

Queensland



Parliamentary Debates
[Hansard]

Legislative Assembly

THURSDAY, 8 SEPTEMBER 1881

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY.

Thursday, 8 September, 1881.

Formal Motion.—Girls' Grammar School, Rockhampton.—Recovery of Lands on Darling Downs.—Supreme Court Amendment Bill.—Withdrawal of Motion.—Motion for Correspondence.—Railway Extension.—Debate on Financial Statement.—Adjournment.

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

FORMAL MOTION.

On the motion of the HON. S. W. GRIFFITH, it was resolved—

That there be laid on the table of the House, a Return showing the amounts received by the Railway Department for the Carriage of the following classes of Goods at ordinary rates (not being Goods carried on Government account) from or to Brisbane and Roma, from the 1st of January to the 1st of August, 1881, specifying the amounts received for each kind of Goods:—

1. Anvils, ale (in bulk), cement, plants, poultry, arrowroot, cotton, dairy produce, eggs, game, honey, bacon, bath-bricks, beef (salt), bread, rice, fish (dried or in brine), mining machinery, meat (fresh), oil (common), stretchers, treacle, seeds, alum, bleaching powder, permanent-way material, stone (building), coke, lead, coal, gunpowder (under 10 cwt.), kangaroo skins.

2. Iron and wire, furniture, flour, sugar, plate glass, millinery, salt (in bags), spirits, soap, sewing-machines, soda crystals, musical instruments, hats, whiting, malt (in bags), malt (in tanks), tin plates, woolpacks, wool (in bales), sheepskins (tied), quicksilver, boots, kerosine.

GIRLS' GRAMMAR SCHOOL, ROCKHAMPTON.

Mr. ARCHER said it might, perhaps, be a matter of surprise to hon. members present that this matter should be in his hands, and not in the hands of the senior member for Rockhampton

(Mr. Macdonald-Paterson) The causes of this being so were these: He had all along been a strong supporter of this Grammar School and a subscriber, and he had been requested to act as trustee; that he only refused because of the duties which required his attendance here in Brisbane so long, and he thought it would be better that a gentleman residing permanently in Rockhampton should occupy the position. When he spoke of this subject to the senior member for Rockhampton the other day, he informed him that from the fact of unforeseen events that had happened in connection with his family he would not be able to attend the House so regularly as he could wish, and he would like to see the matter in his (Mr. Archer's) hands. In coming before the House to ask the sum mentioned in his motion on the paper, he did not come forward as asking it under the Education Act. The hon. Minister for Education, whom he had seen on the subject, declined to put such a sum on the Estimates, saying that it was outside the scope of the Act; but he believed he would be able to show to the House that if this sum was not granted to the Grammar School in Rockhampton it would be a case of great injustice, seeing the way in which a similar sum for the same purpose had been granted here in Brisbane. He might mention that when the subscriptions were first raised in Rockhampton for building the new grammar school it was a most unfortunate time. It was at a period when trade was excessively slack—namely, in 1867—when Rockhampton, and, in fact, the whole country, was suffering from want of money, from want of labour, and from the effects of a very severe drought which was prevalent at the time. The Rockhampton people had had considerable difficulty in raising the amount of £2,000, to which the Government had added £4,000, as provided by the Education Act. They did, however, manage to do that, but when the building was completed the trustees found themselves in debt about £100. That was not a great deal, but after fencing in the school reserve and furnishing the school the trustees found themselves indebted to the extent of some £600, for which they were obliged to give private security. The school had therefore, he thought, made a very successful beginning. It was not long after the completion of the school before the boys numbered something over fifty. He had not the exact number, but he knew the attendance was very large; and as the trustees had from the very first proposed to have a class for girls in the school and had made arrangements for it in the building, they were at once inundated with a large number of girl pupils. Probably no school of the kind had ever started in this country with such a large number of pupils at once. They had already—although the school was in its first year—fifty-six girl pupils in the Rockhampton Grammar School. When the school was started, the large number of girl pupils who immediately took advantage of it had forced the trustees to engage assistants to the staff first appointed for the teaching of the girls. They were now pressed, and required more teaching power before they could really do justice to such a large class as they had under them. The trustees themselves had given their security for this debt, and they thought it rather hard that they, in a far-distant place like Rockhampton, should be denied the same assistance that had been granted to Brisbane for a succession of years. They did not claim this as a right; but they said that, as that House had for a succession of five years granted in aid of the Brisbane Girls' Grammar School a sum of £300, they could see many reasons why Rockhampton should not be less favoured than Brisbane in this matter, and many reasons why Rockhampton should be more favoured than Brisbane in that way. In the first place, the

Brisbane Grammar School had started several years before the girls' school was formed. The school was in full working order, and if a girls' class was particularly wanted at that time, one would suppose that here, where they had the largest and wealthiest community in the colony, they could have easily raised subscriptions for building a girls' grammar school, and have thus brought themselves under the Act, and be enabled to claim the Government subsidy for the purpose. But, instead of doing so, they applied to that House for a meed of assistance, and the House had very liberally granted for the last five years £500 in order to assist the Girls' Grammar School of Brisbane. Now, Brisbane was not in the same position as Rockhampton in another respect. In the first place, Brisbane was wealthier and larger than Rockhampton; and there was another advantage in the fact that Brisbane had a far larger number of institutions in which young ladies could get a higher education than Rockhampton had. He himself knew a large number of girls who had come down from Rockhampton for the purpose of finishing their education in Brisbane, simply because the smallness of the town and inability to meet the demand for higher schools had prevented anyone from establishing institutions in Rockhampton where higher education could be got for young ladies; in fact, they had come down here to finish their education simply because the means were not to be had in Rockhampton. It was to supply that want in Rockhampton that the trustees of the Grammar School deliberately intended to open a girls' school at the same time that the boys' school was opened. They did so, and the fact of no less than fifty-six pupils having taken advantage of that opportunity the moment the school was finished showed the necessity that there was for it. He knew he had no claim at all in law to this money, but he simply threw himself upon the justice of the House, or upon the feelings of the House. He would like to compare the number of girls that had been educated in the Brisbane Grammar School from year to year with those who attended the Rockhampton school for the first year. The Brisbane school was thrown open to girls in 1875, and the first year the attendance was fifty; in 1876 it was fifty-eight; in 1877 it was forty; in 1878 forty-three; in 1879 forty-eight, and last year sixty-seven. That was to say that until last year, after six years, inclusive of this year, it only amounted to eleven more than the number who took advantage of the Rockhampton school on the first year it was opened. That was not surprising, because they had other places here where girls could get education, while in Rockhampton they had either to go without higher education or resort to the one place open for them. This year he saw that the attendance at the Brisbane Girls' Grammar School had increased very much, it being now about eighty; and he believed that the people of Brisbane were now raising a fund which, when supplemented by the Government grant under the Education Act, would enable them to build a special school for girls. But if Brisbane had been allowed six years to get ready for this purpose, was there any reason why a much smaller and much poorer community should not be allowed at once to build a boys' and girls' grammar school? He hardly thought that anyone would say that that would be a fair thing to do. He thought, looking upon it in the way that they must have looked upon it when the grant was first made to the Brisbane school, they would see that in common fairness it was necessary to give the same grant to Rockhampton, especially as it was less able to help itself; although he did not think it would be long before Rockhampton would be able to

support a girls' grammar school independently, and then come down to the Government with a claim for assistance. But it was too much to expect that they should be able to do the same as Brisbane at the commencement. He would now read a few words of what had been written to him by the chairman of the trustees, the Rev. Alexander Hay. That gentleman admitted that some change must shortly take place, because they felt that at present the girls' rooms were already quite crowded enough, and it was necessary to provide a residence for the lady principal, but that could not be accomplished for some time to come. In the meantime, they only asked the same assistance that had been granted to the Brisbane school, so as to give them breathing time until they could raise a subscription for the purpose of providing a school for girls. He had seen the hon. Secretary for Education on this subject, and he plainly told him that as the grant for the Brisbane school was altogether outside the Act, he did not intend to assist in the matter. He did not believe that that hon. gentleman's sense of justice was so dull that he would put his foot down and say that the same could not be done for Rockhampton as was done for Brisbane.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY (Sir Arthur Palmer): Don't deceive yourself.

Mr. ARCHER said, in that case, if the hon. gentleman was so excessively unjust, he hoped that there was justice enough in the House to correct it. He could not imagine any person connected with Brisbane, or whose children had had the advantage of schooling in Brisbane, opposing the grant to the Rockhampton school, under the circumstances. The thing would be too unjust altogether. He did not wish to take up the time of the House by entering into an argument. He thought he had said enough to justify the House in voting this sum for the Girls' Grammar School at Rockhampton, and he hoped that the Secretary for Education, hard as he was, would see that he had brought forward a case that, at all events, had justice on its side. He should hear what that gentleman had to say. He moved—

That the House will, on Thursday, the 15th instant, resolve itself into a Committee of the Whole, to consider of an Address to the Governor, praying that His Excellency will be pleased to cause to be placed on the Supplementary Estimates for this year a sum not exceeding (£500) five hundred pounds, as a Grant in Aid of the Girls' School, in connection with the Rockhampton Grammar School.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY said it was hardly necessary for him to go very fully into this case. The hon. member, in moving the resolution, acknowledged that he had no claim whatever on the justice of the House.

Mr. ARCHER: No; I said no legal claim.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY said, then the hon. gentleman ought to have said it. He had no claim whatever on the justice of the House. He came there for a benevolence, in fact. He could not support the claim for one moment in any way, except by saying that the Brisbane Girls' Grammar School had had the support of £500 a year for the last five years. There was no doubt about that fact. The Brisbane Girls' Grammar School had had a vote of this House of £500 a year for its support; but he maintained that ninety-nine wrongs did not make one right, and that, except by the vote of that House, the Girls' Grammar School had no right or title whatever to the sum of £500 a year for its support. If the House agreed to the motion of the hon. member for Blackall, they could not refuse to grant the same amount to Maryborough, to Ipswich, or to Toowoomba, if the two latter places

chose to establish a girls' school in connection with the grammar schools there. It would be far better for Brisbane and Rockhampton to follow the example of Maryborough when a similar application was made and refused, and the committee who were moving in the matter were told by him that if they raised another thousand pounds they would be entitled by Act of Parliament to a supplementary vote of two thousand, and afterwards to an endowment. Would it not be better for Rockhampton and Brisbane to follow the example of Maryborough and set to work and raise that amount? Maryborough raised it within three weeks, and would not that be a better example to follow than to come down to the House asking for a benevolence for the support of the Girls' Grammar School? It was a disgrace to Brisbane—he had said it over and over again—that such a large, wealthy and populous community could not support a girls' grammar school, and that they should have, year after year, to come to the House for a vote of £500 to educate the children of even members of that House. He thought it said very little, indeed, for either Brisbane or Rockhampton if they could not support a girls' grammar school of their own—that they did not follow up the provisions of the Act, and raise sufficient money to give them a claim to an endowment under the Grammar Schools Act. If it was the will of the Assembly to give the hon. member what he asked for it must be given, but he assured the House that Rockhampton was in no way entitled to it; that the Brisbane Girls' Grammar School was in no way entitled to it; and that if they granted this now they must do the same with regard to all other grammar schools that asked for it.

Mr. GRIFFITH said he did not think anybody had asserted, or was likely to assert, that the Girls' Grammar Schools at Brisbane or Rockhampton had a legal right to £500 a year any more than a great many other institutions to which money was voted by Parliament annually. It was only a question for the discretion of the House whether the advantages gained by the country in having such institutions were such that the House was justified in voting this money. It was not a question of law or justice, but simply a matter for the discretion of the House. He thought himself that the House acted very wisely when it voted the subsidy of £500 to the Brisbane Girls' Grammar School, as the advantages to the colony were well worth that money; and, although he should not desire to see that subsidy always continued on the same basis—the precarious basis of the will of Parliament—still, he saw no reason why it should be discontinued at present. The Minister for Education had said that if this sum was carried there would be no reason why the same amount should not be paid to other schools. When other schools had proved themselves efficient, they could vote the money; when those circumstances arose it would be time enough to deal with such cases. When there was an efficient girls' school at Toowoomba, and its claims were brought forward, the House would no doubt recognise its claims; but there was no reason now for leaping before they came to the stile. He hoped the House would never be very rigidly strict in its interpretation of the education laws of the colony. He remembered a case where two schools applied for a loan. They were not authorised by law to do so, but it was within the province of the House to grant the loan, and they did it, and those schools were now paying interest upon the money. He regarded assistance of the kind applied for in the motion as merely temporary. Hon. members were aware that a short time since a meeting was held in Brisbane in connection with

the Brisbane Grammar School, of which he had the honour to be a trustee, for the purpose of raising a fund for establishing a separate institution for girls, so that they might be legally entitled to a subsidy independent of the vote granted by the pleasure of Parliament, and he trusted that before long the money would be raised. He had no doubt the same thing could be done in Rockhampton, but he did not see any reason why, in the meantime—it being desirable that there should be a school there, and the income of the school being at present insufficient to carry it on efficiently or with such efficiency as desired—the House should not, in the exercise of its discretion, give the necessary assistance. He should very cordially support the motion of the hon. member for Blackall.

Mr. WELD-BLUNDELL said he did not agree with the idea brought forward by the Colonial Secretary and the leader of the Opposition, that Rockhampton had no greater claim to assistance in aid of the Girls' Grammar School than Toowoomba, or other large towns in the Southern districts. He maintained that the position was very different. In the first place, all the towns of any size whatever in the Southern districts were connected by line of railway with Brisbane, and, consequently, there was no difficulty whatever in the way of parents having every control over their children and visiting them, or enabling children to go up to the district where they resided. Practically, Brisbane was a very convenient centre for establishing a girls' grammar school, to which parents residing anywhere in the Southern districts could send their children. Not so with Rockhampton. As a matter of fact, the Central districts were separated from Brisbane as far as if they were in New South Wales. It took two or three days to communicate with Rockhampton or the Central districts, or for children to return to Rockhampton. The consequence was that Rockhampton had been found a convenient centre wherein to establish a girls' grammar school to which parents might send their children, whether they resided up the country or in the neighbourhood, or even so far off as Maryborough. Maryborough was not in the same position; it was a centre not connected with a large district in the same way as Rockhampton, and it would be very premature to grant any assistance to it. He should willingly support the hon. member for Blackall's motion. He thought the Central district required to have fair support and encouragement in promoting higher education.

Mr. NORTON did not wish to say much on this matter, but he did not desire to give a silent vote. He thought the positions of Rockhampton and Brisbane were very different indeed. Rockhampton might be in a good position to provide the necessary funds for this purpose, but Brisbane was in an infinitely better position to do so. He did not think the House was justified in voting this sum any more than in voting that for the Brisbane school. He should, therefore, vote against this motion, and he should also oppose the other grant when it came before the House. He said plainly that if they were to go on giving votes of this kind, there was not the slightest reason why they should not make votes for ordinary schools. In his own district, which was not a very rich one by any means, when they wanted some improvements to the school, they had to subscribe every penny before they could get any assistance whatever from the Government. If people in a small community had to do that before they could get any assistance, he did not see why a different course should be taken in larger communities. Under ordinary circumstances he should have been glad to support the hon. member for Blackall, but he felt

that, regarding the matter in a proper light, and after what had been pointed out by the Colonial Secretary, he could not support this motion; and if any other proposal of a similar kind was made he should treat it exactly in the same way.

Mr. SCOTT said it was not his intention to oppose this motion; but he desired to explain how it was that £500 came to be voted to the Brisbane Grammar School. At the time that it was formed, in 1875, there was no similar school in Brisbane where girls could be educated.

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS (Mr. Perkins):
Nonsense!

