Queensland

Parliamentary Debates
[Hansard]

Legislative Assembly

TUESDAY, 22 JULY 1879

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY.

Tuesday, 22 *July*, 1879.

Petitions.—Question.—Formal Motion.—Supply—vote on account.—Ways and Means.—Appropriation Bill No. 1.—Land Act Amendment Bill—committee.

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

PETITIONS.

Mr. BEOR presented a petition from John Alexander Gregory, of Bowen, praying for relief from an error made in the Real Property Office by which he had lost a right-of-way.

Petition read and received.

Mr. BEOR presented a petition from residents of Bowen and District, setting forth the advantages which would result from the construction of a line of Railway from Bowen to Bowen River.

Petition read and received.

QUESTION.

Mr. BAILEY asked the Premier—

What are the intentions of the Government with respect to the Elections During Recess Bill?

The PREMIER (Mr. McIlwraith) replied—

The matter has not been before the Cabinet.

FORMAL MOTION.

The following formal motion was agreed to:—

By the PREMIER—

That so much of the Standing Orders be suspended as will admit of the immediate constitution of the Committee of Ways and Means, and of the reporting of Resolutions from the Committees of Supply and of Ways and Means on the same day on which they shall have passed in these Committees; also, of the passing of a Bill through all its stages in one day.

SUPPLY—VOTE ON ACCOUNT.

The PREMIER moved—

That there be granted to Her Majesty, on account, for the service of the year 1879-80, the sum of £100,000 for or towards the expenses of the various Departments of the Service of the Colony.

Mr. MILES asked the Premier how he proposed to distribute this amount? They had heard of considerable reductions in the Estimates, and he wished to know on what basis the money was to be appropriated?

The PREMIER said that this £100,000 was towards paying the salaries this month and next month, on the Estimates of last year; but no proposed increases, if there were any, would be acknowledged until they had passed the Committee. The amount proposed would be sufficient for two months.

Mr. MILES said it was an unsatisfactory way of doing business. The times were very hard, and he therefore intended to endeavour to reduce some of the large salaries. This was a very unsatisfactory way of paying salaries. Government had had ample time to push on their Estimates, and should have had them all passed before getting the money voted.

The PREMIER quite agreed with the hon. gentleman that the Estimates should be passed. They could not possibly get them through before the end of the month, but he was quite willing to take a suggestion if the hon. member would offer one. The Estimates could not have been brought on sooner, for the House would have resented them before some of the other business had been proceeded with. It was not possible to pay this month at the rate of the Estimates under discussion, as he could not say what amounts would not be allowed; but he wished to push forward the Estimates as quickly as possible.

Mr. MCLEAN said it was all very well to talk about pushing forward the Estimates,

but it did not look like it when the House had been in session thirty-two days, whereas yesterday was really the first day that they had gone into Committee of Supply. There had been a great delay in bringing the Estimates forward. He had no doubt it would be quite justifiable to reduce some of the items, and then the Treasurer would see what he had to pay.

The Hon. J. DOUGLAS said it would be admitted that it was desirable that the whole of the Estimates should be passed before the end of the financial year, but the practice of Parliament had been such that this was an impossibility. They might deplore this circumstance, but they must recognise the fact, and were bound to vote these sums as required. They could not pass the Estimates before the end of the financial year.

Mr. MCLEAN could not see it. If the House were called together a little earlier the business might be got forward in time to pass the Estimates. The mistake lay in the late period at which the House was assembled. It would have been much more satisfactory if the House had been called together at least six weeks before they were: if that had been done the Estimates would have been all passed.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY (Mr. Palmer) said—

> If ifs and ands were pots and pans
> There'd be no work for tinkers' hands.

It came with a very bad grace from the hon. member that he should oppose the vote, when the Government of which he had been a member brought in no less than three Appropriation Bills. Any opposition given to the late Government was because they asked too much, and were not content with £100,000 on account. The Treasurer at present only asked for that amount—no more. It came with a bad grace from the hon. member that he should say the Estimates were not brought down soon enough. The House might have got through half the Estimates by this time if, instead of talking about nothing, they had attended to them. They might have been half passed at the previous sitting alone if hon. members had not gone in for talking about nothing. As to calling the House together earlier, the hon. member appeared to forget that this was a new Ministry coming into office, and that they had no time to prepare their Bills, while the previous Ministry ought to have assembled the House earlier, because having been some time in office they knew what their Bills were likely to be.

The Hon. S. W. GRIFFITH said they were not offering any opposition to the vote, though, from what the hon. member (Mr. Palmer) had said, it seemed as if he was anxious they should oppose it. He had not heard of any members of his side of the House who were desirous to do so—in fact, they were anxious to assist the Government. As to the Colonial Secretary saying the House could not have been called together sooner because Government could not mature their Bills, it appeared that they wanted a little more time to mature them, for at present they were not matured at all. He understood the Premier to say there would be no increases paid if the vote passed. He presumed payments would be made on the basis of the new Estimates, with that exception. He wished to know where the money was to be taken from for the erection of the new gaol buildings at St. Helena: was it to be spent before the sanction of the Committee was obtained? There might be a difference of opinion as to the desirableness of there being only one gaol in this part of the colony. Was the money to be spent first and sanction asked afterwards, or was it intended to ask for the necessary sanction in the usual way?

The PREMIER said it was intended to ask the sanction of Parliament for the expenditure. He was glad hon. members opposite seemed anxious that the Estimates should be passed through Committee as speedily as possible.

Mr. DOUGLAS said he was anxious to see every reasonable facility given to provide for the temporary necessities of the Government; but if it was expected, as the Colonial Secretary seemed to expect, that they were going to vote the Estimates slapdash, he would perhaps find himself mistaken. The hon. gentleman said last night that he was going to take down every stone of the gaol, apparently without consulting Parliament at all; but Parliament would much prefer having been consulted first on the matter, although he would not say there might not be good grounds for something being done in respect to the gaol. There must have been a certain immediate expenditure already incurred without Parliament having been consulted about it, for the removal of fifty or sixty prisoners and their workshops could not be effected without some immediate provision for it. He did not offer any objection to the passing of the vote on account because he considered it necessary.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY said it was his intention to consult Parliament before proceeding to dismantle and sell the gaol, and the consent of Parliament would, of course, have to be obtained before that was done. With regard to the expenditure already incurred, it was very small, and consisted only in the erection of a few workshops for the prisoners. There was room for sixty additional prisoners at St. Helena without any additional expense. As to removing prisoners from one gaol to another, that was a transaction of the Executive, and the Government were not bound to consult Parliament upon it. The immediate expenditure—about £200 for timber—would come out of contingencies;

and £1,000, as he had said last night, would be the sole expense for a building to receive the whole of the prisoners from the gaol.

Mr. McLean said he intended to perform his duty in watching the Estimates narrowly, and he considered the time spent upon them last night was anything but lost. If the Colonial Secretary thought to gag hon. members on this side he would find himself mistaken. He had no objection to the vote on account being taken, but he objected to being lectured by the Colonial Secretary as to how the Estimates should be dealt with.

Mr. Miles said he did not offer any opposition to the passing of the vote: all he wanted was information. He denied that any Government had ever asked for a vote on account until they had got a long way through the Estimates. Seeing the depressed state of every industry in the colony he should make a persistent endeavour to reduce the high salaries. The Government was nominally one of retrenchment and economy, but he had never seen anything of it yet beyond their discharging a few working men. There was one department which might be totally abolished with advantage to the country, and that was the Department of Mines, which was costly and did nothing.

Mr. Stubley said he should do his utmost to prevent the abolition of the Mines Department; but there was another institution, that of the Volunteers, which was utterly useless, and which, if abolished, would save the country £10,000 or £11,000 a-year. They were not even an ornament, and yet in Brisbane they paraded about in flash clothes at the expense of the country, including the northern portions which received no benefit from them.

Mr. Griffith suggested the desirability of going back to the old financial year. He could never see the advantage of the change, and by reverting to the old system things would work much more comfortably.

The Premier said he had given the question a good deal of consideration, and he had come to the conclusion that the present system, under which the financial year ended on the 30th June, was the more convenient of the two. There was one anomaly which ought to be put a stop to, and that was that the accounts of the Auditor-General were made up to the 30th September, and only those who had had experience of it could know the inconvenience to which it gave rise.

Mr. Douglas said that, although the change to the old system might be desirable in some respects, the effect of it would be that Parliament would have to sit in summer.

Mr. Stubley asked whether any of the money now to be voted would be paid to the Volunteers for this month?

The Premier replied that any amounts that had accrued due to the Volunteers, based on the Estimates of last year, would be paid on that scale until the new Estimates were passed.

Question put and passed.

The Chairman left the chair, and reported the resolution to the House. The resolution was adopted, and leave given to the Committee to sit again to-morrow.

WAYS AND MEANS.

On the motion of the Premier, the House went into Committee of Ways and Means.

The Premier moved—

That, towards making good the Supply granted to Her Majesty for the service of the year 1879-80, a sum not exceeding £100,000 be granted out of the Consolidated Revenue Fund of Queensland.

Question put and passed.

The resolution was reported to the House, adopted, and leave given to the Committee to sit again to-morrow.

APPROPRIATION BILL No. 1.

The Premier introduced a Bill to give effect to the foregoing resolution; the Bill was read a first and second time, and the House went into Committee to consider it.

Mr. Dickson asked how it was intended to apportion the expenditure on roads and bridges out of the sum now asked for? Would it be based on last year's Estimates, or on those of the present year?

The Premier said the money to be expended on roads would not exceed the present year's Estimates.

Mr. Dickson said that was scarcely an answer to his question. In the Estimates for the present year there were no details of expenditure on road votes—the sums were put down *in globo*. He wished to learn how the Government intended to meet the payments for the requirements for road purposes throughout the colony until the sanction of the Committee had been given to the expenditure in the shape in which it was placed on the Estimates. There appeared to be no basis on which it could be settled.

The Minister for Works (Mr. Macrossan) said all really necessary work on the roads would be carried on, no matter what the cost might be. The road votes for East and West Moreton had actually been apportioned beyond the requirements of those districts as recommended by the officers in charge, while the other districts had not been so favoured, higher sums being recommended than those put down. No work would be allowed to remain in abeyance or unfinished so long as there was money to spend upon it.

Mr. O'Sullivan said that if anybody asserted that more money was down for West Moreton than the district required he could contradict it.

Mr. DICKSON said he did not speak of East and West Moreton in particular: he did not wish to introduce local questions. A certain sum for roads had been put down on the Estimates—£20,000 for one district, £15,000 for another, and £10,000 for a third; but no details were given as to the manner in which the Government intended to proceed with that expenditure. No doubt, when the Works vote came on for discussion, some details would have to be given before the Committee was likely to pass those amounts in their present shape. Without any wish to embarrass the Minister for Works, he wished to know how he proposed to proceed with that expenditure on the roads of the colony until the Committee had decided as to the sums on the Estimates-in-Chief. It might happen that some urgent work at present uncontemplated might arise, which could not be taken up on account of the Estimates not being sufficiently large. If the details of the expenditure on roads had appeared on the Estimates there would have been no need for his question. No such information was given, and, therefore, it was optional on the part of the Government how they would proceed to spend that portion of the £100,000. With a view to obtaining a little elucidation he had put the question which, he submitted, was a pertinent one.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said he had no intention of imputing to the hon. member a desire to embarrass. He had already explained that the necessary work would be carried out, but not unforeseen work requiring a large expenditure. Whatever work was found to be necessary would be carried out under the recommendation of the usual officers. That course of action would apply to the whole colony.

Mr. GARRICK was glad to hear that all necessary work would be carried out, but he was surprised to hear the hon. gentleman say that the amount put down for East and West Moreton was quite sufficient for the current year. The amount voted for that purpose last year was £52,760—out of which, he believed, there was a large unexpended balance—and the sum put down this year was only £20,000. That was £32,760 less than last year, and yet the Minister for Works said the amount was enough. He did not know what might be the opinion of the agricultural districts on the subject, but, according to his information, the sum was not likely to be nearly enough. And what were they to understand about the rates under the Divisional Boards Bill—was the £20,000 to be irrespective of rates? He could tell the Minister for Works that if he intended to give any means of communication at all the sum would be quite inadequate.

The Hon. G. THORN asked when the Loan Estimates would be laid on the table of the House?

The PREMIER said the question had been asked before and answered—this week.

Mr. GARRICK asked the Minister for Works whether the Government had made any calculation on the ground of rates to be derived under the Divisional Boards Bill, or whether £20,000 was the absolute total sum required for roads in East and West Moreton?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said he considered that sum was sufficient, and more than sufficient, for repairs of all the main roads. From his knowledge of the different districts he thought that would be sufficient to keep the roads in good order and repair; but he could not say that it would be sufficient for carrying on new works.

