Queensland

Parliamentary Debates
[Hansard]

Legislative Assembly

WEDNESDAY, 2 JULY 1879

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY.

Wednesday, 2 *July*, 1879.

Easter Encampment.—Petition.—Motion for Adjournment.—Question.—The Rabbit Nuisance.—Formal Resolutions.—The Rabbit Nuisance.—Meat Preserving.—Chairman of Committees.—Lady O'Connell Pension Bill—committee.—Land Act Amendment Bill—second reading.

The SPEAKER took the chair at half-past 3 o'clock.

EASTER ENCAMPMENT.

In laying a return of the expenditure on this Encampment on the table,

The COLONIAL SECRETARY (Mr. Palmer) said that it was necessary he should take the unusual course of making an explanation. The pay of the men amounted to £1,968; the return of rations was £1,201 15s. 3d.; the cost of stores, £676 7s. 1d.; but as it would not be fair to charge the whole of the cost of the stores to this year, the Under Colonial Secretary had, with his consent, and he thought very fairly, considering that they had the goods, only charged the account with 25 per cent. of that amount. The total cost of the Encampment, instead of being the £8,000 they had heard so much about, was £3,348 17s.

PETITION.

Mr. STUBLEY presented a petition from residents of Townsville and district, praying that a proposed deviation of the Townsville-Charters Towers line, near Townsville, be not carried out.

Petition read and received.

MOTION FOR ADJOURNMENT.

Mr. KATES moved the adjournment of the House, to bring under notice a communication he had received from a selector residing at North Branch, referring to a new exchange which was supposed to be in contemplation, and which, if completed, would prove a serious injury to the Darling Downs and the colony. The statement in the letter was as follows—

"I beg leave to draw under your notice a land exchange reported here, and, if completed, a more gross injustice was never perpetrated in the selecting community. It is as follows:—Messrs. Gore and Co. hold 5,000 acres, the north-westerly point of what was known as St. Ronan's, formerly the property of Mr. Wm. Graham, destitute of both timber and water, with the exception of one well, which from its brackish nature is entirely unfit for use. Gore and Co., I am informed, want to give this valueless country to the Government and get in return 7,000 acres of the land on North Branch, which is now open for selection, with water frontage to the Condamine River, and North Branch beautifully timbered—in fact, the cream of the Downs. From its delightful situation it is called the Gentleman's Seat, and is only fifteen miles from Cambooya Railway Station, while St. Ronan's is forty. It is also reported that Mr. Graham promised to use his influence for Gore and Co.—that is, if they used theirs and got him returned. Now, Mr. Kates, this is a most absurd exchange, and I beg of you to nip it in its infancy. * * * * Since I heard of this unjust transaction, I have always ridden day and night to secure your return, using all the means in my power to do so. Would that I could see you about this most gross transaction, or that it had fallen to an abler pen than mine to describe. Mr. F. A. Gore is now in Brisbane to push forward this exchange. On behalf of myself and 200 of the electors of Darling Downs, I sincerely hope you will bring all your influence to bear, and defeat, if possible, such injustice."

He had been in favour of exchanges for black-soil country, but this one would not be an advantageous exchange, because it would give 7,000 acres of good land for 5,000 acres of inferior land, and it could not promote settlement. Would the Minister for Lands give some information on the subject, as he (Mr. Kates) hoped to hear that the letter he had read was not well founded.

Mr. KELLETT asked the hon. member to give the name of the writer of the letter.

Mr. KATES said he would not be justified in doing so.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS (Mr. Perkins) thought they had heard enough about the Darling Downs election and its electioneering tactics. If the hon. member desired the explanation he described, the best way would be for him to give proper notice. It was inconvenient to answer the subject of a letter suddenly read in a garbled fashion, and especially when the hon. member refused to give the name of the writer. He could assure the hon. member and the House that he knew nothing whatever of the exchanges referred to.

The Hon. S. W. GRIFFITH said it was very satisfactory to learn from the Minister for Lands that no such exchange was contemplated, but there was another portion of his remarks which he could not expect to pass unnoticed. It was not the place of the hon. gentleman to have referred to the Darling Downs election, considering what had occurred, and that the hon. member who moved the adjournment had been returned at the head of the poll in spite of the active opposition of the Minister for Lands. It was scarcely proper for the hon. Minister to say they had had enough of the Darling Downs election.

The PREMIER (Mr. McIlwraith) said that if any hon. member read a letter in the House which insinuated that the Ministry were capable of, and were in the very act of doing, an injustice to the colony, he should, at least, give the name of the writer to the House, and should also have the courtesy to ask the Ministry for the information in some other way than that he had chosen. His hon. colleague had given a distinct denial to the statement that any such exchanges as those described were contemplated, and that should have been sufficient.

Mr. GROOM said he was glad to hear the contradiction. The report to which the hon. member (Mr. Kates) had referred was in general circulation on the Downs, where, it was stated, exchanges of this nature had been made. He had received a similar letter himself—though it was not accessible at the moment—and he knew the writer perfectly well, and could assure the Minister for Lands that the writer was as respectable a man as the hon. Minister was a member of the Ministry: outside the House the Minister for Lands would not dare to impeach his character. The report as to the exchanges was not mentioned in disparagement of the Government in any way, but simply as a thing in contemplation as to which some information was required. For himself he was very glad to hear from the Minister that such exchange was not contemplated, and the announcement would give great satisfaction outside. The course the hon. member (Mr. Kates) had taken was perfectly right;—any member had a right to ask a question, and it was the duty of the Ministry to give him a civil answer. He knew the locality very well, and could agree with the writer of the letter that it would be an unjust thing if such an exchange were to be even considered, so absurd was it altogether.

Mr. MOREHEAD had a vivid recollection of the hon. leader of the Opposition (Mr. Griffith) saying that the hon. member for Toowoomba never spoke but that he happened to have a letter on the subject under discussion in his pocket: perhaps this was one of them. It would be much better and more satisfactory to the House if the hon. member (Mr. Kates) would give the writer of the letter's name.

Mr. O'SULLIVAN had not thought that any member of the House would have been in any way annoyed that letters of this kind should come before them. He was glad to see that they were exposed, because the moment they were brought to the surface they were always refuted. They generally found that such rumours as these came from the Darling Downs. A week ago they were told by the member for Toowoomba that the Allora lands had been valued by the Government at £5 an acre; but when the matter was really placed before the House they found there had been no valuation at all. He had stated at the time that the lands were not valued at £5 an acre, and time would show whether his statement or that of the hon. member for Toowoomba was right. If any gentleman ever sent him a letter of this kind he should always read it to the House, to let hon. members know what was in it, and this he would do whether he knew who was the writer or not—it should be fully exposed. As regarded land exchanges, he was always opposed to them, let them come whatever way they might. His experience showed him that if a man wanted to swop a horse it was always suspected that there was something the matter with the animal. It was much the same with the land exchanges—people always suspected some roguery or another. He took this opportunity of saying that, if the Government wanted good lands which would serve a number of settlers who required that land for actual cultivation, it was much better for them to buy it out and out than try to effect an exchange for it. The land could then be sold to those who wanted to cultivate it for what it cost, with a reasonable interest added. If that course were taken there would be no suspicion of collusion on either side.

Mr. MILES said that he also had received a communication from residents of the district on the same subject, and he had intended to have followed it up in the usual way, by giving notice of question to the Minister for Lands; but he had been anticipated by the senior member for Darling Downs, who, being a new member, was probably unaware of the proper way of getting the information, and had made a mistake. However, they had got the information they required, and it was not necessary to proceed in the matter further.

Mr. KATES, in reply, said that he had no intention of imputing anything to the Minister for Lands, but he brought the

matter forward with the view of preventing the exchange if it was contemplated; and the debate which had taken place had had the desired object, and he was glad to hear from the Minister for Lands that there was no foundation for the report.

Question of adjournment put and negatived.

QUESTION.

Mr. BAILEY asked the Minister for Works—

1. Is it the intention of Government to continue the trial surveys from the Gympie Railway at or near Gootchy and in the direction of Kilkivan?

2. Have the Government concluded any negotiations with respect to the Burrum Tramway?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS (Mr. Macrossan) replied—

1. The intention of Government will be disclosed at the proper time.

2. No.

THE RABBIT NUISANCE.

Mr. SIMPSON rose to move the adjournment of the House to draw attention to a subject of a great deal more importance to the Darling Downs than the land exchanges—it was what was termed the rabbit nuisance, and on referring to an article in the *Warwick Examiner* of June 28, he saw that a writer in that paper said that he had seen a lot of rabbits in that locality dug out of a burrow evidently recently made; if left to breed they would do an immense deal of damage, and——

The SPEAKER said that a similar motion had just been negatived, and it was not competent for the hon. member to move another adjournment at this stage of the business.

FORMAL RESOLUTIONS.

The following formal resolutions were passed:—

By Mr. AMHURST—

That there be laid upon the table of the House, any further correspondence between the Engineer of the Southern and Western Railway, or any other person, and the Minister for Works, on the subject of Ballast used on No. 5 Section, Southern and Western Railway.

By Mr. WALSH—

That there be laid upon the table of the House, a copy of all correspondence, minutes, and papers having reference to the Charges paid by Distillers for the Overtime of Inspectors.

THE RABBIT NUISANCE.

Mr. SIMPSON said he would move the adjournment of the House, in order to call attention to the rabbit nuisance, with which the colony was threatened. In the *Warwick Examiner* of June 28, Mr. Linnett was reported to have shot a hare just outside that town, and to have seen a lot of rabbits in the same locality, and assisted to dig out a burrow which had evidently been recently made. He (Mr. Simpson) had had some experience of the rabbit nuisance, and knew what it meant;—it meant simply that, if rabbits were once fairly established on the Darling Downs, the farmers there would be completely ruined. He had a letter from a friend largely interested in farming and grazing on the Downs, informing him that rabbits were being let loose below the Range, about Helidon. When in New South Wales recently, he happened to see on a railway platform in the interior a box containing fifteen or twenty live rabbits, and the man in charge of them informed him that they were to be sent to Queensland, adding that hampers of live rabbits were sent to this colony by him every three or four months. He had intended to bring this matter before the House at an earlier date, but was told it was so unimportant as to be not worth attending to. He now saw he had made a mistake in delaying so long, for it was a thing which ought to be dealt with at once, by the passing of a short but very stringent Bill, preventing the possibility of any more rabbits being turned out in the colony, and offering strong inducements to persons to exterminate those already here. All who knew what had happened in Victoria, New South Wales, South Australia, Tasmania, and New Zealand, would know what a fearful pest rabbits were when once fairly established in a colony. Happily they were not yet fairly established in Queensland, and it ought to be their strongest aim to prevent it. He would read one or two extracts on this subject from the *Australasian*. That journal, of October 5th, 1878, contained the report of Mr. Black, district surveyor, who was sent out specially to report on the rabbit nuisance in the Wimmera district. A portion of that report was as follows:—

"Mr. Black states that the origin of the nuisance in this locality was due to the liberation, in the summer of 1869, of four pairs of rabbits at Moreton Plains, by Messrs. Mills and Mogg. These gentlemen believed they were conferring a benefit on the district, and went to special trouble and expenses in providing shelter for their *protégés* in order to give them a fair start. They have now spread over a wide area, extending from the Avoca River on the east to the Wimmera on the west, and from Donald on the south to the Murray River on the north. They are not yet so numerous over much of this area as to prove a nuisance, but for a considerable space round the centre of distribution they have increased to such an extent as to have become a pest, inflicting serious losses on the selectors by destroying their crops, and in

several instances, also, on the pastoral tenant, whose sheep they have actually driven off the ground by entirely eating up the grass."

He might say that the rabbits had now crossed the Murray River, and that they had extended in thousands, nearly 150 miles into the Riverina country. Further on Mr. Black gave some specific instances of the damage done by rabbits, of which he might mention the following—

"On a selection of 960 acres at Lake Bulloke, held by Mr. Glowery, the return from seventy-five acres under crop was only nine loads of hay, owing to the ravages of these pests. Thirty acres were completely eaten off. Many of his neighbours suffered in an equal degree. At another selection of 320 acres, near Morton Plains, twenty-one acres were completely eaten off last year, and this year he did not expect to save any of his crop. Mr. Fielding, a selector at Currapagna, and thirty-four other selectors within a radius of three miles of Watcham pre-emptive, lost by the rabbits last season 360 acres of grain crops and 5,500 acres of grass. On the Curryo South Run, which formerly carried 15,000 sheep, the rabbits have literally eaten the sheep off the run, which is now unstocked."

Many other cases of the kind were enumerated, and Mr. Black suggested that—

"To deal with the question effectually, the destruction of vermin will have to be made compulsory on all landowners, and perhaps the best way to accomplish the object would be to amend the Local Government Act by taking power to the Governor in Council to proclaim infested districts on the application of a certain proportion of the ratepayers, and making it compulsory on the local bodies to take action on the appearance of such proclamation."

In the same paper of November 2nd there was an article headed "The Rabbit Bill," it which it was stated that, in moving the second reading of the Bill, the Minister of Lands said—

"The mischief being done by the rabbit in the Mallee district cannot be exaggerated. On his recent visit he passed over tracts which were now grassless, the rabbits having eaten the grass—roots and all. On the stations the sheep are starved. On the selections old men of sixty or seventy years of age are sitting up all night to keep the rabbits from the corn. His proposal is to give the shire councils power to levy a rate of 1d. per acre, and also to authorise them to go upon private property and destroy the rabbits at the expense of the owner. All brushwood fences in a rabbit district are liable to be burned down on the order of inspectors under the Act, and anybody turning rabbits loose in a district shall be liable to a penalty of £10 for each offence."

In that journal of December 2nd there was a report of a deputation to Mr. Berry on this subject, and that report concluded as follows :—

"The subject was considered at the Cabinet meeting in the afternoon, and the following arrangement was arrived at :—The Minister of Lands to be authorised to expend, under proper regulations to be hereafter framed, a sum not exceeding £1,500 in the suppression of this evil, a similar amount to be contributed by pastoral tenants and selectors in the districts afflicted. A meeting of selectors is also to be held in the district to consider the proposition of the pastoral tenants—that in consideration of their undertaking to clear their runs, selection thereupon shall be stayed until 1880."

The fact mentioned in the last extract was worthy of notice, for the pest must be a most serious one when the Government proposed to keep the pastoral tenants' runs from selection for three years on condition that they cleared off the rabbits. He might cite many other extracts on this subject from the *Australasian*, for hardly a fortnight passed without its containing a letter or paragraph relating to the rabbit nuisance; but he thought he had said enough to show that the matter ought to be dealt with at once, in order to nip the evil in the bud. Large sums had been paid for the destruction of marsupials, but he could assure hon. members that that nuisance was as nothing compared with the rabbit nuisance if it once made headway in the colony.