Mr. SCOTT said hon. members might laugh, but they could verify the thing for themselves. The great want of a girls' school was felt, and the matter was forced on the attention of the trustees. In the first quarter that the school was opened there were sixty pupils, and the reason why the £500 grant was made was that the trustees had done all they possibly could do under the Act. They had fulfilled every condition connected with it, and had got the maximum endowment that could be got. He thought the hon. member (Mr. Archer) was mistaken in what he had said about the Brisbane school. He (Mr. Scott) thought that school was entitled to an endowment of £1,000 a year now. He believed that there were eighty pupils there, and that the fees amounted to £1,200 a year, speaking roughly. The 2nd clause of the amended Grammar Schools Act said—

"Notwithstanding anything contained in the Grammar Schools Act of 1860, it shall be lawful for the Governor, with the advice of the Executive Council, whenever the sum received in any district for the purpose of establishing a grammar school shall have amounted to less than two thousand pounds, and fees to the amount of five hundred pounds per annum shall have been promised by responsible persons for a period of three years, to direct to be paid to the credit of the trustees of such grammar school, in the manner provided by the said Act, a sum or sums not exceeding in the whole one thousand pounds."

He thought the hon. gentleman did not require to come to this House at all for this £500; he might have got it easily according to the Act, and he (Mr. Scott) would be glad if he did get it. He thought the hon. member had made some mistake with regard to the number of pupils attending the Brisbane school. Last year there were seventy-five pupils.

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS said he was only surprised that the hon. member (Mr. Archer) had been so moderate, seeing the encouragement he had received since making his speech on this motion. The hon. member might have asked for £2,500 or £3,000, and he (Mr. Perkins) believed it would have had the same support. It was a strange contrast when he saw the leader of the Opposition standing up here and supporting the voting of money for a purpose for which no case whatever had been made out—£500 of the taxpayers' money to subsidise what did not exist—and then introducing the legal argument that when under similar circumstances application was made by Ipswich and other places he would assent to similar votes. This sort of thing had been carried a little too far. They had grammar schools established at Rockhampton, Maryborough, Ipswich, and Toowoomba; and the consequence was that it was almost impossible to get efficient staffs of teachers. He had heard a statement made by the hon. member for Leichhardt that when this girls' school was established in Brisbane there was no other girls' educational establishment; but he was informed that there were several; and he happened to know that the granting of this subsidy had brought the grammar school into competition with many ladies of culture who had been brought up

in places of refinement, and who expected in the autumn or evenings of their lives to make a subsistence by teaching a school. He objected entirely to this proposal. They were taxed quite heavily enough for education, and he did not think it was fair to come to this House and ask for a vote for educational purposes, as a sort of charity. No case whatever had been made out for this grant; the people had no legal claim to it, and it was simply a case of benevolence towards fifty wealthy parents in a place like Rockhampton. He should object to the voting of the sum asked for.

The PREMIER (Mr. McIlwraith) thoroughly objected to the way in which this matter had been put, and also to the reason given in support of the motion. The only reason given was that, as an annual grant was made to the Brisbane school, therefore there should be one to the Rockhampton school. Now, that was no reason at all. If money was squandered in one place for a school that was no reason why it should be squandered in a similar way in places all over the colony. They had no right to £500 a year to the Brisbane school; and they ought to be ashamed of such a grant instead of being proud of it. What was this £500? Was there any reason why they should give such a sum to that cottage on the hill when there were ladies teaching just as good schools in other parts of the city? He could not see why they should subsidise one particular school. The only effect of it was that it destroyed others. If there was competition without a Government subsidy to one, the ladies' schools would be very much better. The effect of subsidising one school was to make a large and an indifferently good school and injure all other schools. He said that the Grammar School was not a good school because the Government subsidised it. In a community of this sort, why could not parents pay for the education of their children?

An HONOURABLE MEMBER: So they do.

The PREMIER said they paid for their education less than what the Government gave. He sent his children to the school, and he was ashamed that they were being educated in any degree at the public expense. But he could not help it; and why should he, against his own wishes, be forced to accept this gratuity from the State? He did not want it, and he did not think the parents of other children attending the school wanted it. They were perfectly well able to afford, and were quite willing to afford, the expense of the education of their children. As he had said before, the effect of the subsidy was to make a large and indifferent school, and injure other schools. There ought to be free competition, and give a chance to educated ladies in the colony who were perfectly competent to keep good schools. He should vote against the motion, and should oppose the vote in every possible way. When the people of Maryborough applied for assistance to their school, they were told distinctly that they would not get it. What did they then do? They raised the money themselves; and if this vote was given to Rockhampton, an injustice would be done to Maryborough. It was no argument at all to say that because a grant was made to the Brisbane school, therefore it should be made to Rockhampton. If it was granted, and they did not wish to commit an injustice, then similar votes would have to be made to other towns that had been refused.

Mr. REA said that he had gathered from the speech of the Premier that while he thought the private schools kept by ladies were better conducted, yet he sent his own children to the Grammar School. The hon. gentleman pooched the idea that the grant to the Brisbane school was any precedent; but he (Mr. Rea)

thought it was a very good precedent. Unless they were going to make "fish of one and flesh of the other," they must either withdraw the grant from the Brisbane school or give one to Rockhampton. He (Mr. Rea) was opposed to the principle of voting public money for the education of the children of wealthy parents. He held that there was something approaching meanness on the part of parents in asking the State to pay for the education of their children. But this money had been voted year after year for Brisbane, and even the Premier took advantage of it. He held that the claim now made was a just one, when it was remembered that a grant was given to Brisbane. A letter he had received from the chairman enabled him to state that that gentleman expected in twelve or eighteen months Rockhampton would be able to claim the sum to which the school would be entitled under the Act. The thought had suggested itself to his (Mr. Rea's) mind that the £500 now asked for might be made part of that money in advance, and might be charged against the school when it became entitled to a sum under the Act. He held that Rockhampton had a greater right to a grant of this kind than Brisbane, and should support the motion.

Mr. O'SULLIVAN said that he should expect from the speeches of Ministers that the disgraceful sum of £500 which had been granted for the last four or five years to the Brisbane Girls' Grammar School would be struck off the Estimates for the present year, and not be put before the House at all. He must vote against this motion, and in doing so he must handle it from a very different point of view to those from which it had been handled so far. The hon. gentleman who introduced this motion said that there were fifty-six girls at this school already—and that in the first year, and very soon after its establishment. Now, if these fifty-six girls paid as he had paid for his own girls, there would be no necessity for them to come to the State at all. He could not go to the State for his girls. To educate them he must take the money out of his own pocket. Why should not these other parents do the same? It had come to his knowledge that evening that an hon. member of that House—with an income of £5,000 a year—was sending his daughter to this miserable grammar school. Was not such conduct mean and miserable? Did hon. members not know that there were at least one-fourth of the members of this community—at least one-fourth of the inhabitants of the colony—who could not send their children to these schools from conscientious motives? Why should these other men sponge upon them for these schools—making them pay taxes, and so making them pay for the education, not only of their own, but also of other people's children? Neither was it true, as had been stated, that there were at present no means of education in Rockhampton for young ladies. He knew that none of the inhabitants of the colony, but those who could afford to pay, sent their children to these schools. Why should these people sponge on their neighbours? Did not every member of the House know that he and others like him had two taxes to pay? Was such conduct fair and honourable? And yet these people called themselves "liberal." The leader of the Opposition had supported this motion for this reason—he said there was no principle of justice in it. Those were his words.

Mr. GRIFFITH: I never said it.

Mr. O'SULLIVAN said that he took the words down. The hon. gentleman said it was not a matter of law or justice—

Mr. GRIFFITH: Strict justice.

Mr. O'SULLIVAN: And yet the hon. gentleman supported the motion on such grounds.

Mr. GRIFFITH: I said it was a matter of discretion.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: Indiscretion!

Mr. O'SULLIVAN said that there were ample means of education in Rockhampton. There were ladies there who had devoted their lives to education, and were educated in all branches of study in which it was fit for young ladies to be instructed. He had also understood that these grammar schools were not to be turned into sectarian schools. But he saw that a Rev. Mr. Alexander Hay was one of the trustees of this school. When these schools were first started no clergyman was allowed to go into them. Why should the Rev. Mr. Alexander Hay be a teacher in this school?

Mr. ARCHER: He is not a teacher.

Mr. O'SULLIVAN: Or a trustee. As a taxpayer of the colony he objected to Mr. Alexander Hay, or any other rev. gentleman, having anything to do with the matter at all. The argument that this money should be given to Rockhampton because Brisbane had a school was a miserable argument. Because an injustice had been committed in Brisbane upon one-fourth of the people in the colony, was another such injustice to be committed in Rockhampton, and the door opened for every town to be entitled to the same injustice, as the leader of the Opposition called it? He was glad to see that there was some little ray of fairness left in the junior member for Rockhampton, in that he did not like to see fish made of one and fowl of another, but did he not see that in this fish was being made of one and fowl of another? Did he not know that a quarter of the inhabitants in this colony could not, on account of conscientious motives, take advantage of these schools? And yet at the same time they were taxed for them. He himself had for many years paid from £100 to £200 a year to educate his own children. He would not allow one of them to go to these schools if he could help it, and was it fair that he should also have to pay for educating the children of gentlemen who had thousands of pounds per annum, and yet educated their children on charity? He should oppose this motion, and all other motions of the same kind. They were paltry and miserable. The reason given by the hon. member for Clermont for supporting the motion was a miserable one. It was that this injustice should be committed in Rockhampton, because of the facilities for going up and down the railway, and that the parents could see their children at school, and the children could see their parents. But that was altogether foreign to the matter. The matter was a question of pounds, shillings, and pence; not whether they should see their children, but that other people were being actually robbed. That was the whole question. He did not think they should be very particular about seeing their children at school. The schools were never so well attended to as when the children were very seldom seen by their parents. These grammar schools were not producing proper results, and without competition they would never do so. The teachers said—what did they care about the schools, and how they went on; their pay went on all the same. In former times the pay was according to the number of pupils in the schools, and according to their efficiency, which was a very different thing. The only thing that annoyed him was that these men should talk about generosity, liberality, and all that kind of thing, while they were actually at the same time picking his pocket in the shape of taxes. There was no doubt at all about it, and he should oppose this motion, and every other motion of the same kind.

Mr. H. PALMER (Maryborough) said that he should consider it his duty to vote against this

motion, and he regretted, to some extent, to have to do so; but he looked upon it that, if it were carried, it would be in direct contravention of the existing laws, which regulated their State system of education. What the people had done in Maryborough should be done by the people in Rockhampton. The Rockhampton people were quite as wealthy as the Maryborough people—indeed the supposition had always been that they were wealthier; and therefore it was a direct want of willingness, rather than anything else, that they had not complied with the regulations. He thought that the Maryborough people who subscribed money towards their school would, if this vote were carried, have a very good reason to come on the Government for a refund of that money, and to be exonerated from the guarantees they had given. He did not see why they should not do so. He was sorry the hon. member for Rockhampton had made an appeal to the State in a case of this kind; and he was sorry, also, to have to vote against the hon. gentleman who had brought forward this motion, because he believed the hon. gentleman had done it from the best motives. But he (Mr. Palmer) could not sympathise with it, and must therefore vote against it.

Mr. MACDONALD-PATERSON said that the motion was brought forward with his full concurrence. He was sorry he was not in the House during the early part of the debate. The reason was that he had supposed that the motion of the hon. member for Port Curtis which preceded this one would have taken up some time. With regard to the remarks of the hon. member for Stanley, that this was a paltry motion, he (Mr. Macdonald-Paterson) could not regard it in that way at all. The precedent had been recorded in the case of the Brisbane school, and now, if the Government were in earnest in opposing applications for grants of this kind, the proper thing for them to do would be to put their foot down, and say they intended to sweep them off the Estimates altogether. To be consistent they must take up that position. What was sauce for the goose ought to be sauce for the gander. The system had obtained to that extent, and while the grant to the Brisbane school went on the Rockhampton people had a right to come to the House and make an application for a similar sum. He was not sure that there were not stronger grounds for the establishment of a girls' school in Rockhampton than for the establishment of one here. Brisbane being the capital of the colony attracted to itself competent private teachers, and so good facilities were given to parents to have their daughters instructed in the higher branches of education. There were less grounds and less reasons for the establishment of the Brisbane Girls' Grammar School at the time it was started than there were now for the encouragement of the establishment of one at Rockhampton at the present time. At the time the Brisbane school was started there were a number of respectable young ladies' seminaries in the city.

Mr. SCOTT: No!

Mr. MACDONALD-PATERSON said that Brisbane, too, had the reputation of enjoying a better climate than Rockhampton; and whether that was true or not, people from the Southern colonies were more likely to start schools here, being the capital, than in Rockhampton. With regard to what had fallen from the hon. member for Stanley, it was all nonsense for that hon. gentleman to say that certain persons were picking his pocket, because they sent their children to State-subsidised schools. If such an argument applied in the case of the schools he referred to, it applied also in many other matters relating to the State. The hon. gentleman might just as well say also that those persons who had no

conscientious scruples to their children attending the State schools, and who yet did not send them to them, were also having their pockets picked. On the other hand, it could be said that the sending of the telegraph lines into the far wilderness of the colony was simply picking the pockets of the ratepayers for the purpose of giving facilities to the pioneer squatters—because these lines did not pay, but they were of great advantage to the general community, nevertheless. Would the hon. member for Stanley go further and say that it was picking his (Mr. Macdonald-Paterson's) pocket to carry out the railway to South Esk—or, as it was called, the Brisbane Valley Railway—because that line would not be likely to pay for some time the interest on the cost of its construction? This kind of argument might be worked out in that way to an enormous extent. If it was legitimate to expend money in developing the material resources of the colony, surely it was perfectly legitimate also to encourage in a similar way the advancement of the higher branches of education, whether it was at Rockhampton or elsewhere. This was an argument on a higher ground altogether than that relating to railways, telegraphs, harbour and river works, and such like. He would have liked to have replied further to the hon. member for Stanley, but he felt that hon. member was getting on to dangerous ground, and he dared not trust himself to go in the same direction. The time was not a proper one, and a motion of this kind was not the opportunity when such matters should be discussed. He would conclude by saying that the motion had his hearty support, and he should be very much surprised indeed if the hon. member who introduced the motion had not a good following when the proper time came.

Mr. GROOM regretted very much that he could not see his way clear to vote for the motion, because he agreed with the Colonial Secretary that if it were carried he would be justified in asking the House for a similar sum for a school at Toowoomba. He certainly should do nothing of the sort, for he knew that in his town—and it was the same in Rockhampton—there were a number of ladies who had established good schools for girls, and these ladies were just as much entitled to the subsidy as the school for which it was now asked. On that ground he felt it to be his duty not to vote for this motion. He agreed with the Minister for Lands in regard to the number of ladies who had culture and refinement, and who had laid themselves out specially for the education of girls. Good education was given by these ladies in their schools, and it would be an injustice to them if this motion were carried. He would not ask for such a vote for Toowoomba, because he would be thereby inflicting injustice on schools which were doing good service among the population of that town. For the same reason he should vote against this motion.

Mr. LUMLEY HILL said he was sure they were all very glad to hear the senior member for Rockhampton say that the hon. member for Blackall had his hearty concurrence in the motion. For his part, it seemed to him that the hon. member had been making a cat's-paw of the hon. member for Blackall.

Mr. ARCHER: Nothing of the sort.

Mr. MACDONALD-PATERSON: The proposed school is to be in Blackall.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: The Rockhampton school is to be in Blackall.

Mr. LUMLEY HILL said he was wholly opposed to State assistance to education in the higher branches in any place, whether in Brisbane or anywhere else. If they allowed it in this instance, every town in the colony

would put in a claim—Toowoomba, Warwick, Stanthorpe, Bundaberg, Gladstone, Maryborough, Townsville, Cook. They would be simply inundated with claims—and Roma, the other Blackall, Winton, Aramac, Muttaborra—all would ask to be remembered. It was being liberal with the taxpayers' money to assist people who could very well afford to pay for the education of their children. He should oppose the motion both now and when it went into committee with all the force he could command.