Mr. DICKSON asked whether hon. members were to understand that that sum would be spent entirely irrespective of the Divisional Boards Bill—whether, if that Bill passed, an additional sum would be added commensurate with the rates?

Mr. MCLEAN said he gathered from the remarks of the Minister for Works that the £20,000 would be spent exclusively on main roads. If so, that should be distinctly stated on the Estimates. From the hon. gentleman's remarks they were getting a glimpse of the Ministerial policy.

Mr. O'SULLIVAN said that perhaps the hon. member would state what he meant by main roads, as there might be a difference of opinion.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said it was impossible for him to tell what was a main road. If the question arose in the House the House would have to decide. He used the term "main road" in a general sense.

Mr. GARRICK said, as the Minister for Works had used the term in connection with the vote of £20,000, he looked to him for a definition of the term. If the amount had been arrived at by calculation upon some data concerning main roads, it was for the Minister for Works to say what main roads were, in his opinion.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said the sum was fixed upon data concerning all the roads that had been on the Estimates before.

The various clauses having been passed,

The CHAIRMAN reported the Bill without amendments, and the third reading was fixed for to-morrow.

LAND ACT AMENDMENT BILL—COMMITTEE.

On the motion of the MINISTER FOR LANDS (Mr. Perkins), the House went into Committee for the consideration of this Bill.

The preamble was postponed.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS moved that clause 1—Interpretation—as read, stand part of the Bill.

Mr. GRIFFITH said the Committee were entitled to some explanation as to the in-

tentions of the Government with regard to the Bill. At the second reading of the Bill their intentions were not expressed by the Bill as it stood, and it would facilitate business if the Committee were now informed. In particular, hon. members would like to know whether the Government were prepared to accept amendments dealing with the Crown Lands Alienation Act of 1876 or not. On that point they wished to have a distinct understanding. If the Government were prepared to accept amendments of the land law generally, a good many of them were likely to be proposed; if the Government were resolute in refusing to accept any, of course they were strong enough to do so, and the Committee would know what they were about. If the Bill was only intended to deal with the exchanged lands at Allora, there might be differences of opinion on that subject, but it would have to be treated as such. As it stood at present, however, the Bill dealt not only with the exchanged lands at Allora but also with amendments on the Land Act of 1876.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS said he could only repeat what he had stated on the second reading of the Bill—namely, that the Bill was intended to deal with lands acquired by exchange; but the Government had availed themselves of the opportunity of removing what was considered an evil by increasing the homestead area from 80 to 160 acres. The 13th clause, also, provided for a want that had been long felt, particularly on the Darling Downs, where facilities for grazing cattle were very much required by selectors. Further than those provisions there was nothing in the Bill affecting the Land Act of 1876; and he might inform the Committee that the Government did not intend to encourage further amendments on the Bill. A necessity had arisen for dealing with the Allora and other exchanged lands, and the Bill was required to enable the Government to offer the lands for sale at the earliest opportunity, for the accommodation of intending settlers in the country.

Mr. GRIFFITH said he wished to know whether the land law was generally open for discussion? He trusted that the Government would take charge of the Bill themselves, and he wanted to know in what way it was to be regarded. Were they going to allow amendments of the land law generally to be brought in?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: No.

Mr. GRIFFITH said if any amendments were allowed several hon. members would bring forward amendments, and very important ones.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: I again repeat, the Government do not intend to alter the Land Act of 1876.

Mr. THORN asked whether the Bill would deal only with the Allora and other exchanged lands?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: With exchanged lands, and with other land by clause 8.

Mr. DICKSON said that on the second reading there was a general feeling that it was desirable that the Bill should pass, but that its operation should be confined strictly to exchanged lands. Hon. members now wished to know whether the Government intended to confine the Bill solely to exchanged lands, and not introduce, or allow to be introduced, any amendments affecting the general land law. The question was a simple one, and he hoped the Minister for Lands would give a distinct answer.

The PREMIER said hon. members would see that the primary object of the Bill was to deal with those exchanged lands, as immediate legislation for that purpose was necessary. At the same time it had been considered advisable to repeal one part of the Land Act, 1876, and the Government had taken the opportunity of doing so. They had therefore put before the House a Bill dealing with the Allora exchanged lands, and containing also an amendment of the homestead clause of the Act of 1876. They had also taken the opportunity to remedy a defect with regard to survey fees, upon which the Government had been constantly losing money. In other respects the Government desired that the discussion should be confined to the subject of exchanged lands. If hon. members were to insist upon bringing in amendments so as to make the Bill an elaborate revision of the Act of 1876, their doing so would simply destroy the Bill; and the Government had no intention of allowing it to be destroyed. The amendments proposed by the Government, which were printed and circulated, were merely technical, and mostly suggested by the former discussion of the Bill.

Mr. MCLEAN said the expression of opinion on the second reading of the Bill was to the effect that it should deal simply with the Allora exchanged lands; but the Government opened up the general question of land legislation by the introduction of clauses 8 and 9. He did not object to the extension of the homestead area; but he would point out that by introducing those clauses the Government had themselves invited amendments dealing with the whole question. He considered the Bill ought to deal solely with the Allora lands, and an opinion to that effect had been generally expressed. The Government could now scarcely blame any hon. member who introduced an amendment affecting the general land laws of the colony.

The PREMIER said clauses 8 and 9 did not invite amendments on the Land Act, 1876. He had not heard any strong expression of opinion during the second reading that the Bill should deal exclusively with the Allora lands. However, if the Committee

decided to confine the Bill entirely to that object, they could carry out their wish by striking out clause 8 and the other clauses after it.

Mr. O'SULLIVAN said no hon. member had been more in favour of increasing the homestead area than the hon. member for the Logan—in fact, he himself proposed an amendment for that purpose. If they now took a favourable opportunity to increase it, that would not be opening the whole question. He objected to opening up the whole question, and agreed with the hon. member for the Logan that the Bill should deal only with exchanged lands. To make a good Land Act was work for a session; and if they tried to deal with the whole question they would only fail and spoil what they already had in hand. Although he was anxious that homesteads should be increased from 80 acres up to 640 acres even, yet, if it was the wish of the hon. member to withdraw or insert the clauses dealing with the question, it would make no difference to him (Mr. O'Sullivan). He was prepared to accept either decision, and would not introduce his own amendments. The hon. member for Logan would agree with him that now was a favourable opportunity to enlarge homesteads from eighty acres to the area they were previously, and that by doing so they should not be opening up the whole land question. It was very well known that they were always out of pocket in regard to the survey fees, and to deal with that matter, also, did not appear to him to be opening up the general question.

Mr. KATES agreed with the suggestion to strike out the clauses Nos. 8 and 9, with reference to the extension of homestead areas, believing that the Bill should deal with the Allora exchanged lands only.

Mr. MCLEAN did not agree with the suggestion of the hon. member to strike out clauses Nos. 8 and 9. He maintained that eighty acres, no matter how good the land was, was not sufficient for a man to bring up his family upon, and he would be no party to expunging the clauses named. At the same time, his opinion was that the Bill ought to deal solely with the Allora exchanged lands, and that the Government could not object if amendments regarding other matters were introduced, seeing that they had departed from the real object for which the Bill was introduced.

Mr. KATES said it appeared to him that the hon. member for Logan was entirely ignorant of the quality of the land around Allora. If hon. members would make inquiries into the matter, they would find that there were only 1,000 acres in the neighbourhood of Allora under wheat, and that for the last nine years they had produced an average of twenty-four bushels to the acre. He had paid as high as 7s. 6d. per bushel for wheat, and his hon. friend, Mr. Horwitz, had given as much as 6s. 3d.; but taking the minimum at 5s., the return would be £6 per acre, or £6,000 per annum for the 1,000 acres. They had recovered 22,000 acres of magnificent land—probably the finest in the colony—and if they had only 10,000 acres of it under wheat the return would be £60,000 annually. Where was there another spot in the whole colony which would produce a similar return? Hon. members representing sugar-growing constituences might say their lands were equally as good, but he (Mr. Kates) did not think there was another place in Queensland which would produce £6 per acre per annum. Moreover, it must be remembered that the sugar industry was protected through the tariff to the extent of £5 per ton, and that it employed black labour, whilst in the case of the Allora exchanged lands white labour would be employed and a more desirable class of men introduced. Reference had been made to the Barcoo squatter and the northern miner: he had not the slightest objection to their securing some of these lands, provided they brought their ploughs with them and made their homes upon the land. What they wanted was wheat-growers. At present they had only 6,000 acres under wheat, whereas to provide the colony with breadstuffs there should be 60,000 acres under cultivation. They only produced 120,000 bushels of wheat annually, but to keep the mills on the Downs alone going 700,000 bushels should be produced. Only yesterday he had seen truck-loads of Adelaide flour being taken to the Downs. As to the price to be charged for these lands, hon. members must not think that intending selectors wished to get them for a low figure. He believed they would be prepared to give something like £4 per acre, if the Government would give them time to pay. He maintained that it would never pay a man to engage in farming if he had to pay another to do his work. It was only the *bonâ fide* selector, the man who made his home upon the land and did his own work, who would prove the successful farmer; and therefore there should be a residence in conjunction with a cultivation clause. He would have preferred that a Bill had been introduced dealing solely with the exchanged lands. In connection with this matter he might state that, in his report of 1878, Mr. Tully, the Under Secretary for Lands, said, regarding these lands—

> "The lands near Allora are most suitable for agricultural farms, and it is to be hoped they will be occupied by a class of selectors capable and able to utilise them to the fullest extent. The cultivation of wheat in the neighbourhood of Allora is now a settled industry, and throwing these farms open to selection will be of material service to the district. The best of these lands are worth at least £4 per acre, and as they adjoin the town of Allora they should provide homes for a large number of people."

He believed that this report was based upon the reports furnished by Commissioners Hume and Smith, who both inspected the lands. He would also read some resolutions which were passed at a recent public meeting of not only the inhabitants of Allora, but of the electors of Darling Downs generally. At this meeting these resolutions were passed—

"Proposed by Mr. Cameron, seconded by Mr. Briton—'That the Minister for Lands be requested to introduce a clause into the Exchange Land Bill, making personal residence a condition of selection on exchanged lands.'

"Proposed by Mr. Anderson, seconded by Mr. Nemeth—'That the Allora exchanged lands, in the opinion of this meeting, should be divided into three classes, according to distance from town and intrinsic value, and that selectors in the first-class should be allowed as a maximum area 80 acres, in the second-class 120 acres, and in the third-class 200 acres.'

"Proposed by Mr. Feast, seconded by Mr. Richart—'That a clause be inserted in the Bill rendering it unlawful for any Government to sell any exchanged land by public auction.'

"Proposed by Mr. Cameron, seconded by Mr. Cook—'That the present system of written applications be dispensed with, and that the land be balloted for as follows:—The selections to be numbered from one upwards; that the unsuccessful applicants for number one to ballot for next number, and so on until all the land proclaimed open for selection is disposed of.'"

As regarded the last resolution, he might say that, under the present system, if a man was unsuccessful in securing a particular piece of land he had to wait for a month or more before he would have a chance for another piece; but, according to the plan proposed, a man who was an unsuccessful applicant for selection No. 1 would have a chance for No. 2, and so on.

Mr. Amhurst (who was very indistinctly heard in the gallery) thought the hon. member who had just sat down had been a little misinformed in the information that he had received on the question of sugar-growing. He had told them that there was a protective duty on sugar, but he (Mr. Amhurst) presumed that the tax of £5 to which the hon. member alluded was originally imposed for revenue purposes, in the same manner as the other duties. The sugar-growers derived no benefit from it, because they exported half of their productions; their productions doubled their consumption, and, therefore, there could be no great benefit for the colony; there would be if all the rest of Australia were to take off the sugar tax. He believed there was no flour tax imposed in Australia, except in Victoria, where a duty of 10s. per ton was levied. The only benefit the sugar-growers got from the £5 per ton duty on sugar, and the only reason why it was imposed was because of the existence of a large monopoly in the southern colonies. The Sydney refinery was in combination with the Melbourne refinery—the two were believed to be identical—and this duty prevented them manipulating the prices and exporting their sugar to the colony to the ruination of the planters here. In reference to the labour question, which was a heavy item, the wear and tear of machinery, as also the interest on machinery, must be taken into account. Taking the average of the colony, and what it cost for wear and tear of machinery, &c., he believed it cost £15 for every ton of sugar that was produced before any return was obtained; and, if the average result for a number of years was taken, he did not think that the net profit would be more than £5 per ton. Of course, in exceptional cases—such, for instance, as where the planters were near a market—the profits would be greater. Then, the cost of transport between here and New South Wales and Victoria had to be taken into account. In New South Wales there was a protective duty, and, calculating freight and other charges, the Clarence River planters had an advantage of £8 per ton over the Queensland growers, which was a great pull when sugar was worth only from £25 to £26 per ton net, equal to the same sum free on board at port of shipment. He should like to see farmers growing sugar-cane, but they could not stand the hot climate; it must be done on a large scale. Referring to the speech of the hon. member for Darling Downs, he had no doubt that the wheat-grower got a return of £6 per acre, but he presumed it would cost at least £3 per acre to cultivate. Was that correct?