Mr. MESTON said he was glad the subject had been brought before the notice of the House, for it was one which required immediate attention from the Legislature. In some of the southern colonies the rabbit nuisance had become a source of widespread desolation, not only to the farmers but to the pastoral tenants, and he trusted that strenuous efforts would be made to keep it out of Queensland. While shooting in his own electorate some months ago, he saw on a selection five or six rabbits running about loose, and, on his remonstrating with the owner, the latter agreed to shut them up, adding that there were two he could not catch; so he (Mr. Meston) put a charge of shot into the two which could not be caught and stopped their propagating powers for ever. He had been informed, but was not certain of it, that some enthusiastic sportsmen had turned out rabbits at the Pine River. It might do, for purposes of sport, to turn them out on Stradbroke or Moreton Island, but to turn them out on the Darling Downs would be an act of suicidal folly. The House was indebted to the hon. member for Dalby for bringing this matter forward, and he hoped it would receive speedy legislative attention.

Mr. KATES said that, as a resident of the Darling Downs, he had heard nothing about the rabbit nuisance, and thought there was no necessity for alarm as yet. He believed the hare mentioned in the *Warwick Examiner* was the same as that shot the other day at Headington Hill.

Mr. PERSSE thought that to talk about the subject on a motion for adjournment

was a waste of time, and suggested that the hon. member for Dalby should bring in a Bill to prevent the rabbit nuisance.

Mr. SIMPSON said he considered himself too young a member to take charge of a Bill of this important nature. If it were introduced by the Government it would receive, he felt sure, the support of both sides of the House.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY said the rabbit nuisance, if once established in the colony, would be a very serious matter; but nothing whatever could be done by moving the adjournment of the House on a question of this sort. The duty of the hon. member for Dalby was to bring in a Bill, and he believed he would have the support of every member of the House in passing it. He hoped the nuisance would not prove so serious as was imagined. Years ago an intimate friend of his own turned rabbits out on the Downs, and they all died. If anything was to be done, the hon. member must bring in a Bill, for it was no use wasting time on a motion for adjournment.

The Hon. J. DOUGLAS said he did not think time was lost on a discussion of this kind, and he was glad the hon. member for Dalby had drawn attention to it, for, if rabbits were allowed to increase in the colony, the consequences would be most serious. He could well understand that the Government were not prepared at present to bring in a Bill dealing with the subject, and he trusted the hon. member for Dalby, or some other private member, would do so. It would be wise to anticipate the evil, as had been done with regard to phylloxera in the vine. In the meantime, the agricultural societies might, in their several districts, do much good by paying attention to it, and, perhaps, offering an immediate reward for the destruction of rabbits.

AN HON. MEMBER: They have no money.

Mr. DOUGLAS said that if the agricultural societies were not capable of dealing with a matter of that kind they were not worthy to fulfil their functions. He was quite sure, however, that the agricultural societies in Warwick and Toowoomba were quite competent to make investigations in order to ascertain whether the evil existed, and, if so, to take steps to prevent it from spreading. Their action might be followed up by the absolute prohibition of the introduction of rabbits by sea, and their destruction where found upon land.

Question put and negatived.

MEAT PRESERVING.

Mr. KELLETT moved—

That this House will, at its next sitting, resolve itself into a Committee of the Whole, to consider of the desirableness of introducing a Bill to provide a Bonus for Meat-curing Companies by an Assessment on Stock."

Question put and passed.

CHAIRMAN OF COMMITTEES.

The PREMIER, with the permission of the House, moved, without notice, that Mr. Cooper act as Chairman of Committees during this day.

Question put and passed.

LADY O'CONNELL PENSION BILL—COMMITTEE.

The House went into Committee for the consideration of this Bill.

On the motion of the COLONIAL SECRETARY, the preamble was postponed.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY said he proposed to move, as an amendment to the first clause, that the words "It shall be lawful" be erased. The effect of the amendment would be to carry out the suggestion made by the leader of the Opposition last night. The clause would then state that "The Governor in Council shall authorise by Executive minute."

Question—That the words be omitted—put and passed.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY moved that at the end of the clause the words "said pension to commence from the 23rd day of March last" be inserted.

Mr. GRIFFITH suggested that the year should be stated.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY said the meaning was obvious, but he would insert 1879, to please the hon. gentleman. To be strictly correct, he believed it should be "in the year of our Lord One thousand eight hundred and seventy-nine."

Mr. GRIFFITH said he could not allow the observation of the Colonial Secretary to pass without a word. He did not conceive that the position he occupied in the House required him to devote himself to matters of detail, but he desired that Bills should pass the House in proper and intelligible form. It was rather the duty of other hon. members than his to call attention to such matters. The hon. gentleman, who never forgot anything, remembered that some seven years ago, when he (Mr. Griffith) first came into the House, he made a criticism which might be considered verbal. That incident the hon. gentleman had never been able to get out of his head, and he still made some uncivil remarks whenever he (Mr. Griffith) suggested an amendment. He would further observe that the clause as it stood was entirely in violation of the spirit of our legislation, because it declared that the

Governor "shall" do a certain thing, whereas it was well known that the Governor was never directed to do anything, but power was given him to do it. Knowing the hon. gentleman's objection to even the slightest alteration, he had not mentioned the matter. He considered he was not fairly chargeable with making merely verbal amendments because he wished to see legislation carefully carried on. His experience as a member of the legal profession was, that one-half of the litigation over the construction of Acts of Parliament had arisen from the absence of careful watching when the Bills were going through the House.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY said he could not allow the remarks of the hon. gentleman to pass without saying a word on the subject. This Bill had been drawn up by the Attorney-General, and was a transcript of Manning's Retirement Act. It was therefore rather late in the day to find fault with the wording. The Government had endeavoured to meet the hon. gentleman in every possible way. So far from the hon. gentleman having, seven years ago, made only one objection to the literal wording of a Bill, he (the Colonial Secretary) could conscientiously say he never remembered introducing a Bill to the wording of which the hon. gentleman did not object over and over again. To please the hon. gentleman, he had no objection to insert his own words, though they meant exactly the same as in the original Bill.

Mr. DOUGLAS said the phraseology of the clause was not exactly what it ought to be, as it was a manifest defect in legislation to impose duties upon the Governor in Council in this form. The original form of the clause "It shall be lawful" was not in itself objectionable, though he believed the form should be "shall be payable." Now they were telling the Governor in Council what he "shall" authorise, but he was not quite sure that the Governor in Council might not take it into his head to refuse. He would take the opportunity of suggesting that more care should be devoted to the drafting of Acts of Parliament in future. During the time he (Mr. Douglas) had been connected with the late Government a good deal of the work of drafting Acts had devolved upon the hon. member for North Brisbane. It would be much better that a draughtsman should be provided, as the work was an important and arduous task which no hon. member should be called upon to undertake. The work required technical knowledge and familiarity with the forms of law sanctioned by antiquity and practice, and that being so it was desirable that someone acquainted with those forms should be required to undertake the responsibility of putting Acts of Parliament in a shape as clear and admitting of as little doubt as was possible. The duties of the committee would be, then, less than at present. After the Bill had passed through the committee, and before it reached its final stage, the draughtsman should pronounce upon its phraseology and suggest any further amendments that might be necessary.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY said the hon. gentleman knew as well as he did that there was no Parliamentary draughtsman. This Bill was exactly copied from the Manning Retirement Act; but the Government had no objection, with the permission of the House, to go back to the Eliott Pension Bill, the clauses of which were, he believed, rather superior. He did not think that the Governor in Council would refuse to do what he was authorised to do by Parliament. Their object had been to make assurance doubly sure, but, if hon. members preferred the terms of the other Act, he would move as an amendment that the clause be omitted with a view to inserting the following—

> An annuity or pension of £250 shall be paid to Eliza Emily O'Connell styled Lady O'Connell for the term of her natural life and the said annuity or pension shall issue and be payable out of the Consolidated Revenue of the colony and shall commence from the day of the death of Sir Maurice Charles O'Connell.

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

Question—That the clause proposed to be inserted, be so inserted—put.

Mr. MILES said he should have opposed this Bill at its second reading had he been present. He had opposed all Bills of a similar nature, and he should continue to do so, so long as he was in the House. It was much to be regretted that those in receipt of large salaries did not make some provision for their widows in case of their death. With the advantages offered by life assurance companies all persons in receipt of large salaries could make provision As long as this House voted away public money for such purposes, applications like this would be continually brough forward. During his late electioneering tour the question, "Are you in favour of pensions?" had been put to him again and again; and he had replied, "no," and he never had been. He remembered that when the Manning Pension Bill was before the House a gentleman of the legal profession told him it was no use making a noise about the matter, because it was impossible the man could live. What had been the result? The gentleman had long ago left Queensland, and was

now living in another colony, but was still drawing his pension. A greater swindle never was perpetrated than the passing of the Manning Retirement Act. He would like to know where the money was to come from to pay all these pensions? Only lately a gentleman had retired on a pension of £1,250 per annum after fifteen years' service, and now it was proposed to grant another annuity of £250. And yet, when they asked the Minister for Works to cause the roads injured by the late floods to be patched up, they were told there was no money. He presumed the Bill would be carried, but he would raise his voice against it, and let the country see who it was that was prepared to squander the public money in pensions. So long as the House granted these annuities, men in the public service would make no provision for their widows and families.

Mr. MESTON was understood to say, in reply to the last speaker, that it required more moral courage to withdraw his Bill to amend the Manning Retirement Act than to go on with it. In anything that he undertook moral courage should not be wanting, and he could credit himself with having ten thousand per cent. more of it than the hon. member.

Mr. KATES said that, although he thoroughly sympathised with Lady O'Connell, and was sorry to hear that she had been left in destitute circumstances, he should on principle oppose the Bill. When they were hearing of retrenchment in every department, and were dismissing men, they could not afford to grant pensions. Only a few days ago a poor widow, the postmistress at Allora, had been dismissed at one day's notice, although she had been thirty years in the Government service at the pitiful allowance of £30 per year.

Mr. REA said that when they considered that Dr. Lang, notwithstanding the eminent services that he had rendered to the colony, had never received a shilling from it or drawn one shilling by way of pension, they must arrive at the conclusion that the Bill before them was not justified. Sir Maurice O'Connell received more public money as salary than, perhaps, any man in Queensland, and, therefore, it was something monstrous that the gentlemen who had initiated the Bill had not subscribed sufficient out of their own pockets to make up a fund for his widow. That would have been the straightforward, manly way of doing the thing, and would have been better than to come begging to the Committee, and saying at the same time that none but those with tip-top salaries were worthy of pensions.

Mr. WALSH regretted exceedingly that a discussion had arisen on the subject. There was no rule without an exception, and although, generally speaking, he was adverse to pensions, he thought the Bill before the Committee was one which ought to have been passed without the slightest objection; he really had not expected that there would have been one member to oppose it. Everyone was not fortunate enough to be able to provide for his wife and family, and if Sir Maurice O'Connell was among the number it did not do away with the fact that he had been one of the most valuable and respected of their colonists. It would have been only a graceful act to have granted a higher pension to Lady O'Connell. The amount might have been £400; but no doubt, on account of the bad times, the Government had seen reason to make it so low as £250. He hoped the hon. member who had threatened to divide the Committee would think better of it; the pension should have been voted almost spontaneously.

Mr. MACFARLANE (Ipswich) said he had opposed the second reading, and should oppose the Bill now. It was well known that during the last few years men had died who had served their country gratuitously for many years in that Chamber, and yet no pension had been proposed for their families. He knew of one case where the family had been left poorly provided for. He did not like this respecting of persons, and on principle he was opposed to every gratuity; he should therefore move, as an amendment, that the proposed pension be reduced by £249 19s.

On the recommendation of the COLONIAL SECRETARY to the last speaker—to content himself with voting against the motion—the amendment was withdrawn.

Question—That the new clause as read stand part of the Bill—put.

The Committee divided:—

AYES, 33.

Messrs. A. H. Palmer, McIlwraith, King, Macrossan, Perkins, Griffith, Dickson, Stubley, O'Sullivan, Beattie, Kellett, Archer, Simpson, Macfarlane (Leichhardt), Beor, Hamilton, H. W. Palmer, Lalor, Persse, Walsh, Rutledge, Lumley-Hill, Weld-Blundell, Kingsford, Low, Morehead, Stevenson, Norton, Douglas, Groom, Hendren, Amhurst, and Baynes.

NOES, 7.

Messrs. Miles, Kates, Rea, Bailey, Grimes, Macfarlane (Ipswich), and Mackay.

Question, therefore, resolved in the affirmative.

On the motion of the COLONIAL SECRETARY, the following new clause was passed—

A proportionate amount shall be paid at the end of the month in which Sir Maurice O'Connell died and such annuity or pension shall thereafter be payable monthly on the usual day for payment of official salaries and the receipt of the said Eliza Emily O'Connell or of such

person as shall be duly authorised and appointed to receive the said annuity or pension shall be a good and sufficient discharge for the payment thereof.

Preamble passed, and

The COLONIAL SECRETARY moved that the Chairman leave the chair and report the Bill with amendments.

Mr. DICKSON said he should like to ask whether the Government intended introducing a Civil Service Bill. He had refrained from speaking upon the present measure, because he deemed it one which appealed to their sympathies in an especial manner, and would not, therefore, be regarded as coming under the ordinary classification; but unless a Civil Service Bill were passed, the House would have periodical appeals to its sympathies, and possibly the sympathies of hon. members might induce them to grant pensions which could not be justified either on their merits or on account of the financial position of the colony. He was not sure whether a Civil Service Bill would affect the measure before the Committee — whether Lady O'Connell would come under its provisions, but at the same time it was desirable, where there was such a large Civil Service, that distinct legislation should be so framed that the claim of each member of the Service or his representative should be recognised, and should not need to be treated, as claims were sessionally, as a matter of charity, but as one of right. He believed now was an opportune time to ask the Premier whether he would this session introduce a Civil Service Bill, the materials for which were in his Department, having been collected during the last few years?

The PREMIER: We do intend to bring in a Civil Service Bill.

Question put and passed.

The CHAIRMAN reported the Bill with amendments; the report was adopted, and the third reading made an Order of the Day for to-morrow.