Mr. DE SATGE said that, as he represented a central constituency, it might be thought that he should go to a great extent with the hon. member for Blackall; but his objection was almost as broad as that of the hon. member who had just sat down; that was, his total abhorrence of girls' schools altogether. Boys' schools might be very well, but every mother who wished to have her daughter modestly educated should keep her at home for the purpose, as girls' schools were productive of no good whatever.

Mr. KATES could not see his way to support the motion. He saw nearly £130,000 on the Estimates for educational purposes. That was too large a sum for the colony, considering the revenue, and they ought not to enlarge it by additional sums for grammar schools for girls. They were spending too much on education already, and for that reason he should oppose the motion.

Mr. ARCHER, in reply, would only say a few words. The hon. member for Gregory said that he (Mr. Archer) had been made a cat's-paw of by the hon. member for Rockhampton (Mr. Macdonald-Paterson); but the fact was that the matter was put into his (Mr. Archer's) hands, because he had taken a personal interest in the school since it was built, and he was more certain of being able to bring forward the motion in the House than was the hon. member for Rockhampton (Mr. Macdonald-Paterson). He regretted to see that the Premier was not in his place. He really felt sorry for the hon. member when he confessed to a state of mind which made him (Mr. Archer) feel that the hon. member was leading a very unhappy life through having to educate his daughters at the expense of the poor men of the country. The hon. member for Stanley also seemed to think it necessary to hide his diminished head and not listen any further to the debate. But why did not the Premier discover earlier that this was such a nefarious system? There was actually a sum of £500 on the Estimates for the Girls' Grammar School, Brisbane, this year, and the Premier confessed that he had been ashamed of his children receiving this education at the expense of the public. He supposed, as a rule, the Estimates passed through the Treasurer's hands before they came to the House, and it was his duty, with the sentiments he had uttered, to have put his pen through that estimate.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: No.

Mr. ARCHER: Decidedly it was.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: Decidedly not.

Mr. ARCHER: The Colonial Secretary is going to defend the vote in the case of the Brisbane Grammar School.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: I am not going to do anything of the sort.

Mr. ARCHER could only say that the hon. member had stated to-night that he could not vote for this motion, because it was wrong, and the Brisbane vote could not make it right. He (Mr. Archer) did not see the wrong at all. If there had been a wrong, the House had made it right. The House had a right to vote what money it thought proper, and it had done so;

and for the Minister for Education to own that he had been lending himself to the miserable practice of granting aid to the Grammar School in Brisbane, and then suddenly to become virtuous when money was called for in another place, was hardly what he expected. He thought the hon. member had more grit in him, and that he would have stood up for what he had done even if it were wrong. But the hon. member had become so conscientious, and was suddenly seized with such a horror of this practice, that he would oppose it with all his might. Seeing that the Government had taken such a decided stand, he hardly expected to carry his motion; but he would try, and he was happy to see that some gentlemen looked upon the matter in a different light from which it was looked upon by hon. members on the Treasury bench. The Premier said it was a miserable reason to say that because the money was voted for Brisbane, therefore it should be voted for Rockhampton. But it was by no means a miserable reason when they considered that the vote which came before the House for five consecutive years was discussed and granted every year, showing, at all events, that the opinion of the House was in favour of the vote. If the vote for the Brisbane Grammar School was never found fault with by those hon. gentlemen who opposed this motion to-night—if they could not see that it was scandalous until someone else claimed a similar sum—he could only say that their vision was not very clear, but that they were very obtuse indeed. When the capital of the colony, with all its accumulated capital and its large population, had received the indulgence for five years, it would be by no means beneath the dignity of the House to grant it to an outside district which was not in such a good position. He was well aware that arguing in this manner would convince no one. He would thank those gentlemen who had promised their support; and hoped that those who had probably themselves derived advantage from the Brisbane vote for several years would have the courage to vote in favour of the motion.

Question put, and the House divided :—

AYES, 19.

Messrs. Dickson, Rea, Macdonald-Paterson, Rutledge, Griffith, Stevenson, De Poix-Tyrel, Archer, Fraser, Low, Beattie, H. W. Palmer, Bailey, Kingsford, Baynes, Roote, Garrick, Weld-Blundell, and Scott.

NOES, 20.

Sir Arthur Palmer, Messrs. McIlwraith, Perkins, Price, Macrossan, F. A. Cooper, De Satgé, Groom, H. Palmer (Maryborough), Grimes, Norton, Horwitz, Meston, Aland, Macfarlane, Black, Lunley Hill, Kates, O'Sullivan, and Miles.

Question, therefore, resolved in the negative.

RECOVERY OF LANDS ON DARLING DOWNS.

Mr. KATES, in moving—

1. That the House will, at its next sitting, resolve itself into a Committee of the Whole, to consider of an Address to the Governor, praying that His Excellency will be pleased to recommend that a sum of £500,000 be placed on the first Loan Estimates, to provide for the gradual recovery, either by repurchase or exchange, of the large arable properties now held by private landowners on the Darling Downs, adjacent to the Southern and Western and projected Warwick and Killarney Railways.

2. That, in the opinion of the House, it is desirable that such lands, when so repurchased by Government, be dealt with under the provisions of the Exchanged Lands Act of 1879, for purposes of settlement by way of selection.

3. That a Bill be introduced to give effect to the foregoing resolutions.

—said he hoped hon. members would divest themselves of all party feeling, and be prepared to weigh the arguments brought forward for and against the motion, and record their votes on the merits of the question. The purpose of the

motion was to endeavour to gradually undo the injudicious and injurious action of previous Governments in connection with the land administration of the past. The evil was of long standing, and had, he was sorry to say, tended to retard settlement on one of the finest portions, not only of this colony, but the whole of Australia. Any hon. member who had travelled over the Southern and Western line of railway, especially between Toowoomba and Warwick, could not but regret to see such magnificent, open, rich downs country a waste and wilderness, and by no means answering to what by nature it was eminently adapted for—namely, the habitation of human beings. What did they see there? With the exception of a few isolated selections on those plains, like oases in the desert, they could see, like they saw fifteen or twenty years ago, nothing but sheep and cattle depastured on the natural grasses. About 300,000 acres of that rich downs country, adjacent to the Southern and Western Railway and the projected Warwick and Killarney railway, was in the hands of about a dozen private gentlemen, who monopolised the cream of the country and the water frontages of the rivers and creeks. About two years ago the Government very wisely recovered from the Goomburra Estate about 21,000 acres of agricultural land around the township of Allora, and he was in a position to state that this action had been attended with a most unparalleled success. This the Government had practically admitted. They had only to look at His Excellency's Opening Speech for confirmation of that statement, and in the sixth paragraph they found the following remarks :—

"The demand for land is increasing throughout the colony. In almost every district settlement is advancing. The exchanged lands on the Darling Downs have been largely selected by *bond fide* cultivators at prices which will amply repay the country for the cession of the lands which have been given in exchange."

He was in a position to say that not only had the Government made a large pecuniary profit on the exchanged lands, but they were acquiring what was of still greater value—*bond fide* settlement and cultivation of the soil. He held in his hand a condensed return in connection with the Allora exchanged lands, and out of eighty-two blocks thrown open in October, 1879, sixty-one lots at £5 an acre and twenty-one at £4 an acre were taken up. Of the sixty-one lots at £5 an acre, fifty-one lots containing 2,110 acres were taken up by twenty-nine selectors; and of the twenty-one lots at £4 an acre, fifteen blocks containing 606 acres were taken up by nine selectors. That was under the first proclamation. In the year 1880 no land was thrown open, but in the year 1881, on the 15th March, twenty-three blocks were thrown open, and nine selectors had settled on them. They had selected 605 acres at from £5 to £8 15s. per acre, and he himself had selected 160 acres at £4; and the last proclamation of June 1st, 1881, showed that out of thirty-three blocks open four persons had taken up 280 acres at £5, and that eleven persons had selected there at £3 and £4 per acre. This clearly showed that when good land near the railway line was to be had, people would flock to it and select at even such prices as £4, £5, £7, and nearly £9 per acre, rather than take up land on stony ridges or scrubby mountains at 10s. the acre. He might as well state in connection with the exchanged lands that every selection was now fenced or in the course of being fenced, and that over 1,800 acres were under cultivation. Neat residences had been erected, and, with few exceptions, permanent water procured. All this had been done in the short space of scarcely eighteen months. This successful precedent emboldened him to bring this motion before the House. He could safely state that the lands of

Westbrook, Eton Vale, Clifton, Talgai, Canning Downs, Glengallan, and Headington Hill were in no way inferior to the Allora lands; they were near the railway, with mostly deep alluvial soil, and were well watered. By repurchasing these lands the Government would acquire closer settlement, and the traffic returns would show far more favourable results than they did at present. At this point he wished to correct a statement in *Hansard* last week as to his remarks upon the proposed railway from Killarney to Warwick. What he said was that that line would never pay unless the Canning Downs were bought back. He maintained that fifty families settled on 20,000 acres of such good lands would, by combining the cultivation of cereals with artificial grasses, such as lucerne, prairie, and other fattening feed for sheep and cattle, produce far more wool and fat in proportion than one owner now did or ever would on these 20,000 acres. In fact, he believed there should be 100 graziers and farmers where there was at present only one. They would, in proportion to their holdings, draw five times as much produce from the soil. The owner of Eton Vale drew a large sum of money from his land, and he spent it in England. He owned 80,000 acres; and would it not be better to have 250 or 300 families settled on the land, consuming dutiable goods, and helping to bear among them the burden of taxation now resting on the general taxpayers? He believed that the large proprietor of Darling Downs was willing to sell his estates in one lot. Some hon. gentleman in opposition to this motion might say, "Why does not a company start and buy these lands?" The reason was, that if a company were to take it in hand they would not care a straw for cultivation or for *bonâ fide* settlement—all they would want would be a stiff profit on their purchases. He was also of opinion that the intending selectors preferred the Government to be their landlord, and as the Government could get money cheaper than private parties they could afford to give the selectors more time to pay for the land. Let it be understood that the success of the whole affair was to be found in the system of deferred payments. By giving people plenty of time to pay, they did not mind giving a good price for good land. Let it be also understood that he did not wish the colony to risk or lose a single shilling by this resolution. The Government should dispose of the lands in question without making any money profits whatever, but, to recoup themselves for the loss of interest they might sustain, they should act on the following principle:—That if the selector's money amounted to, say, £200, let the Government give him ten years to pay it in; let the selector pay one-tenth, or £20, during the first year with interest at 4 or 5 per cent. on the remaining £180; in the second year, let the selector pay another £20 with interest again on the remaining £160; and in the third and following years let the same process be repeated, until, in the ninth year, he would have nothing to pay but the remaining £20 to entitle him to the deeds. By the introduction of this system the selectors would get the land exactly at the price which it cost the Government, and the Government, while losing nothing, would create a closer settlement on the Darling Downs. He was also greatly encouraged to bring this motion before the House by the remarks of the hon. the Minister for Works, who, recently visiting the fine country between Warwick and Killarney, could not help exclaiming that—

"It was scandalous that such a tremendous area of such fine, rich lands should be in the hands of one man, and that, if possible, they should be repurchased for purposes of closer settlement."

The Canning Downs property stretched from the gates of Warwick to Killarney, a distance of

about thirty miles, being the cream of that portion of Queensland. The hon. gentleman also said—

"He hoped the time would come when they would see the whole of the eastern portion of the country to the Range occupied with settlers instead of by one man, and that there would be a line direct through Canning Downs. The land was all suitable for tillage, and he considered it a standing disgrace to the land laws and to previous land administration that so much of the fine country should be allowed to pass into one man's hands."

This was said by the hon. gentleman not more than two months ago. He also said at that time—

"He considered that the people of Warwick should not rest until these lands were purchased back, and turned to that use which they were most suitable, so that they could sustain a large population. He fully believed that a scheme could be originated and carried out successfully by his hon. colleague, whereby these lands could be reclaimed, and which would be beneficial to the people, the present owners, and the Treasury. His only regret, however, was that he could not promise more than the railway to Killarney. It took a great many drops to fill a bucket, and this was only one of the drops in the many acts of usefulness which the present Government purposed doing."

It was generally admitted that Mr. Macrossan said what he meant, and meant what he said; and he (Mr. Kates) was sure he would not belie himself on this question. He had made many friends by expressing these sentiments, which were entirely in accord with the feelings of the people in Warwick and surrounding districts. He, as a member of the Cabinet, and a prominent member too, would, he hoped, use his best endeavours and influence with his hon. colleagues in support of this motion. Let it be remembered that there was not an acre of agricultural land on the Darling Downs left in the hands of the Crown, and he had reason to believe that the large landowners of that land were willing to sell—

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: Very likely.

Mr. KATES said there were several stations in the market showing this to be the case. By the suggested amendment in the Divisional Boards Act, taxation upon acreage would fall heavily upon these large proprietors; and should members of the boards take it into their heads to put a special tax on all agricultural land exceeding 640 acres held by one person, it would be a serious blow to those who now held 20,000 and 30,000 acres of such land in natural grasses. He would quote several such cases. Within the Clifton division alone they found the following:—

	Acres.
Eton Vale	43,510
Felton	21,416
Ellangowan	3,656
Balgownie	5,321
Pilton	31,302
Clifton	43,098
Headington Hill	35,857
East Talgai	31,615
North Toolburra	21,402
West Talgai	17,010
Goomburra	9,961
Glengallan	36,150
Maryvale	19,240
Total	319,544 acres.

He did not expect that what he proposed would be effected in a year or two—it would take six or seven years to accomplish it—but he would like to see this principle established—namely, the desirability of breaking up huge estates in the settled districts, without interfering in any way with or injuring existing vested rights, with a view of considerably increasing the number of smaller holdings. He would quote, in support of his motion, a few extracts from the works of

John Stuart Mill in evidence of the advantages of small landed proprietors:—

"Wherever we find peasant proprietors, we also find the comfort, the security, confidence in the future, and independence which assure at once happiness and virtue.

"The peasant who, with his children, does all the work of his little inheritance, who pays no rent to anyone above him nor wages to anyone below, is never ruined by revulsions of trade. Instead of fearing for the future, he sees it in the colours of hope; for he employs every moment not required by the labours of the year on something profitable to his family and to future generations. His little patrimony is a true savings bank always ready to receive all his gains and utilise all his moments of leisure.

"The peasant has a lively sense of the happiness attached to the condition of a proprietor.

"Accordingly he is always eager to buy land at any price. He pays more for it than its value—more, perhaps, than it will bring him in; but is he not right in estimating highly the advantage of having always an investment for his labour, of being always able to find bread without the necessity of buying it at scarcity price?

"The peasant proprietor is of all cultivators the one who gets most from the soil; he is the one who thinks most of the future, and who has been most instructed by experience. He is the one who gives most encouragement to commerce and manufactures.

"Among the many flourishing regions of Germany, in which peasant properties prevail, I select the Palatinate for the advantage of quoting from an English source the results of recent personal observation of its agriculture and its people.

"Mr. Howitt, a writer whose habit it is to see all English socialities and English objects on their brightest side, and who, in treating of the Rhenish peasantry, certainly does not underrate the rudeness of their implements and the inferiority of their ploughing, nevertheless shows that, under the invigorating influence of the feelings of proprietorship, they make up for the imperfections of their apparatus by the intensity of their application. He says:—

"The peasants are the great and ever-present objects of country life; they are the great population of the country, because they themselves are the possessors. This country is in fact, for the most part, in the hands of the people. It is parcelled out among the multitude. It is, perhaps, from this cause that the peasants on the Rhine are the most industrious of their class in the world; they labour busily early and late, because they feel they are labouring for themselves; they are their own masters, and every member in the family has the strongest motive to labour."

"The experience of all other parts of Germany is similar. 'In Saxony,' says Mr. Kay, 'it is a notorious fact that during the last thirty years, and since the peasants became the proprietors of the land, there has been a rapid and continual improvement in the condition of the houses, in the manner of living, in the dress of the peasants, and particularly in the culture of the land. I have twice walked through that part of Saxony called Saxony-Switzerland, on purpose to see the state of the villages and of the farming, and I can safely challenge contradiction when I affirm that there is no farming in all Europe superior to the careful cultivation in the valleys of that part of Saxony.'