Mr. Kates said the total expense of realising the crop would be about 30s. per acre.

Mr. Amhurst said, if that was correct, the Downs' farmers must do their cultivation extraordinarily cheap. He was afraid, however, there must be a fallacy somewhere. Coming back to the real point, the hon. member had argued that if they increased the size of homesteads over eighty acres the selectors would have to employ other labour. Why should not people employ labour, and why should not labourers have the chance of becoming landowners in their turn? It must also be considered that a small farmer could only cultivate a certain quantity, and in bad seasons he was likely to get into the hands of those who advanced money on his crops—as was, no doubt, already done on a large scale. He had no doubt that for the next few years it might be profitable to grow wheat for local consumption, but he looked to the time when they would have to compete with South Australia and California, and be exporting wheat to other parts of the world. What they wanted to be was great exporters and small importers; and if wheat-growing went on increasing as it should do they must become exporters in five years. He

further held that, to make farming successful, unless the Darling Downs was different to other localities, the farmers must combine agriculture with other things —with the raising of pigs and the keeping of milch cows, and so forth. He hoped the hon. member for Darling Downs would reconsider his opinion on the question of area. No doubt the hon. member thought it would be a kindness to limit homesteads to eighty acres, but his (Mr. Amhurst's) opinion was that the area should be 160 acres.

The Hon. J. DOUGLAS said he should have preferred the Bill to have dealt simply with the exchanged lands. With regard to that object of the Bill, of course they must have some amendments—amendments within the scope of that portion of the measure—and he hoped there might be free discussion, and that they might arrive at a satisfactory result. As to the latter portion of the Bill—to clauses 8 and 9—though he should have preferred to deal otherwise with the matter involved, he was happy to hear from the Minister for Lands that he proposed to limit the discussion as much as possible to the clauses. He understood from the hon. gentleman and the Premier that they intended not only to offer no encouragement to open out the general question, but that they proposed to oppose the treatment of any new matter not connected with the clauses. If hon. members were committed to that, he saw a way of coming to a conclusion with regard to the Bill; but, if extraneous matter were not opposed, they should get into a long rambling discussion. He was prepared to deal with the Bill as it stood if the Minister for Lands would oppose all motions not dealing with the actual matters embraced by the measure.

Mr. GROOM said he agreed with clauses 8 and 9, extending the size of homestead areas from 80 to 160 acres. A case which had been brought under the notice of the House within the last few days by the hon. member for Maryborough (Mr. Douglas) illustrated in a striking manner the straits to which parties were put under the hon. member's Land Act to secure sufficient land to form a home for themselves and their families; and he (Mr. Groom) thought that the Minister for Lands had done wisely in introducing the clauses named. The case to which he alluded was that of the man Daniel Condon. He was a selector with a large family—the children mentioned the other day were only part of his family—and he wanted to secure a home of 320 acres for himself and his children. He had taken up eighty acres, but he found it utterly impossible to obtain more, except on the terms which had been represented; the children had themselves to go before a magistrate and make a declaration that they were of a certain age, which they were not really. He did not believe that there was any intention to commit a fraud; he believed that the man was driven to take this course because the Land Act limited him to eighty acres, and to make a suitable home for himself and his family he required 320 acres. Had the area been 160 acres, as was now proposed, the father and the eldest daughter could have each taken up 160 acres; the magistrate would not have committed himself by taking the declaration of children who were under age; and the country would have been spared the lamentable spectacle of a man taking from an intending selector £20 to withdraw his claims to the land and then turning round and informing upon him. If any person deserved prosecution it was not the unfortunate children and their father, but the man who took the £20 and then gave evidence against them. Such conduct was deserving of the severest punishment. Had this clause been in operation there would have been no need for this man to descend to the position of a scoundrel, nor for the children to have made the declaration. Condon himself was as decent a man as one might meet, and what he did was simply that he might get the land for his children. To prevent a repetition of such a thing, the Minister had done wisely in introducing the amendment; and he (Mr. Groom) was also of opinion that the hon. gentleman should not countenance any other amendments of the Land Act of 1876. He himself would like to have introduced several amendments, but should not attempt to do so because he did not wish to set a bad example nor to throw any obstacles in the way of the Bill. It was important that the Bill should be carried as soon as possible, so that another season might not be lost without the cultivation of the Allora lands. The Minister for Lands had exercised a wise discretion in increasing the homesteads to 160 acres, and he (Mr. Groom) would like to have seen a proviso that would enable the Government to exercise a discretion in another direction. Eighty acres of land on a creek with a railway running through would be quite enough under favourable conditions; but there were other localities where 320 acres would not be equal to that 80 acres, and consequently the Government should have the power of granting either eighty acres or a larger quantity, according to their discretion.

Mr. SIMPSON entirely agreed with the hon. gentleman who had just sat down, and could add that, as regarded the man Condon, he believed he had offended as he had not knowing exactly what to do. He (Mr. Simpson) had employed the man himself, and had always found him a decent and straightforward man; and he went with those hon. members who thought that if anyone was to be punished it should be

the informer. No doubt they would like to see some amendments upon the Bill before the Committee, but they would much more like to see the Bill passing through and the Allora lands opened. The Government should have the discretionary power which the last speaker had referred to. If any amendments were introduced he would try to see that children of a less age than eighteen should be allowed to take up selections, so as to do away with the tendency that had been exhibited in Condon's case.

Mr. STUBLEY said that the proposition before the Committee did not give what he wanted—viz., that a man should not be registered at any time for more than the maximum amount fixed by the Government. He wanted to see a clause inserted to that effect, and should not be satisfied till it was inserted. It was only the old dreary system of land laws over again, leaving a loop-hole for dummyism at any time, unless some such clause was inserted. There were plenty of people in Queensland who had had a great deal to do with dummies, and they must know that, although this Bill was important in many respects, it left a loop-hole for their operations. They might employ men to grow wheat for them for a time, though virtually owning the land.

Mr. O'SULLIVAN said he did not wish to prolong the discussion, but he must express his agreement with the hon. member for Toowoomba. He, however, objected to giving power to the Minister of the day to increase or decrease the areas from 80 to 320 acres; he objected to it at the time the Land Bill of 1876 was passing, and said what he now said—that the limit of eighty acres would lay a foundation for perjury, coupled with the fixing of the age at eighteen years. The case of Condon was not the only one. There were other cases later than that, where persons had taken advantage of the law, and he much admired the spirit in which the hon. the Speaker insisted on carrying a resolution reducing the age from eighteen to fifteen years. Parents should be able to take up land in the names of their children, of whom they had the care, for whom they paid taxes, for whom they were accountable up to a certain age. Who so fitting as the parents to keep the land for their use until they were able themselves to occupy it? A provision of this kind should be embodied in the land laws of the colony, and if a Land Act ever came before the House again he was positive the majority would insist upon its introduction. Eighteen years was altogether too advanced an age to fix as a limit, for a boy or girl in this colony was as old as a grown-up person of twenty-five or twenty-six at home. Investing the Minister of the day with discretionary power would be liable to abuse. It would be excessively inconvenient to give the Minister the power of granting either 80, or 160, or 320 acres. The same result would be better attained by the provisions of Mr. Archer's Land Bill of 1868, by which these areas were classified by the officers of the Government, who were held accountable to the House for the classification. Let these areas be classified into two or three classes. The Ministry of the day would be glad to have the responsibility taken off their shoulders, for it would be a most unthankful task, and whatever they did would lay them open to the charge of partisanship. If the classification was taken as in the Land Bill of 1868, the whole object would be gained. It was a pity some steps had not been taken by the Government to prosecute the informer who had already been referred to as connected with the Condon case—a fellow who virtually stole £20 from Condon by accepting a bribe not to bid against him, and who then informed against him and gave evidence before the court. A more villainous method of stealing he never heard of. If the law could not reach him it was something to know that he had the reprobation of the House, and he (Mr. O'Sullivan) believed, of the country, when the facts were known.

Mr. GRIFFITH said they were drifting into a discussion on the land laws generally, after all; and he was sorry to hear the hon. member who had last spoken speak in advocacy of false declarations.

Mr. O'SULLIVAN: I did no such thing; but I do object to any man getting money under false pretences.

Mr. GRIFFITH said that if a person obtained land by fraud, the person who gave information respecting it performed a public service. The Government, he understood, were going to oppose all amendments on the land laws in general, and he was glad of it; if they adhered to that they would get on with the business.

Mr. GROOM would like to rise to a point of order. He denied any sympathy with parties making false declarations, but said that if a man was mean enough or base enough to go into a land court and say he would take £20 from a man for not bidding against him, and then give information to bring him to trial, that man was deserving of the hardest names that could be applied to him. This was the man who had led the unfortunate Condon and his children into the trouble they had got into. If there were any means of forcing the man to disgorge the £20, and of handing it back to Condon and his large family, it should be done. The Minister for Lands would get the thanks of the whole country if he could insist upon the money being disgorged.

Mr. GRIFFITH said he was not aware that the informer had made £20 in this way; and, now that he knew it, he entirely

agreed with all that the hon. member had stated as to the conduct of the man in levying black-mail in such a fashion.

Mr. O'SULLIVAN: Then we evidently all mean the same thing.

Clauses 1, 2, and 3 passed as read.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS said that, as hon. members would perceive, the last clause provided that the 39th section of the Crown Lands Alienation Act of 1876 should not apply to exchanged land; but he was now desirous of moving, as an addition, the following words—"Except such portions thereof as may be defined and set apart by proclamation in that behalf." His reason for moving this amendment was that he wished to pay deference to the expressed opinions of members on both sides of the House on the second reading; for, while he personally would adhere to the opinion that conditional purchase was the best method of settling the people upon the lands, he was bound to pay respect to the opinion of hon. members. He hoped this would satisfy hon. members, and that the leader of the Opposition would not see the necessity of moving the amendments of which he had given notice. It was his (Mr. Perkins') desire that these lands should be occupied and cultivated in a *bonâ fide* manner; and in that desire he would be second to none. He did not wish to deny that he thought it desirable that new blood should be introduced at Allora. He knew the condition of the people there well—perhaps better than most members in the House—and he knew that some of them had not the means of cultivating the lands as they should do. If any encouragement, therefore, by way of inducement held out, were given to another class of selectors to take up the land, Allora would prosper, within three or four years, as it had never prospered before. At Toowoomba he knew of some twenty persons who had the means and inclination to take up land at Allora under the conditional purchase clause, and he was anxious, therefore, that any inducement that could be held out to them should be held out.

Mr. GRIFFITH hoped the hon. gentleman would not press this amendment. It was provided by the 39th section of the Crown Lands Alienation Act of 1876 that lands might be thrown open for selection as homesteads at five years' purchase at 6d. an acre. The main feature of this Bill, as the House were informed, was that these lands, acquired at considerable cost to the country, were to be sold at an adequate price. Was 6d. an acre for five years an adequate price?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: No.

Mr. GRIFFITH said, then he should like to know why the hon. gentleman wished to put in this proviso, which would enable the Minister of the day to repeal the clause if he liked. In dealing with land it was absolutely necessary to give some discretion to the Government; but here they were dealing with a special case—the case of very valuable land, which they had acquired by giving a large extent of valuable land in exchange—and what they desired now was to secure settlement and get a fair price for the country. But the five-year homesteads, as he would call them, were entirely inapplicable to this land. In the first place, what was the object to be attained by the five-year homestead provision? Two particular qualities were attached to them: first, cheapness of price; secondly, shortness of term; and these were the only two particulars which distinguished them from conditional selections in homestead areas. The proviso proposed by the hon. gentleman could not be introduced simply for the purpose of getting personal residence, because that might be obtained just as well by proclaiming portions of the land as homestead areas. If lowness of price was an object to be attained, he might point out that people most intimately concerned in the selections were waiting to take up the land and willing to give a fair price for it. From that point of view, therefore, also, the amendment was a mistake. As to shortness of term, was it probable that five years would be more desirable than ten? Were they not likely, on the one hand, to get a higher price if they gave ten years to pay, and was it not likely to be more beneficial to the selector to give him ten years to pay the money in than five? These were the only objects that the amendment could serve, and the first one was not secured, and the other was a disadvantage both to the Government and the selectors. He hoped, therefore, the hon. gentleman would adhere to his original intention, and have no five-year homestead selections at all. He should also propose to make personal residence compulsory, but that was another matter altogether, on which he should have something to say at a later hour.

