then the movement for a steam-punt, set aside for a bridge. Now that a bridge had been established and toll paid, an advance was made for a free bridge. That was right; and honorable members must, in dealing with the question, look upon the city as one and united. The bridge must be regarded as a general highway. The Honorable Mr. Thornton said, a toll

was repugnant to the feelings of an Englishman, who did not like to be interfered with in going where he chose. He (Mr. Brown) quite agreed with the honorable member, and he reminded him that there was rather an impediment to freedom in his department, the Customs, in the searching of people coming into the colony. The Honorable Mr. Gregory had offered a plea for the citizens of Brisbane; and it was right some concession should be made to them. The representatives of the municipality whom the citizens had elected, had not had a brilliant career. If they did anything towards making the roads and streets passable, it would be to their credit; but their ways were a disgrace to the city, and would be to a small municipality. It was an act of cruelty to animals to ride or drive over the road past the North Quay. But the Municipal Council would now have funds out of which to make the streets. Land being still available for sale afforded an additional reason why the Government should take over the bridge from the Corporation, and he believed that benefit in a pecuniary sense would accrue from the bridge being free, as the lands which would revert to the Crown would be thereby greatly enhanced in value. Even in the enormous city of London there were now no tolls; as, by degrees, they were found extremely inconvenient and annoying, and were abolished. The time was passed for them to exist in a city like Brisbane. He was always under the impression that the Maryborough bridge cost £30,000; but perhaps the Postmaster-General was better informed than he. There was some reason in what was said about reducing the tolls on the ferries; but he thought if a change was made, the cost of collecting the tolls would be larger than the revenue collected. It was proposed, he understood, to establish a steam punt lower down the river, somewhere about Edward street; he should like to know if that really was so.

The Hon. T. B. STEPHENS said he did not like to pass a remark made by the Honorable Mr. Gregory, that if the bridge was made free, the railway ought likewise to be made free. He entirely denied the correctness of any comparison between the two. In the case of a bridge, which was, in fact like a main highroad, anyone could pass over as he pleased; he could walk or choose his own mode of conveyance. A railway must be worked by the proprietary at expense for conveyance and haulage. A ferry came into the same category as a railway; a punt or a boat for conveyance and haulage must be provided. In the case of a road or bridge there was of course maintenance for wear and tear; in that of a railway there was maintenance and working expenses.

The Hon. G. SANDEMAN took the opportunity, before the question was passed, of saying a few words. The subject of the Bill had occupied the minds of a great many honorable members for a series of years.

They knew that a great deal of money had been wasted on the bridge, and that the country was now called upon—not the municipality of Brisbane, but the colony—to take over the bridge: the colonists at large were called upon to take over the work with all its liabilities from the citizens. He thought that in the present state of the commercial world, and having regard to the finances of the country, it was a grave question for consideration; and he must say that, although he quite agreed that this bridge was a highway and ought to be considered one, yet having regard to the peculiarities of the case, he concurred with the Honorable Mr. Gregory that it would be desirable to exact a small toll. It was all very well for honorable members to take an extremely liberal view of the matter; but some day or other the country would have to pay; and, depend upon it, all the railway schemes and others which would have also to be paid for, would entail a higher rate of taxation than existed at present;—and this was already the second colony on the list of Australias in regard to a high rate of taxation. The colony was now on the eve of another era of expenditure consequent upon a system of railway extension. He thought that, in committee, it would be the duty of honorable members to go into the question closely, and, under the circumstances, to impose a limited toll, at any rate, for a period, on the bridge. He should not, of course, vote against the second reading. He could not at all agree with the Honorable Mr. Stephens about the difference between a bridge and a railway. The country paid for the construction of railways, and it was now called upon to pay for the bridge. Hitherto the tolls on the bridge were very much higher than they ought to be. No doubt that was the cause of a very strong feeling being created about the bridge. It remained for the House to modify the rates. Really, honorable members should look to ultimate results, and economise.

The Hon. W. D. Box said he should support the second reading of the Bill, as he regarded the bridge as one of the highways of the colony. He did not agree with the remarks of the Honorable Mr. Gregory, that the bridge should be classed with a railway; and it would not be well for the House in its wisdom to put a toll on the bridge. Honorable members had not considered sufficiently the position of the bridge. If he remembered rightly, a member of a former Ministry had brought about the trouble by insisting upon a certain kind of bridge being made, which threw the construction out, and led to the time when the Bank of Queensland failed; and entailed an additional cost of something like £40,000. Yet the design had been approved in the first instance by the Government. He hoped that the Bill would pass as it stood.

Question put and passed.