"But the most decisive example is the case of Belgium; the soil is originally one of the worst in Europe. The provinces of West and East Flanders, says Mr. McCulloch, form a far-stretching plain, of which the luxuriant vegetation indicates the indefatigable care and labour bestowed upon its cultivation. Much of the most highly cultivated part of the country consist of peasant properties, managed by the proprietors.

"Large properties gradually disappear, and are divided into small portions which sell at a high rate. But the wealth and industry is continually increasing, being diffused through the masses of the population."

"The evidence of the beneficial operation of peasant properties in the Channel Islands is of so decisive a character that I cannot help adding some to the numerous citations already made.

"Mr. William Thornton, in his 'Plea for Peasant Properties'—a book which, by the excellence of its materials and of its execution, deserves to be regarded as the standard work on that side of the question—speaks of the Island of Guernsey in the following terms:—

"Not even in England is nearly so large a quantity of produce sent to market from a tract of such limited extent."

"The happiest community," says Mr. Hill, "which it has ever been my lot to fall in with is to be found in this little island of Guernsey." "No matter," says Sir George Head, "to what point the traveller may choose to bend his way, comfort everywhere prevails."

"What most surprises the English visitors is the appearance of the habitations, with which the landscape is thickly studded; many of them are such as in his own country would belong to persons of middle rank.

"Before the Revolution, the agriculture of France was wretched, and the peasantry in great indigence; at that time they were not so universally as at present—landed proprietors.

"There were, however, several districts where the land, even then was, to a great extent the property of the peasantry, and among these only were many of the most conspicuous exceptions to the general bad agriculture and general poverty."

He thought he had quoted sufficient evidence to show that the great prosperity and happiness of Belgium, Switzerland, France, etc., were to be traced to the existence of smaller estates, and the multitude of industrious proprietors. It would be well for this colony to have the foundation for the attainment of similar results laid here with as little delay as possible; for the longer they waited the more difficult would it be. He would also, in support of his motion, quote a few extracts from recent returns supplied by the Lands Department. Mr. Tully, a gentleman who had been connected with the Lands Department for twenty years, and who ought to be considered a good authority on this question, in his report of the 16th July, 1881, showed that in the Toowoomba and Warwick districts the average price for land selected by conditional purchasers was higher than in any other land district in the colony. While in other parts of the colony the average price for land obtained was as low as 5s. the acre, it was in the Toowoomba and Warwick districts 17s. and 19s. 10d. per acre respectively, clearly showing that land was in great demand on Darling Downs. Mr. Tully also said—

"Having adverted to the Allora exchanged lands, I may mention that up to the present time there have been sixty-seven selections made, and that the average price for the land so selected was £4 10s. per acre."

Now, as Mr. Tully in his report was estimating the value of these lands at £3 per acre, it clearly showed that the Government was making a profit of 30s. on each acre, besides acquiring closer and *bond fide* settlement on the public lands of the colony. Mr. Tully also said—

"So far as can be ascertained the selectors of this land are all *bond fide* cultivators of the soil, so that Allora is likely to become the centre of farming settlement on the Downs."

On the whole, Mr. Tully showed that good land near railways was eagerly bought up and good prices paid to obtain it. Why should the Minister for Lands state that not 1s. had been made out of those lands, when in some cases they had realised £3 15s. per acre? Mr. Tully also showed in his report that, whilst there were 23,000,000 acres of land in the colony open to general selection, only 93,000 acres were open in Toowoomba and 87,000 acres in Warwick. And even that 87,000 acres would have been selected long ago if the land had not been situated as it was, at the heads of the different creeks near the top of the Stony Mountains and in the scrubby parts of the Main Range. Mr. W. C. Hume, the Commissioner for Crown Lands on Darling Downs said—

"I may generally state that the progress of settlement is most satisfactory. Land is always eagerly selected, not only where suitable for agriculture, but often in places where no apparent inducement exists. During the past year, as far as my knowledge extends, all those who have selected consist of *bond fide* settlers. As a rule, selections are at once entered upon, generally improved, and to a certain extent cultivated. This especially applies to the Allora exchanged lands, which, where selected, are held by a most desirable class of men."

This was the testimony of an officer of the Lands Department itself, and yet there were 5,000 acres of land adjacent to the railway lying a waste and

a wilderness. He would now quote some evidence from the Registrar-General's report in support of the motion. Mr. Henry Jordan, in his preliminary returns of agriculture and live stock, dated July 28, 1881, showed under Table I. :—

"That, of the forty-four police districts in the colony Toowoomba and Warwick stand first and foremost in regard to extent of land under cultivation."

During the year 1880, the land under cultivation in these two districts comprised 33,806 acres, with 10,520 acres under wheat, 9,400 acres under maize, 1,050 acres under barley, 1,000 acres under oats, 250 acres under rye, 1,330 acres under potatoes, 6,800 acres under artificial grapes, 180 acres under wines, 500 acres in orchards and gardens, and various other crops. Under Table II., the Registrar-General gave a return showing the gross produce of each description of crop raised in the several districts of the colony during 1880, wherein hon. members would see that Warwick and Toowoomba districts produced 230,000 bushels of wheat, 1,520 bushels of oats, 21,200 bushels of barley, 264,000 bushels of maize, 2,800 tons of potatoes, 340 tons of wheaten hay, 1,260 tons of oaten hay, 6,800 tons of lucerne hay, 234 tons of barley hay, 41,000 gallons of wine, 194,000 lbs. of grapes, 40,350 dozen of oranges, and 4½ cwt. of tobacco. All that was produced from lands, in the average, inferior to those adjacent to the Southern and Western Railway, which he now recommended to be repurchased for settlement. What he proposed was not of such a startling or extraordinary nature as some hon. members seemed to think, especially when compared with land legislation in other countries. As an instance of the recent advances made in land legislation, he might refer to the Irish Land Bills. The Act of 1870 gave the tenant, after years of persistent agitation to obtain it, a right to the value of improvement effected by him on the land he held under lease. This was regarded by landlords at the time as an inroad on their rights, but it was simply justice, for it gave the value of improvements to those who made them. But the Land Act of 1881, that had now just passed the House of Commons and the House of Lords, made a still more remarkable and surprising advance in the direction of progressive land legislation. Recent experience had proved that the possession of large landed estates in Ireland by a few proprietors was inimical to the welfare of the majority of the tenants. And what had been done? The Gladstone Land Bill not only made it compulsory on the part of landed proprietors to sell, but, under certain conditions and safeguards, advanced to the tenant two-thirds of the money necessary to enable him to become in time the absolute owner of the land. The State thus took the land from the large proprietor and gave it to the small owner, believing that the peasant proprietors were the surest safeguards of national prosperity and national strength. This went infinitely further than he proposed to go. The selector here did not expect the Government to advance any money; he was willing to buy the land at a fair price, but he wanted time, and he wanted good agricultural land, and not stony ridges at the head of the Condamine, for his money. To give hon. members an idea of what members in the House of Commons thought about this question, he would direct their attention to Dr. Lyon's amendment on the 25th clause of the Irish Land Bill, 1881, which read as follows :—

"The Land Commission may from time to time purchase such waste, semi-waste, or uncultivated lands as to them shall seem fit, apportion them in such lots as they deem suitable, and may sell such lots to persons of approved character and competency; and the Board of Works may advance to such purchasers such sums per acre as may, in the opinion of the said Board of Works

be adequate and proper, either in bulk sums or by adequate instalments, for the due reclamation of such waste lands. All sums so advanced to be secured upon the lands in such manner as the Boards of Works shall determine, and to be made repayable as hereafter set forth in regard to after advances under this Act."

This was simply a question of political economy; previous Governments had done the mischief, and succeeding Governments were not only justified, but were in duty bound to rectify these mistakes whenever they could do so with benefit to the State. Should the motion not be carried now, he was determined to bring it on again and again, feeling sure the day was not far when this question would and must be resolved in the affirmative. In the meantime he should have the satisfaction of knowing that he had done his duty, as he considered it was almost sinful to allow such rich lands to remain any longer useless and uninhabited. Above all, the danger of creating a class of small tenant farmers should be carefully avoided. The introduction of such a class would be most undesirable in a young colony like this. He was sorry to say there were some such farmers already to be found in a portion of Darling Downs—steady, industrious men, who had been driven by the sheer scarcity of good agricultural land to accept leases from the big landowners. He had obtained a few names of tenant farmers, in order to show that what he stated was no fiction or invention of his own, but a simple fact. These men were each renting eighty acres of land on Canning Downs at, say, 10s. per year per acre rent. They were :—P. McNeigh, Thomas McGahan, Patrick Keleker, G. Boote, Timothy Murphy, James Campbell, Peter McGuckin, E. Malone, Michael Brewer, Thomas Gleeson, James Pullen, Thomas Ryan, James Gardner, Garrett Byrnes, Lewis Batt, and there were others on Clifton Station. He maintained that these men could not cultivate these rented farms with the same energy and heart as they would were they the owners of the land, their own masters and their own landlords. The magic of property turned sand into gold; give a man the secure possession of a bleak rock, and he would turn it into a garden, but give him a five-years' lease of a garden and he would convert it into a desert. He need add no more, except to say that he should not have brought the motion forward had the slightest allusion been made in the Opening Speech to the subject, or any prospect held out of the continuance of the successful system of exchange. As the session was now approaching its close, he had considered it his duty to bring the motion forward, and he felt satisfied that the discussion of the subject would at least lead to good results at some future day. He moved the resolution.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS said that, at times during the course of the speech just delivered, he had doubted whether the hon. member (Mr. Kates) was serious or not. The hon. member had no doubt contributed a large amount of information with regard to the land systems in Switzerland, Saxony, Ireland, and other countries; and he (Mr. Perkins) agreed with the hon. member that the small tenure system had in many cases been the main stay in those countries. How the hon. member expected to bring about the result desired, even if the resolution were carried, he failed to see. The hon. member appeared to have imbibed his ideas from some observations made by the Minister for Works at Warwick on a recent occasion, when that hon. gentleman expressed what was no doubt his thorough convictions on the subject; but the hon. member was going the wrong way about to carry out his views. Supposing no opposition were offered and the resolution were carried, the inevitable result would be that the owners of the

large estates on the Darling Downs would be informed, on the highest authority, that the Legislature would at one time or another repurchase the lands which it had previously sold to them. If the scheme were to be carried out at all, it must be in the same way that the Suez Canal shares scheme was effectuated. Private individuals might very possibly get eligible offers of the large estates in question; but make a proclamation that the State wanted to buy those properties, and there would be plenty of offers of property, but at fancy prices. That was the aspect in which the business presented itself to him. On the other hand, if a Government, sharing to a great extent the opinions expressed by the hon. member, and having, as the present Government had, as sincere a desire to promote the settlement and prosperity of the country as any member of the community, were to get a suitable offer, and had the boldness to accept it on the spot, they might then get lands on terms which would pay the State and enable them to settle population. The opportunity, however, did not exist at the present time; and the hon. member in his resolution had not stated whether his projected measure would contain a provision to compel owners to sell to the Government.

Mr. KATES: No.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS said then the hon. member would fail altogether in his project. He would have to go about shaking his bag of money, and he would get plenty of offers from owners of property, but at their own prices. It would be very undesirable to raise an impression that people might buy lands from the State and afterwards sell them back again. A system of corruption and fraud would spring into existence to which the old practices of dummieing would bear no comparison. A door would be opened for fraud and deceit in every direction, and where it would end, and what magnitude it would assume after a period of fifteen or twenty years, he would not undertake to say. The hon. member had given as one reason for his motion the great success which had attended the settlement of the Allora exchange lands; but he (Mr. Perkins) was bold to say that there had never been a more miserable failure. It had proved to him that there were lots of people in the colony—at all events, on the Darling Downs—who had every desire to settle on the soil in a *bona fide* manner, but that the statement drawn up prior to that exchange about the wants of the community, and the representations made on the subject to the Hon. John Douglas, were altogether at variance with real facts. Out of 20,000 acres of land given by Mr. Wienholt in exchange for 40,000 acres in another place, the quantity selected up to the present time was, he believed, under 5,000 acres.

Mr. KATES: It has not been thrown open.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS said it had been thrown open in quantities far in advance of the requirements of the people. It took a year for them to select 3,000 acres at a price only one-third of that at which it was valued in order to induce Mr. Douglas to carry out the exchange. As an instance in proof of the purchasing power of the people, he would give one instance. At a recent auction, on selection day, some allotments were thrown open at a reserve of £4 or £5, and they were run up to £8 5s. and more by the people themselves. The Government had nothing whatever to do with the matter. If there was any mistake about that he should be glad to correct it. Other people had a say in the valuation of those lands besides the Government. He did not like to mention names, but there was a gentleman well known to the hon. member and to the people of the Darling Downs—a

gentleman not at all likely to act in an oppressive manner towards the people—who was associated with Mr. Hume, the Land Commissioner for the Darling Downs. That gentleman and Mr. Hume were accustomed to give separate valuations of the land, neither knowing at what rate the other had valued it. It was the desire, both of the Land Commissioner and of that gentleman, acting under special instructions of the department, to settle the people upon those lands; but, as he had said before, only 5,000 acres had been put off up to the present time, and at a price only one-third of that at which it had been valued. The hon. member asked the House to believe that a great profit had been made out of those lands. Out of the 20,000 acres, 9,000 or 10,000 acres had been offered for selection, and nearly the half of that did not realise more than 30s. an acre. Bearing in mind the fact that that land cost the State £3 an acre, where, he would like to know, was the profit? Considering that that land was possessed of a splendid climate, that by some peculiarity it was subject to rains when places within twenty miles of it were suffering from severe drought, that a fine stream of water ran through it, and that the railway was within two miles of a portion of it, it was certainly strange that it had taken so long a time to dispose of under 5,000 acres of it. Assuming that 7,000 or 8,000 acres would sell at an average of £3 10s. per acre, what would become of the balance? The ranges would not fetch £1, the remainder not more than 30s., and, when the total amount was made up, he did not expect the average to be more than 30s. per acre. He denied that there would be any profit whatever on the transaction. He now desired to allude to the cry that had been raised and instilled into the minds of people by agitators and electioneering agents and others who wished to gain favour with the people, that they were entitled to have the land thrown open to them at 2s. 6d. an acre, in the same way as homestead selections. He would give now the other side of the picture. When the Exchanged Lands Bill was before the House he (Mr. Perkins) wanted to throw the lands open to the shopkeeper from Brisbane, the miner from Charters Towers, and the squatter from the Barcoo. Had that been carried out—as it would have been but for the vexatious opposition of the hon. member and a few others who acted with him, and had not the Government had more important business on hand at the time—Allora, he made bold to say, would now have been a flourishing township. Instead of 5,000 acres, 20,000 acres would have been settled upon, homesteads would have been built, and cultivation of some sort going on over the whole of it; and there would have been a class of settlers upon it who, for every £1 that had been expended on it hitherto in improvements or buildings, would have expended £10. He did not say they would be wise in doing so, but he happened to know that several persons intended going on the land at the time solely because of the accounts they had heard of the climate there, and of the facilities for reaching it by railway. He hoped what had happened would be a warning to the hon. member, and that, whenever similar business was to be dealt with, the leader of the Opposition and those who acted with him would have learned a lesson from the past, and act accordingly. There was another phase of the question. The hon. member had stated that there were ever so many hundreds of thousands of acres of land between Toowoomba and Warwick in large estates. That was, no doubt, a misfortune, but it was one that could not be remedied now. It was idle at this stage to inquire why or how those estates were got together, although he had his own opinion about it. A great cause of complaint was the