Mr. GROOM said that, if he understood the Minister for Works correctly, his amendment was to enable the Government to proclaim 4,500 acres of land in the neighbourhood of Allora under the provisions of the homestead clause of the Act of 1876—at the price of 6d. an acre per annum, subject, of course, to the ordinary competition at auction. No one would be prouder than he (Mr. Groom) to see homestead selections on that land; but they must look to this fact, that already the very best land on the Darling Downs had been selected by the owners of different runs or by other means, and that what was left was anything but desirable land for homesteads. A large amount of land was proclaimed as homestead areas on the Darling Downs when the hon. member

(Mr. Douglas) was Minister for Lands, the greater part of which consisted of stony unwatered country some distance from the railway. During the last drought many of the selectors on those lands had to go fifteen miles for water, and he had seen them carrying it in billy-cans. Those persons had paid not 2s. 6d. an acre for those lands, but the maximum price had been 40s. an acre, and very little had been sold under 20s. an acre. The fact was, that people had either to take that land or to go without any—there was no other option left to them. Hundreds of persons had taken up land in that stony country, and had laboured under all the difficulties he had mentioned; and therefore he contended that if the exchanged lands at Allora were offered at 6d. an acre for five years, a severe blow would be struck at the commercial value of those already selected elsewhere. He took it for granted that when those exchanges were made it was on this basis: Mr. Wienholt received 40,000 acres at Jondaryan for 20,000 acres at Allora, the value of which was said to be £60,000. That, however, he disputed, and it was a mere arbitrary price. By proclamation the Minister for Lands had reduced the price of the Prairie lands to £1 an acre, and therefore they might say that the 40,000 acres received by Mr. Wienholt represented £40,000. He considered that for the 20,000 acres at Allora the £2 an acre which they had represented by the exchange was a fair price for the Government to ask for it; and, if the Government put up the land at that price, and allowed ten years to pay it, they would do very well. It was well known that the secret of settling people on the land was allowing them time to pay for it; and if the Secretary for Lands in New South Wales was asked the cause of the success in the settlement of that colony, he would say that it was by charging the people 5s. an acre cash down, and allowing the balance to remain over for many years. Supposing, for instance, a man took up eighty acres of land, he would have to fence it, provide a house for himself and family, and buy farming implements, all of which would represent an outlay of £200 or £300 before he could get anything from his land; and therefore the longer time that was allowed a man to pay for his land the more land would be taken up. Seeing that men had already had to pay £2 an acre for stony land on the Darling Downs, he considered that to offer the land at Allora at 6d. per acre, payable in five years, would be a great injustice. The area of that land at Allora was limited, and also was within a very short distance of the railway by which produce could be sent to market; so that the Government had every right to take as much care of that land as possible, and not dispose of it for less than its value. Even if they had to wait for years before they parted with it, it would be better for them to do so than to let it get into the hands of speculators. Besides that, there was every reason to presume that immigration would be resumed, and that then there would be a demand for those lands. They ought also to reserve what little good land there was left for the boys who were now growing up. They should give land to all who wanted it for settlement, but there was no necessity for rushing that particular land into the market. He considered that not only had they a right to ask a fair price for the land, but that it would be an actual injustice to dispose of it for less than was paid for the stony unwatered land on the Darling Downs, and would be a destruction of the interests of those who had embarked their capital in that stony land. Having been in personal intercourse with selectors who would be willing to take up the Allora lands, and knowing their opinions on the subject, he was in a position to say that the Minister for Lands might very fairly and properly ask for £2 an acre for them. Of course, if people chose to run up the price at auction, that would be their own business.

Mr. KATES agreed with the hon. member at the head of the Opposition, that five years was not long enough to allow selectors for payment. He should, himself, prefer extending the time to twelve or fifteen years, as the longer the time allowed for payment, the more money people would be prepared to give for the land. It would have been better, perhaps, if the Minister for Lands had inserted a clause classifying the land and valuing it, say, up to £5 an acre.

Mr. REA said he agreed with the bulk of what had fallen from the hon. member for Toowoomba, but he could not concur with the statement that the longer the time given for payment the better it would be. That argument might apply to exchanged lands, but if it was made indefinite it would be very dangerous, as in the course of twenty years an interest would be created that would out-master any Government, as he noticed the selectors had combined to do in the colony of New South Wales.

The PREMIER said it appeared that the amendment of his hon. colleague, the Minister for Lands, would not meet the views of the Committee as well as the amendment of the leader of the Opposition would do, and he would therefore suggest that they should test the real point of difference between the Committee, which was whether the land should be submitted under the homestead clauses or not.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS said that what he had proposed was only to put 4,500 acres

under the homestead clauses at first. It was never intended to part with the land at 2s. 6d. an acre; but, in order to remove certain doubts, he would withdraw his amendment.

Amendment withdrawn accordingly.

Mr. STUBLEY wished to know whether the Minister for Lands would be willing to insert a clause he (Mr. Stubley) had prepared, to the effect that a man should not be allowed to select as a homestead more than 200 acres of this land.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS said it would be more convenient not to bring forward such an amendment at the present time.

Clause, as printed, agreed to.

Mr. GRIFFITH said he thought the present was a convenient time to take up the question which some hon. members had raised at the second reading of the Bill, respecting the way in which the lands at Allora should be disposed of. At present the 4th clause of the Bill before them merely provided what was already the law—it was, in fact, synonymous with the terms of the Act of 1876; but it had had the effect of drawing the attention of the Committee to the fact that it was proposed to throw open these lands without requiring personal residence. He had given notice of an amendment to carry out the views of hon. members who, at the second reading of the Bill, expressed themselves in favour of personal residence. All the rest of the land on the Darling Downs was homestead areas, but these exchanged lands would be disposed of on different terms if there was no personal residence required. He thought most certainly that a Minister who proposed dispensing with personal residence in the case of these lands should be able to give a very good reason for the change. The results of his amendment, if carried, would be that there would be personal residence, and that the maximum area should be 200 acres. Since he had given notice of his amendment another had been circulated by the Minister for Lands to limit the area, and the only difference was that he (Mr. Griffith) had used the language of the Act of 1876, whereas the hon. gentleman had adopted different phraseology. He was informed that some hon. members were not quite familiar with the provisions of the present Act on the subject of price and personal residence, but those provisions were explained in clauses 14, 15, 23, and 38. In the matter of homestead areas the conditions were the same as in other parts of the colony, except that the maximum area was limited to 1,280 acres, with power to the Government to reduce that maximum to 120 acres; and the conditions of occupation were the personal residence of the lessee. When the Act of 1876 was going through the House there was scarcely any difference of opinion as to the desirableness of personal residence on the Darling Downs, and he did not know any reason why the exchanged lands, which were amongst the most valuable of all, should be exempt. In 1874, when the Land Bill introduced by the late Mr. Stephens was before the House, he (Mr. Griffith) objected to personal residence being compulsory all over the colony, and he still saw good reason for holding that opinion with respect to some parts of the colony; but there had been a great deal of dummying, and it was much easier to dummy when a man could appoint a bailiff and change him as he liked. Both sides of the House were agreed in desiring that these exchanges should lead to what was called the close settlement of this part of the colony, and he, for one, believed the only mode of securing actual settlement and cultivation was by insisting upon personal residence. In 1874 the members of that part of the colony to which this Bill applied were in favour of personal residence everywhere. On the Darling Downs personal residence ought to be insisted upon, and, in order to give effect to that, he would propose a clause to supersede clause 4, which being already law was to that extent unnecessary. The form in which he should like to see the Bill become law was, with the clauses of which he had given notice inserted dealing with the exchanged lands the same as all other lands on the Darling Downs—making the maximum area limited to 200 acres, and giving the power to throw the land open to selection in surveyed blocks. He would now propose this amendment—

All exchanged lands within the district or part of the colony described in the second schedule to the Crown Lands Alienation Act of 1876 shall be and the same are hereby set apart as homestead areas.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS said the hon. gentleman, after proposing that the maximum area to be selected should be 200 acres, forgot that there were some other exchanged lands on the hands of the Government at the present time, and that their object had always been to accept first-class agricultural lands only in exchange for pastoral. That was one of the cardinal conditions of the system. To those who had any local knowledge of the Allora lands it must be patent that they were not all alike, and, if 200 acres was to be the maximum, the law would again have to be changed. If the Government were to be trusted at all, they should be allowed to administer the Act without any such hindrances. He had already said that, in deference to the expressed opinions of hon. members on both sides of the House, he would not insist upon his own personal opinion upon this matter; and he would repeat again that he and his colleagues were as desirous to see this land settled upon as any hon. members of the House could be.

There was no intention whatever to let land go at half-a-crown an acre. By-and-by, when certain portions became selected, it would be highly inconvenient indeed, and delay settlement, if the Government were fettered by the maximum mentioned by the hon. gentleman; and the same arguments would apply to the other exchanges in operation at the present time. As to the non-residential clause, he (Mr. Perkins) fancied he knew something about settlement; he knew how it worked in practice, and that there were persons in different parts of the colony who would find it inconvenient to reside upon the selections they were anxious to take up, and these were persons who did not wish to break the law. Some of them might not reside upon the land they wanted for two or three years, and some would never reside there permanently; but they were persons who would build, not the regulation houses, but substantial houses that would cost from £500 to £1,000, and it could not be doubted that these were the best sort of settlers for the district, even if they only came backwards and forwards occasionally, for they would employ more labour than the eighty-acre man was likely to do. Moreover, he (Mr. Perkins) found that the eighty-acre men were becoming quite as expert as others in trading upon their selections. At the Dalby court the other day, where there was apparently a great rush for homestead selections, the land commissioner, when he came to collect the money, found that some of the so-called selectors were not to be found. They had attended the court merely for speculating purposes, and no doubt many such persons were waiting at the present moment for an opportunity to levy black-mail upon their neighbours, managing at the same time to evade the law. If residence was insisted upon, he was satisfied that, instead of this land being settled upon in eighteen months or two years, it would be many years before the whole was taken up, and that would be so much the worse for the colony and for Allora. He did not say that his was the only correct way of dealing with these lands, but he had heard no better proposed, and nothing had been said to make him shift his opinion.

Mr. STUBLEY said he understood the Bill was to deal specially with the Allora lands, and if it had been headed the Allora Land Bill it would have been a good one; but if the Minister for Lands did not accept some of these amendments there was not much chance of its passing to-night, especially if the Bill was to deal with all exchanged lands: in that case it entered into a new phase altogether.

The PREMIER said the very first clause of the Bill defined what exchanged lands were, and reference to it would show that there was no intention to confine the Bill to the Allora exchanged lands. It applied to all exchanged lands at present in operation, and to any lands that might come hereafter to be the property of the Crown through the 39th section of the Act of 1876. The amendment moved by the leader of the Opposition put the real question at issue between the different parties to the test—namely, should they insist upon personal residence as one of the conditions? He (the Premier) would like to see this matter fairly tested. The object of the Government in dealing with these lands was, as had been stated over and over again, to secure cultivation, and it was therefore the object of consideration what steps should be taken to secure this object most effectually. In considering this they had to consider whether personal residence had the effect of leading to the cultivation of the lands of the colony, and especially if it would have the effect in the case of the particular lands under consideration. They came to the conclusion that it would not, and that for two reasons. The first was, that personal residence had been as much abused as any other condition in the Act of 1876 or 1868. What, then, would be the consequence if this condition was insisted upon with respect to the Allora lands? Simply, that it would circumscribe the number of people eligible for selections, and it would result that the only applicants for that land would be people who could nominally perform the conditions of residence—namely, the inhabitants in and about Allora. If residence was compulsory, the effect would be that, while the whole of the land would be alienated, the only applicants would be those living in the neighbourhood. It would be a fault in the Bill if the area of individuals that could select was circumscribed. They therefore proposed to make it as general as possible by not insisting upon personal residence. Insisting upon personal residence meant the throwing of the lands they wished to see cultivated into the hands of people who could not possibly cultivate them. The area from which to choose would be limited, and so they would lose the means within their power of attracting the people whom it was desirable to attract. The condition of spending money on the selection instead of a general condition of residence, and another condition which was of very great importance—namely, paying a good price for these lands—would be the best means by which the Government could secure actual cultivation. He wished, however, to see it tested whether the Committee insisted upon personal residence as a *sine quâ non*. Hon. members had attributed to this more importance than it deserved. Government, if they chose, could deal with this land under the Act of 1876; but they had decided not to do so, because it had cost a large amount of money, and ought therefore

to be dealt with exceptionally. This was a Bill to deal primarily with exchanged lands; and if the amendment were carried it would not take away from the principle of the measure. It would not be fatal to the Bill, because the Government were prepared to take instructions from the House as to how they should deal with this land. His own opinion was that personal residence should not be insisted upon as a condition, for without it they would be better able to attain their object of getting the land into the hands of those best able to cultivate it.