LAND ACT AMENDMENT BILL—SECOND READING.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS (Mr. Perkins), in moving the second reading of this Bill, said he trusted it would be refreshing to hon. members, after what they had heard this evening about granting pensions, and letters from North Branch, to turn to the discussion of a measure which, if passed into law, would be of great and lasting benefit to the colony. It was a very simple measure, entitled "A Bill to amend the Law relating to the Alienation of Crown Lands." It might, perhaps, have been called "The Exchanged Lands Bill," but, for certain reasons, it had been given its present title. It did not propose any violent or extensive changes in the present land law, because it was not considered that the time had yet come for that; but the necessity had been forced upon the present Government, owing to the state in which they found the exchanged lands had been left by their predecessors in office, to make some provision of this kind. As most members were aware, a series of exchanges of land had been effected between certain landholders and the Government during the past two years, and the most important of these exchanges was effected by the hon. member Mr. Douglas, when presiding over the Land Office. But, on taking office, the present Government found that, beyond the agreement to make the exchanges and making certain Executive minutes before leaving office, the late Ministry had done nothing whatever to utilise these lands; and as the present Ministry had every desire that the lands should be put to the best use—that was, to agriculture—and he believed that if agriculture was to succeed at all it must succeed on the Darling Downs—they had since taken action to place themselves in a position to further that object. It was not his business to say whether the exchanges were good or bad, but this he did know—that the people of Dalby had been loud and continuous in their wails and lamentations with regard to the lands given in exchange for the Allora lands. He did not know the capabilities of the Dalby land, but he did know what the capabilities of the Allora land were, and could say that it was about as good as any agricultural land in the colony. Therefore, to that extent he congratulated the hon. member on the success that had attended his efforts in effecting that exchange. Seeing that the Dalby lands which were given to Messrs. Kent and Wienholt in exchange for the Allora lands were, at the time, valued at 30s. per acre, and as he knew from other sources that they would have brought that price in the market if put up to auction, that made the cost of the Allora lands, to the State, about £3 per acre. He also knew that an influential deputation from Allora waited upon the hon. member, Mr. Douglas, when he was Minister for Lands, to urge the exchange, and to intimate the benefit that would accrue to the country if the exchange were carried out. That deputation consisted of about fifteen persons, and while some of them valued the land at from £3 to £4 an acre, the ideas of one or two rose to the extent of saying they believed it would fetch from £10 to £12 per acre. But that was no guide for the present Government in dealing with these lands, and at the outset they had this difficulty confronting them—that if they proceeded

to deal with those lands under the present law they would be open to any person to select at half-a-crown an acre; and seeing that they had cost the State at least £3 per acre, that was not considered a desirable state of things. Moreover, the people of Allora, who knew the land best and who expected to reap most benefit from the exchanges that had been effected, one and all expressed a desire that the lands should be sold at a fair and reasonable price, and not sacrificed at half-a-crown an acre. He was also informed, and believed, that if the lands were disposed of under the present law they would fall into the hands of a few individuals in the district; that when the certificates of the fulfilment of conditions were issued it would be found that three-fourths of them were in the hands of speculators in and around the Darling Downs. Consequently, it behoved the Government, as the guardians of the State and the interests of the people, to take steps to secure to the country that land, and offer it at a fair and reasonable price; and hence the measure now introduced. Hon. members would notice that the term "exchanged lands" was defined in clause 1, and there could be no doubt whatever as to the meaning of it. Clause 2 provided that "with certain exceptions the provisions of the Crown Lands Alienation Act, 1876, should extend and apply to exchanged lands." The meaning of that was that they were to rely upon the Land Act of 1876 in dealing with these exchanged lands except as hereinafter provided. If this Bill were passed into law there would be three modes of dealing with these exchanged lands—one would be for the Government to proclaim them open as homesteads under the 38th section of the Act of 1876—that would necessitate personal residence; another mode would be that they could be proclaimed open to conditional selection under section 4 of this Bill without personal residence; and a third mode would be for the Government to offer them at auction unconditionally. Clause 3 suspended the operation of the homestead clauses of the Act of 1878 so far as related to exchanged lands. Clause 4 declared it lawful for the Governor in Council to proclaim exchanged lands, or such parts thereof as might be deemed expedient, open to selection by way of conditional purchase. With reference to clause 5, hon. members were aware that, under the Act of 1876, the extent of improvements was limited to 10s. per acre, and this Bill proposed to increase the value of those improvements to 20s. per acre; indeed, he believed it would make very little difference were the amount made 30s. or 40s. per acre, because it must be presumed that any person selecting land in order to utilise it and reap benefits from it would be forced, without any conditions whatever, to expend a larger sum in improvements than 20s. per acre. In fact, it would require that amount to erect fencing and put up some kind of a residence; and from the way these lands would be disposed it would not pay a man to keep them idle, apart from any conditions that might be imposed: so that 20s. per acre in improvements could not be considered a hardship in any way. Clause 6 provided that any person holding selections under the Crown Lands Alienation Act of 1868, or the Crown Lands Alienation Act of 1876, or under both these Acts, comprising the maximum area allowed to be selected by these Acts, might nevertheless make an additional selection of any exchanged lands open to selection. The intention of that clause was this: it was considered desirable to encourage shopkeepers or merchants in Queen street, the successful miner at Charters Towers and the Palmer, or the squatter from the Barcoo, or the disappointed selectors at Dalby, or any persons who might be tired of living in Ipswich or other parts of the colony, who chose to take advantage of the provisions of this Bill, to enjoy the fine and salubrious climate of the Darling Downs; there would be no hindrance to their doing so. He might also inform the House that, since it had gone abroad that this exchange had been effected, he had had numerous applications from different parts of the colony, as varied as the colony was itself—from near Normanton to Tenterfield, and also from Rockhampton and the Western districts, making inquiries as to how these lands were to be dealt with—whether they would be allowed to select or not, and expressing a strong desire to come and make selections, or buy, if the lands were put up to auction. Ever since the 1876 Act came into operation, it was an admitted mistake—he supposed it was unintentional—but at anyrate, both in and out-of-doors the general topic of conversation by every person interested in the land question was, that 80 acres was too small an area for a man to make a living upon and bring up his family in comfort. Opinions had been expressed pretty freely in the House on that point; but, seeing the time was not yet ripe for bringing forward a more comprehensive measure on the land question than this Bill, the intention of which was to enable them to deal with the exchanged lands, and that it was considered desirable that the Act of 1876 should continue upon trial this year to see what the result would be, he had availed himself of this opportunity of conferring this boon upon the homestead selectors of the colony. That was the object of the clause—that a homestead selector could take up from 80 to 160 acres in homestead areas. Clauses 8 and 9 would, of course, be read together,

Clause 10 provided that clauses 80 and 81 of the Act of 1876 should be repealed. Under the present Act there was a schedule of survey fees to be charged, but it was found that these fees did not pay for the surveys. The charges for surveying in this colony were very unequal. He was informed by the Under Secretary for Lands that a surveyor up at Cooktown or Townsville, or out west from those places, received 100 per cent. advance because of the hardships and privations he had to endure in making surveys in those districts; and, also, that the difficulties that beset surveyors were increasing every day, because all the land convenient to railways and roads was surveyed, and surveyors had now to go through large scrubs and over rugged country where it was very inconvenient to take provisions and other necessaries. Consequently, there was a great increase in expense and a loss to the State, because in many cases the fees, and three or four times the amount of those fees, were entirely absorbed by the insurance fund, more especially in cases where town lands had been surveyed—such as the land at Petrie's Bight, or the land at South Brisbane, or land in Toowoomba. It was therefore considered desirable, instead of having the present schedule of fees, that regulations should be made from time to time by the Surveyor-General to meet the requirements of the colony. That was the meaning of clauses 10 and 11; but in no case would there be any possibility of increasing the expenses where selectors of small portions under 320 acres were concerned. It applied only to large transactions and where surveys had to be made in inaccessible places. With reference to clause 13, it was admitted on all hands that the present system of commonages and reserves was of very little benefit to the portions of the community for whose benefit they were intended. In the neighbourhood of Dalby and Warwick, where the country was pretty thickly populated, it would be thought that those commonages or reserves would be of some benefit to the people; but the fact was that persons living hundreds of miles away sent down their flocks of sheep or herds of cattle to eat up all the grass, and the result was that the settlers and farmers derived no benefit from it at all. The object of this clause was to benefit the settlers and farmers and to remove present abuses. There was no provision in this Bill, nor was there any law in force at present, to prosecute persons for grazing on camping, water, or town reserves. These were excluded, so that persons could go there and do as they liked; but clause 13 provided that any person, unless lawfully claiming under any lease, or otherwise, who should be found occupying lands reserved for pasturage purposes, or for the use of travelling stock, or depasturing horses, cattle, or sheep, should be liable to punishment. At the present time, whenever trustees had been appointed and they had taken the management in their own hands, they could deal with trespassers; but in many cases the people had not appointed trustees; they were content with getting the reserve proclaimed, and each one took as much out of it as he could get. Others, however, had been more industrious, and had appointed trustees whose names were published in the *Gazette* as soon as sent down, and he heard they were working satisfactorily. Hon. members would readily see that this might be used as a weapon of torture, if it was left to the residents in the neighbourhood to put it into operation; and in order that they should not torment one another or use it in a vexatious manner, the power was left in the hands of the commissioners, who were generally supposed to know their work, and who would not allow it to be worked so as to be made an instrument of torture. It would also be seen that there was a long interval between the penalties for the first, second, and third offence. Hon. members would see that this was a very simple measure. It did not arm the Government with any powers that they did not possess at the present time. No extra powers were asked for, but it was simply to put the Government in a position to deal with valuable lands on the Darling Downs in such a manner as to let people who had long been anxious to settle on them do so as soon as possible. To give effect to the Bill, blocks had been surveyed in small lots of 40, 80, and 120 acres each, and reports had come in from the commissioner, and from a gentleman who was well acquainted with the question, as to the value of these particular lands if cut up in blocks. There would be a price put on each lot, and there would be this change from the present system—in making an application a man would know what he was applying for, as each lot would be numbered, and he could go and inspect it, and there would be no danger of overlapping; he would also know the value put on the land. Every lot should be dealt with on its own merits, for it did not follow that because one lot was worth so much others should be the same. Unless the House ordered otherwise, every lot should be dealt with on its own merits. In the case of an applicant not being successful, and two or three persons wanting the same land, it would be for themselves to determine the value. He believed that the Bill would be an inducement to have these fine lands brought into the full swing of agriculture. He did not think there would be any objection to the measure, because it was not a question dealing with the land policy of the

colony. At present it was not unusual for persons to go to Dalby and Warwick with no idea of taking up land themselves, but merely to stand by their friends; and he had been told that that was the case by Mr. Commissioner Hume. Not long ago he (Mr. Perkins) was assured by a poor woman that she had to pay a man £25 to stand aside, in order that she might get the piece of land she wanted. But, now, the people would know what they had to do instead of being ignorant of what was required of them, as they were under the old system. With these remarks, he begged to move the second reading of the Bill.

Mr. GRIFFITH said that when the hon. gentleman rose to move the second reading he told the House that now they had before them a measure from which the country was to derive a great and lasting benefit; and he (Mr. Griffith) was under the impression that they were at last to have a speech from a member of the Government in which it would be shown in what way the public would derive some little benefit from the policy of the Government. On his side they were beginning to wonder when they would hear that policy, instead of being always told that they would know it in good time. It was now nearly time that they should know it—that they should know something of the intentions of the Government. They had been told that the late Government had done nothing to utilise these lands; but they had very good reasons for not having done so, as they had not the titles of the land. He had expected to hear the hon. gentleman give some description of the peculiarity of these lands which required an alteration in the law, and of the way in which he proposed to bring about the results he mentioned; but all the hon. gentleman said was, that the lands cost about £3 an acre, and that it was not advisable to let people go on them for 2s. 6d. an acre. He also stated that some of the land had been surveyed in 40, 80, and 120 acre blocks. He told the House, instead of disclosing the policy of the Government, that by repealing the 39th section of the Act of 1876, and leaving the rest in operation, it was possible to deal with the land in three ways—either by conditional purchase, by homestead settlement, or by auction. But in which of these ways did he propose to deal with the land? At the present time the Government could sell every bit of it at auction to one man if they chose, and the only difference, then, from this Bill, would be that there could be no homestead settlement upon it. In considering the three kinds of ways in which the Government could deal with the land, the House was entitled to be told which way the Government considered was the best, if exceptional legislation was required. When the Act of 1876 was passed, it was provided that all lands that might become available for selection on the Darling Downs should be homestead areas, and that there should be no selection without personal residence; but the cardinal feature of the present Bill was to dispense with personal residence, and, although the hon. gentleman did not call attention to that, it was really the most important feature. When the hon. gentleman said that the object of the Bill was to enable all classes of persons to select these lands—such as merchants and storekeepers in Brisbane and elsewhere, and squatters in the interior—did he really think that merchants would give up their business in Brisbane to reside on those lands, or that his new friends the squatters would leave their lands on the Barcoo, which they were told was so well fitted for close settlement, to come and reside on these lands at Allora?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: Certainly not.

Mr. GRIFFITH presumed, then, that the object of the Bill was to do away with personal residence. If they were going to give away the land best suited to cultivation without requiring personal residence it was a very grave mistake. It was also said that the land was to be sold at a fair and reasonable price, which, he agreed, would conduce to settlement and discourage speculation; but the effect of the Bill would not be in that direction. The Government might sell the land by auction, or by conditional purchase with residence by bailiff, or with personal residence; but, from what fell from the hon. gentleman, he should not wonder if auction was the mode in which the lands were intended to be sold, as surveying it in blocks of 40, 80, and 120 acres was of no earthly use except for the purpose of selling it by auction. For, supposing the Government intended to sell it under the conditional purchase system, and not as homestead areas, then they could not limit any purchaser to less than 640 acres; and as the hon. gentleman expressly said that they were not going to insist upon personal residence, it was evident that the Bill was brought in so that they might be able to dispose of the land by conditional purchase. The hon. gentleman told them very plainly that he was going to dispense with personal residence; but he was evidently not satisfied with that, as he was going to allow all people who had already acquired the maximum area of land allowed by law—and perhaps by dummying or other unfair means—to take up another 640 acres of this land. He must really express a hope that the House would soon know something of the policy of the Govern-

ment in dealing with these lands—that before the evening was over some information would be given to them. Again, he would ask what was the use of the Government having the land surveyed in the small blocks mentioned by the hon. member, when a man was entitled to take up 640 acres under conditional purchase, unless the Government intended to proclaim only one block at a time? He contended that the Bill should not be allowed to pass until it was provided that the whole of the land was made a homestead area. Supposing that was done, the Government might then limit the maximum to 120 acres; but, as the Bill was at present, he could not see the use of cutting up the land into the blocks referred to by the hon. gentleman. He had seen a rumour in one of the papers that this Bill originally contained an auction clause. A straw sometimes showed the way in which the wind blew, and the survey of these blocks showed that the Government had intended to sell them by auction. When they passed the Act of 1876 it was never intended that lands on the Darling Downs should be sold in blocks of 640 acres to persons already gorged with all the land the law entitled them to acquire. Then they had been told that it was proposed to increase the amount to be expended on improvements from 10s. to 20s. an acre. He did not attach much importance to the amount required to be expended on improvements, and believed that the conditions applying to improvements had often been evaded, and that if they got suitable men on the land the amount now required for improvements might be reduced: but there would be time to discuss that when the Bill was in committee. The other parts of the Bill really did not require much comment, except to point out that the 13th section on which the hon. gentleman dwelt at such length was already the law, so that that part of the Bill was unnecessary. The only part of it which referred to a subject with which they really had to deal was in reference to the lands acquired by exchange. He did not know whether all those lands were similarly circumstanced, but he believed they were not. All they could infer from the hon. gentleman's speech was, that homestead selectors were to be excluded from these exchanges. He did not suppose the hon. gentleman thought that if the land was thrown open any of it would be taken up by homestead selectors at 2s. 6d. an acre, because competition was certain and would raise the price to the fair value; so that the only sort of reason he gave for dealing with these exchanges in the manner proposed by the Bill before them was one that had no existence. The Government had entirely failed to grapple with the question, and it must be obvious to everyone that the only proper way of dealing with the land was that which they had left untouched. It was almost incredible that, in dealing with any lands on the Darling Downs which it had been declared by the Legislature should only be dealt with as homestead areas, any Government should propose to dispose of the most valuable portion of them in the manner now proposed by the Bill. He was afraid the Minister for Lands had lost the virtue that used to distinguish him when he put himself forward as the champion of the *bonâ fide* free selectors on the Darling Downs; for now, instead of coming forward in that capacity, he came forward as the champion of persons living in towns and in the interior, and of people who had monopolised all the lands they could get hold of. If the Government really intended to deal with these exchanged lands in a proper way, every principle contained in the Bill should be out of it; they were principles that ought not to be applied to such lands.