fact that a railway was being made round the estate of a certain gentleman on Canning Downs. It had been stated over and over again that the present Government granted the title-deeds to that estate. He would now state for the information of the public that the present Government had nothing whatever to do with the deeds of Canning Downs. All the deeds had been issued before they entered on office, with the exception of a portion of eighty acres. Nevertheless, by one contrivance and another, in the Press and at public meetings, it had been reported in different parts of the colony that the present Government handed out the deeds of that vast estate. He wished to give those reports a public denial. All he knew of the matter was that the late Mr. Davenport succeeded in winning an action which he brought before the court at Westminster, and that without any further inquiry or delay, or allowing the reputed owner of Canning Downs to assert his rights, the deeds were handed out. And a splendid speculation it was for the man who became the owner of it. Had he known he would have got his deeds so easily the estate would have fetched £20,000 or £30,000 more. Considering the way in which the previous occupier, Mr. Wildash, was harassed and bamboozled, it was a shame and a scandal to the Government for the time being that he should be turned out into the streets and that another man should be allowed to step in and reap the rewards of his labours. The hon. member wished the House to believe that all those lands would be put under cultivation. He (Mr. Perkins) should like to see that done, and he was as anxious as the hon. member himself to see that state of things brought about. Of all the land between Toowoomba and Warwick, only a very small portion—not more than 10 per cent.—was in the hands of small holders, and there was a good deal of farming carried on out of sight of the railway line. But whenever the farmers there happened to get good crops they had almost to go a-begging to sell them. The people were not able to consume it, and the railway had to carry the produce at one-quarter of what he (Mr. Perkins) was charged for hauling a ton of freight. If farming there could only be carried on by leaning on the State to carry the stuff for next to nothing, the sooner the farmers turned to some other occupation the better. While desiring as much as anyone to see people settled on the land, he did not think it wise for them to engage in an industry for which there was no room; and that could only be the result if the Government encouraged men to go farming on the Darling Downs. Now, he happened to know that when there was a tolerably good crop of wheat, owing to the favourable nature of the season, there were no people able to buy it, and it was bought at Toowoomba and at various other places. And yet they talked of shipping wheat also. If this occurred when there was such a small area of land under wheat, what would happen if the area was so much larger as the hon. member proposed to make it? Could it ever be pretended that they could export wheat here? He himself admitted that it was very desirable to shut out Adelaide and Victorian flour, but that they would ever become exporters of wheat—that wheat could be grown here and exported at a profit—he denied. From his experience down below—in Victoria—he knew that a large number of persons had been rushed and deluded into taking up land for farming in that colony, and that a few people in Melbourne were reaping all the profits. In many instances the result was that where there were many hundreds of acres farmed and cultivated in the most economical way, the proceeds did not realise more than £4 per acre. The farmers had to cart their produce to the railway station, to pay various freights to Melbourne, storage,

commission, and other things; so that the business could not pay. He furthermore asserted that in a few years very little wheat would be grown in Victoria on the present system. He was very anxious indeed to see as much wheat growing in the colony as would supply them instead of importing it from Adelaide and elsewhere, and he hoped that state of things was coming about; but he held that there was plenty of land in the vicinity of Warwick and Allora to grow all the wheat required for consumption between Brisbane and the terminus of the Southern and Western Railway. Furthermore, if the hon. gentleman carried his resolution, and these lands were to be treated in the same way as the Allora exchanges—the operation of which he (Mr. Perkins) had sketched out—it showed that the hon. member had not studied the question at all. He evidently looked at it from an Allora point, and he still adhered to the opinion he expressed when the exchange lands were being dealt with. He did not show what benefit would accrue to the whole colony from this transaction. His project was so weakly and so vaguely put forward that he (Mr. Perkins) could not think that it would be entertained by this House. If it were highly desirable in the interests of the colony that these lands should be purchased, they would have to be purchased in some way different to that proposed by the hon. gentleman. The transaction would be one that required a Government with considerable boldness to carry out when an opportunity occurred. When that opportunity might occur it was not for him to say, but he believed an opportunity might have occurred when the Government might have been able to drive a bargain with the owners of these estates, only for the publicity given to the subject by the hon. member. He thought that opportunity had passed by now. He (Mr. Perkins) did not know whether the project would be entertained by his hon. colleagues, but he felt for and sympathised with the people of Warwick that it was a great misfortune for the place to be surrounded by the vast estate of Canning Downs. However, he was not without hope; he was satisfied that the day was not far distant when carrying sheep on Canning Downs would not pay. He did not believe there was a more overrated place in the colony with regard to the carrying of sheep than the Darling Downs, and he was of opinion that ere long many of the growers of wool there would have to look for pastures new. If the country was so good, if they could get 5s. or 10s. per acre, they could not make that land pay by running sheep on it; and hon. members would find that, without any action, or coercion, or intimidation on the part of the Government or that House, the present possessors would voluntarily come and offer their properties to private individuals at such a price that it would pay them to go into the speculation. When that time came—which he thought was not far off—he trusted that some of the owners or land-sharks on the Darling Downs would reflect and well look into the question, and, instead of trying to make the land carry double the number of sheep that it was capable of, they would be able to treat with the hon. gentleman who had introduced this motion, or somebody else of a speculative turn of mind who had the interests of the colony at heart, and offer their estates at such a price or on such terms as would induce business. He must oppose the motion of the hon. member.

Mr. DE SATGE said he must confess that he thoroughly sympathised with the hon. gentleman who moved this resolution, and he should support the motion on principle. He thought the hon. member went rather too far in proposing at once to procure the sum of half-a-million to be expended in this way. He agreed with

the Minister for Lands that the resumption of these estates must be a work of time, and that by passing a resolution of this kind they might at once arouse the natural cupidity of holders of property to get as high a price as they could. What mistakes had been made in former times had little or nothing to do with the resolution. Had they not made mistakes in all times in legislation? Were they not last night gathering together several Liquor Licensing Acts, and boiling them down, as it were, into one; and had not the hon. member for Burnett introduced a Bill giving a most important measure of relief to the selectors? Did not their present Acts of legislation show the mistakes they had made at one time and another? He thought the history of those who were the original settlers or pioneers of Darling Downs would show that they had had to struggle as hard to obtain their present position as settlers in outside districts had to do now. The lands on the Darling Downs were originally taken up under the Orders in Council of 1847, which specially provided that the lessees of these runs only should have a pre-emptive right over their land at the fixed price of 20s. per acre, which price should never have been departed from. They had exercised that pre-emptive right, purchased their water frontages, and procured the money required for purchasing with the hard fight which they had with their stations. If they calculated the interest of these amounts from the time of purchase to this time—some twenty years—it would be found that they had paid something like £2 10s. an acre for their land. He did not think, therefore, that they could quarrel with the original owners, seeing that they were allowed to obtain their runs at 20s. an acre. What they had to quarrel with was the legislation that gave shrewd men an opportunity of getting land in their own hands by dummyism and other improper means, and against the public good. Between the years of 1855 and 1864 was a period of such unexampled prosperity on the Darling Downs; such an abnormal price was obtained for wool, and there was such a scarcity of sheep in the Southern districts, that the Darling Downs men were able to lay by funds enough to acquire large portions of land in the exercise of their pre-emptive right, and thus founded these large estates. The legislation that then took place in 1868 should have checked those purchases of the chief portion of the Darling Downs—an exceptional district in the colony—and have stopped effectually the acquisition of those enormous estates. That, however, was not done, and the chance was lost afterwards; because, in the Act of 1868 which followed it, they not only cheapened their land, but they gave the power under that and other Acts that were not sufficiently watched to prevent fraud, to allow the best portion of their estate—that, at any rate, in the best climate—to pass into the hands of men who, though perfectly entitled to avail themselves of the Act, were not in many cases pioneers. The chief portion of the water frontages had already been acquired, and the majority took up land to the largest extent allowed by the Act of 1868. It was not with this Government or the previous Government that the fault lay; it was a matter too remote to be referred to in this House. It was the fault of those who did not take, in times of unexampled prosperity, the trouble to prevent the acquisition of the Darling Downs. The Minister for Works in his speeches at Warwick and Killarney, and the Minister for Lands to-night, had expressed their entire sympathy with the motion of the hon. member for Darling Downs.

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS: No.

Mr. DE SATGE said that, having made mistakes in all their land legislation, they must

take some abnormal steps in order to place themselves in a right position—if they wanted to continue settlement in that special district of the Darling Downs—so as to secure a reversion of those lands gradually. He did not say that it was to be done under this motion in one lumpsum, and by rushing into the market to secure these estates; but he was quite prepared to vote with the principle of the motion, in order that some latitude should be allowed to the Ministers of the day in dealing with such matters. It was a very great power to leave in the hands of Ministers, and he thought the hon. member for Darling Downs showed the enormous confidence he placed, both in the Ministry of the day and especially in the Minister for Lands, in allowing him the manipulation of that half-million of money for the repurchase of those estates. He (Mr. De Satgé) thought the motion was founded upon a right principle; those estates must by some means be re-acquired, but it must be done with discretion. There must be some well-known valuer, or someone who was qualified to judge the value of the land for agricultural purposes—whether he was taken from Victoria or from England. He must be a man who could thoroughly class those lands—for they differed very much in value—in order that those estates might be, to a certain extent, re-acquired for the settlement of that portion of the colony, which was really the only climate in which they could ever have a dense population, and could become thickly peopled. He heartily sympathised with the settlement of the Darling Downs. They had been led from one thing to another into a state of things which was not sound. The railway from Warwick to Killarney, without the acquisition of the large freehold in that neighbourhood, would be a monstrous affair, because it would never pay. The chief portion of the land which it passed through was freehold. They had the land immediately on that line, but the whole of the land right back was of equal value. The most sensible plan was to acquire that freehold, so as to be able to encourage settlement in that district and make that railway pay. So far as he could follow the speech of the Minister for Lands, that gentleman's sympathies were entirely with the mover of this motion. He could say nothing, really, virtually against it, or against the weighty arguments in the very excellent speech of the mover of this resolution. As regarded the Allora exchanges, they had been told that they had not realised all that was expected; but they must not forget that the last two seasons had been exceptionally bad for agriculturists. Nature seemed to have done everything she could to stop agriculture in every portion of the colony, especially on the Darling Downs. They had had two of the severest winters ever known, and he was sorry to see again that this year promised to be the same as last year—one extremely unfavourable to an industry that they all wanted, although they might be ranked as rabid squatters, to flourish in the southern part of the colony. He knew the limited extent of agricultural land there was in the colony. The Darling Downs was a limited district, and the Peak Downs was also a very limited district. They knew how they had already preserved some of their lands by an act in which he thoroughly coincided with the Minister for Lands with respect to the new classification of Northern lands, which he saw were classified as high as 20s. for certain sugar lands; and they were shown by that act the care that they must take in future in the distribution of their lands. He considered that although this step, in the eyes of business men, did not look like business—that was one argument of the Minister for Lands—that they must not buy with one hand and sell with the other—they must put all that principle in their pockets if

they wanted to encourage settlement in the colony. He should suggest that, if this principle was carried by the motion of the hon. member, they could very well afford to pass some Act by which the Minister of the day might have the power of purchasing a great deal of the lands that were required for the purposes of settlement. He did think, in the face of the arguments they had heard with reference to the Killarney lands within the last few days, that they were thoroughly entitled to buy land there before they made the line; because, until there was a larger area open for settlement than the narrow strips along the line, it would not pay. He considered this matter was not a party question. The whole action of the hon. member (Mr. Kates) seemed to have shown the extreme confidence he possessed both in the Ministry of the day and in the Minister for Lands; and he (Mr. De Satgé) contended that the hon. member had shown excellent argument for the repurchase, gradually and on a proper scale, of certain estates that were of great agricultural value. There was no doubt that every day was developing one portion of the Darling Downs to be agricultural land and the other to be purely pastoral, and the difference between these two seemed so enormous—seemed about double—that he supposed that great care would have to be exercised in making repurchases of this land. He thoroughly agreed with the member for Darling Downs, who had made this resolution, affirming the desirability of the purchase, before more time elapsed, of certain portions of those lands, that they might be thrown open for selection or for sale by auction. He felt certain, from the tendency of the report of the Commissioner for Lands upon these lands, that this would be a good commercial transaction for the Government to enter into.

Mr. DICKSON said he was of opinion that the motion which was now before them was one of the most important resolutions yet made this session, and he wished to regard it as such. He was very much pleased to see the hon. member for Darling Downs introduce it in the able manner in which he had done; and even if he should not carry it, yet if it received that full deliberation which it deserved, he would have done good service to the colony in introducing it. It was a motion of very great importance indeed, and of such moment that he did not think his hon. friend need feel very greatly disappointed should he not succeed in carrying his resolution, especially when the Government were opposed to it. Should he not succeed in passing his motion, he would at least succeed in obtaining an expression of opinion from this House upon the correctness of such a line of action. He would have initiated a measure which in the long run, he (Mr. Dickson) believed, would tend to very beneficial results in connection with these large and valuable tracts of country on the Darling Downs. There was no questioning the fact that it was a most depressing sight to one who had the interests of the colony at heart, and wished to see this land peopled by human beings, and homesteads fostered and encouraged, to travel along the magnificent land of the Darling Downs, and witness year after year not the slightest progress in settlement, not the slightest increase in the number of human beings or the amount of cultivation; that was what they might observe along the line of railway. They saw the finest land in Australia remaining from year to year absolutely unoccupied. This sight struck every beholder with the deepest regret, and was continually a subject of comment by visitors to Queensland from the more populous colonies of the South. He conceived that any measure which had for its object the legitimate recovery of these lands for *bonâ fide* settlement was a measure which demanded their fullest

deliberation, and was a measure which he believed any Government concerned in promoting the interests of this colony should not hastily reject, even though it should be one which might not at the time it was introduced run in parallel lines with their policy, or with what they conceived the financial position of the colony enabled them to admit. He should have been glad to have understood from the remarks made by the hon. Minister for Lands that he sympathised with this motion; but, while he listened to him with very great attention, he found that, though he did not distinctly disavow the desirability of ultimately settling the Darling Downs lands with human beings, still at the same time he did not give the hearty co-operation to this motion that its importance demanded. And, considering that this resolution had been on the paper for a considerable time this session, he thought he might accept the caution of the Minister for Lands as indicating that the Government were not prepared to formally accept the resolution. Notwithstanding the remarks made by the Minister for Works on a recent occasion, he understood from the reserve of the Minister for Lands that the Government did not see their way to accept the resolution with any amount of cordiality; for that hon. gentleman, while not disapproving of the ultimate recovery of these lands, held out that the present would not be an opportune time to recover them or for such a resolution as the present to be carried. The hon. gentleman stated that it would be imprudent for the House to affirm the resolution, inasmuch as by so doing they would intimate to the holders of real estate on the Darling Downs what the intention of the Government was—that, in fact, it would be like shaking a bag of money before their faces—to use the hon. gentleman's own words. He seemed to think that it would be better to recover these lands by a *coup* such as the purchase of the Suez Canal shares, in the hope of the action of the Government being ultimately ratified by the vote of Parliament. He should be glad now if the hon. gentleman could have enabled him to understand that the present Government intended to proceed with any such *coup* with the view of its ultimate ratification by the House. But, while the Government were credited with a desire to extend railways into the interior, he (Mr. Dickson) had not heard even from their most ardent supporters that they were credited with any very great desire to increase the facilities for the legitimate homestead occupation of the colony by *bonâ fide* settlers.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: You don't want to hear it: you know it.