Mr. DOUGLAS said the Premier had put the question very fairly, and they had better accept the issue he had offered to the Committee. The best securities for selling the land to the greatest advantage were—first, surveying it properly, then offering it in a judicious manner, and then fixing the price. With regard to the residence condition, he was inclined to favour it in preference to the cultivation condition. Both those conditions, as was well known, had been set aside, and probably always would be to some extent, unless the selectors were very carefully looked after; but that was a matter of administration, and subject to the defects attached to all administration in connection with conditions. Considering the locality, he thought it probable that a residence clause here might be satisfactorily guarded, and the Minister for Lands might find no difficulty in really securing residence; and, though there was a good deal to be said for the argument that this would limit the number of selectors, yet there would be an ample number of selectors found in the vicinity of Allora, Warwick, and Toowoomba, who would be quite willing to comply with the condition of residence. As to the condition of cultivation, that also had been set aside. That was one of the conditions under the regulations previous to the Act of 1868 on land taken up in agricultural reserves, and the question then arose as to what cultivation consisted of. Those who dummied land at that time—and there was a distinguished gentleman, now a member of the House, who was an adept in all the methods of acquiring land under the Acts of those days—put an interpretation upon cultivation which was accepted by the then Minister for Lands (Mr. Lamb)—namely, the ploughing of the land to a depth of nine inches. The consequence was that a good deal of the land was ploughed in a very perfunctory manner in order to comply with the condition, but nothing was ever sown upon it. That was held to be cultivation then; and it would, no doubt, be held to be cultivation now. In those matters of conditions they must remember that they were fighting against men who would, if they could, avoid those conditions, and nothing but the persistent and systematic watchfulness of the Minister for Lands would defeat those persons who wished to set aside the law. As all legislation connected with conditions was surrounded with those difficulties, he preferred to accept the amendment proposed by his hon. friend, believing it to be the best form of condition they could adopt.

Mr. MCLEAN said the object of both sides in connection with these lands was the same, and, as an argument in favour of the amendment, he would point out that from the report of the Under Secretary for Lands it appeared that land taken up in homesteads had been cultivated to four times the extent of land taken up in conditional selections. People took up homestead selections for *bonâ fide* settlement, and with that view put it under cultivation. His opinion on the matter under discussion was that the Committee should insist on personal residence, so as to prevent these valuable lands being secured by capitalists for speculative purposes. Their great object of bringing the land under cultivation would never be attained unless they insisted on residence as a condition.

Mr. REA thought hon. members were losing sight of the fact that there were other objectionable features in the Bill—the greatest, perhaps, of which was the provision allowing men who had taken up their full quantity of 10,000 acres under other Acts to take blocks out of this particularly choice locality, as if they had not enough already. The Premier wanted men to take up this land who would not reside upon it, on the ground that they would cultivate it to a larger extent and to better purpose than smaller men who would accept the condition of personal residence. If those large, monied men really wanted this land for cultivation, they might have purchased it years ago, for it was freehold land long before it came into the possession of the Government. But none such had ever come forward, and now they wanted to take it away from those who would willingly settle upon it. The occupation of this land should be guarded by every contrivance known to the law, for the country was jealously watching lest the Committee should permit the thin end of the wedge to be introduced and allow it to be taken up by large absentee holders.

Mr. STUBLEY said it had been his opinion, and that of many other hon. members, that this was a Bill to deal specially with the Allora lands. Conditions of residence, as all knew, had been abused; but was he to understand from the Premier's remarks that that condition in this case would lead to the alienation of land in larger quantities than the proposed maximum of 160 acres? If so, he would suggest a simple clause as a remedy, to the effect that title deeds

should not be issued to anyone having more than a certain quantity of land. On the other hand, as the Bill was to deal with all lands exchanged or to be exchanged, it would be impossible to fix any definite area, for 160 acres here would be worth 500 or 1,000 acres in other parts of the colony, and land might be obtained by exchange on the banks of a river, or in the vicinity of towns where ten acres might be worth fifty acres in the Allora district. It ought to be understood whether they were dealing with this particular tract of land or with something else.

Mr. THORN said he had played his part in effecting the exchange of the Allora lands, and now that the Government had those lands they should see that a population was settled upon them that would produce something more than was the case in other parts of the colony. He considered that 120 acres of land at Allora were better than 600 acres in any other part of the country, even in West Moreton. He was in the Allora district during a severe drought, and he was surprised at what was then being grown; even the stony ridges were most prolific. He should be very sorry to see the land alienated in any other way than that contemplated by some hon. members on both sides of the Committee. There was no other part of the colony so well suited to growing wheat, for although it was possible to grow it in other parts—even in the Dalby district—he believed it had not been found a success. To secure the land being properly cultivated, he considered it should be made a *sine quâ non* that there should be personal residence, and also a good price asked for the land. With those two things the land would be turned to good account, such as wheat-growing, whilst without them it would pass into the hands of speculators. Wheat-growing would pay, as a crop could always be got in that particular district; even during the drought there were crops which astonished everyone who saw them. Such being the case, he thought the Committee would do wrong if they abolished personal residence. He believed, notwithstanding the contrary opinion expressed by the hon. Minister for Lands, if the conditions he mentioned were secured, within three months the whole 20,000 acres would be taken up. What was wanted was people who would cultivate the soil themselves and live upon it.

Mr. SIMPSON said that the members of the Committee appeared to agree that what was wanted on the Allora exchanged lands was cultivation; but there seemed to be a great deal of doubt as to how that was to be brought about, and whether the condition of residence would ensure it. He had in his hand a return which had been furnished from the Lands Office, from which he found that in the Toowoomba district there were 430 homestead selections. The lands in that neighbourhood were supposed to be equal, as regarded purposes of cultivation, to those in the Allora district, but what was the result? On those 340 selections the total area under cultivation was 2,250 acres, or something like five acres to every homestead selector. If the total area of their farms was taken, it would be found that they had a little over 80,000 acres, or something like 200 acres for each selector, so that they cultivated one out of every fifty acres. That was what homestead residence did in the Toowoomba district; and the improvements on the selections amounted to about 8s. an acre. In the Warwick district there were 2,302 acres under cultivation, or an average of eight or nine acres to each selector; so that, as far as homestead residence secured cultivation, in the case of Toowoomba they cultivated five out of every 200 acres, and at Warwick eight or nine out of every 200 acres. Thus, the mere fact of insisting on homestead residence would not secure cultivation. The object of the Minister for Lands was undoubtedly that the Allora lands should be selected by *bonâ fide* residents—by people who would make use of the land by cultivation and by that alone; and he (Mr. Simpson) believed that the price would go a long way towards ensuring that. As to cultivation in the Dalby district, which had been referred to by the hon. member for Northern Downs (Mr. Thorn), he believed that it would be only in a very small way for some years to come. He had himself tried cultivation there, but found he was able to purchase all he wanted in the Allora district cheaper than what he could grow it for. Still, there was no doubt that in course of time cultivation would spring up there. As to what the hon. member for the Kennedy said—that the Bill should only apply to the Allora exchanges, he would point out that there had been no less than five distinct exchanges in the year 1878, some of which were certainly not very large. He heard that more were contemplated, and surely the hon. member would not say that a separate Bill should be introduced for each; if so, there would be little else to do during a session. He considered that one Bill should apply to all exchanges, and that it should be left to the Minister for Lands to get a fair price and to carry out what was desirable. He did not go with hon. members who considered that all those lands should be under homestead residence only, as the latest record showed that the homestead residents on the richest part of the Darling Downs only cultivated about one acre out of every fifty. Other conditions—such as cultivation and a fair price—would have more effect than insisting on personal residence.

Mr. MILES said that, if the Bill was passed in its present state, it would not be suited to the Allora lands. An exchange

had been made with the proprietor of Jimbour Station, by which some land at times partially flooded had been taken for dry lands entirely unsuitable for small settlers. Those lands would be suitable for conditional selections, but to apply this Bill to all exchanged lands would be perfectly absurd. After the opinion they had heard from the hon. member for Maryborough (Mr. Douglas)—who probably knew as much about the land laws as any hon. member—that no Land Act had been passed the conditions of which had not been evaded, some reason should be given for continuing to impose the condition of residence without providing some safeguard to ensure that the provision would be carried out. He might as well state that, in the event of a division taking place, he should support the hon. member for Brisbane, because his constituents were in favour of the condition of residence; but he thought he could suggest a plan by which all the ends desired could be secured. The greater portion of these lands were, he believed, well adapted for agricultural purposes, and therefore it should be cultivated and turned to the best account. But he knew that the conditions of the Act of 1876, which compelled personal residence, were not carried out, and the hon. member for the Logan, who seemed to stick to that principle, knew that they had not been complied with. The best and only means for getting the land utilised and cultivated was to get a fair price for it. When this exchange was first proposed his colleague had stated that the lands were of enormous value, and that he was prepared to pay almost any price to obtain them. Under the Act of 1876, by the provisions of which a man could apply for land at 2s. 6d. per acre, people took up land in order to hold it until they got the titles, and then they disposed of it; but he hoped these lands would not be used in that way. To prevent that, and to get *bonâ fide* settlement, they must fix the price at about £2 10s. per acre. That figure would not be too high, and it would be the best guarantee that the land would be occupied and cultivated. The Government would not be justified in trying to get an enormous price by enticing the farmers to run up against each other; and very little speculation could be done with land at over £2 an acre. He was rather surprised at the remarks made by the hon. member for Dalby about the land in the neighbourhood of Dalby. He had recently read a long report about the land there under wheat cultivation, stating that the hon. member for Toowoomba (Mr. Davenport) had sent his manager for the purpose of inspecting the wheat, which he described as looking better than any crop he had seen even on the Warwick side. It was in contemplation to erect a flour-mill between Dalby and Jimbour; so that he was surprised the hon. member should throw cold-water on the land as not being adapted for agriculture. He remembered when a large quantity of land was thrown open in the neighbourhood of Cumkillenbar it was taken up by people who did not understand how to cultivate it. A dry season came on and they lost their crops, because the land was not then in a fit state to grow them; and their holdings passed into other hands. He believed the lands in the neighbourhood of Dalby towards the Range, when they came to be cultivated, would be found able to grow wheat as well as any other part of the colony. A wheat crop did not require a great deal of moisture—in fact, it was more likely to suffer from too much than otherwise. He also believed that further west, at Mount Abundance, a good deal of land would be found equal to that at Allora. If the leader of the Opposition insisted upon personal residence he should feel bound to vote with him; but he warned him that personal residence would not secure the object he had in view. The land was equal to any he ever saw; some part was ridgy and timbered, but the greater portion was fit for agriculture. The Government should, he thought, have a discretionary power. They should be empowered to divide the lands into first, second, and third class, and fix a value upon the different classes. If they wished to have the lands cultivated, however, they must fix such a price that it would not pay persons to take it up for grazing purposes. If they did so, they would succeed in getting the greater portion of those lands put under cultivation.

Mr. RUTLEDGE said he purposed to record his vote in favour of the amendment of the hon. member for Brisbane. He did so because he saw that the passing of that amendment was absolutely necessary in order to the accomplishment of the object which was entertained when the exchanges were negotiated. The statement was unanswerable that, in order that the object contemplated when those lands were acquired by exchange might be accomplished, they should be cut up into small areas in order to insure their being cultivated by the occupiers. No one, rich or poor, would go in for cultivating lands in those parts on a very extensive scale, for two reasons: first, because to cultivate thoroughly was somewhat expensive, and, secondly, the experiments would be to many persons rather risky. For those two reasons no large area of land in those parts would be cultivated by any one owner. He believed that the system adopted under the Land Act of 1876, of having such land cut up into homesteads and sold at the comparatively trifling sum of 2s. 6d. per acre, payment extending over five years, was altogether erroneous. He knew that many powerful arguments