The PREMIER said that the leader of the Opposition, in replying to the speech of the Minister for Lands, made a strong point of the fact as alleged by him—that the Minister had said nothing whatever to disclose the policy of the Government. The policy of the Government was very well disclosed in the Bill before the House, and it was disclosed much more fully in the speech made by his hon. friend (Mr. Perkins) in introducing the measure. The leader of the Opposition had further said that it was just on a par with the action of the Government throughout in refraining from disclosing their general policy. The House had now been in session about seven weeks, and he (Mr. McIlwraith) could say, from his experience of Parliament, that there had never been a time when the House knew more of the policy of the Ministry than the present, and he could challenge any hon. member on the other side to name one session from 1874, when they got into power, till now, where more of the Government policy had been disclosed than had been by the present Ministry. When a similar objection was brought against hon. members now sitting on the other side—that they had not disclosed their policy—what was their general answer? That their Bills were on the table of the House, and that the House was therefore in full possession of the policy of the Government. The present Ministry had put their policy into their Bills, which had now been before the House a considerable time; and, in addition to that, hon. members of the Opposition had had more information given them in the Financial Statement than ever was given on similar occasions while they were leading the business of the House. Another point was the excuse given by the

leader of the Opposition why this subject had not been dealt with by themselves. Hon. members knew perfectly well it was under their administration that the land exchanges which gave rise to the Bill took place; and the excuse made was that they never were in a position to get the titles of the land they dealt with. That, also, was the position of the Government at the present time. They had not got the titles for the land they proposed to deal with in the Bill, but that was no reason why they should not pass a measure to enable them to deal with them when they did get those titles. The Government were exactly in the same position as the Government were in during the whole of last session, but they (the Opposition) refrained from dealing with the question because they could not cope with the difficulties they themselves had created. They did acquire a large amount of land at a high price, but did not see how they could fit what they had done in with the legislation expected from them by their supporters. Not only did they refrain from dealing with the subject, but, what was stranger still, they left no record in the Lands Office to show what their opinions upon the matter were. The least they should have done was to leave some record of their intended policy with regard to the disposal of these lands. To his mind there was nothing more questionable, and that he more disliked, in the administration of the Land Bill, than these exchanges. Such exchanges should be put down. He had a stronger feeling against them than the hon. member for Stanley, who, at an earlier part of the evening, said there was always some suspicion attaching to the arrangement of a business of this kind. No doubt there was this suspicion; and a stronger objection still was, that the Government could not possibly deal with land exchanges without laying themselves open to influences to which no Government should subject themselves. It was quite plain the late Government were unable to withstand those influences, and therefore they refrained from bringing in a Bill. The Bill before the House was plain enough, and he had not the slightest hesitation in meeting the principal objections brought against it by the leader of the Opposition. The hon. gentleman said he was astonished that it had not been pointed out by the Minister for Lands that the cardinal feature of the Bill was doing away with personal residence. He (Mr. McIlwraith) denied that this was the cardinal feature of the Bill: so far from it, he would not withdraw the bill if it was reversed. The Government would not consider it a defeat of their measure if the House came to a definite conclusion upon that point, and actually insisted upon personal residence on every selection in this 24,000 acres, or in any land got by exchanges. His own personal feeling was that personal residence should not be insisted upon. He stood by the Bill as explained by the Minister for Lands, and held that in dealing with these particular lands personal residence was a very questionable advantage; and, so far as his own opinion went, it should not be insisted upon in the present case. These lands had been acquired by the State in a different way from ordinary Crown lands. They had been acquired by exchange—the Government had given a considerable value, and ought to see, at all events, that they got some value equivalent to what was given. If they failed to attain that object, there was no limit to the extent to which the Government of the colony might be defrauded, in future times, by land exchanges. The cardinal feature of the Bill was not personal residence, as stated by the leader of the Opposition, but to make actual farming lands out of what had hitherto been used for purely pastoral purposes. The Government were doing all they could to bring more lands under cultivation. That was the main object of the Bill, and, in order to attain that object, it was plain they could not deal with them under the Crown Lands Alienation Act of 1876, because, if they had thrown them open as homesteads, they were liable to be taken up at 2s. 6d. per acre. The Government could not possibly allow this to be done with lands which had cost them £3 an acre, and it would have defeated their object of bringing the lands under actual cultivation; and he had not the slightest doubt that in three years' time, had they thrown open the lands for selection as homesteads, the whole of it would have reverted to its present use, and would be in the hands of, possibly, one large landowner. The hon. gentleman argued that the land should have been put up to auction, and that, as there was sure to be more than one applicant for each block, they would have got a sufficient price for it. There was much reason in that, but it was thoroughly inconsistent with the action of the Opposition. It had been the boast of the hon. member for Maryborough, and of the leader of the Opposition and his followers, that it was owing to the high auction prices that the Government received such a large amount of money for the Western Railway lands. And now the leader of the Opposition said that, if they had thrown this particular land open as homesteads, they would have obtained their object because, under the auction system, it would have realised what it was worth. He did not believe it would: the sale would have been so manipulated that the Government would have got very little for the land, and ultimately it would have

reverted to its present condition and use. That was one of the things they had to guard against, and in order to do so it was necessary to enact that clause 39 of the Crown Lands Alienation Act should not apply to the land to which this Bill referred. At the same time, it was necessary to prevent the lands going for nothing, and that some sort of guarantee should be given that actual settlement should take place upon them. That was provided for by clause 5, which enacted that instead of the maximum amount of improvements necessary to be put on the land by the Crown Lands Alienation Act of 1876, 20s. per acre should be the minimum. It was a question whether this would attain the object; at all events, it would go much further in that direction than the provisions of the Act of 1876. He had no objection to see the amount increased, but he should object strongly to see it diminished. The hon. gentleman had pointed out that the Government could deal with this land in three different ways: they could throw it open for conditional selection, they might sell it by auction, or they might sell it under the provisions of this Bill. No doubt that was so; at the same time, the provisions of the Bill and the speech of the Minister for Lands proved conclusively that it had been all through the intention of the Government to deal with these lands in small selections, the maximum limit being 120 acres. He (the Premier) saw, and pointed out to a number of members to-day, at a meeting of Government supporters, that as the Bill was drafted it would be necessary to insert a clause limiting the maximum area, because by the 23rd clause of the Crown Lands Alienation Act, the Government had no power to prevent a selector from taking up 640 acres. It was evident from clause 7 that it was the intention of the Government to deal with the whole of this land as if it had been a homestead area—in fact, the action referred to by the leader of the Opposition, in animadverting on the speech of the Minister for Lands, proved this conclusively. The Government had surveyed the land in lots of 40, 80, and 120 acres. The meaning of that was clear—120 or 160 acres was to be the maximum amount anyone could select. A man might select one 40-acre block, or two 40-acre blocks, or three 40-acre blocks, or a 40-acre block and an 80-acre block, but he could not take up more than 120 or 160 acres. He was perfectly aware of the objection taken, and it would be necessary to insert a clause limiting the power of the Government as to the maximum area that could be selected on these lands. With regard to the 6th clause—which the leader of the Opposition considered enough to damn the Bill—that those who held selections under the Acts of 1868 and 1876 should be allowed to select under this Bill, he thoroughly believed in it. If they limited the competition, they would run a risk of defeating their object by preventing capitalists from coming in who were able to bring the whole of this land actually into cultivation, and they had decided not only to allow men to select who had taken up the full quantity under the other Acts, but also to do away with personal residence, but compelling them to fulfil the conditions of improvement. The wider they made the area of selection the more likely were they to attain the object they had in view, and it would not diminish the rights of the people to homesteads. In regard to land acquired under such peculiar circumstances, they were bound to look to the primary object of cultivation in the measure they adopted. He defied any hon. member to prove that they had limited the power of making homestead selections by allowing these lands to go without personal residence. That objection came with a very bad grace from the leader of the Opposition. When the late Mr. Stephens introduced his Land Bill, in 1874, the most damning opposition to it was made by that hon. member. The great principle of Mr. Stephens' Bill was personal residence on land actually alienated. The hon. gentleman spoke most strongly against this principle, insisting that he, as a barrister, practising in Brisbane, had just as much right to have a property on the Downs as any other man in the colony; but that, being obliged to attend to his business in town, he could not fulfil any condition of personal residence. By arguments such as that the hon. gentleman succeeded in defeating the Bill of 1874; and now the same hon. gentleman was found insisting that the principle of personal residence should underlie all land alienation.

Mr. GRIFFITH, in explanation, said that the Bill of 1874 was a Bill dealing with all the lands of the colony, whereas this was a Bill dealing with special lands on the Darling Downs. In this case personal residence ought certainly to be insisted upon.

The PREMIER said he differed entirely from the hon. gentleman. This Bill was an accidental Bill altogether; they were dealing with lands of great value, and the question of personal residence sank into insignificance as compared with their great object of seeing those lands come under cultivation. The Government were bound to see that they got value for the land, and that the land was put under cultivation. He was waiting with some interest to hear what the hon. member for Maryborough would have to say on this point. The great principle of that hon. gentleman's Act was, that they should receive a sufficient price for lands disposed of for settlement. If that was the principle of the Act of 1876,

how much more important was it that a sufficient price should be obtained for lands which had cost the Government so much as these. Clauses 9, 10, 11, and 12 did not seem to have been noticed by the leader of the Opposition, so he presumed they had met with approval. The provision in clause 11 was absolutely necessary, because the present scale of fees for survey did not much more than cover half the cost to the Government—a state of things never contemplated by the Act of 1876. By this clause it was proposed that the fees to be charged for the survey of selections should for the future be fixed from time to time by the Governor in Council. The principle adopted would be, not to make a profit, but simply to reimburse the cost of survey. The hon. gentleman took objection to the 13th clause as unnecessary, being enacted in the Act of 1876. Possibly the hon. gentleman's criticism might be correct, as he had not had time to examine it;—the provision had been suggested to the Government by the Department. If there was any clause similar to it in the present Act it had been inoperative, and some provision was necessary for dealing with men who occupied and monopolised the reserves set apart for camping and other purposes. He had now, he thought, answered all the doubts suggested by the leader of the Opposition. The policy of the Government had been shown sufficiently well in the Bill, and also by the action they had taken. They meant to deal with those lands in small selections, making the maximum area to be selected 120, or perhaps 160 acres, and they had no objection to the House fixing which limit it should be. Of course, the Government would have power reserved to them of selling all those lands by auction, but there was not the slightest intention on the part of the Government to use it—all would be thrown open for selection. It had been pointed out to him by the Minister for Lands that the clause of the Act of 1876, referred to by the leader of the Opposition as embodying the provision in clause 13, only provided for penalties by regulations. There was no clause in that Act which made the same provision as clause 13. His hon. colleague was, therefore, perfectly justified in introducing his amendment of the Act. To meet the only tangible objection brought forward by the leader of the Opposition, the Minister for Lands would be prepared to introduce a new clause limiting the power of the Government as to the amount which could be selected by one selector. He had every reason for standing by the principle of the Bill that every man in the colony, no matter whether he had selected the maximum quantity or not, or whether he owned a homestead or not, should be eligible to select a portion of this land.

Mr. Douglas said the hon. gentleman had invited criticism, and he would express his opinion upon one or two points. Before proceeding, he would say that when he first saw the Bill he was reminded of a somewhat edifying discourse he once heard, from the text—"The little foxes spoil the vines; the vines that bear the tender grapes." He fancied this was one of the little foxes not very pretentious in itself, but which might lead up to very considerable evils. He was afraid that was a characteristic that appertained to some of the measures and the policy the hon. gentleman had alluded to. The hon. gentleman had told them that he had never known a session during which so much of the Ministerial policy had been disclosed as the present session. He (Mr. Douglas) would admit at once that the Financial Statement had been made involving very important results, and that Bills also had been introduced and passed through certain stages; but what they had to complain of was that, most important matters connected with both that Statement and those Bills were not as yet disclosed. Neither the Statement nor the Bills had sufficiently disclosed what should be the cardinal features of the Government policy. With regard to the important measure lately discussed—the Divisional Boards Bill—the important features of that policy had not been disclosed. After a debate of two nights they scarcely knew what the policy of the Government was to be—whether the Bill was to be applied to the whole colony, or a part, or what parts; or in what manner it was to be applied. The same thing might be said with regard to the Financial Statement. They had been told that it was contemplated to raise a large loan—such a loan as had never yet been authorised—for the formation of railways, but as yet they knew nothing of the particulars of that scheme. He supposed it would be said that the proper time had not arrived. That would be merely following up the remark made by one of the Ministers to-night, in replying to an unpretending question, which might fairly have been answered—that when the proper time came the hon. member would be told. He admitted that a question put in that way might be answered in such a manner, but the probability of business being conducted in an amiable mood was not increased by fencing questions in that way. He fancied the remark of the hon. member for North Brisbane was simply a playful allusion to want of courtesy which had been displayed by one of the Ministers in an early period of the evening. The hon. gentleman (the Premier) laid an accusation against the late Government that they had not dealt with this subject; but that was an unfair imputation, as the hon. gentleman

must know perfectly well that the late Government were not in a position to deal with it. He stated that, even now, the title had not been acquired; but, if so, he had no right to deal with the matter in this shape. If he was not prepared to give a title he was not prepared to legislate. The late Government were not in a position to give a title, because there was considerable difficulty in connection with the acquisition of a title by the proprietor, Mr. Wienholt, the whole of the area requiring to be re-surveyed and brought under the operation of the Real Property Act. He could speak from personal experience as to the difficulties and delays which occurred, and which the Government could not control; so that up to the time of leaving office they were not in a position to deal with those lands in any way, much less to legislate upon them. Now, those titles must have been acquired, if not finally, at least in such a shape as to justify this legislation. It was therefore a somewhat unfair imputation to say the late Government had shirked responsibility in this respect. With regard to the general question of exchanges upon which some remarks had been made, and upon which the hon. gentleman at the head of the Government had expressed an unfavourable opinion, he would simply say that the power of effecting exchanges was one of those powers which might be abused, and which were always subject to suspicion. He would also submit that, by the power of exchange conferred upon the Government by the Land Act of 1876, an opportunity was offered for acquiring land which could be acquired in no other way. He could confidently appeal to all the negotiations that had taken place and the final results of exchanges he had been connected with. To all those cases he had paid particular attention, and in nearly all he had some personal knowledge, and took very good care to consult, as far as possible, the interests of the public in effecting the exchanges. That they were subject to suspicion he was bound to admit; but it did not follow from that that the Government should necessarily be prevented from acting. It was the duty of the Government to act upon their responsibility and defy any suspicion that might attach, because the righteousness with which they used the power would justify whatever they might do. In this case he believed he was justified in what he had done. He courted the closest scrutiny, and he was sure it would be found that the public interest had not suffered at his hands. Of course, the other alternative of buying might be preferable, but that would still be subject to suspicion. There were no funds voted by Parliament to buy these lands if that course had been preferable, and the only course open was to obtain them by way of exchange; and, with the full knowledge that there was a large extent of land suitable for pastoral purposes, and that there was a difficulty of acquiring land for agricultural purposes, with the knowledge, also, that the owners of the agricultural land were willing to exchange it for pastoral land, the Government of the day would have been to blame had they not availed themselves of these opportunities. Following the remarks of the Premier, he found that the hon. gentleman did not think personal residence necessary, and he illustrated the subject by reference to the doctrine which he (Mr. Douglas) had frequently laid down—that it was most desirable they should obtain a sufficient price for their public lands. He still adhered to that doctrine, and held that they sold a great deal of land at an insufficient price, getting neither money nor settlement. Real improvement—real cultivation—was the best value, and the most sufficient price for their land; but if they got neither cultivation nor money, then they deprived themselves of means which might be legimately applied to public purposes. Personal residence ought to be a condition of alienation of these Allora lands. The object, he took it, and the one he had in acquiring these lands, was that they might have a stretch of good country for agricultural purposes. The hon. gentleman talked a good deal about settlement—about close settlement, but scarcely ever about agricultural settlement, of which he (Mr. Douglas) was sorry to say they had too little. These exchange lands were most suitable for agricultural settlement, and he defied the hon. gentleman to say that agriculture could be carried on without settlement. The imaginary barrister, or lawyer, or business man, who frequented Queen street, and whom the hon. gentleman had summoned to his assistance, he looked upon as a bogie, as a mere stalking-horse, made use of to enable the land to be acquired for other purposes than what it should be devoted to; and he did hope that they should not so frequently have this gentleman summoned up as an advocate for settlement, secured by residence by bailiff. That had been the worst feature of their past land laws, and he hoped that before long, when the reconsideration of the land question was undertaken, residence by bailiff would disappear.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: Why so?