Mr. DICKSON said he had not heard that the settlement of population upon the Darling Downs had engrossed the consideration of the Ministry so much as the extension of our railways. Passing from the remarks of the hon. Minister for Lands for a moment, he would observe that the affirmation of the principle contained in this resolution to-night did not necessarily bind the Government to all matters of detail. Before further action could be taken in connection with the recovery or repurchase of these lands a Bill must be introduced into the House, and that Bill was certain to provoke discussion, which would lead to a more minute determination of the details under which these lands would be repurchased, and would be thrown open for settlement. He did not think that the repurchase of these lands could be accomplished by the State in a manner at once secret and economic. The State never was able to acquire property from private individuals on as advantageous terms as two individuals could make a transfer; and, therefore, he did not

think there was much in the argument of the Minister for Lands as applied to the subject of this discussion. He contended that the mere question of profit in its pecuniary shape—in the shape of so many pounds, shillings, and pence—was not the real object of this discussion. The true object of it was to endeavour to settle population upon large fertile tracts of territory, which had been for many years absolutely unoccupied by human beings, and which, should it remain under its present ownership, would for years remain in the same position. They wanted to have population there. They had a magnificent territory—a territory well adapted to an immense increase on the present population—and it was a melancholy fact that if they looked at the immigration and statistical returns our increase of population did not keep pace with the development of the colony in other respects or with the attractions which the colony possessed for occupation by our fellow-countrymen. He conceived that it was true statesmanship to endeavour by every reasonable and legitimate means to encourage population to settle in such parts of our colony as would give them a fair opportunity of commencing colonial life under encouraging circumstances; and he believed that no part of the colony offered more encouraging circumstances for the settlement of such population than that portion of the lands of this colony on the Darling Downs which was now the subject of their present discussion. The hon. Minister for Lands had stated what he very much regretted to hear, and what he certainly did not expect to hear from him—that the exchanged lands of Allora had been a failure, and that they had not realised the expectations of the Government. He (Mr. Dickson) trusted that that failure was solely confined to the pecuniary aspect of those lands; that they might not possibly have fulfilled the pecuniary expectations looked forward to from their being thrown open to homestead settlement. He maintained that if it could be shown that 5,000 acres, small as that area was, had been occupied by an agricultural population, it would ultimately redound much more to the benefit of the colony and the benefit of the community itself than if 20,000 or 40,000 acres had been taken up by the Barcoo squatters, Queen-street shopkeepers, or Charters Towers miners alluded to by the hon. gentleman, which, for years, would have been obtained and held simply for speculative purposes, and without any desire whatever, to make the land so occupied productive. He contended that the time was too short for them to judge of the full benefits which must follow the occupation of those exchanged lands; and, whatever the hon. gentleman might say of the action of the Opposition, the Government ought to feel glad now for having been forced to give way to the action of the Opposition which prevented those lands from being again absorbed by speculators. It was their action which induced the *bond fide* occupation of this land, even though it were only 5,000 acres, for real agricultural settlement. It was too limited a time for them to judge of the beneficial results which might follow from the occupation of those lands in the shape in which they were presented to the country through the action of the Opposition. He preferred to hear that only 5,000 acres had been occupied, rather than that the whole should have been at once swamped by a few speculators having special facilities for pre-emption with a view of excluding them from settlement, and with a view to their own aggrandisement. He must say he was entirely at one with the hon. gentleman who had introduced this resolution in the desirability of some such action as he advocated being adopted by the Gov-

ernment. This could be done best by a Government who possessed the strong following that the present Government commanded. There would possibly be an amount of hardship in connection with the resumption of this land, but he believed it was a mere sentimental hardship. The ownership of this land had accrued through original pastoral occupation, and the hardship might be got over if fair compensation were given for the land under a principle which some of our statutes indicated. If fair compensation be given for this land, their return to occupation by a class of people who would make them more productive than at present, would be a real benefit to the State, and would not be a hardship to the present proprietors. Individual interests must at all times, unfortunately, suffer where public interests were paramount; and, these lands having been acquired chiefly through pastoral occupation, if the owners were compensated fairly by the State he considered they would suffer no injustice in the lands being now diverted to occupation by a more close settlement than could possibly arise under the system of tenant farmers. He thought there was a good deal of force in the remarks of the hon. member for Darling Downs in reference to the system of tenant farming. There was undoubtedly a strong feeling in the minds of farmers in this country that they should have the right of ownership. They would like to own the land in fee-simple, and not be tenants, improving property the tenure of which was uncertain. The motion was one, as he had said in the beginning, which demanded a large amount of consideration. Even if it were carried that evening, there was no doubt that the resolutions in committee and on the Bill, which must be introduced by the Government to give practical effect to the measure, would be very sharply criticised. While he gave the Government credit for desiring, according to their lights, to place this colony in the van of Australian progress, he thought that the inducement to settlement would be greatly limited and restricted when it was known that the best land for settlement was in the possession of large landed proprietors, and that no action had been taken to gradually recover these lands and attract settlement in its best form. As it was a money vote, the Treasurer was bound to consider this resolution with great caution. He (Mr. Dickson) believed that if a sum of half-a-million of money were placed on the Estimates for the gradual resumption of these lands it would be an expenditure far more judicious, and far more beneficial in its results for the future of the colony, than the many millions of money which formed the aggregate of their indebtedness at the present time. He would be glad—apart from the question of public works, which appeared to take up a great part of their time—if the Government, having such a strong following as they had, would take up this question, and either obtain the money from the public Treasury or devise some legislation by which the settlement of these closed lands—the best part of the colony—could be effected at the present time. He should give his hearty support in the absence of any alternative suggestion for resuming these lands to the resolution of the hon. member for Darling Downs; and he was glad to hear that the hon. gentleman was so deeply impressed with the importance of this question that even if he were defeated on the present occasion he intended to agitate, agitate, agitate, until he had obtained some measure of success.

Mr. GROOM said he would not like to give a silent vote on this question, particularly as it referred to a district in which he was deeply interested. This was not the first time that the question of purchasing back some of the land on

the Darling Downs had been brought before this House, and whenever it had been considered in times past it had received a cordial reception. He had himself hinted that the time would come, sooner or later, when, after the division of these estates by the death of their owners, some action would be taken by the Legislature in order to purchase some of these lands for settlement. Whether that time would come or not he was not in a position to say. It was a remarkable thing that from the time of the passing of the Agricultural Reserves Act in 1861 down to the present time—a period of twenty years—almost every session they had had a land resolution brought under the consideration of the House, and the Darling Downs land had come under discussion in connection with it. The hon. member for Mitchell stated that a very considerable portion of the Darling Downs—the large runs on the Darling Downs—were taken up under the Orders in Council of 1847; but he thought the hon. member was slightly in error. The leases were granted under the Orders in Council in 1847, but they were granted under Sir Charles Fitzroy for fourteen years, and when the Legislature met in the session of 1860 it dealt with the land itself. It was unfortunately under the land laws of the Herbert Administration that a great many of the evils on the Darling Downs arose. The land was sold very cheap. The original owners who held the grants took up large areas on the Darling Downs. Some hon. members would probably remember that in 1866 a large station on the Darling Downs—he would not mention the name—comprising about 43,000 acres of purchased land, the whole of it stocked—it was a magnificent station—was offered for sale by Mort and Company at an upset of £50,000. There was not a bid for it. Mr. Macalister was in the colony at the time, and he (Mr. Groom) remembered suggesting to him that he should purchase that property, and telling him that the sheep could be easily disposed of, and the land could be occupied by, he was quite sure, from 150 to 200 settlers. Now he did not suppose that a quarter of a million would purchase that property. There was considerable force in the arguments of the Minister for Lands with regard to the purchase of these lands. The extraordinary act of Lord Beaconsfield in purchasing the Suez Canal shares could not have been done if there had not been persons behind the scenes to make an excellent bargain for the State. If it had been known that it was the intention of the Government to purchase them, it was probable that the “bears” on the Stock Exchange would have had some hand in it. The Minister for Lands said that, if it were known the Government intended to buy back the lands, these owners would put on an extraordinary price—much more, indeed, than they would otherwise ask for it. But he (Mr. Groom) was quite sure of this: that in course of time, when the population had increased—at the present time it was limited and was likely to be so judging by present appearances—some Legislature would take some action for purchasing back those lands. It was not a novel scheme at all. A remarkable case in point occurred in the early history in the colony of Natal. Some fifteen or sixteen years ago, the Legislature of that colony passed a compulsory Sales Land Bill, which was sent home for the assent of the Imperial Government. The reasons for this Bill were that the land, some three or four years previously, for several miles around, had been sold for pastoral purposes, and the European population was pouring in so rapidly that there was no room for extension inland, the colony being then surrounded by hostile tribes. Under the circumstances the Imperial Government gave assent to the Bill and it became law. Of course, no such reasons

could be urged here for such an Act. This discussion could do no harm, though he did not think the object aimed at would be accomplished in the way proposed in the resolution. It was one of those matters which required an extraordinary amount of care and caution in order that the public interests might not suffer. It was hardly necessary to discuss the matter with regard to the settlement or non-settlement in connection with the Allora exchange, because it did not exactly apply in this case. Whether that exchange had realised expectations he was not in a position to say; but he knew from personal observation that the land had been surrounded with fences, and that the people were settling there and cultivating it. That was the prospect that presented itself to him. Whether the affair had been a financial success was another matter altogether, but he believed that the settlement of the population was of far greater consideration than the financial success. Even if they gave up the land for nothing, and settled people on it in that way—treating them kindly afterwards, giving them seed for the first year, and opening up railway communication—he believed it would be a good course to take; and he had no doubt that the syndicate which had undertaken the formation of the transcontinental railway would also offer the land for nothing, if it was only to get the people to settle on it and so get traffic for their line. There was one remark of the Minister for Lands which he hardly knew how to treat—but there was another gentleman who could speak with more correctness about it than he could—and that was that when the wheat was grown there was no one to purchase it. There was, however, plenty of money to purchase it, but the mills were limited, and it was quite possible that when people entered into a combination to give a certain price and no more others did not choose to sell it. But the more land that was placed under cultivation the more mills there would be; and then the matter was one which would very soon cure itself. As regarded the export of wheat, he believed that notwithstanding the discouraging seasons of the last two or three years they would yet see the ships leaving the port of Moreton Bay for London with wheat cargoes grown in the colony, and yielding a profitable return. It was very possible that in the colony of Victoria the expectations of the people in this respect had not been realised; but, at the same time, wheat continued to be grown there. In South Australia there were millions of acres under cultivation, only averaging a few bushels per acre; whereas here the average was from eighteen to twenty bushels, going even as high as twenty-five bushels—almost double that of the other colony. Of course, the area now was limited, and they were not able to grow more than they required for their own use. The motion had his sympathy, and he did not think that the House would do harm in affirming, because a Bill would have to be introduced on top of the resolution in order to give it practical effect. He did not go altogether with the hon. member in thinking that they should go to these owners and say—“We want to buy your run back. What are you prepared to take?” The wiser course was, he believed, that suggested by the Minister for Lands. If any of the estates were put into the market for sale, and the Government could see their way clear to purchase them with benefit to themselves and to the country, he thought they should have the power to do so. When Mr. Macalister was Premier, the hon. gentleman had told him (Mr. Groom) that the Government had no such power. He (Mr. Groom) thought that the power given under the Act of 1876, where land could be either bought or exchanged for public purposes,

was sufficient authority. The money could be voted afterwards, as had been done in the case of the Suez Canal shares. So, in this case, where the Government saw an opportunity of purchasing back part of the land, they should be able to do so; and he did not think there would be any objection on either side of the House to voting the money afterwards. If the matter came to a division he should support the motion. It could certainly do no harm, and might be of great practical good.

Mr. HORWITZ said that he considered that the question was one which ought to be considered very carefully. For instance, the line from Warwick to Killarney had cost the country £90,000, and the land on only one side of it had been taken up, and on the other was the Canning Downs property. He believed that the parties on the Darling Downs were ready to sell their land, and if it was so he could see no harm in giving the Colonial Treasurer the power and half-a-million of money at his command, so that he might buy the land, and by selling it again settle *bonâ fide* settlers on it. The Minister for Lands had said that the exchange of land at Allora had turned out a failure. He differed from the hon. gentleman. The land exchanged was worth 15s. an acre, but the Government gave two acres for one, which was equal to paying 30s. per acre for the land at Allora, for which the country had got back £3, £4, and even as high as £8 per acre. He would like to know where the failure came in. If a person bought land at £2 per acre and sold it again to a *bonâ fide* settler at £2 per acre, the country lost nothing by it. He did not see how they could lose if they got their own back again, with the settlement of population increasing the revenue of the colony. He differed, too, from the Minister for Lands in thinking that they wanted six times as many farmers on the Darling Downs as they at present had there. The Minister had said that the farmers there were unable to sell their wheat; but he (Mr. Horwitz) had bought as much as he could find room for, as he knew also his neighbour, Mr. Hayes, had done; and he believed the hon. member for Darling Downs (Mr. Kates) had bought as much as he could find storage for. The only thing he (Mr. Horwitz) was sorry for was that the farmers of the Warwick district had not got more wheat now to sell, as they could get more than they got a few months ago by about 1s. a bushel. There were any amount of buyers at the beginning of the season if the farmers were willing to sell. The millers were in the habit of taking it in as soon as they could. If they were full, of course they could not take more. No doubt the question before the House was a very important one. A mistake had been made years ago in the land being given into the hands of a few proprietors. The State had now, of course, no control over them. The State could not recover them any more except by paying for them; and he thought it was nothing but right that the House should take it into consideration now. They should make up their minds now, because if they did not they would be compelled to do it before very long. The House should vote a certain sum of money, and try to buy back these lands as soon as they possibly could.

Mr. DE POIX-TYREL said that he could not agree with the speaker, who said that they ought to vote money to buy these lands back. He (Mr. De Poix-Tyrel) had not made up his mind which way he was going to vote. He thought he should vote for the motion; but, in the meantime, he would like to point out that a vote of £500,000 to purchase back these lands would be something like promoting a large jobbing company in the lands on the Darling Downs.

He would be much more inclined to vote with the hon. member if that hon. gentleman had come with an undertaking in his pocket from the gentlemen who owned these lands, stating the price they would take for them. And if he were asking them to vote a specific sum they might possibly have dealt more cordially with the question than they were able to do now. He thought a mistake was made—and mistakes were being made every day—they all made them—in parting with these lands at the small price at which they were alienated from the Crown. He was quite sure that the sooner these lands were put under cultivation the better, but he did not see how they could do it all at once. Some hon. members who had spoken in favour of it were, he believed, millers, and looked at it from a miller's point of view. The hon. member for Darling Downs, he believed, owned mills and also a considerable quantity of land there. He (Mr. De Poix-Tyrel) would like to know what that hon. gentleman would take for his land, and, if so, they might possibly entertain the purchase. He believed they should take some steps in the direction of resuming these lands, and he should vote for the hon. member's resolution.