had been advanced on the other side, and he entirely sympathised with the purposes contemplated by those hon. members who advocated that land should be almost given away to induce settlement; but he could not assent to their arguments when he discovered—as had been shown by investigation—that the system had been a perfect failure. The object of their legislation should be to have as many occupiers as possible abroad over the face of the country, and that object could not be secured by almost giving away homesteads. When canvassing his electorate he made a special point that the true system of alienating public lands especially suited for agricultural purposes was, in his opinion, to put a high price on the land and allow an extended period—say twenty years—in which to pay for it. If, instead of alienating lands at 2s. 6d. per acre with payments extending over five years, they had alienated them at £1 and allowed the payments to extend over twenty years, they would have secured real settlement and inflicted a death-blow to the speculating tendency which was so disastrous to the best interests of the country. He verily believed that the best way to deal with these lands was to introduce this experiment now. It would not be an extensive one, and, if the argument used in favour of it was false, it could be proved in a way that would for ever set at rest all doubts as to whether or not the system, which had a great many advocates in the colony, was correct or not in regard to their agricultural lands. He recognised that they must draw a very wide distinction between the way in which they should dispose of pastoral and agricultural lands respectively; and the way in which to secure that agricultural lands should fall into the hands of people who were agriculturists was to place a good price upon them, and give the people extended periods to make the payments. Why should not this be done in the case of Allora lands? If these lands were thrown open in the same way as homesteads had been in the past, the result would be that there would be fifty applications for every farm. Some neighbouring landowners would supply the deposit-money to ten or a dozen of their dependents, who would lodge their applications on the understanding that if they succeeded in drawing the lot the land would become theirs, and they would act as their dummies. Land had been dummied on a large scale in this colony already, as the Minister for Lands well knew. Recently, an acquaintance of his had complained to the hon. gentleman about some dummying at the Logan, and what did the hon. gentleman say? He introduced the name of his Satanic majesty—so he (Mr. Rutledge) was informed—to emphasise his deliverance on the subject, and justified it on the ground that the practice of dummying was so universal that there was no need to speak about it. If they admitted the principle in connection with the alienation of these exchanged lands which had guided them in the past, they should inflict a blow upon the farming interest from which it would not recover for many years. He had been informed that there were a number of wealthy gentlemen who had their eyes upon these lands. He did not credit them with the intention to try to secure a large portion of them for the purpose of turning it into pasture—he gave them credit for more sagacity. They meditated the appropriation of a large area of these lands so that, when they had secured it, they would cut it up into farms of from forty to eighty acres—which they now said would not support a man and his family—and letting them to men who had no alternative, being agriculturists and nothing else, but to pay from 10s. to 20s. per acre for the privilege of renting these farms. They meant to create the landlord system which had been the curse of Great Britain and Ireland. Had not the progress of Ireland been retarded by this landlord system, by which the people had been brought down almost to the condition of serfs, and by which a spirit had been infused into them which had brought them to a state of desperation almost bordering upon revolution? He looked to the time when the colonies might be ruled by one of Queen Victoria's sons, and the hon. member (Mr. Davenport) might be created Marquis of Headington, and be able to lord it over his dependents;—then he could go away to Europe, and his agents could be as exacting as the agents of the absentee Irish landlords were upon their poor tenants, whom they dominated with so much perfidiousness. They ought to nip in the bud this attempt to establish the landlord system, and if they could succeed in crushing out the system in its inception they should be doing an act for which they would be entitled to the gratitude of posterity. Here was an opportunity for hon. members opposite to stand up for the rights of the people, and show that there was no antagonism between the squatters and the people. There were some members on the Opposition benches who had endeavoured to stem the anti-squatter cry, and had been advocating fair play to the squatters. Here was the opportunity for hon. members opposite to give the death-blow to the attempt to make ill-feeling between the two classes—to smother the cry with regard to squatters and their voracious tendencies and their nefarious attempts upon the rights of the people. But if the Bill should pass as drafted, and gentlemen of large capital could come in and take up these exchange

lands, would there not be an unanswerable argument put into the mouths of the people that the squatters, as a class, were a danger to the common wealth? Opposition members wanted to see the antagonism between the classes entirely removed, and here was an opportunity for hon. members opposite to lay aside their party feelings and preferences, and say that, since this exchange land was one of the few areas suitable for wheat, they would do their best that the right parties got it, and no one else. In order to secure the object contemplated by the exchanges, it was necessary to have personal residence. Let the people become their own landlords. Let a price of £3 or £4 per acre be put on the land, and a period of, say, twenty years given for its payment, and if that were done they should allay the uneasy feeling which existed in the minds of the community, and do much towards the securing permanent prosperity of the country.

Mr. O'SULLIVAN said the last speaker had stated it was absolutely necessary that the people should be settled upon these lands, and just a little before the Committee had seen by a return that those who had settled upon the lands had only cultivated in the proportion of one acre to every fifty. The land taken up had not been bad land, and he also denied the assertion that these Allora lands were better than any other in the colony. It had been stated by the hon. member (Mr. Thorn) that 100 acres of Allora land were better than 600 acres anywhere else; but he (Mr. O'Sullivan) would assert that, in several parts of West Moreton—on Laidley Creek, the Brisbane River, and the Rosewood electorate—there was as good land as anywhere. The hon. member for Enoggera had made a great deal of the dummying question; but no hon. member had yet cleared up the reason for the practice. There was no dummying going on now, comparatively speaking. The great cause of dummying was the depreciation by the Government of the value of land-orders; they were depreciated by the Government so much that, in many cases, £30 land-orders were sold as low as £5. It was provided by the regulations that no one but the owners could buy land with these orders, but a way of getting over the difficulty was soon discovered. A power of attorney, which cost about 2d., overcame the difficulty; and it was found that the attorney instead of the owner could take up land. The consequence was that capitalists bought up land-orders wherever they could get them; they gave from £5 and upwards for £30 land-orders, and he had seen £18 land-orders as low as £4;—this caused the dummying. There were no land-orders now. What few were out now unretired were of no value. The practice he had referred to was the real cause of all the dummying on the Downs and elsewhere, but it was now done away with. The Government of the day, in fact, turned the Treasury into a pawnshop, and depreciated the land-orders. They told the holders that they would buy them back for £6; a man went to the Treasury and got the money, and, if he wished to redeem them five or six weeks after, they insisted upon their pound of flesh;—and this, and not their land laws, had been the real cause of dummying. They all agreed these lands should be cultivated, but differed as to the mode of attaining that object. The hon. member (Mr. Douglas) had said a good deal on the subject, but his knowledge of farming was purely theoretical and not practical; and he would therefore rather take the opinions of the hon. members for the Logan or Oxley. It was like gold-digging—the man who read the most books on it was not the man who got the lump of gold, but the practical miner. Therefore, the men used to cultivation knew more about it than anyone else. When every other Act which had been passed had been evaded, why should they choose to insist on residence when they knew that it would be evaded in this case? Again, it had not been made clear that residence would encourage cultivation, but the great objection was that it limited the number of purchasers. He wished to see the lands thrown open, and agreed that to fix a certain price on a certain amount would ensure residence and prevent the land being bought for speculative purposes. He did not see why people from Brisbane should not cultivate 50 or 100 acres as well as people on the spot at Allora. If the lands were thrown open they would not be all locally purchased; but why should the rest of the colony be excluded? The hon. member (Mr. Kates), as a practical man, agreed that the land should be divided into classes, and he (Mr. O'Sullivan) did not believe this 22,000 acres was all of the same quality and of equal value, because some of it would be a greater distance from the railway station than the rest, and that would raise the cost of carriage—a very important consideration with the farmer. There might be a compromise between the two parties in the House. A certain quantity of land could be put up with personal residence insisted on and improvements, and some could be put up under the condition of residence by bailiff at another price, so that, say, 5,000 acres should be cut up into small farms of eighty acres with personal residence; then, further out from the railway another lot could be put up at a lesser price, and residence by bailiff be allowed. If they failed with one class, they would not fail with the other: so far every Act had failed. He disliked too many governmental regulations with regard to the settlement of land, and had never

insisted on restrictions to agricultural settlement, because no man knew better than the farmer himself what he wanted. So that, practically, he agreed with the hon. member (Mr. Miles) that a fair price would cure the evil of dummying. It had been stated at public meetings, and by deputations, that these lands were worth from £5 to £10 an acre: how was it their value had now come down to £2 and £2 10s.? They need not care twopence about personal residence: throw the land open at a fair price, and the men who bought at a fair price would only buy for the actual purposes of cultivation. If this land was better than any other in the colony, as it was said to be, those who bought it should pay a better price; and he did not wish to see the purchasers confined to the little neighbourhood of Allora. The land was Queensland land, and the inhabitants of Queensland should have a perfect right to buy it. If they would take his view, they would arrive at all that was required and that both sides of the House wished. If they divided they would divide on a mere matter of opinion; but he should vote against personal residence, which seemed to be against common-sense, and to have the lands thrown open.

Mr. GRIFFITH was not one of those who supposed that personal residence was a panacea against fraud. Some hon. members told them the lands should be put up at a sufficient price, and others that the lands ought to be classified. The price was fixed under section 15 of the Land Act of 1876, which provided that the Governor in Council should specify the upset prices of land to be sold. The price would be according to classification, and that they assumed; but what they wanted to know was, why should these lands on Darling Downs be exempted from personal residence while all the rest of the land in the district was subject to it? The only answer was that there were several other people who would like to have some of it. The Bill showed who those persons were—those who had already exhausted their acquiring capacity under the present law. No doubt there were persons who wanted the land—he would like some of it himself, but he was not prepared to go and reside on it. It might be suggested that he (Mr. Griffith) did not always believe in personal residence. He had not always done so, it was true, but since 1874 his opinion had been modified, because he found that it was the best safeguard which had been provided against dummying. He had seen dummying in all its phases; he had been in cases many times where dummying had been investigated, and he knew the whole *modus operandi*. Further than that, he had even been asked to advise how it could be done, though he had always refused to give an opinion on that subject. But to such an extent had dummying been carried that it was exalted to the rank of a fine art. There were very few members of the House who wished to see dummying take place, but unless they insisted on personal residence dummying would take place, and a good deal of it, and, instead of the lands being settled on by actual cultivators, they would get into other hands for speculative purposes; and the end they had in view in effecting the exchange would not be attained. In the Governor's Speech the Ministers who put the words in his mouth said that special legislation would be introduced to encourage *bonâ fide* settlement and actual cultivation on these lands. How were they going to secure it if they dispensed with personal residence? There were plenty of persons it would pay to take up blocks of the land at almost any price, who would put up a one-roomed humpy on it and put a man there to keep it, and, without actually spending any money on the land at all, and a miserable pittance merely on the man in the humpy, would wait until by the exertions of their neighbours the value of the lands would have greatly increased, and they would be remunerated very well for their little outlay. They were not legislating for men of that kind. He did not know the men who wanted the land; but if they wanted it and would not comply with the conditions, let them be left out of consideration. They could not legislate for everybody, and it would be entirely wrong to proceed on such a basis. He had heard no arguments whatever in support of the proposition to except this land from the rest of the Darling Downs. If personal residence was a mistake, so was homestead selection, and the law had better be repealed altogether.

Mr. PATERSON said the Bill was practically withdrawn after the second reading; it had been remodelled, and it was understood that it would come before the Committee as a Bill to deal with the Allora lands and nothing else. That impression was participated in generally by both sides. The two members for Stanley had that impression; and the gist of their speeches upon the question was emphatically what the Opposition side of the House had contended for all along—viz., *bonâ fide* residence as one of the conditions of settlement. He had been surprised, therefore, to hear the hon. member (Mr. O'Sullivan) departing from the position he had previously assumed. He (Mr. Paterson) was disappointed to find that the general ground for the observations of members on both sides had tended to make it apparent that the only good agricultural lands in the colony were those dealt with by the Bill. The hon. member had, however, pointed out there were other good lands on the coast side of the Range; and he (Mr.

Paterson) could assure the Committee there were quite as good lands in other parts of the colony. Even the Minister for Lands would lead the general public in and out of the colony to believe that the Darling Downs was the only spot in which there was any likelihood of agricultural settlement being successfully carried on. The desire that this Bill should give facilities to others than *bonâ fide* selectors was based on the ground that those others were not likely to get good agricultural land elsewhere. The sooner this fallacy was exploded the better; for there were equally good lands to be had, at the price represented as a fair price, elsewhere. In legislating upon this question they should endeavour to confine themselves to what was previously proved to be the best land law in securing *bonâ fide* settlement;—that was purely homestead settlement. They had been told that only one acre in fifty had been cultivated under the homestead system; but he was convinced that if they rejected the residence clause they would not have one acre in 500 cultivated;—at any rate, it was very unlikely that the type of settler who would locate himself on the Allora lands and comply with the personal residence clause would do it without making the land contribute to his profit. The member for Dalby spoke of the condition of cultivation as the proper thing, and the condition favoured by the Government; but there was no such thing in the Bill, and if the Government were to make some compromise in the direction of a condition of cultivation, and say that a portion of the Allora lands should be devoted to conditional selection, he himself would be inclined to go a step in that direction. Notwithstanding that a number of members on both sides of the House had expressed their desire that some clauses should be introduced to prohibit further exchanges being negotiated and completed by the Government of the day, no fresh clause had been so far proposed. He regretted the Government had taken no cognisance of these expressions, because the bulk of them came from their own side of the House. The Committee was at present in a very good humour to deal with the subject. The question was—should there be any exchanges at all in the future, and, if there were to be any, was it proper that the Government of the day should be charged with the duty of negotiating and completing them; or should such exchanges be negotiated and brought before the House for ratification or rejection? The present Bill should not be allowed to pass much further without an expression being given by the Government upon this subject. He could foresee many evils that would arise from this system of exchanges, and one of the very first things that would be done would be carrying into effect such expressions as he heard from a squatter the other day, who said—"We must now go in for all the first-rate agricultural lands we can get, in view of ultimately exchanging them for three or five acres for one, because as population grows, so will there arise further demand for agricultural land." Another point hon. members were anxious about was, whether residents in Queensland should be permitted to take up small areas for each of their children; and he did not see why, as there were other subjects besides the Allora lands dealt with in the Bill, they should not go a little further and deal with some of these extraneous matters. He was glad that the amendment of the leader of the Opposition, making the maximum area 200 acres, was put in such a concise form. It embraced his own ideas upon the subject, and he could not help thinking that if that clause were carried, the better qualities of land would be disposed of to the best advantage. He was favourable to the condition of residence; and he hoped, by the assistance of the votes of the hon. members for Stanley, if they came to a division, to see that carried into law.