Mr. DOUGLAS said because it was made use of to divert the land from its legitimate purpose. There were gentlemen who had much capital at their command, and who looked to the acquisition of the public estate for grazing purposes merely, and for these gentlemen residence by bailiff

was the best vehicle to acquire land for such purposes. They got the land at a reduced price under the idea that they were contributing to settlement, but they did nothing of the kind; the land acquired on these conditions might be surrounded by a fence, but when the owner found that he could not make an income off it, as in all probability he frequently did, he transferred to the large capitalist, who no doubt put it to a good account for himself. The hon. gentleman also referred to the conduct of the leader of the Opposition in 1874, when Mr. Stephens' Land Bill was introduced; but, if he recollected aright, the hon. gentleman himself was a stern advocate for residence, contending it was the best guarantee they had for securing settlement. Now they heard him advocating the reverse;—he was in office in 1874 as he was now, and had not even the inducement that his hon. friend might be supposed to have of changing his opinion through changing his seat.

The PREMIER: I have not changed my opinion. I say this is a perfectly exceptional case.

Mr. DOUGLAS thought it was just one of those exceptions which did require residence, but, unfortunately, the hon. gentleman did not think so. He had also referred to the guarantee they were supposed to have in the provision that the purchaser should improve to the extent of 20s. per acre?—but this important clause did not say anything about cultivation. Its operation would be found to be that the purchaser would seek to get as much as he could for the money expended on improvements, and give as little as possible to the Government. The tendency of colonial land legislation was to do away with improvements. In New South Wales that was the tendency. Improvement was one of the original conditions, and now it was to be swept away, not as regards the future, but it was actually proposed to legislate retrospectively. There the idea was being encouraged that a bargain made with the Government could be revised for the benefit of the purchaser. Large interest shad been created in the meantime which pressed upon the Government to diminish the requirements of the original bargain. Nothing could be fraught with greater evil than if political pressure should be brought to bear in all constituencies towards relaxing the conditions of their existing land bargains. He had not the slightest doubt that if the Bill went to a second reading they should be favoured with all sorts of amendments and suggestions as to the doing away with the conditions of the land already sold. They should be invited to legislate retrospectively. The member for the Burnett had already given notice, and, no doubt, when it did come before the House, a dozen hon. members would be ready with all sorts of amendments to edge into this little Bill. Viewing the position of the Government with regard to the Bill before the House, he found the Premier ignored all cardinal principles. His hon. friend (Mr. Griffith) had endeavoured to extract his principles from the measure, but the hon. gentleman said, "That is not the principle at all; I shall do exactly as I like." The hon. gentleman had favoured the House with his opinions, and, whilst he was gratified to hear him, he felt sorely distressed that this should be the way the Premier meant to deal with an important question. He had told them that they might define what they liked, and they might, if they liked, secure residence; the consequence would be that every one who had any ideas on the question would think this an opportune moment for ventilating his ideas. If any attempts of this kind were made, he could promise the Government that he should assist in every way to prolong the measure, because if there was anything more unwholesome, more untrue to principle, more destructive to sound legislation, it was the announcement they had heard that evening. They had got no statement in the Bill that the maximum would be 120 acres. He did not know how the Premier deduced that this was the maximum, but he presumed he had merely taken his opinion from his colleague, the Minister for Lands, who told him that the land was surveyed in blocks of 40, 80, and 120 acres. But that did not make 120 acres the maximum; and in a matter of this kind the hon. gentleman should lay down a marked outline of what he intended to be a definition of his policy. Coming, now, to the Minister for Lands, who had spoken very frankly, and who was hardly experienced as yet, he enjoyed the opportunity now—he would not say of retaliating, for that was foreign to his disposition—but he had a lively recollection of the persistent, vehement way in which the hon. gentleman, when he sat on the Government cross-benches, used to interrogate him—a persistency and vehemency which he had not displayed since taking his seat on the Treasury benches. However, he was happy to think that the hon. gentleman was passing through a species of regeneration; he had cast off the old man and put on a new man altogether, but he must confess that he should like a little more politeness from him when he answered questions. He certainly was advancing in the right way—he was less cruel than he used to be, and less energetic in his denunciation of the Government or anybody in the House, and there were now hopes for him; but he

would have to go through a severe ordeal before he rose to the stature which, no doubt, he would reach some day. The hon. gentleman said that in all probability this Bill had better have been called a Bill to deal with the exchanged lands. He (Mr. Douglas) agreed with him; but why did he not stick to his original intention? Then there would have been an intelligible issue, and the issue would have been narrowed down to the question of dealing with those exchanged lands; but this Bill dealt with various subjects connected with the alienation of land, and was very objectionable on that ground. It did not attempt to repeal the existing laws and introduce something in their place; but it took a bit here and a bit there, making a sort of *mélange* that might lead to very considerable results, especially if some of the contemplated amendments were admitted into it. The hon. gentleman said that for certain reasons this was not done, and he should be glad to know, at a later stage, what those reasons were. He was rather amused at the way in which the hon. gentleman referred to the wails that had gone up from the people of Dalby in consequence of this exchange that had been effected while he (Mr. Douglas) was Minister for Lands. Of course, he admitted it was natural that the people of Dalby should regret that this land should have been exchanged for the Allora land, because they would expect to be benefited by settlement upon it; but they knew that the wild, treeless, wasteless plains that had been exchanged with Messrs. Wienholt were really unsuitable for settlement. The hon. gentleman admitted it. During the time he (Mr. Douglas) was Minister for Lands the hon. gentleman introduced some settlers to him who had taken up land on those wide, wasteless plains—which were no doubt rich in grass and suitable as pasturage, but not for agricultural settlement—to see if some alteration could not be made in the terms on which they took it up; but he found that he could make no alteration as the law stood. These men found the expense of occupation in this particular country was far greater than they had anticipated; and they came to the Minister for Lands to try and induce him to revise the bargain they had made. This certainly went to prove that the land was not suitable for agriculture, whatever it might be for pastoral purposes. The hon. gentleman also fixed the value of this land at 30s. per acre, but he (Mr. Douglas) could not agree with him. No doubt similar land had been bought for 30s. an acre in cash—the settlers whom he had referred to had taken it up at that price; but there was a good deal of similar land that had been thrown open at 20s. per acre and was not taken up. They had also been told, inferentially, that the Government had given £3 per acre for the Allora lands; but that was a mistake altogether: they had given nothing of the kind. They gave two acres on Jondaryan and the Prairies—rich pastoral land, no doubt—for every one of agricultural land under the Main Range; but it was impossible to say that they had actually given that amount of money for it. And, approaching this question in connection with homestead selection, one argument in favour of the Bill was this—that because they had paid £3 an acre for this land—and that statement he had shown was not based upon fact—they were bound to obtain £3 per acre for it; but he maintained that they were bound to get the best price they could in connection with agricultural settlement, and they might get that by applying the homestead clauses to it. There was no reason why, even under the homestead clauses, they should not secure both agricultural settlement and something like a sufficient price. He entirely approved of what the hon. gentleman had done in regard to surveying this land. He thought such a portion of the country as this ought to be surveyed before it was selected at all, because it could only be sold to the best advantage both to the Government and the selector by being surveyed and proper roads being made through the farms, which would thus lead to the convenience of the purchasers being consulted. But in that respect the Bill had done nothing; it did not show how these lands should be divided; and it only showed that everything in the Bill was left to administration. But, however anxious the hon. gentleman might be to do what he could for the farmers—and he (Mr. Douglas) believed he was really anxious to encourage agricultural settlement—still he had laid down principles in this Bill which might be over-ruled against agricultural settlement, and there might be people who, if this Bill were agreed to, might find a way of defeating even the ends of the hon. gentleman himself. He was glad to find that the hon. gentleman did not look upon his officers that were now under him with the hostility he once did, and that he had learned to estimate them at their true value. He regretted, in the past, that the hon. gentleman should have been so hasty as to complain of those officers. He believed them to be honestly competent men, and he was glad to hear from the hon. gentleman that he now admitted their competency and their honesty.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: When did I say they were dishonest?

Mr. DOUGLAS said the hon. gentleman, last session, made use of very unguarded expressions; he got up, no doubt, in a fearless manner and denounced everything

and everybody at times, when he had nothing else to do, and when he was hardly sensible of the serious responsibility which attached to him as a member of the House; but now he had the additional responsibility of a Minister, and he had thereby learned what he (Mr. Douglas) believed ought to be the responsibility of every member of the House. He was glad, however, that these officers had been admitted into the hon. gentleman's counsels, and that he thought them worthy of consideration. The hon. gentleman referred to a crowd who attended the recent sales of land in the settled districts, and exacted blackmail from buyers; but he hoped in that respect the hon. gentleman's imagination had overcome him, and that they were not likely to suffer seriously from the "crowd" of people who were likely to attend sales for this purpose. He had summoned, as evidence in support of his statement, some old lady, who said she had to pay £5 or £10 to one of the "crowd;" and if he could only fasten on that gentleman and make an example of him he would confer great benefit upon the community. Before concluding, he wished to say a few words with reference to clauses 8 and 9. The hon. gentleman said these were introduced because they were not yet ripe for a more comprehensive measure; and were they to assume from that that when the proper time came—which was always coming—he would be prepared to bring in a comprehensive measure? However, in the meantime, he said he was going to confer upon the selectors the boon of increasing the area that might be taken up under homestead selection. Upon that point he (Mr. Douglas) believed he held somewhat peculiar views. He still adhered to his opinion that it was not necessary to increase this area. He held that the present area available for the best homestead selection was still limited, and that they could not afford to throw away their public lands in consideration of the future benefits which would devolve upon the people who inhabited this country; and he entirely repudiated the statement that men could not make a living upon eighty acres That statement was falsified by everything they knew of agricultural settlement. Look at the old countries!—look at France! At the present moment there was no more remarkable spectacle of a nation deriving its chief power from its agricultural resources. There the land was better distributed than in any other country, and people with eight, ten, and twenty acres made a handsome living for themselves from the cultivation of those acres. The same might be said of Germany and Bavaria, and he could only wish that the same principles that now prevailed in France or Germany had effect in Ireland. What strength it would give to the Empire! How it would pacify and consolidate the nation! The people would be satisfied;—they asked for nothing more than small farms ranging from eight to twelve and twenty acres, which had been proved were amply sufficient to secure a man in the necessaries, and even some of the luxuries, of life. They could have no more remarkable instance of that than the little Channel Island of Guernsey, where there were more small freehold peasant proprietors than there were at the present time in the whole of Ireland.

An Hon. Member: No.

Mr. Douglas said he could satisfy the hon. gentleman on that point, as he fortunately had the opportunity, lately, of perusing a debate in the House of Commons in which these facts were clearly and indisputably laid down. This brought him to another point. The hon. gentleman would probably say he (Mr. Douglas) had criticised his action, and ask him to state what he would do; and although he was not called upon to tell him, and it might be impolitic to do so, he would state what he thought ought to be done in this case. In the particular case of the Allora reserve he would vest it in trustees, for the purpose of securing strictly agricultural settlement. It was one of those things which must be done steadily and not precipitately. At first about a dozen men should be selected who were agriculturists, and better machinery must be brought into action for securing settlement than a Government board or department. They must go round and find men who would show what they really could and were prepared to do, and, having done that, they must provide those men with the means of doing it by putting them on the land. He believed that could be done, but it never would be if left in the hands of a Government department, for, however good might be the intentions of the Administration, he believed it could not be done so effectually by any Minister for Lands as by specific trustees appointed for the purpose, due care being taken that the sale of the lands should extend over a certain number of years. It was necessary, perhaps, that a farmer should have a certain percentage of land for grazing purposes, or a commonage even, which was of quite as much importance to him as his freehold; and therefore it would be desirable that the portion of these lands not sold should be set apart as a commonage for the selectors on them. It was true that the area was limited, but if the right to graze over it was given until such time as it was necessary to place the whole in the market, it would be productive of more benefit than selling all the land in a few months. What he had proposed could only be done by close

and accurate observation, and that he did not see in the Bill.

Mr. KATES said he could hardly find words to express his astonishment, on reading the Bill brought forward by the Minister for Lands that evening. The Bill ought to be headed. "A Bill to discourage and retard settlement on the Allora exchanged lands;" and he was surprised that the hon. gentleman who was so well acquainted with those lands should have brought in such a measure. The hon. gentleman told them that the Prairie lands were worth 30s. an acre, and that two acres of the Allora land having been given for one of the former, it made the value of the Allora lands £3 an acre; but it was well known that the price of some of the Prairie lands had been reduced to 12s. an acre. However, the people at Allora did not want to get their land for nothing, but were willing to give £3 or £4 an acre for it, provided they had time to pay it; and he did not see why the Government should not give them time, as they had the security in their own hands. Since the Minister for Lands had abandoned the idea of making personal residence compulsory, the Bill was utterly worthless for the purpose of encouraging settlement. The hon. gentleman should have spoken to the people in this way—"I have recovered possession of 22,000 acres of excellent land on the Darling Downs; we want you to settle upon it; we are willing to give you this land at £4 an acre, and to give it you without your paying anything for it for the first two years—without any payment except the survey fee." It was well known that the first two years were the most trying to a farmer, as he had to put up fencing, find out water, buy horses and saddlery, &c., which took up all his spare cash; but if he was allowed two years in which to pay for his land, he would be placed in a better position, and by such means settlement would be promoted. If the Bill was carried in its present form, settlement on these exchanged lands would be a failure, as there should be nothing but *bonâ fide* residence. If a farmer was not sincere in settling down on the land, he would not be agreeable to compulsory residence, which was the only thing to tie him to the land. He should not go into the clauses of the Bill, because the principle of compulsory personal residence having been abandoned settled the whole thing. There was one good clause in it—namely, that land-orders or certificates issued to members of the Volunteer Force should not be available in dealing with these exchanged lands; but the other clauses were all bad. They were told by the Minister for Lands that the Governor in Council should have the power of selling these lands by auction unconditionally, and if that was the case there would be good-bye to settlement for ever, as speculators would step in and buy up the land. He hoped the hon. gentleman would see his way clear to withdraw the Bill. He (Mr. Kates) had been a resident in the Allora district for fifteen years, and he was speaking from experience when he said that, unless they insisted upon compulsory residence, *bonâ fide* settlement would be abolished.