Mr. FOOTE thought he could not see his way clearly to go into the matter in the way in which it was brought forward; yet it was quite clear to everyone who travelled from Toowoomba to Warwick, or even further, that the country on the Downs at the present time was not producing what it might produce by a very great deal. It was quite clear that this was one of those districts that was specially fitted for agricultural settlement; in fact, it was the best district he had seen since he had been in the colony. He had heard of other districts and localities which were spoken very highly of, but so far as his own experience extended he did not remember having seen any country that came up to the Darling Downs. He did not wonder at the astonishment displayed by the Minister for Works when he was at Warwick some time ago. He (Mr. Foote) saw by the Minister's remarks that he was delighted with the country; and believing as he did, notwithstanding that the hon. gentleman was associated with the Conservative party, that he was a democrat in spirit, he was satisfied that the hon. gentleman was one of those who would like to see the Darling Downs fully populated, or, at any rate, populated in such a way that people could afford to live there. He could also believe that the hon. member would not be favourable to the system of tenantry existing in the old country, where large capitalists held the land and let it out to small farmers. Those lands on the Darling Downs, as he said before, were the best lands for agricultural settlement he had ever seen; and although they were represented as a wilderness he could not fall in with that view. He remembered the Downs when they were considered to be in their prime—when stations in that district were looked after from all parts of the colony, and were considered very secure investments. Those stations were very heavily stocked, and he believed that the reason why at the present time the country would not carry more stock was because of the over-stocking which had taken place from time to time, and which resulted not only in the grass being eaten down, but the roots also. He could also understand why those townships on and near the Downs were anxious for agricultural settlement. The railways, one going west and the other south, had taken away the trade to which they were formerly accustomed; and consequently they had to depend on the trade which they wished to create. The tradesmen of Ipswich years ago suffered in the same way by the railway approaching and

then going beyond the place—the inhabitants being thrown upon their own resources, which, as a rule, were very poor until other interests sprang up. It was quite clear that the large landholders on the Downs—of whom he did not wish to say anything disrespectful—traded at first hand, and consequently their orders and exports went straight to the various ports, so that the towns with which they formerly did business lost a somewhat thriving trade. That was how the inhabitants of Dalby, Warwick, and other towns lost their trade; and it behoved the inhabitants of those places to look out for the means of supporting a population. Taking this view of the matter he thought the Downs country was specially adapted, not only for the growth of wheat, but of other products also. He had visited that district occasionally, and he considered the farmers about Warwick the most well-to-do class of farmers in the colony. Apart from the sugar farmers, they were the most independent, thriving, and best situated farmers in Queensland. Their land was capable of considerable production; they had a great deal of hardship, and were subject to drought as well as to extreme wet weather; but notwithstanding all this they managed to get an average crop something like four years out of six. He had traded with Warwick in cereals for some years past, and he did not remember the farmers there having two good years in succession; therefore it was a necessity, if the town was to be anything, that there should be a large producing population, because in proportion to the increase of population would be the decrease of taxation per head. Increase of population meant an increase of trade, whereby the whole of the inhabitants of the colony were benefited. He could not see his way to suggest by what means the Government could accomplish the object of the resolution; at the same time he believed they were fully alive to the necessity of attaining that object, and that they would lose no chance which might arise from whatever cause, and which would enable them to settle population on those lands. There was a remark which fell from the hon. Minister for Lands with which he did not agree. The hon. member scouted the idea of agriculture as being a non-paying industry. He (Mr. Foote) was aware that there was not the same profit attached to it as to many other interests, but the hon. member must remember that every man in the colony was not a capitalist. The hon. member's ideas might be very much higher and larger than those of other people; and he might be able to see things that would pay wonderfully well, but the poor man who came to the colony with a few pounds in his pocket was content to go and settle on the land and make the best he could of it. Another observation made by that hon. gentleman was that when the farmers got a crop they were obliged to go begging in order to sell it. His (Mr. Foote's) experience was very different. He was aware that many farmers when they had raised a crop required the money. The only capital the agriculturist in many instances had to go on with was merely his labour; and if supplied with twelve months' rations till he got in his crop he considered himself in a good position. Therefore, considering that the persons entering on agricultural pursuits in those districts had done so without capital in most instances, he must say that to his mind the result had been an almost unprecedented success. Not only were agricultural farmers from the old country engaged in the pursuit, but almost all classes of tradesmen who knew nothing about farming—tailors, shoemakers, etc.—but who had the idea that they would like to go in for farming, knowing very little about it till they entered upon the work. The result in those cases must produce

needy circumstances; and when the crop was grown many persons who would not otherwise do so were under the necessity of selling it. But he maintained it was an impossibility that Queensland could, for a long time, grow as much wheat as would suffice to supply the colony. He should be glad to see the day when sufficient was grown in the colony to shut out the imported article, so as to keep the money in the colony; but his experience for the last few years, so far as the Downs was concerned, was that he had never been able to get anything like a half supply. He could get wheat for two or three months, but as a rule after May he could seldom find wheat to cut up in Warwick at a price which would pay him to grind lower down. He did not consider that wheat should be grown as a speciality on the Downs. In regard to what were called small farmers, he did not think the land should be cut up into very small lots, but into portions on which people could make a respectable living. The class of men occupying such portions of land could make more than treble the amount of money than was made at the present time if they went in for cultivation. He remembered when the late Mr. Davenport arrived on the Downs there was a great outcry against him by the old squatters, who did not look on him as a fair man. They said he came to the place with capital, and was going to turn things upside-down. So far as his (Mr. Foote's) knowledge went, there was not a man in the whole district who had done more good by way of example and enterprise than the late Mr. Davenport. With reference to the resolution, he considered it a step in the right direction, though he could not see the means by which the object was to be approached; but if the thing could be done in a reasonable and profitable way and without too great an expenditure of public money it ought to be done. He did not regard this question so much as a question of finance as one of settlement. He was quite sure that the Downs under the present system of grazing was almost worked out; and ultimately, whether the Government took steps in the matter or not, it would pay to enter upon some of those lands by way of speculation, with a view of reselling in smaller quantities at some future day. Whether this would be done by the Government, or whether it would be left to the chance of events, it would ultimately come to pass.

Mr. O'SULLIVAN said he did not wish to go back to the history of the creation, and the general history of the squatters, and how this land on the Darling Downs was acquired, but should at once come to the question, on which he wished to say a few words. He had entire sympathy with the ideas expressed in the resolution, and would take this opportunity of congratulating the hon. member (Mr. Kates) on the service he had done to the colony by the able speech he had delivered this evening. He thought also that a very able speech had been made on the other side by the Minister for Lands; but he did not think that any wonderful amount of new light had been thrown on the subject since those two gentlemen had spoken. The idea that had struck him from the beginning was that there was a great deal of theory and very little practice in the way in which this matter had been handled to-night. He had heard from no hon. gentleman how they were to put this machinery into working order. He thought it would take a good deal of time to mature a plan that would suit the country and encourage the closer population of those Downs. That they ought to be turned into small holdings he thoroughly believed; and there were some practical ways of doing these things in other closely populated countries, but they were ways that would not answer in this country. For instance

the Government might borrow money at 4 or 5 per cent., and let it out at, say, 6 per cent. to those that required it, and allow them to pay a certain amount of interest on it for twenty, thirty, or thirty-five years. This was a plan that had been adopted in other countries. He did not think it would work here; nor did he think that their choice of land was so limited that this would create an immediate demand for the land on the Darling Downs. There was no doubt that there was some of the finest land that could be seen on the Darling Downs, and it was also quite true that there was very good land in other places in the colony; but we were not pushed, and we could not show a case by which we could demand the lands from those owners at anything but their own price. He did not think it was a case that could be urged at the present time as one of public necessity, considering the state of our population and the quantity of land at our disposal. He thought it would be impossible to support the motion as it now stood; but, if it were possible to put it into practical form, he would be very glad to vote for it. He thought the hon. gentleman had done a wonderful service in introducing the motion, and, if he would let it stand over until next session, and give hon. members some practical scheme to work upon, he would do a still greater service. He had shown so much ability that the matter might safely be left in the hon. gentleman's hands. He (Mr. O'Sullivan) would be very glad if he would take that advice, which, he thought, would be of more benefit to the country than urging the motion on to a division to-night. If he could do so, he (Mr. O'Sullivan) would be very happy to vote for it, although he must acknowledge that, in doing so, he should be voting in the dark—in fact, he would be voting for a theory, and he would take the precaution of saying that the vote he would give in support of the resolution as it stood would not bind him as regarded the way he might think proper to handle it in committee. Considering the able debate which had taken place over this resolution—probably, as one hon. member had said, one of the most important that had yet come before the House—he thought it would set Queensland and some of the other colonies thinking, and that by next session they would be able to bring forward some practical plan which would work. He did not hesitate to say that perhaps properties this day week would be valued at double their present price by their owners. The Government could not look upon the land as though they urgently wanted it, because it was impossible to say that there was any scarcity of land in the colony. He believed the Minister for Lands had a sympathy with this resolution, although he was very guarded in his remarks, as a Minister of the Crown should be. He was not to blame for being cautious, but from the very beginning of his speech he (Mr. O'Sullivan) thought he showed great sympathy with this motion. But he made some statements that he could not agree with. The hon. member said we should never be able to obtain wheat for exportation. He (Mr. O'Sullivan) had the greatest respect for the hon. gentleman's opinion, but entirely disagreed with this proposition. He believed it was possible that millions of bushels would be exported from this colony, and that, too, in a few years. There were other views that the hon. gentleman gave expression to, and which he (Mr. O'Sullivan) was bound to disagree with, but they were so small in themselves that they were not worth noticing, in addition to which he was disinclined to comment severely on the speech of the hon. the Minister for Lands, because he detected that he was in great sympathy with this motion. He was sure the hon. gentleman who had moved that resolu-

tion would take his (Mr. O'Sullivan's) few observations in good part, and if that hon. gentleman liked to act in any way that he had indicated, or in any way that he liked, he (Mr. O'Sullivan) was his man.

Mr. REA said the hon. gentleman who had just sat down had made it a ground of complaint that no new light had been thrown upon the subject by succeeding speakers to enable hon. members to arrive at a more definite conclusion than they would have been able to arrive at previously. He (Mr. Rea) thought there had been a great deal of information given on both sides, and that information went to show—if it went to show anything—that never had there been a better illustration of the necessity existing for a land tax on the Darling Downs than at the present time. They could see also that the initiation of this resolution would immediately increase the value of that land, and for this the mover of the resolution would be to blame. But he was not the first to raise this question. He saw from a paper that the Minister for Works had stated that it was a crying shame that those lands were not in the hands of small holders. The railway there must have been made purposely to increase the value of those large estates—that was the inevitable conclusion from the Minister for Works' speech. But there was one thing that they must give credit to the Minister for Lands for—and there were very few Ministers for Lands that would have done it—and that was for pushing aside the very tempting dish that was placed before him—namely, the half-million that was put at his disposal to purchase land. It was very much to his credit that he had shown a desire to push that particular dish from him. He wished he could praise the Minister for Lands as much in other things; but, unfortunately, he had seen that the hon. gentleman in some matters of land policy had exhibited a short-sighted view of his responsibilities. He alluded to the new valuation placed on the sugar lands of the colony. Certainly the increase was very considerable—from 5s. the former price, to 15s. and 20s. the present price. The hon. the Minister for Lands had had nearly three years' opportunity of testing the value of the property which was put under his control, and it was not at all to his credit that he had allowed sugar land in some instances to go at a price so very much lower than its value. It was not one of those blunders that could be thrown on a previous land Minister, because it was only since the present Ministry came into office that the real value of the sugar lands of this colony had come to be known. He hoped, before action had been taken, that the Minister for Lands would reconsider those valuations, and put them at something like their marketable value; because it was a gross injustice to the district that he (Mr. Rea) had the honour of representing, as the majority of selectors there had been charged from 10s. to 15s. for their land. The average value of an acre of a wheat crop had been stated to be £4, but the value of a similar extent of a sugar crop was from £25 to £28. Now, the only sequence of this was that we were literally throwing away our sugar lands, which was a gross injustice to the northern portion of the colony. He would vote for the question brought before the House in this resolution, and he hoped that a special account would be kept of the product of land sales on the Downs, and that any deficiency would be made up by a tax on the residents there. The whole of the colony should not be mulcted for the benefit of the population of that part of it; and the debate to-night had gone to show that a tax should be imposed upon those who had held the land and not turned it to proper account. He should like to see the

Minister for Lands take the matter up and devise some means by which those who had taken up the land for speculative purposes could be compelled to turn it to some good account. He had been informed, however, that the Minister had not made the best of the opportunity he had at the present time, by putting the rich lands within his reach into the market. Of the Allora lands he was told that only one-quarter had been placed before the public, and if that were so he could not see the use of voting another sum for this purpose until the first lot of lands were thoroughly exhausted. When those lands were placed before the public it would be seen whether the people were ready to take up the lands at the price put upon them. If the discussion had done no other good it had shown that the proper use of the exchanged lands had not been made, and he hoped the Minister would give a pledge that he would throw open all the Allora lands at once and test whether the demand was a *bona fide* one or not. He should vote for the motion with the understanding that, if the proposal were carried into effect, a profit and loss account should be opened for the Darling Downs district.

Mr. FRASER said he agreed with the hon. member for Stanley that the hon. member for the Darling Downs, in bringing this matter before the House and the country, had done good service. The proposal, it must be admitted, was in the direction of somewhat exceptional legislation, but it must be borne in mind that the colony was now reaping what had been sown in past times, and that this was the inevitable result of past maladministration of the land laws. If the discussion did nothing else it would point a moral and be a warning to the House to avoid the course of legislation which in the past had led to such a state of things. It was foretold long ago that the time would come when those valuable lands, parted with in such a manner, would, in the interests of the colony, have to be bought back again. Hon. members had been told that only very recently a similar course had been pursued with reference to lands equal in quality to the best of the lands on the Darling Downs, and there was not the slightest doubt that the day would come when the colony would be called upon to buy back the lands on the Peak Downs and elsewhere which had been alienated in a similar manner. He had been very much pleased to find that the Minister for Lands was so much in sympathy with the spirit of the resolution. He could well understand that the hon. gentleman might find himself surrounded with difficulties: it was one thing to look at a question from outside and quite another to deal with the same question from an official standpoint. The hon. gentleman, however, said that there were not sufficient people in the colony to have taken up the Allora exchange lands, with the exception of a very limited quantity. In that case he would like to ask who was to blame. If there were not sufficient people in the colony, why were there not? It was a notorious fact that the Government of which the hon. gentleman was a member arrested the progress of immigration almost as soon as they got into office, and since then immigration had gone on in a very lingering manner. Had the Government addressed themselves to the question of immigration as they should have done, they had, perhaps, a better opportunity than any preceding Government of bringing out a class of men who would have been glad to settle on the Allora or any other similar lands, and instead of a few thousand acres the whole of those lands might have been taken up by this time. Then hon. members were told that the colony could never become an exporting country, and that wheat could not

be exported to advantage. It would be very singular, however, if things which would succeed in other countries, not so favourably circumstanced, could not succeed in Queensland. The American growers could send wheat a thousand miles by rail, ship it to England, and sell it at a profit in Mark Lane; and, making allowance for the shorter rail transit in this country, he could not conceive that the difference in cost of ship freight could be so great as to render the export from this colony unprofitable. Could it be supposed for a moment that South Australia would go on year after year exporting thousands of tons of wheat at a loss? And if the people of South Australia could export at a profit the people of Queensland could certainly do so, seeing that the average yield was, so far as there had been an opportunity of testing it, twenty to thirty bushels to the acre, as against something like ten to twelve bushels in South Australia. Taking these circumstances into consideration, he saw no reason why hon. members, by utterances of that kind, should discourage those who were disposed to enter upon that industry. Again, hon. members were told that the farmers could not find a market for their produce; but in spite of that the farmers appeared to be in a fairly prosperous state, and comparatively few found their way into the insolvency court. It was very true that they did not make fortunes, and that they led a hard life; but, hard as their life was, it was a vast improvement on that which was led by the same class of people in the old country and in Europe. He would venture to say that if that class of people in Europe could obtain access to the lands of this colony they would find them a paradise as compared with their present locations. Various plans might be suggested by which the whole of the lands on the Darling Downs could be repurchased and thrown open to selection without any appeal being made to the Government at all, to the advantage both of the settlers and of those who might enter upon the speculation or enterprise. Though not approving altogether of the idea that the Government should be called upon to repurchase these lands, he should certainly express his sympathy with the spirit of the resolution by voting for it if it went to a division.