Mr. O'SULLIVAN said that reference had been made to a speech he previously made. The hon. member (Mr. Paterson) could see a fault in another man's speech when he could not see one in his own. They had it on the records of the House that personal residence had produced one acre of cultivation in fifty. Let the hon. member apply himself to answer that if he could. The hon. member seemed to insinuate that he (Mr. O'Sullivan) was departing from the remarks he had previously made; but he was not, and only the eye of a special pleader could detect the slightest difference between what he now said and what he had said before. He was as suspicious as anybody as to these exchanges generally; he never believed in them, for he knew that possibly capitalists and people in the possession of runs would be very likely to buy up the agricultural land for the purposes of future speculation.

Mr. KELLETT said it was evidently the wish of both sides of the House to make this Bill as complete as possible, so that the greatest number of people should be settled on the Allora lands. There was a difference of opinion how the settlement was to be effected. The idea of some was, that it was inadvisable to have *bonâ fide* homesteads only. On the second reading of the Bill he expressed his ideas; and the hon. member for Rockhampton need not imagine that he had changed them. A clause had now been proposed to make some of the Allora lands homestead selections. The Minister for Lands had told the Committee he was prepared to try the experiment of making, say, 5,000 acres of

these lands *bonâ fide* settlement by personal residence, his only wish being to settle the greatest number of people upon the land. His (Mr. Kellett's) idea was that if it was left as originally in the Bill—namely, that it should be taken up by residence by bailiff, they would not have the number of people settled on the land that it was the wish of Parliament there should be. From his own knowledge of farming, the only men successful in that pursuit were those who lived on their farms, were *bonâ fide* farmers, and who used the plough themselves. With the present state of farming and the price of agricultural produce, men could not afford to pay farm overseers if they would make a profit. If they were to make these Allora lands a wheat-growing country, it would be advisable to set apart the greater portion of it for *bonâ fide* residence. As, however, there was a difference of opinion, let them have some portions for residence by bailiff and some by *bonâ fide* personal residence. The experiment might be tried somewhere to start with. These 24,000 acres need not be all thrown open at the same time; and it could be seen, after the first 5,000 acres had been tried for a year, which was the better plan. He himself believed the result would be to show that personal residence was necessary if they would produce the large quantity of wheat that it was desirable and possible to produce. If the matter came to an issue, he would certainly vote for a *bonâ fide* residence; but he hoped it would be shown to the Committee, in some more definite way than at present, that a certain portion would be set apart for that purpose, that certain portion to consist of the picked parts.

Mr. PATERSON explained that he had referred to the hon. member's speech in support of his own argument, and not to throw any doubt upon his sincerity.

The PREMIER said that when the leader of the Opposition put to the Committee the point to be decided—namely, whether personal residence should be one of the conditions of the alienation of the 21,000 acres of the Allora exchanged lands, it was quite clear from the hearty "hear, hears" with which he was greeted from his own side that the minds of hon. members were made up, and he (the Premier) had thought a division would have been come to at once. On the second reading of the Bill he intimated plainly that it was not a vital point to the Government whether personal residence should be insisted upon or not, and he had taken the earliest opportunity of bringing it to the test. There were matters of far greater importance before the House, and it would be impossible to find time for the discussion of a small Bill like this at such an enormous length. He was anxious to get the Bill out of the way, and he would warn the Committee that the Bill could not be allowed to block the way of more important Government business. Far too much importance had been attached to it, and unless it was finished speedily it must be got out of the way for matters of more importance.

Mr. GROOM said he did not intend to prolong the discussion, but he did not wish the remarks of the hon. member for Dalby to go forth in *Hansard* without contradiction. That hon. member said there were only 430 homesteads in the Toowoomba district, comprising 2,250 acres. But that was far below the mark.

Mr. SIMPSON said he quoted the figures from a return which he believed to be accurate.

Mr. GROOM said the return was full of inaccuracies. As far back as 1863 Toowoomba was surrounded by three large estates, the proprietors of which were anxious to pick up every available acre of land about the place. The consequence was, that when people wanted land for selection they had to go beyond those large estates, and when he went with the Minister for Lands, the other day, to the Westwood homestead area they had to travel twenty-two miles to reach them. He had had experience on the Darling Downs of the working of every Land Act passed in the colony, and was firmly convinced that the best test of *bonâ fide* selection was personal residence. What was cultivation within the meaning of the Act? Under the Act of 1866 it was defined as ploughing a few inches deep, and when the land thus scratched was sown with artificial grass, the commissioner, to his shame and discredit, reported that the condition of cultivation had been complied with. If that was to be the condition for selection on the Allora lands, they would be opening the door to a repetition of the dummying which was so disgraceful in former years. In all the colonies personal residence was being made a condition of alienation of the land; and in Victoria there was a tendency, which might with advantage be followed here, to hold back the title-deeds for a considerable time in order to secure the fulfilment of that condition. He was sorry to see it stated in the report of the Under Secretary for Lands that there was a disposition on the part of the eighty-acre homestead selectors to buy the land for speculative purposes, and, as soon as they got the title-deeds, selling it to the neighbouring squatters. He believed that if a return was made of the number of men who had done so, it would be found so insignificant that it seemed almost like a political dodge to put it in print. Of course, the condition of residence had been avoided, and an inquiry into a case of that

kind was now going on at Toowoomba. In the face of that inquiry it was a parody on legislation to pass an Act enabling other persons to take up similar selections without the condition of personal residence. The Minister for Lands had said there were twenty persons at Toowoomba who wished to take up this land. If they were men like some he knew who carried on business at Toowoomba, and bought land for speculative purposes, and making believe to fulfil the residence condition by going out to the land on Saturday night and returning on Sunday morning, he would not vote against his convictions to secure settlement of that kind. If such were the parties in Toowoomba who wanted the Allora lands they would get no assistance from him.

Mr. SIMPSON repeated that the figures he had quoted were taken from an official return, and if the figures were incorrect he did not want the mistake to be saddled upon his shoulders.

Mr. KATES said the whole question lay in a nutshell—residence by bailiff or personal residence. The former meant scratching the soil, and the latter deep ploughing and effective cultivation. This was not, as the Premier had said, a matter of small importance, because if these lands were settled successfully there were 70,000 acres more on the Darling Downs which could be recovered in the same way, and if otherwise there would be no chance of recovering it.

Mr. REA said the time wasted on the Bill was owing to the innovations introduced into it by the Government. The question of the leader of the Opposition—why these lands should form an exception to all the other lands on the Darling Downs—had not been answered, neither had any attempt been made to disprove that the land under cultivation on homestead selections was in proportion to total area four times as great as on land taken up on conditional selection. There was one thing which had escaped the observation of hon. members—namely, that the original area of the homestead selections was increased, in order that the selectors might have land for grazing purposes. It was this that had caused the disproportion alluded to by the hon. member for Dalby.

Mr. HORWITZ was understood to ask the Minister for Lands what value was put upon the lands at Allora?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS said he had not totted up the value, but he could assure the hon. member that a fair value would be obtained for it, and one that would be too high to admit of its being used for other than cultivation purposes.

Mr. HORWITZ said the hon. gentleman's answer was very unsatisfactory. They had been told that the Government had 22,000 acres, which were worth £3 an acre, and he considered that the whole of it should be put under homestead areas, instead of affording an opportunity for its being locked up by speculators.

Mr. MACFARLANE (Ipswich) said he had not the least wish to retard the passing of the Bill; but having heard the opinions of hon. members representing the Darling Downs and Allora districts, to which opinions he attached great importance, he had a few remarks to make. The Premier told the Committee that the object of the Government was to have the Allora lands put under cultivation; but if that was the object it was only natural to suppose that a cultivation clause would have been inserted. As there appeared to be a great deal of difficulty in defining what cultivation was, it would have been much better if the Government had accepted the amendment of the leader of the Opposition, and insisted upon personal residence. It had been stated that the land in the Allora district was admirably suited to the growth of wheat, therefore it was a matter in which the whole colony was interested; and in order to secure that the land should be used for wheat-growing purposes, he hoped the Committee would come to the conclusion to compel personal residence.

Mr. BAILEY said he was sorry hon. members on his side of the Committee should be accused of offering undue opposition to the Bill. Not long ago they were very kind to the Government, and allowed a Bill to pass with very little discussion. That Bill went to another place, and was ultimately shelved; but it could not be said that the Bill now under consideration had not been properly discussed. The Bill had a tendency to establish something that he did not like—it would establish a system of landlord and tenant; it would enable speculators to take up choice lands, and after making a few improvements to let them to tenants. What did this cultivation mean? Who was to perform the cultivation—the tenant or the landlord? If the land was bought by a speculator to let to a tenant, he could compel that tenant to perform the cultivation regulations. To show how easily those regulations might be evaded, he would mention a case that occurred in the electorate of Mulgrave. He knew a gentleman there who took up a large area of land under the sugar regulations, and that gentleman went with his men and ploughs and harrows to the land and planted some cane between the furrows to comply with the regulations; but not for the purpose of cultivating it. They harrowed it over afterwards, and at the present time that land, which was taken

up for sugar-growing, was the best fattening paddock in the district; it belonged to a member of the other House. It was a perfect farce to impose regulations of that kind in the present instance, for, even supposing they were carried out, it would be by the tenant and not by the landlord; not by the speculator who lived in the town, but by the hard-working tenant who lived on the farm. A great deal had been said about homestead selectors not cultivating their land and not complying with the residence conditions; but he was in a position to say a good word for them. He had seen German settlers who had taken up land apparently unfit for any purposes of cultivation;—he had seen them and their wives digging up ground which no Englishman would have attempted, and, wonderful to relate, he had seen them succeed in growing crops on that land. Those selectors were often hemmed into corners of rejected lands, and had made the best possible use of them. He trusted hon. members on his side of the Committee, if the saving clause providing personal residence was not carried, would take care that the Bill was thrown out, no matter what the consequences might be. They had been told by the Minister for Lands that he should be willing to make any ordinary concessions; and he trusted the hon. gentleman would make a concession to the opinions of intelligent men who knew what selectors were and, also, what dummying resulted in.

Mr. GRIFFITH said the Government, at the second reading of the Bill, told the House they did not care whether personal residence was imposed or not, but hon. members on his (Mr. Griffith's) side of the Committee who represented the farming districts did care, and regarded it as a matter of vital importance. On the Government side of the Committee there were a few members sitting still and saying nothing, and the Government relied upon a majority of hon. members who had heard nothing of the debate to carry out their object. Not a single attempt had been made by hon. members opposite to take part in the discussion, and not a member of the Government had condescended to answer his question why an exception should be made in the case of the Allora lands from other lands on the Downs which were taken up on personal residence conditions. If the Government had answered the question he put to them the Committee might have gone to a division some time ago. Was it not enough to irritate men who were endeavouring to prevent further fraud in acquiring the land, to see how the Government had cast a glamour over the hon. member for Stanley, who generally took up an independent stand, and who had spoken so strongly in favour of personal residence? Now the hon. member had come to the conclusion that personal residence was undesirable.

Mr. O'SULLIVAN: I deny it.

Mr. GRIFFITH said he was glad to hear the hon. member had not altered his strongly-expressed opinion, and no doubt he would vote in accordance with it. It was really annoying—more than annoying—that members who considered the matter of importance, and took a warm interest in it, and brought forward arguments they sincerely believed in, should be met with silence and contempt. That was not the way the Government would assist in getting through the business of the House. At present hon. members had simply been told that a number of men in Toowoomba wanted some of those lands, and they had been told that doing away with the residence condition would conduce to agriculture. Could anyone show a non-resident farmer in the colony, or a farm worked by an owner who was non-resident? And yet they had been told, with what he might almost call effrontery, that the best way to insure farming was to say that the farmer need not live on his land. They knew perfectly well that a great number of people did not want to see farms, but wanted the land thrown open for speculation. They (Opposition) protested, and, while anxious to go to a division, they wished to have the matter determined by men taking an intelligent interest in the matter, and not by a silent majority, voting without knowing what they were voting about.