Mr. GARRICK said that, by the Crown Lands Alienation Act of 1876, the whole of the settled district of the Darling Downs was set apart for homestead settlement. By doing this the House insisted upon personal residence as a necessity, for, although a person might conditionally select within a homestead area, it was well known that he was not allowed to complete his term of residence by bailiff, but by personal residence only. That was a condition of the Act of 1876; and what was the object of this personal residence? He took it, it was to secure the cultivation of the land. He had heard it discussed many times in former years, and even lately, that they had no right to direct in what channel money should flow—that was, that if a person chose to spend his money in any other way than in agriculture he should do so. He contended, however, that the State had the power to consider this matter, and if it considered that agricultural was a better form of settlement than others, it had a right to insist upon it. He looked at the question as a sort of protection. They said to a woollen company—"If you produce so many yards of cloth we will give you a bonus;" and for what did they say that? Why, because they wished to cultivate an industry in the colony, and they gave a bonus to certain capitalists for establishing it. They had just as much right to direct capital and labour to agriculture as to any manufacture. They very frequently gave land for very much less than its market value for the encouragement of industries—for instance, they gave their homestead areas for the sake of encouraging agriculture. Hon. members were aware that, whilst a homestead selector could get his land for 2s. 6d. an acre, the conditional purchaser had to pay 20s. an acre for the same quality of land. That showed that they were not insisting on the market value in either case, for clearly there could not be two market values for the same land—the fact was that neither was the market value; but the land was given for very much less than that value in order to promote agricultural settlement, and, inasmuch as it employed labour and capital it was, to use an expression of the Colonial Treasurer, most desirable to have, if possible, close settlement. The object of making the Darling Downs an agricultural

area was for the purpose of securing that close settlement; and, when compulsory residence was enforced, it was because it was considered a condition essential to secure that. He was glad to find that the Premier agreed with him that they required first and above all things this agricultural settlement. But the hon. member had not made any provision for securing it. Hitherto it had been considered that personal residence was the one great thing to get it. The members of the Government expressed themselves anxious to promote that settlement, but they had not attempted to secure it in the Bill before the House. They professed to have at heart the devotion of this rich land, which was peculiarly adapted to the cultivation of wheat, to agriculture; but they had taken no steps to secure it. They had done away with the necessity of personal residence, and that, taken together with the speech of the Minister for Lands and the admission of the Treasurer that he was ready to alter the area to 640 acres, showed very clearly that the Bill would not do anything to promote agricultural settlement. Why did not the Government come straight to the point, and say that, although they were not going to demand compulsory personal residence, they would insist upon a certain quantity of the land being cultivated? Look at the vast areas of land that had gone from the Darling Downs since 1868, when the country was told that agricultural settlement was to take place—when they were told to let capital take its natural course, and that the natural course would be agricultural settlement. Look at the returns laid on the table only last session, and see the numbers of holders of from ten to a hundred thousand acres of rich land, most of which, it was proved beyond doubt, was worth £3 an acre. There were parts of Clifton, for example, sold at £3 an acre.

Mr. GROOM: Some of it for £4 10s.

Mr. GARRICK said he was obliged for the information. Here, then, was land bought for about 15s. an acre sold for £3 and upwards, and yet he believed there had not been a spade or a plough put into it. Those lands were now in the same condition they were ten years ago, notwithstanding the manner in which they had risen in value. It behoved Parliament, now they had got this area of land, to endeavour to secure beyond all doubt that it should be devoted to agriculture and nothing else. But this Bill did not provide in any sense for that. The meaning of the Government was clearly that this Bill was to do away altogether with homestead areas in these exchanges. They never meant that this Allora exchange should be treated as a homestead area. This was placed beyond doubt by the speech of the Minister for Lands, who said we should have no more half-crowns an acre. He agreed with the Premier that they did not want to sell these lands for nothing. But the Government could get a fair price for them. There were hundreds of selectors willing to give a fair price, and who did not want them at half-a-crown an acre. As the member for Darling Downs (Mr. Kates) had said, all they wanted was to have time given them for payment. He (Mr. Garrick) believed the Government might ask a large price for these lands if they gave easy terms of payment. As the Treasurer truthfully said, the first consideration was not the money value, but settlement upon the land and the promotion of a certain industry; the second consideration was that the country should get a reasonably fair price. He (Mr. Garrick) believed they could get both—that was to say, a reasonably fair price, which to it would add the proper cultivation they all so much desired. If instead of bringing in a Bill like this the Government had said, "There is the Allora exchange; we have surveyed it, and we will fix a price upon it, £3 or £4 an acre, some more and some less; we will give you ten years to pay for it; we will not ask you for any rent for the first or second years; the whole of the rents shall be payable during the eight years; but we will ask you, in connection with that, to do one of two things—either we will insist upon personal residence, or your cultivating a given proportion of the land." That would have been the proper course. Of course, when they excluded the homestead man in this way, they excluded the necessity of personal residence. The next section said that it should be lawful for the Governor in Council to proclaim exchanged lands open to selection by way of conditional purchase. Was there any necessity for this? What was the necessity of declaring that they might proclaim areas open by way of conditional purchase? The power was already given under the Act of 1876, and there was no more necessity to take such a power than to take power to proclaim homestead areas; but these two sections show the meaning of the Ministry. They took power to proclaim conditional selections, but to exclude from them all homestead purchases. If there had been doubt about the meaning of the Bill before, the speech of the Minister for Lands would have removed it, when he made use of the expression, "No more half-crowns—let persons come from everywhere to select those lands." Showing clearly that they were reducing the settled districts of the Darling Downs, including one of the finest bits of land in it, to conditional selection. He believed under those circumstances the Government might have secured both con-

ditions. Very likely there would be some who would object to the strict condition of cultivation. If they got cultivation, not in the slip-shod way of doing things that used to exist in times past, but something that would be fair—that would sell the lands and secure for the Treasury what it was entitled to, and for the country the settlement to which it was entitled. With reference to the Bill, the intention of the Government, as he had said, was pretty clear. It said that the 39th section of the Crown Lands Alienation Act should not apply to exchanged lands. Under the Act of 1876 the homestead man could select, not only from a homestead area, but within a conditional area. He could enter into both at the uniform price, subject to competition, of 2s. 6d. an acre. The Government, however, wanted to shut him out of the conditional area by the 39th section. The Premier got into quite a difficulty, and attempted to get out of it by expressing his willingness to insert a new clause. He (Mr. Garrick) was, himself, prepared to do one of two things—either to insist, without doubt, upon compulsory residence, in order to secure an agricultural settlement which was wanted; or insist upon a stringent condition that agricultural settlement should form one of the conditions of the alienation of this land. He believed in asking a fair price, but he would give long terms of payment, charging nothing for the first or second year; so that the selector, instead of devoting his small capital to the payment of his rent, might use it for reproductive purposes.

Mr. GROOM was very sorry to hear from the hon. member for Maryborough (Mr. Douglas) that he had not yet recovered from the eighty-acre system which he had introduced in 1876; but he (Mr. Groom) would beg him to remember that when he talked about France, and brought the present condition of the agricultural districts of France into comparison with Queensland, the argument would not hold water for a moment. He would also remind the hon. member that he was addressing intelligent men in the House who had some knowledge of France and of the Continent, and it was quite possible that if the hon. member had ten or fifteen acres of such land as the valuable vineyards in the South of France possessed, and from which thousands of pounds of profit were derived every year, he might find it sufficient. But to take some of those lands on which hundreds of years of careful cultivation had been bestowed, and compare them with some of the eighty-acre blocks on the Darling Downs, where there was sometimes not sufficient grass to feed a goat, much less carry on the business of a farmer, seemed to him absurd. There could be no comparison between a highly cultivated country, such as France, and a country like Queensland, which was as yet comparatively untouched. Still he agreed with the hon. member in some respects, that where the land was extremely valuable, as on the banks of creeks—such as King's Creek and Dalrymple Creek—if a person could secure eighty acres it was as much as he ought to get; but at present, with the exception of such places and the 20,000 acres at Allora, there was not a sufficient area where persons could get eighty acres of entirely agricultural land. It frequently happened that a limited portion only of the land was fit for agriculture, and the great bulk was more fit for grazing purposes than anything else; while sometimes, as was the case after the late three years' drought, there was certainly no grass and sometimes only stones visible. The eighty-acre system was not to be considered in dealing with the subject matter of the Bill. What was the object of the land exchanges? It would be remembered that the principal residents of Allora, with the assistance of certain members of the House, waited on the hon. member (Mr. Douglas) when he was Minister for Lands and represented to him that the proprietors of Jondaryan Station were willing to give up the valuable agricultural land they held in the neighbourhood of Allora—land which it was understood was the best wheat-growing land in the colony—if they could make satisfactory terms with the Government. After a considerable amount of deputationising and a lot of correspondence between the proprietors of Jondaryan and the Government, the exchange was eventually effected, and 20,000 acres on Goomburra were given for 40,000 acres at Jondaryan. The primary object of the exchange was that those 20,000 acres should be devoted to wheat-growing in the district of Allora, and it was one of the special conditions that it was to be so devoted. This particular land was, perhaps, even better than the generality of land on the Darling Downs, and being almost beyond the range of rust it was of a highly productive nature. The chief reason which induced him to advise the Minister for Lands to agree to the terms proposed by Mr. Wienholt was, that these 20,000 acres of land should be exclusively devoted to wheat-growing.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: No.

Mr. GROOM was sorry to hear the hon. gentleman say "No." That was the impression on his mind, and it was certainly the opinion of the gentlemen who came down to advocate the exchange, for it was pointed out what a vast sum was every year sent out of the colony for flour, while here was a district which, if the farmers

could get possession of it, would not only supply the whole colony with wheat, but would leave a very large surplus for export. At the rate of twenty bushels to the acre, which was a low average, these 20,000 acres would produce 400,000 bushels of wheat, which, at 5s. per bushel, would be worth £100,000. That was the value of this land to the colony, supposing it was in the hands of the farmers and under wheat cultivation. One of the primary objects the Government had in view in effecting this exchange was the growth of wheat, and that object had always weighed with him in supporting it. He had always been a strong advocate for personal residence on land, and was of opinion that settlement was the best price any Government could get for land; and, even if this particular land had cost the country £40,000, yet, if it was settled upon by farmers, and even if they had fifteen years to pay off the purchase money in, the Government would be well recouped provided the land was given for settlement, and settlement alone. He had had a painful knowledge of what residence by bailiff meant on the Darling Downs, and he had seen thousands and tens of thousands of acres of the best lands in the colony alienated on that system of residence by bailiff. He trusted this land would not be parted with unless personal residence and cultivation were religiously insisted upon. It was not proposed to abolish the auction system; and if these lands were put up to auction, and 10,000 acres were rushed into the market at once —if personal residence were abolished, and only 20s. an acre to be spent on improvements—it would be the man with the biggest purse on the day of sale who would get the land—not the farmer who wanted to grow wheat, but the capitalist who wanted to hold the land for speculative purposes. If this was to be the effect of the Bill, it behoved them all to prevent its becoming law. Far better leave the land as it is than hand it over to persons for speculative purposes, who would let it out to farmers at 10s. or 15s. an acre, or sell it at equally high prices. There was one gentleman on the Downs who was already leasing his land to farmers at 10s. an acre—land almost unimproved, and surrounded by a ring fence of a most inferior character, and which was a disgrace to the commissioner who passed it. In this colony they did not want a tenantry, but a proprietary—men who, as Mr. Disraeli once said, were a territorial democracy bound to the soil by the tie of proprietorship. Another blemish in the Bill had been pointed out by the leader of the Opposition —namely, that it contained no limit as to the amount of land which might be selected. The 6th clause distinctly provided that anyone who had taken up the maximum area under the Land Acts of 1868 and 1876, or both, might come upon these lands and select up to 640 acres. It was true, if this Bill passed, a proclamation might be issued limiting the amount which any one person might select; but it would be far better for the House to define both the limitation and the price than to leave it to any Ministry that might happen to be in office. It had always been his opinion that the House, as the guardian of the land, ought to fix its price. At present this was done by the Executive; and one Minister administered the Act of 1876 on a theory of his own called the highest cash price. This theory was in operation for three years, during which time many an unfortunate man had selected land at £2 an acre which was not worth 30s., and at 30s. which was not worth £1. On a change of Government the sufficient cash price system was abandoned, and the price had been reduced from 30s. to 12s. 6d., and from £2 to £1. Either the selectors who bought land at the higher price had been injured, or the colony was suffering a grievous injury by the reduced price. The price of land should be fixed by the House. That was the system pursued in all the other colonies, and Queensland was alone in allowing its Executive to fix the price of land. As far as these lands were concerned, this Bill proposed to deal with them in an exceptional sense, and the House ought to insist, first, that they should be devoted entirely to agriculture with compulsory residence; and, secondly, on fixing the price at which they should be sold. As he had said on a former occasion, some of these lands had been valued by competent authorities at £5 an acre, and, if they struck a medium, the probable average value of the land would be about £3 an acre. Independently of this Bill—which ought to have been a Bill to deal exclusively with this exchanged land—a measure of a more comprehensive character ought to have been introduced this session. When the Minister for Lands issued his address to his constituents he stated that he intended to amend the Land Bill, as he had seen how badly it had worked. Such legislation was greatly needed, and, considering the long recess, he had anticipated that such a measure would have been brought forward. As far as this particular Bill was concerned, he hoped that in committee it would be made into a Bill to deal with the Allora exchanges only; and if the hon. member for the Burnett insisted on moving his amendment, he should consider it his duty to propose an amendment in the name of the people of the Darling Downs. The East Prairie selectors had every claim to the consideration of the House, and they proposed now to petition again that their case might be heard. They had a stronger claim now than they had

twelve months ago, because the price of the land had been reduced since that time. They had not paid their rent for the last year, and, virtually, it was in the power of the Government to forfeit their selections to-morrow; still, they were entitled to consideration. This Bill, in its present form, was well characterised by the hon. member for the Darling Downs as a Bill to discourage settlement and wheat-growing on the Darling Downs. This 20,000 acres of land should be sold entirely to farmers for cultivation, and they should be careful not to rush it into the market in unnecessarily large quantities. He did not approve of the highest-cash-price theory with regard even to the Roma lands, and had often said that a greater mistake was never made. If 10,000 acres of the Allora land were put into the market it would be monopolised in some way, in spite of the limitation to 120 acres; and without the principle of personal residence it would go entirely into the hands of capitalists. Without wishing to commit himself by saying he should vote against the second reading of the Bill, he would undertake to say that, if it did not undergo very material alteration in committee, he should do all he could to obstruct its passage, because it would be better to allow the land to remain idle, as it was now, than to let it be sold under the provisions of the 6th clause of this Bill, which he considered the most mischievous clause that he had seen in any Bill.

MR. SIMPSON said these land exchanges were altogether objectionable, in the way they were carried out in Queensland. They should not be effected unless the approval of each exchange had been previously obtained from Parliament. He was very glad the hon. member for Maryborough had given his opinion, as he wished to hear him speak out on the subject. The hon. member said he had had personal knowledge of the exchanges, and believed them to have been to the benefit of the country; that he was quite certain the public interest had in no way suffered, and the Government would have been blamed if they had not carried the exchanges out. He was glad to hear that the hon. member was prepared to take the full responsibility upon himself. He would not say why he was glad, except that the residents in his district considered they had been badly used in this matter and deceived. The hon. member, who might be considered a good authority, considered he was right and they were wrong. As to the homestead clause, he looked upon the idea of a man living upon eighty acres as simply a farce, except in a few isolated localities—small spots such as, perhaps, these Allora lands, where a man might make a bare living on that area. If the lands could be cultivated a man might do something with eighty acres, but they could not be, except in such small spots as he had mentioned; at any rate, up to the present time it would not have paid to cultivate them. The hon. gentleman propounded an extraordinary scheme for appointing trustees, who were to have eighty acres to commence farming, while others were to have eighty acres and be allowed to run their stock on the rest. This was an extraordinary way, and he would ask, if eighty acres were quite sufficient, why should some favoured few have the rest to run their stock upon free? The land was worth paying for, and people should not be allowed to run their cattle upon it for nothing, leaving it to become a hotbed for Bathurst burr and thistles, as on places on the Downs which were "no-man's" land. The hon. member for Drayton and Toowoomba, a short time ago, was in a fearful state of mind because it was rumoured that the Government intended to charge £5 an acre for this land. It did not seem clear how he got the information, but he said the land was worth £3 per acre. It did not seem right to suppose that the Government were going to charge at a very high rate, but he supposed they would get a reasonable figure for it. Looking at clause 5 of the Bill, he considered that, in the case of these special lands, the rate of 20s. for improvements might well be exceeded—cultivation to be counted as improvement. When a certain amount had been ploughed, the improvement by cultivation might be counted as worth 20s. to 30s. per acre, as cultivation was the kind of improvement needed. As to the price, many hon. members were far better able to judge than he was. He would most heartily approve of extending the area for homesteads to 160 acres, and he would like to see it put back to 320 acres—as it was before. He was also in favour of another condition in the homestead clause. He would give men with children the right to take up small quantities—forty to eighty acres—for each child, and allow them to work it to the best advantage. At the present time, every inducement was held out for parents to declare their children a certain age when they were not. They could not hide from their eyes the fact that eighty-acre selections were taken up simply because people wanted land for their children who happened to be not quite the required age, and they were applied for and got. It would be better not to induce those people to make declarations which were not true. A great deal of money was paid for immigrants, and he did not see why they should not encourage native-born children.

MR. RUTLEDGE said he scarcely knew how to reconcile the statement made by

the Premier, to the effect that the Allora lands were an exception to all other lands of the colony, with the statement of hon. members sitting behind him, to the effect that general principles must be applied in this exceptional case. If the case was exceptional—and these were exceptional lands—the legislation should be exceptional. It did not follow that because, as a rule—taking the average lands of the colony—eighty acres was not sufficient to enable a man to make a livelihood for himself and family, that therefore in regard to these lands—universally acknowledged to be the cream of the colony—the rule should be held to apply. A very great mistake had been made by those who had contended that all lands were of such quality that eighty acres were insufficient to enable a man to earn a respectable living. He could state, on good authority, that on the Darling Downs it was not uncommon for a farmer to reap, from forty or forty-five acres of land, from 1,000 to 1,200 bushels of wheat, which, sold at an average of 5s. per bushel, would leave £250 per annum as the yield from half the area of the eighty acres spoken of as being insufficient. The great curse of land legislation, as regards homesteads, had been the assumption that all people must be miniature squatters. Because the stock of pastoral tenants derived their sustenance from the natural grasses in this way, it was held that the same thing must hold good in the case of those occupying small areas, and that because a certain area would only sustain a certain number of stock all small holdings must be proportionally enlarged. He maintained that, if they insisted upon the areas to be surveyed on the Allora exchanged lands being limited to eighty acres, they would strike a death-blow at this favourite idea, entertained, he regretted to say, by gentlemen so far-sighted and capable of forming good judgments, on most matters, as the hon. member for Drayton and Toowoomba. If they were going to alienate this land for the purpose of pastoral selection, why had they given two acres of rich pastoral lands elsewhere for one in the neighbourhood of Allora? The only justification for having done so was, that thereby they would succeed in settling upon the land a large number of industrious and thrifty agriculturists. To permit men who had selected the maximum amount under the Land Acts of 1868 and 1876 to select as much as 1,280 acres—for that might be fixed as one limit—and hold that area by bailiff, would be to hand over that magnificent country to a few capitalists, who would—as the hon. member for Drayton and Toowoomba had pointed out was now done on the Downs—lease it at 10s. per acre per year to tenants. He held with the Minister for Lands when he talked about fixing the price considerably higher than usually charged for agricultural purposes. The minimum should be £3, and more if the land were held to be more valuable. Some land at Clifton Station, he had heard, had realised £6 per acre. If there should be competition the land might be sold by auction, with the proviso that the purchaser might pay by deferred payments. Although the sale of land in the neighbourhood of Roma had been much decried and inveighed against by hon. members, he believed that, if the system of deferred payments had been introduced, instead of the lands fetching 30s. they would have realised £3 an acre. There would be no hardship entailed upon intending purchasers by a high price being fixed if the Government would allow five, six, or seven years in which to pay. Some hon. members had made a mistake as to the portion of the Act of 1876 under which these lands would be taken up. He took it that they would be alienated under that portion of the Act which had reference to conditional selection in homestead areas. If it should be that the lands were alienated under the provisions of the Act which referred to conditional selections generally, the Government might fix the minimum at 640 acres. The thing was becoming worse and worse as it was investigated. If these magnificent lands were alienated in blocks of not less than 640 acres, a cry of execration would arise from one end of the country to the other which would make even this strong Ministry feel timid. It was not necessary to say much more than to refer to the attempt that had been made to propitiate the ordinary selectors. The class they wanted to see settled on these lands was not the class which the Minister for Lands drew such glowing pictures about. The hon. gentleman talked about the opportunity the hard-working miner who had been successful at the Palmer would have of enjoying the salubrious atmosphere of the Downs on a selection of his own, and about the over-worked business man of the metropolis going to his homestead on the Downs for a little respite from his business, and about the gentleman who had been sweltering under the meridian sun of the interior coming to his property on the Downs and recuperating his health there; all that might be taken for what it was worth. They knew very well where the land would go. There were gentlemen on the Darling Downs whose voracity for land it was impossible to satisfy. There were gentlemen having all the evil qualities of the cormorant without his redeeming qualities, and their capacity for stowing away accumulations of land was illimitable, and it was monstrous that opportunities should be supplied to gentlemen

with well-stocked purses, assisted by foreign capitalists, to monopolise lands which were peculiarly the heritage of the agricultural portion of the community. He had ridden over portions of this very country when the natural grasses were so high that they touched his face; but these grasses had disappeared, and instead there were crops of weeds—Nature's protest against the wilful misuse that had been made of these lands in the past, and demonstrating that they were designed for agricultural purposes. If they handed over these lands to men who would simply allow their stock to graze upon them until they became very valuable they should be perpetrating a gross injustice upon the colony, and one which would be felt for years. Even the Premier would admit that there had been grievous blunders with regard to their land legislation in the past: he was not prepared to exculpate the leaders of the Liberal party from a share of the blame of these blunders; but there was an opportunity now for the Government to distinguish themselves and evidence their liberality. There was a good opportunity for the Minister for Lands to make a name for himself. He might have shown in an indisputable way that he was the true friend of the agricultural settler and of the interests of the colony; and he had had an opportunity of securing the gratitude of the numerous class which was hungering for land for agricultural purposes and was unable to satisfy it. He hoped that the Government would be induced to reconsider the rash determination to hand over these lands to the monopolists, for that would, most assuredly, be the result if the Bill was ever permitted to become law.

Mr. BAILEY said he could not agree with some of the conclusions arrived at by the last speaker. He had been delighted with the burst of oratory which they had heard from him—it was of a higher order than they were accustomed to; but at the same time they were plain practical business men. It was all very well for a gentleman living in town to say that eighty acres of the Allora land, or any other, were sufficient for a farmer, and he might even quote figures to prove that this millionaire of the future might gradually accumulate a fortune at the rate of £250 per annum. But supposing that the gross total value of the man's crop was that much, he would ask the hon. gentleman whether he was aware of the cost of raising it? The hon. gentleman evidently did not reckon that the farmer, before growing the crop, had to fence, build a house, clear the land, employ labour, and buy implements, and when all these things were counted in it would be found that a return of £250 would leave him some £50 or £60 in debt. It had been shown conclusively in Queensland, by practical men, that it was perfect folly to attempt agriculture without combining grazing with it. He had tried as hard as any man to succeed on the agricultural ticket alone, but had completely failed; but if a man could secure sufficient land to combine agriculture with grazing, he might hope to live and to make a home for his family. The ideas of the hon. member for Dalby, although they did not usually suit his book, were very valuable, especially the one about homesteads. They had a great number of settlers upon homestead selections, and three out of four had families growing up. They only held small selections, and there was no room to make a home for their children as they grew up. It would be a very desirable thing for the colony if the father of a family could avoid the breaking up of his family by being enabled to have enough land about him to bring under cultivation as his children grew up. When once a boy left his home in this colony, his parents seldom saw him again;—the next they heard of him was that he was in some other colony. For the reasons already stated, he disagreed with the hon. member for Maryborough when he stated that he considered eighty acres sufficient for the ordinary settler. It was not nearly sufficient, and he should like to see every settler holding from 320 to 640 acres, as without that quantity it was perfectly hopeless for a man to make a home for himself and family. As to the question of price, it had been stated, on the one hand, that settlement was sufficient—that if a man settled upon land, cultivated it, and employed labor to assist him, he paid to the country indirectly quite as sufficient a price as the speculator did directly. He believed that argument to be sound, and he would rather see an agriculturist employing four or five labourers, and paying indirectly the same price as the speculator did by buying at first hand and giving a much higher price, apparently, though not in reality. As for the country which the hon. member (Mr. Rutledge) had described so vividly, he could not help thinking, when the hon. member spoke about grass growing ten feet high or to the height of a man riding on horseback, of the proverb, "Let the shoemaker stick to his last." No doubt the Darling Downs lands were of very fair quality, but there were plenty of other lands quite as good. He was proud to say that in the Wide Bay district they should be able to show, soon, wheat-growing lands quite equal to the Downs. To-day he asked whether the Government intended to carry on surveys to these rich agricultural lands; but, judging by their answers and their policy, he was afraid the present Ministry were shepherding the Burnett squatters, and did not wish these wheat-

growing lands to be put in the possession of farmers. There were many thousands of acres of black soil, and he should like to see little branch railways taken there to encourage the settler to go upon the lands—at present they would not do so because there were no roads to them—and relieve the House from being in constant turmoil about small spots on the Downs. There were thousands of acres, he repeated, as good, if not better, than the Downs land, waiting for settlement; but what was wanted was good roads or railways, and then they should have the wheat-growers of the colony not concentrated entirely on the Downs, but spread over other districts affording equal facilities for wheat culture. The hon. member for Enoggera also said the Minister for Lands was missing a chance, just now, because he had his name to make, and he might hand down his name to posterity as a benefactor. But he (Mr. Bailey) believed the Minister for Lands had already made his name. He had already tried the worth of his name to the very utmost extent, and it was worth nothing. The idea of the hon. member for Enoggera trying to bring him (the Minister for Lands) up to what was called fighting pitch by telling him he had his name to make, was much the same as they would dare a child to do something. But the Minister for Lands was bold enough to do anything. He had tried a great deal, but he had most utterly failed. He had failed in this Bill, as he would in any other land Bill he introduced, and for this reason—they had a large number of men in this colony called land speculators—would the hon. gentleman say that he was not in communication with those gentlemen? would he say that this very Bill had not been framed to meet the wishes of those very men? The Bill had not been framed in the interests of the selectors or farmers, but in the interests of land speculators, who alone would benefit by it.

Mr. DAVENPORT said he took it that the object of this Bill was, in the main, to deal with the Allora exchanged land, and in the interests of practical agriculture he would make a few remarks which he trusted would be acceptable to the House. Whatever the merits or demerits of this Bill might be, he proposed voting for the second reading of it on this principle: For many months past he had been conscious of a large number of the most practical, useful, and well-off intended settlers waiting to get on this land, but for some reasons it had not suited the Department to throw it open. He trusted the measure before the House would deal with the land in such a manner that the selectors would be able to begin to cultivate it between this July and January next year. If that period was allowed to run by, and it got on towards the end of the year before anything was done, the result would be that the produce of a year's labour would be lost. He should vote for the Bill, and he hoped the land would soon be thrown open for selection.

Mr. STUBLEY said he should do exactly the reverse, and vote against the Bill in its present form. There would be no great difficulty in making it a good Bill, if they were to go to a little trouble about it. If they limited the area of this exchanged land which one individual could take up to from 80 to 160 or 200 acres, he would vote for it; if not, he should vote against it. In reference to the price, he thought it might be very easily settled by the selector paying the interest on the purchase money, whatever it might be—say £3 or £4 an acre—for a number of years, with the right of purchasing it in the meantime if he chose to do so. As long as the Government got the interest he did not think they wanted the capital; there could not be any great urgency for it. If either of those amendments were made he should vote for the Bill; if not, he should vote against it.

Mr. WALSH said it was his intention to vote for the second reading of the Bill; and he was somewhat surprised at the expression of the hon. gentleman who had just sat down. Representing as he did a very large and important mining constituency, would he vote to prevent the possibility of those men obtaining a future home for themselves and their children? That was virtually what he was doing. Because he (Mr. Walsh) did not reside on the Darling Downs at the present moment, was he to be excluded from getting 160 acres of valuable land there and cultivating it? The thing was absurd.

Mr. STUBLEY: I did not say so.

Mr. WALSH said the hon. member did: he said he would vote against the second reading of the Bill—in fact, he said an absurdity——

Mr. STUBLEY said he must repeat his remarks;—that person was so very obtuse——

HON. MEMBERS: Order, order!

The SPEAKER said the hon. member should refer to another hon. member by the electorate he represented.

Mr. STUBLEY said he was sorry; it was a *lapsus linguæ*. He distinctly——

HON. MEMBERS: Order, order!

The SPEAKER said he understood the hon. member was making a personal explanation.

Mr. STUBLEY said that was what he got up to do when he was interrupted. He wished to explain that he said distinctly

that if they limited the area to 160 or 200 acres he should vote for the Bill.