Mr. O'SULLIVAN entirely repudiated the insinuation of the hon. gentleman. He did not care twopence whether personal residence was imposed or not. The object was settlement, and he would agree to any condition that would ensure it. It had not been shown, however, that personal residence had improved cultivation in the colony.

Mr. MESTON said the hon. member for Stanley asked how personal residence promoted agriculture? He would ask that hon. member to take a ride round his electorate, where he would find two thousand agriculturists settled upon the land devoting their whole attention to agriculture. It was clear that the sole object of the Ministry was to get the highest possible price for the land, and he could understand that when the purse was empty there should be a laudable desire to get it filled as speedily as possible. The Minister for Lands was therefore, no doubt, sincere, but a high price was utterly incompatible with settlement. It would be far better to give the land at £2 an acre, and leave the selector with a small balance, than to exact £4 and only leave him the alternative of borrowing, as hun-

dreds did. The hon. gentleman must know that a high price did not prevent speculation; men would pay £4 and £5 an acre, and keep the land until it was worth £10, and then sell it. The other day he had met a gentleman in the train, who said that if the Government were not going to enforce the residence clause in connection with these lands, he would be very pleased for himself but very sorry for the country; for he should, himself, buy as much as he possibly could, for the purpose of re-selling it when it increased in value. The hon. member said residence by bailiff would be sufficient, but did he know what the result of that system had been in Victoria as well as in Queensland? It had been the means of establishing the immense estates which were a national disaster to Victoria. It had established the large estates on the Downs, where dummying had been systematically carried out. He remembered one instance of dummying. A man took up a piece of land on behalf of the owner of a station, and to carry out the residence condition he built a small hut for about £10, and employed a school-boy to light a fire every day as he passed on his way to school and replenish it as he returned; and he stuck up a notice on the door, "Out splitting." This imaginary splitter was engaged in splitting imaginary slabs every day for twelve months. They were surely not to be told that Queensland was a desert, and these 20,000 acres the only oasis in it. There was as fine land in the Rosewood electorate as in any part of the Darling Downs; and, in his opinion, of the 40,000 acres given in exchange 20,000 acres were as valuable as the 20,000 taken in exchange) and the other 20,000 very slightly inferior. Standing upon the top of Mount Moriah and looking upon the immense expanse of fine country, he could only look upon the exchange as a national fraud. He admitted the Allora lands were valuable, and especially for wheat-growing—in fact, he believed the Darling Downs would be the granary of the colony in years to come. There were two methods by which speculation could be prevented—by the residence clause which would be effective in one way; or by a clause in the Bill to provide that, whatever quantity was taken up, one-half or one-third should be kept under crop consecutively for three years. That would secure the object to which the Committee decided the lands should be devoted.

Mr. STUBLEY said the provision mentioned by the hon. member for Stanley could easily be evaded. A man might take up three blocks of 120 acres each, and he would have no trouble in getting people to utilise them for three or four years for what they could cultivate from it. He contended that no one should be allowed to register more than 160 or 200 acres, and if he could not get a clause to that effect inserted he should oppose the Bill to the utmost. The statement of the hon. member for Dalby, that only one acre in fifty was cultivated, only went to show that the land had been dummied. That was also the reason why agriculture had not been more successful where tried. This land under the present Bill might be all sold by auction.

Mr. HENDREN said the objectionable points in the Bill were the provision that those who had already taken up land under other Acts could select, and the provision that land-orders would not be received. He should certainly vote for personal residence.

Mr. O'SULLIVAN said, in answer to the hon. member for Rosewood, that the return for the Ipswich district showed that altogether there were but 401 homesteads, of which 4,087 acres were under cultivation.

Mr. GRIFFITH said the proportion of conditional-purchase selections under cultivation in the Ipswich district was 2·6, or one-fiftieth part of the whole; whilst the proportion of homesteads under cultivation in the same district was 15½. He would ask, for the third time, why this particular piece of country should be dealt with on different terms from the other Darling Downs lands? No reason had been given, and he felt bound to conclude that the only reason the Government could supply was, that the Minister for Lands knew some twenty or thirty persons in Toowoomba who wanted some of the land.

Mr. KINGSFORD said, if this was a paltry transaction, as it had been designated by the Minister for Lands, it was unworthy of the dignity and office of the hon. gentleman to introduce such a measure. To him (Mr. Kingsford) it did not appear a paltry transaction. He held that the ostensible purpose of the Bill was of the greatest importance to the country, and that nothing tended so much to the advancement of a State as the creation of a middle or yeomanry class. He had a great objection to all measures which sought to divide the community into two classes only; and the tendency of their land laws had not been against such a division. Supposing these 20,000 acres of Allora exchange lands were divided into settlements of 100 acres each, there would be 200 proprietors with their wives and families, and each farmer would require at least two men to assist him; there would consequently be 200 settlers and a large number of labourers provided for. He could see no reason why the Government should object to the amendment. He failed to see that any good reason had been advanced against *bonâ fide* settlement, but he could see good reasons why

there should be no speculation: the country had been almost ruined by speculation, and it would never prosper until a middle class—a farming and agricultural class—had been created. He admitted that the squatters should have every consideration, but he did not see that they should be considered at the expense of any other class;—for all classes had their uses, and tended to the prosperity of the country: up to the present, though, the agricultural class had been almost snubbed by the various Governments. The system proposed by the amendment was well worthy of a trial, and would, he believed, be the beginning of better days for the country.

Mr. STUBLEY said that, if a man were allowed to take up 320 acres of this valuable land, he could well afford to keep men upon it for the five years. It was only in 1876 that homesteads were limited to eighty acres. How many selections had been taken up since then upon which only one acre in fifty had been cultivated?

Mr. BAILEY said this was a real farmers' question; and there was no greater enemy to either squatter or farmer than the speculator. He knew a district where a large quantity of agricultural land was bought up by the speculator and leased to tenants who, after struggling on for five years, and after they had improved the property, were turned out. If they could have *bonâ fide* settlers—real farmers—let them have them; but let them keep out the speculators. They did not want tenants, but freeholders.

Mr. MESTON said the hon. member for Stanley had quoted a return which showed that in the Ipswich district there were but 401 selections, of which 4,087 acres were under cultivation. He would maintain there were more acres under cultivation at Rosewood alone. It was estimated that during the present year 400,000 bushels of maize would be produced in the Rosewood electorate, which, at fifty bushels to the acre, would give 8,000 acres under cultivation, or double the quantity named by the hon member as being cultivated in the Ipswich district. If this was a specimen of the way these returns were compiled, the fewer there were laid on the table the better.

Mr. O'SULLIVAN objected to the hon. member blaming him for the return. He had read figures from a return with reference to the amount of cultivation on homesteads, and if they were incorrect it was not his fault.

Mr. GROOM endorsed the statement that these returns were perfectly inaccurate. The Minister for Lands could credit himself with representing more than 2,000 acres of cultivated land. In the Meringandan Scrub alone there were nearly 2,000 acres of cultivated land: and there were 400 acres under wheat in what had been once thought an impenetrable scrub on Gowrie Run. In a comparative return of the quantity of land under cultivation in the different colonies that he had seen, he was particulary struck by the smallness of the area set down for Queensland. If these returns formed the basis for such statistics, then Queensland suffered from inaccurate returns.

Mr. SIMPSON said he had only referred to homestead selections to show that personal residence did not induce cultivation.

Mr. GROOM said that in Meringandan the selections were all homesteads.

Mr. BAILEY could well account for the return being unsatisfactory, as he had found the farmers very suspicious of Government officers, who, if they asked for information, did not get what they required, because the farmers were always in dread of some Divisional Boards Bill, or some other device for imposing extra taxation. As a class they were reticent of their own affairs, and the consequence was that the returns would always be unsatisfactory and incorrect.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS, in reply to a question by Mr. Stubley, which was inaudible in the gallery, said he had no further answer to give that hon. member than the one he had already made.

Question—That the proposed new clause follow the last clause of the Bill—put and the Committee divided:—

AYES, 26.

Messrs. Garrick, Dickson, McLean, Griffith, Meston, Paterson, Douglas, Kingsford, Miles, Rea, Kates, Morehead, Hill, Stubley, Hendren, Bailey, Thorn, Rutledge, Macfarlane (Ipswich), Beattie, Grimes, Kellett, Davenport, Horwitz, Low, and Groom.

NOES, 20.

Messrs. Palmer, McIlwraith, Perkins, Cooper, Macrossan, Sheaffe, Simpson, Norton, Stevens, O'Sullivan, Persse, Stevenson, Lalor, Beor, H. W. Palmer, Amhurst, Swanwick, Baynes, Archer, and Weld-Blundell.

Question, therefore, resolved in the affirmative.

After some discussion, inaudible in the gallery,

Mr. GRIFFITH moved a new clause, proposing that the maximum area which any person might acquire in a homestead area in exchanged lands should be 200 acres, or such smaller area not less than 80 acres as might be proclaimed by the Governor in Council. He did not know whether the Minister for Lands had any objection to the clause, as he had a somewhat similar amendment, of which he had given notice.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS objected to it. He knew a number of persons in the

neighbourhood of Allora who did not want more than forty acres each, and, in fact, had not the money to pay for more. Referring to a map on the table of the House, he saw there were very few eighty-acre allotments, and when the best land was taken up they would have to give a larger area than 200 acres of the land, and fresh legislation would be required. He objected to any limitation of the maximum area.

Mr. GRIFFITH said if there was no limitation a man would be able to take up 1,280 acres, as under the present law, which would not be right. In fixing the area in the new clause he was not guided by personal knowledge of the land, but was advised that 200 acres would be a sufficient maximum to take up in this case.

Mr. GROOM said there was a large number of persons in the neighbourhood of Allora unable to go in for eighty acres, but who thought they might be able to take up forty acres. It would be unwise to put these lands entirely beyond the reach of that class of settlers.

After further discussion,

New clause as read put and passed.

Two other new clauses, intended to be proposed by Mr. Griffith—"Land may be declared open to selection on surveyed lands;" and "Surveyed blocks to be applied for as such"—were withdrawn without having been put, on the ground that an equivalent power was already vested in the Government.

Clause 4—Exchanged lands may be proclaimed open to selection—put and negatived.

Clause 5—Amount to be expended in improvements—put and passed.

Clause 6—Additional selection may be made—put and negatived.

Clause 7—Land-orders, &c., not to be available—put and passed.

Mr. KING wished to move the insertion of a new clause to follow clause 7. The present was a very appropriate time to deal with the question of the expediency of continuing the system of exchanges. The Allora exchanges had convinced him that it was not for the benefit of the colony that these exchanges should continue. They were made at the expense of the whole colony, but the people of the colony had not all equally a chance of acquiring a portion of the land. The result of the Allora exchange would be that at the expense of the country a couple of hundred men on the Darling Downs had been benefited, as no person residing at a distance could compete with them. It was not desirable, therefore, that transactions of that kind should be repeated. His object was to test the feeling of the Committee, and he moved that—

From and after the passing of this Act the 69th section of the Crown Lands Alienation Act 1876 shall be and the same is hereby repealed.

Mr. GROOM said that the clause inserted in the Act of 1876 was passed after very careful consideration by the House, and he could not go quite so far as was proposed by the amendment of the hon. member; but he thought that all proposed exchanges should be laid on the table of that House, and if not disapproved within a period of twenty-eight days afterwards they should be considered as allowed. There might be exchanges crop up in other parts of the colony, caused by railways going into districts suitable for agriculture. At Bundaberg, for instance, where there was a railway being made, it was not improbable that there might be inducements for effecting exchanges, and therefore he would suggest to the hon. member the expediency of amending his amendment in the manner he (Mr. Groom) had intimated.

Mr. KING said he would be perfectly willing to accept the suggestion of the hon. member for Toowoomba, to the effect that all exchanges of land should be approved of by the House; and would alter his amendment to that effect.

The PREMIER said that an amendment of so important a nature could not be discussed by the Government without time for consideration, and on that account he would move the Chairman out of the chair.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY said he doubted whether such an amendment came within the scope and title of the Bill, which was a Bill to amend the law relating to the Alienation of Crown Lands.

Mr. KING said, in reference to the point of order raised by the Colonial Secretary, that the clause proposed was in the Act relating to the alienation of Crown lands.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS said the Government had a sincere desire to pass the Bill, so that it might come into operation as soon as possible. The proposed amendment would open up a wide field for discussion, and, if the hon. member persisted, he should have to move the Chairman out of the chair.

Mr. KING said he would, with the consent of the Committee, withdraw his amendment, with a view to considering the suggestion of the hon. member for Toowoomba; and take an opportunity of moving his amendment at another time.

Amendment, by permission, withdrawn.

On the motion of the Minister for Lands, the CHAIRMAN reported progress, and the resumption of the Committee was made an Order of the Day for to-morrow.

The House adjourned at three minutes past 11 o'clock.