Mr. WALSH said he must repeat what he said before. With all due respect to the hon. gentleman, he did not think he was deaf or as obtuse as he might suppose him to be—in fact, he doubted very much whether he (Mr. Walsh) was as obtuse as the hon. member himself. He understood him clearly to say that he would oppose the second reading of the Bill because the area was not limited; but the Bill itself proposed to limit the area to 120 or 160 acres. Where, then, was the consistency of the hon. member? Instead of him (Mr. Walsh) being obtuse, it was that hon. member who seemed to be obtuse, and in a muddle, upon this particular subject. With reference to the remarks of the hon. member for Wide Bay, he would point out that there had never yet been a Land Bill introduced in any of the colonies that had given general satisfaction, and it would be worse than absurd to expect that this would give general satisfaction. He presumed the main object was the settlement of the people upon the land, and the best way to attain that object ought to be the desire of hon. members on both sides of the House. That was his wish, but at the same time he maintained that residents in other parts of the colony had a right to be considered as well as those who happened to reside on the Darling Downs. There was, for instance, many miners in the hon. gentleman's constituency who were anxious to come to a more genial climate to reside; and he maintained that they should not be prevented from taking up 160 acres of this land, upon which they could settle when they had made sufficient money on the goldfields to enable them to cultivate it and rear their families upon it as they ought to do. The hon. member knew very well that persons on the goldfields who made money were constantly on the look-out for suitable places to reside. He also approved of the suggestion that a man should be able to take up an additional area for his children, as he believed such a system would benefit the colony to a considerable extent, and he hoped to see some provision of that kind inserted in the Bill. It had been admitted on both sides of the House that this land was very rich and valuable, and he thought the colony should have the value of that land, but the terms of payment should be made as reasonable as possible. But some hon. members appeared to have forgotten that the Bill provided that the payment should extend over ten years, and those terms, he thought, were sufficiently reasonable. The hon. member, Mr. Kates, had referred to the difficulties selectors had to encounter, but he (Mr. Walsh) thought one of the greatest difficulties and evils that had to be encountered was people going on land without money, or only about sufficient to pay their first year's rent, and then they had to go to storekeepers or money-lenders—he might call them usurers, in many cases—and pledge everything they had, and ultimately, instead of the property becoming theirs, it passed into the hands of the money lender. To avoid that, and to prevent the enrichment of the few at the expense of the many, he thought the Government ought to be in a position to lend money at a small rate of interest to selectors upon the security of their holdings. He did not see why it should not be done; because they ought to give every possible assistance to selectors. He had heard a great deal about the Darling Downs, and, having visited it the other day, he must admit that it was magnificent country, and too much could not be said about it; but he was surprised to see not one-fiftieth part of the land suitable for cultivation under cultivation; and the cause of that, he took it, was want of capital or enterprise, or both. In regard to the lands that this Bill proposed especially to deal with, he thought cultivation should be compulsory, but that the selector should be at liberty to cultivate whatever crop he liked, whether potatoes, or the vine, or wheat, or whatever he pleased. He also thought the Government would be wise not to sell all this land at one time, but in lots of from 4,000 to 5,000 acres at a time, and to give ample notice. He thought that was very necessary, because if the whole of the land was offered at one time the probability was that there would not be a sufficient number of selectors to purchase it, and it would fall into undesirable hands. Reference had been made by the member for Maryborough to the area of land which persons could cultivate with success; and the hon. gentleman drew a comparison between this colony and France; but such a comparison was too absurd to require any comment, especially as it had been sufficiently answered by the member for Toowoomba. He had not had the advantage of living in the Southern districts of the colony, and of knowing how previous Land Acts had worked; but he intended to vote for the second reading of the Bill, although, as had been stated by the member for Brisbane (Mr. Griffith), the cardinal feature of it was non-residence.

Mr. REA said the Minister for Lands had admitted that the Bill was wrongly named, and an hon. member on the Opposition side of the House had suggested that the name should be altered. It was not a Land Bill at all, nor was it in any one respect like any Land Bill he had ever seen or heard of. It should either be called "The Land Minister's Irish Stew" or "Perkins' Mixture;"—at any rate, it was not a Land

Bill. The land in question was the richest on the Darling Downs. The first thing this Government had done on taking office was to try and get it dummied by means of this piece of paper that they called a Bill. That had been admitted by the Minister for Lands, who said that part of it should be given to squatters on the Barcoo; and it would be seen that no selector of moderate means would have an opportunity of bidding against those men. The intention of the Bill to get rid of personal residence was so evident that it was unnecessary to refer to it. Considerable difficulty seemed to exist with the Government as to the precise meaning of the word "homestead;" but he happened, many years ago, to be the first person who had drawn up the rough outline which ended in the Land Act of 1868, and in that draft first appeared the name of "homestead." He had then been asked what a homestead was, and certainly the definition he gave of it was entirely different to what was intended by the various Bills passed by the House. He found that a very large number of homesteads had been dummied by the squatters, but by his proposal no one could have dummied a homestead. He had made it a kind of immigration agent, and there was this limitation to it, that a man should never be allowed to sell his land except to some one who would stand in his shoes, and also that there should be personal residence for ten or twenty years. He should be willing to support a portion of the Bill before them if the Government would agree to such a provision as that. He had, with respect to the Allora land, drawn up two clauses, one of which was that the price after survey should be put on each lot, and that applicants should ballot for the first choice, No. 2 for the next lot, and so on, and that there should not be any payment for three years; but if a man wanted to transfer he should transfer only to another man who should stand in his shoes. The Bill before them was nothing more than a pure merino squatters' Bill; it was merely to give to the squatters some of the richest lands on the Downs to depasture their horses and cattle on. He had looked very carefully over the Bill, and it was certainly not one that could be called a Land Bill. There was only one clear clause, and that was in regard to homesteads, but that was printed in it just before the late Darling Downs election; had it not been for that, they would not have seen anything about homestead areas in that or any other Bill of the present Government. The whole object of it was that non-residents should be able to buy up the whole of the land;—it was not the Brisbane shopkeeper, but the land speculator and the squatters who were intended to be benefited by the Bill only. So far as he could gather, the objections raised by the Premier to previous Land Acts arose from the fact that that hon. gentleman and the Minister for Lands picked out the very worst bits from every Land Act for the purpose of embodying them in the Bill, so as to make it as hard on the poor man and as favourable to the big man as possible. It had been explained on all sides that it was for cultivation that the land was required; but they could not have cultivation without residence, and there was no question that if a man wanted to have his land cultivated successfully he must go on it himself and look after it. He noticed that they had never heard of any exchange lands in the North. He could not see why one part of the colony should be more favoured than another in that respect, or why exchanges should be limited to the Darling Downs. There was no reason why squatters in the North should not exchange their pre-emptives, and it was the duty of the Government to extend these exchanges to other parts of the colony. So far as the Bill was concerned, he should vote against it in all its stages. If it was made a Bill applying merely to the Allora exchanges, he would assist the Government to make it a good measure; but not if it was to be a Land Bill for the whole colony.

Mr. GRIMES moved the adjournment of the debate.

The PREMIER said that any hon. member who made such a motion at that period of the evening should give a good reason for so doing. They had been in the habit up to the present time of adjourning business every evening at ten o'clock; but it was quite plain to him that if there were these early adjournments they would not get through the work of the session for many months. The Bill had been before hon. members for some weeks, and there was nothing in it which justified an adjournment of the debate, or asking the Government to give up two evenings to its discussion. The hon. member for Maryborough had just told them that if they would not agree to one principle he wished to see in the Bill he would assist very materially in protracting the discussion over a fortnight or three weeks. With a prospect of that kind before them, and of further discussion in committee, hon. members should now give way, and allow the second reading to pass, and postpone their speeches until they were in committee, when everyone would have an opportunity of speaking. They should now let the Bill advance a stage, so as to show some progress; if they did not do that they must either curtail the proposed business or have fewer speeches.

Mr. GROOM said the Bill was not the insignificant——

The PREMIER: I never said the Bill was an insignificant one, or employed any such term in regard to it.

Mr. GROOM said that if the word insignificant was not used he would endeavour to use the very words the Premier had made use of—that the Bill to be considered seemed of more importance than he (Mr. McIlwraith) would attach to it. Here were 20,000 acres of land, the property of the public in question; the House represented the public, and if any member thought he had something to say about it he had a right to say it. Whether the session was prolonged for twelve months or two years it made no difference; they must discharge their duty. They had been there for a much longer time discussing the reduction of a paltry salary by £20. The present was an important public question and should not be hurriedly discussed. If the second reading were carried now, the only result would be that the debate would be resumed with much more temper on another occasion. This 20,000 acres of land represented £60,000, and that was an additional reason why they should not hurry over the debate.

Mr. PERSSE agreed that it was a very important Bill and required a good deal of consideration, but it was very unfair to hon. members who lived a good way off from Brisbane that they should have to come down week after week and see so little business done through the House adjourning at an early hour.

Mr. GARRICK was surprised to hear the remarks of the hon. member for Fassifern, who, perhaps, was not aware that the House met at half-past 3 o'clock.

Mr. GRIMES said that the Premier had asked for a reason for adjourning. His answer was that there were four or five members on that side of the House likely to speak.

Mr. GRIFFITH said that the hon. gentleman at the head of the Government had asked him if he thought the debate would close that night, and he had said he thought it would; but shortly afterwards, on inquiry on his own side, he found there were several hon. members who wished to speak, some of them having a particular interest in the Bill and desiring to be heard. Government should not say that this Bill was one of slight consequence, for the Premier had told them on a previous occasion that it was of so much importance that he dispatched his colleague the Minister for Lands to the Downs to explain it. They were not likely to get through, that evening, with the Bill, and he would be glad if the Premier could accede to the adjournment under the circumstances.

Mr. O'SULLIVAN also intended to say something on this important Bill. He thought at first it was intended to deal solely with the Allora lands, but he found that the whole question of the land legislation of the colony was introduced. He would go with the leader of the Opposition in asking the adjournment of the debate, because, if it was insisted in, it would be, after all, adjourned.

Mr. KINGSFORD said it was his intention to have addressed the House on this subject; but, if it would facilitate business, he was prepared to forego his speech if other hon. members would follow suit.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said every hon. member ought to agree with him that one night's debate was sufficient to determine a Bill of this kind. So far, during the session, they had only been playing at politics, and had done no real work whatever. If they were to do any business the hours must be doubled, or else hon. members must agree to speak less often and make shorter speeches. He hoped the Premier would have three Government nights a week instead of two.

Mr. REA said it was all the fault of the Government bringing in bungling Bills. If they would only prepare their Bills before they came to the House there would be a chance of getting on with business.

Mr. DOUGLAS said he did not wish to throw any obstacles in the way of business; but surely, in this particular matter, the Premier himself was to blame. If the question had been narrowed to that of the exchanged lands it might have been got through to-night, but he had encouraged some of his followers to suppose that he would receive any amendments they might offer, not only as regarded these exchanged lands, but the whole land question.

Mr. MILES hoped that no opposition would be made to the adjournment, and promised he would give the Government every assistance in his power to lick the measure into shape, so that the lands might be thrown open for selection.

Question of adjournment put, and the House divided:—

AYES, 21.

Messrs. Griffith, Douglas, Dickson, Garrick, McLean, Rea, Bailey, Kingsford, Miles, Kates, Stubley, Mackay, Paterson, Meston, Beattie, Rutledge, Tyrel, Macfarlane (Ipswich), Grimes, Groom, and Horwitz.

NOES, 28.

Messrs. McIlwraith, Macrossan, Perkins, Palmer, Persse, Stevenson, Baynes, Morehead, Walsh, O'Sullivan, Norton, Stevens, Simpson, Davenport, Macfarlane (Leichhardt), Lalor,

Kellett, Amhurst, Beor, H. W. Palmer, Low, Hendren, Lumley-Hill, Hamilton, Archer, Swanwick, Weld-Blundell, and Cooper.

Question, therefore, resolved in the negative.

Mr. BEATTIE said, as the hour was late, and the debate had been interrupted, he would move that the House do now adjourn.

The PREMIER said there were now fourteen Bills on the paper, and there might be two or three added. If two nights' debate were allowed to other Bills which deserved quite as much attention as this one, sixteen weeks would be taken up, which would be a good session in itself, without taking into consideration time spent in committee work, including Supply and Ways and Means. He wished to inform hon. members that the Government had not the slightest intention of allowing the business of the House to go on at the same slow rate of progress as before, as the country members could not afford the time. He might state that he did not consider this to be the most important Bill of the session by a long way. He had expected by this time to have been upon the most important business of the session—the Loan Estimates, and it was very likely he would have to invert the ordinary course and bring them on before the ordinary Estimates. With reference to some misrepresentations he had noticed during the debate, he would again refer to an objection taken by the leader of the Opposition, of which a great point had been made. He (the Premier) had explained why he had expressed his opinion that a clause should be inserted empowering the Government to alter the limit of area to 120 acres, and he felt sure the hon. gentleman did not disbelieve him when he said the amendment had not been suggested by anything he had said. At a meeting of the party, this afternoon, he had himself suggested the amendment because he saw that no such power was given by any other clause. The great object of the Bill was to reduce to farming lands the Allora pastoral lands, and provided that object was attained the Government would not care what amendments were introduced. He hoped hon. members would allow the Bill to be moved on one stage to-night.

Mr. GRIFFITH said the hon. gentleman had referred to the slow progress of business this session, and said something about having to invert the order of procedure. Unless he was a bad judge of the course of events, the delay of the Government in telling what their real policy was had caused the slow progress. The House were entitled to know the policy of the Government, and their reticence on that point had certainly contributed to the slow progress. Another illustration of the causes of delay was afforded by the conduct of the Government in not giving them, until now, an explanation with respect to the Bill, which should have been forthcoming at seven o'clock, and which, if then given, would have saved a great deal of the discussion. The Premier had in his former speech admitted that there was a grave defect in the Bill, but he had not told them that he had seen it before. The Minister for Lands never led them to believe that it was the intention of the Government to remedy it. The Opposition were not, at any rate, offering the same sort of opposition that the Government of last year had to contend with; but, on the contrary, were doing their best to assist the Government. If the Government would consent to the adjournment, he did not believe it would take long to finish the debate.

Mr. DICKSON said it was the wish of a large number of Opposition members that the debate should be adjourned until Tuesday. He should advise the hon. gentleman to act up to the opinion once expressed by the Colonial Secretary—that it was little use pressing business after ten o'clock, if members were not inclined to consider it.

The PREMIER said he would repeat that the House must work later and quicker if they wished to get through the business of the session. He had no intention of proceeding further with the debate, but he wished to enter his protest against the business being protracted in the way that it had been. The Government had no intention of preventing the fullest discussion. If there was any Bill to which they were entitled to the assistance of hon. members opposite it was this, because the cause of its origin was the action of hon. members opposite.

Mr. DOUGLAS said he had heard with some satisfaction the remarks of the hon. gentleman, and his intimation that the Government intended at an early day to bring in their proposals in connection with the Loan Estimates. All other questions must, at the present time, be viewed with impatience by hon. members, until they knew the exact policy of the Government with regard to those Estimates.

Question—That the House do now adjourn—put and negatived.

On the motion of Mr. DICKSON, the debate was adjourned.

The resumption of the debate was made an Order of the Day for Tuesday.

The House adjourned at five minutes to 11 o'clock.