Mr. MILES said the hon. member for Darling Downs was to be congratulated on the able manner in which he had brought forward this resolution, and it would be well if the Government would declare at once whether they were going to assent to or to oppose it. Had they done so at an earlier stage, a great deal of talk might have been saved. If the House divided, he should vote for the resolution, although he did not think it would effect much. If accepted, it would bind the Government to nothing, but simply authorise the introduction of a Bill. Hon. members must know perfectly well that, if the land was to be recovered at all, it must be in a different way from that. The very moment the Government were put in possession of half-a-million for that purpose, all who had lands to dispose of would require fancy prices. It would be a very good thing for the State if the lands could be recovered for agricultural purposes, but this was not the way. Some of the very large proprietors, deriving immense incomes from the lands, lived out of the colony, and contributed nothing towards the taxation of the colony. If the lands could not be recovered for agricultural purposes, the Government would have to fall back upon a land tax to make the owners contribute towards the taxation of the colony. He was perfectly satisfied that the Government might accept the resolution without doing any harm whatever; but a Bill would have to be introduced for the purpose of carrying out the intention of the resolution, and

hon. members could then take proper care of the disposition of the lands afterwards. If the resolution were agreed to, the House would be about as far forward as they were now—they could not compel proprietors to sell except at their own prices. A considerable portion of the lands were not so well adapted as others for agricultural purposes, and it would certainly not be a good thing for the State to give a large price for good, bad, and indifferent land alike; and it did not stand to reason that the owners would sell the good land and retain the bad. Even if the resolution were passed, they would be just as far from recovering those lands as they were to-day. If they were recovered care must be taken that no portion of the interest on the purchase money should fall upon the shoulders of those who were not likely to benefit from it—the burden should fall upon those who reaped the benefit. Under all the circumstances, he believed it would be far better for a private person to purchase those lands than the Government, for, the moment half-a-million of money was set aside for the purpose, the owners would naturally make up their minds not to sell under £5 an acre. Perhaps the better plan would be for the Government to negotiate for the purchase without any bill or resolution at all, and the House, he felt sure, would willingly give them a bill of indemnity for any money they paid, so long as it was advantageous to the State. If the money was put into the hands of the Government it would be almost an impediment in the way of recovering the lands. If the question came to a division he should vote for it.

Mr. BLACK said that no one was more anxious than he to see an agricultural population settled upon the lands of the colony; but there was one weak point in most of the arguments that had been used in support of the resolution. Hon. members had failed to show that there was any absolute necessity for it. The House was asked to vote half-a-million of money for the purchase of a particular 319,000 acres of what was supposed to be agricultural land; and the natural inference of the public would be, from reading the speeches that had been made, that that was the last 319,000 acres of agricultural land that were left in the colony. And after all, the purchase of that land would be, to a certain extent, a further experiment, which, as far as he could understand from the results of the Allora experiment, was not very likely to be much more successful than, according to the Minister for Lands' showing, that had been. Out of the 20,000 acres purchased from Mr. Wienholt and others, only some 4,700 had been actually selected by not more than sixty-seven selectors—a fact which showed that the demand for agricultural land in that district could not be very great. With 15,000 acres of these lands yet unselected, he could not see where the necessity came in for the purchase of more.

Mr. KATES: They have not been proclaimed.

Mr. BLACK said he had no doubt they could easily be proclaimed if they were wanted; and until it was all selected, it was hardly fair to ask the House to vote half-a-million of money for making a further experiment. If the experiment had to be made, why confine it to the Darling Downs? There were plenty of other localities in the colony even more adapted for agricultural settlement. Hon. members on the other side were constantly talking about the Darling Downs as a field for agricultural settlement; whereas, if a similar scheme were proposed for some of the Northern lands, the same hon. members would ridicule it. One would almost think there was no other agricultural land open for selection in the colony. There were now 24,000,000 acres of land open for selection in Queensland; and, surely, out of that enormous area there must be some suited for

agriculture, without asking for this very exceptional legislation for the Darling Downs. He agreed with the theory that an agricultural population was above all other populations beneficial to a country; but he did not see any necessity why a few private individuals should reap the enormous benefit which would arise from devoting half-a-million of money for the repurchase of their lands. If that principle were to be acted upon, he (Mr. Black) had some land which he would be glad to sell to the Government on similar terms. No doubt the owners of that 319,000 acres, if they were not putting it to a profitable account, would very soon find that it was to their interest to cut up the land and sell it. Assuming that that land was becoming more and more unfit for grazing purposes, the owners, to protect themselves and property, would cut it up for sale as soon as a demand for it arose, and that demand would undoubtedly arise as soon as people saw that they could profitably engage in agriculture. However beneficial it might be to settle an agricultural population in a country, it ought to be first considered whether that agricultural population could be profitably employed. The statistics adduced to-night did not prove that farming on the Darling Downs was a very profitable speculation; and from the little he had seen of the Warwick district, where a great deal of wheat was being grown, it did not strike him as a locality where immigrants were likely to settle down if they were shown over the much more profitable lands in the North. The hon. member (Mr. Rea) had spoken of lands in the North where the annual return to the farmer was worth £25 or £28 an acre. If those figures were correct, why not send the agricultural population there, where they could be profitably employed, instead of taking them to a district where the Government had to begin by purchasing the land at a heavy expense, and where it was even then doubtful that the industry would be a success? He should endorse the principle of settling an agricultural population on suitable land, but he did not think a sufficiently good case had been made out for voting £500,000 for what would be neither more nor less than a gross act of political jobbery.

Mr. GRIFFITH said he only had a very few remarks to make on the motion. In the first place, he desired to congratulate the hon. member (Mr. Kates) on the admirable manner in which he had introduced the subject to the House. He was sorry he could not say so much of the speech of the Minister Lands, who, one would suppose, seemed to think that the country was entirely unfit for agriculture; that it had been tried and failed, and that the sooner people could be made aware of the fact that there was no hope for agriculture in the colony, the better. That was the burden of the hon. gentleman's speech. The hon. gentleman had changed very much since he had been in his present company. A very few years ago, as member for an agricultural constituency, he used to speak of the country as being suited for agriculture, and take up that line generally. During the short time he had been in his present company, he had apparently joined those who used to tell them that the Darling Downs would not grow a cabbage.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: Who said that? I should like to know.

Mr. GRIFFITH said that was now an historical statement, but the place which would not grow a cabbage had seemed to be getting westward. First, it was the Darling Downs, then it got as far as Roma, next it went to the Barcoo. But now it seemed to be returning again to the Darling Downs. He (Mr. Griffith) held that the

Darling Downs was one of many parts of the colony which were eminently suitable for agriculture, and the land of which would ultimately have to be devoted to agriculture. He understood that the meaning of the motion was mainly to call the attention of the House, and the country, and the owners of those large estates to the fact that owners of land had their duties as well as their rights, and that it was within the province of the Government, if they found large tracts of land not being put to the use which ought to be made of it, to interfere in order to enable the country to get the best advantage it could from those lands. He would not refer to the details of the motion, because they were comparatively of little importance; but it was quite time it began to be understood that the owners of large estates had duties to perform to the State, and that if they did not perform them they would be looked after. In every country where there was sufficient land to enable the question to arise, there had always been an agrarian question, from the time of the Romans to the present day in Ireland. All lands ought to be put to their proper use, and, if they were not, there were many ways in which the State could legitimately interfere; and it was quite certain that the colony could not afford to carry on extensive public works for the benefit of tracts which were practically waste land. The land ought to be put to some better use, and some means would certainly have to be adopted to enable the State to get its best value for what was, after all, in a certain sense, its own property. He should support the resolution.

The PREMIER said the hon. member for Darling Downs ought to feel flattered by the manner in which he had been complimented from both sides of the House; but, if he had listened attentively to the speeches of those who so much congratulated him on the way in which he had introduced this resolution, he did not think he would feel flattered. Several hon. members who had intimated their intention of voting for the resolution were diametrically opposed to what it would bring about if carried into operation; and no one differed from the hon. member so much as the leader of the Opposition. The leader of the Opposition said the lesson they were to draw from the hon. member's motion was this: that the House affirmed that the owners of property had duties to perform as well as rights. Just let them look at the motion. It asked that the Treasurer should raise by loan the sum of £500,000 for the purpose of buying back large estates to make them into small farms. Who was to reap the benefit of this enormous expenditure? Did the hon. member not know very well that every large landowner, if he were in the House, would vote for such a motion? Who was to get the benefit of such a transaction but the landowners? And the landowners themselves were the persons who instigated a motion of this sort. If they wished to teach landowners their rights and duties, it was not by buying their estates at exorbitant prices. A grosser job than that could not be perpetrated, but there was not the slightest chance of it passing. Why talk of the matter seriously? He thought, when the motion was made, that the hon. member was not serious about it, and that he really had no intention of pushing the motion. He (Mr. Kates) must know perfectly well that he had not the ghost of a chance of getting through the House a motion that would put into practice the principle embodied in this Bill. He might pass a motion like this through the House on a private night in a thin House, but he would not be one bit nearer the object he had in view. He need only refer to his colleague, the hon. member for Darling Downs (Mr.

Miles), who made the strongest speech possible against the motion, while vowing that he would vote for it. He (Mr. Miles) congratulated the hon. member on the arguments he used. They were asked to vote £500,000 for the purpose of repurchasing land to be sold to small farmers. That was a financial operation, and the business of the hon. member for Darling Downs would have been to show that, at all events, the thing was not going to result in loss to the colony; because, if there was to be a loss, the first question to ask was, on whose shoulders was it going to fall? Assuming that there would be a loss, was the hon. member prepared to say that the residents of Warwick—where he intended this scheme to come into operation—were prepared to stand as security for the money, or rather to find the £500,000 themselves, or to stand by the whole loss, whatever it might be? Were they prepared to take up that position? The hon. member would have to admit two things: in the first place, that they could not do it; in the second, that they would not do it. Where, then, was the use of going any further with the matter? If they substituted for the words "Southern and Western Railway" the words "Gympie and Maryborough Railway" there would be less enthusiasm displayed by the hon. member who introduced the motion. What did he care about putting farmers on the lands along the Maryborough and Gympie line? And yet it was just the same thing—merely substituting Maryborough and Gympie for Warwick. Why should the State spend money in order to artificially fix population in a particular place? Was it going to be a profitable financial operation? Did the hon. member mean to tell him that it would be a profitable operation to buy back £500,000 worth of land, and cut it up into small lots and sell it to small selectors? Did he mean to say that the proper machinery to employ in such a transaction would be the Government? Did he not know that all experience had shown that Governments were never able to buy land cheaply? They sold land for 5s., 10s., and in a few cases for 20s. and 30s. an acre; and when they came to buy back the same land a year or two afterwards for public purposes they had to pay £20 an acre for it, although in reality the land had not increased in value one bit. In the face of that experience the hon. member asked the Government to conduct this financial operation. Why?—because they could borrow money at 4 per cent., and the speculator could not borrow under 6 or 7 per cent. Was anything more ridiculous ever brought before the House? The Government, in buying this land, would be required to give at least double its value. The hon. member need not shake his head; it would have to do it. It would be a series of jobs throughout. He (the Premier) thought he had proved that they would have to give an enormous price for this land; and he knew that nine-tenths of the House would never allow such a principle as this to be admitted—that the loss that would accrue should be paid by the country generally. It should be paid by the particular district in which the transaction took place. This, he contended, was a financial operation which was going to result in a loss; that loss was not going to be borne by the general Government. Who, then, were to bear the loss? Who could bear it, except the purchasers of the land? It was simply a measure for raising the price of land on the farmer. That was to say, they were to settle the country by an artificial system by which the price of land would be increased, and the very men who were supposed to benefit by it would have to pay the increased price. The hon. gentleman's next business would be to bring down petitions from the oppressed tenant farmers on the Darling Downs, stating that they could not pay their rents in bad seasons and

good seasons too, and asking to be relieved from paying them. That would be his business for the rest of his political career. He (the Premier) would next refer to the argument which was used by the hon. member for Toowoomba. The whole of that hon. member's speech was this: He would vote for the resolution because it would do no harm. He admitted that it would do no good, but it would do no harm; therefore he would vote for it. Just let them consider whether it would not do any harm. Here they were living in a country which depended a great deal on its reputation in the English money market. He, as Treasurer, drew up a prospectus asking for a loan of a million of money. In that loan there was £500,000 for the purpose of buying back large estates and cutting them up for small farmers. In the money market it would be made known by various means that the colony was possessed of over 400,000,000 acres of land. They had lauded the agricultural capabilities of the colony to a great extent in every loan prospectus they had brought before the English public; but when intending borrowers examined the items of this loan they would find that £500,000 was asked for the purpose of repurchasing lands for agricultural settlement in small farms, notwithstanding the enormous quantity of agricultural land the colony boasted of. Could there be anything more ridiculous? Was it not the old bugbear that had been for years before them—the old cry of “Darling Downs,” until everybody was thoroughly sick of it? He might say that during his whole political experience he had been doing nothing else but combating the absurd notions that came from the Darling Downs, from every possible point of view. It did not matter whether ultra-Conservative or Liberal, they brought down the most absurd propositions, founded on the notion that the Darling Downs was the whole colony; and now they brought before the House the subject of repurchasing these lands, which, under a Liberal administration, were given away and had accumulated in the hands of a few owners. Now that they had been parted with, the hon. gentleman proposed that they should commence over again, buy them back, and resell them; and yet, according to the hon. member for Toowoomba, this would do no harm. No harm! He (the Premier) should like to know what construction would be put upon it at home. In a prospectus for a loan, they would find on one page that out of their enormous territory of 400,000,000 acres, most of which was of first-rate quality, only 6,000,000 or 7,000,000 acres had been alienated, and on the next page that there was no agricultural land left in the hands of the Crown in the colony, and that they were actually borrowing £500,000 for the purpose of buying large estates back again. He himself did not care whether the motion itself was carried or not, for it would never go further; he only hoped that the public would not put the same construction upon it as that placed by the hon. member for Darling Downs or the hon. member for Toowoomba; and he would beg to remind hon. members that not one of the hon. gentlemen who had expressed their intention of voting for the motion believed in it. There was not one who did not condemn it, and the hon. member for Stanley (Mr. O'Sullivan), who supported the motion in a very ironical way, told them what he was going to do when it got into committee. The motion if carried would be a dead letter, and for this reason it would be better if the hon. member withdrew it. He did not like to see hon. members stultifying, and he was satisfied that there were not two hon. members who wished the colony to believe by their votes that they approved of borrowing £500,000 for the purpose of buying back large

estates and reselling them to farmers, for that was the principle in this motion.

Mr. KATES said he was astonished at the remarks of the Premier of this colony. Because this was a matter benefiting the farming community it was to be pooh-poohed and laughed at; and, at the same time they heard so much of the transcontinental railway and other so-called productive works. He (Mr. Kates) did not wish to let the country lose or even risk a single shilling in this matter. The Premier had simply denounced what he had already done by the exchange of land, the principle of which the Government approved, and which was a great success. He thought he could entirely demolish the argument of the Minister for Lands, who told them that the settlement on this land had been a failure. Let it be remembered that it was the precedent of the present Government that induced him to bring forward this motion. And if the argument of the Minister for Lands were true, then the report of his own Under Secretary was false. Mr. Tully and Mr. Hume had reported that the exchanged lands project had turned out an unqualified success. This report was addressed to the Minister for Lands; and Mr. Hume, the local commissioner, who was constantly on the Downs, stated that there was no land left on the Darling Downs fit for settlement. If it were true that the land was not fit for settlement, why was it proposed to make a railway from Warwick to Killarney? He told the Minister for Works, when the plans, sections, and book of reference of that railway were before the House, that of forty-six blocks to be resumed only sixteen were occupied by farmers, the remaining thirty being the property of one man—the owner of Canning Downs; and that was after taking the line round to the settled portions of the district, and avoiding Canning Downs. Had he taken a straighter line, it would have gone entirely through Canning Downs; and where would the traffic have come from? Nowhere, unless the land was more extensively settled. Yet it was proposed to spend £100,000 on this railway for the benefit of a few people. It was perfectly true that there was no available land in the district fit for settlement, and he believed this motion would result in tremendous profit if carried out on the same principle as the exchange of lands project. The hon. Minister for Lands also told them last week that there were thousands of acres there ready for selection. He (Mr. Kates) could tell him there was not one inch of the land left fit for agricultural purposes. The Premier was afraid of the country losing by this arrangement, but the country would lose nothing by it. If the hon. gentleman did not like to buy this land he need not do so. If the Bill that was asked to be brought in did not suit, they could throw it out. The Premier was not bound to buy unless it suited him, and unless he saw that if these lands were cut up they would pay a handsome profit, besides giving an impetus to *bona fide* settlement. He had reason to believe that some of those gentlemen holding 60,000, 70,000, and 80,000 acres of land on the Darling Downs were willing to sell out at a low figure—at £2 5s. per acre—not £20 an acre, as the hon. gentleman tried to make out. These owners preferred selling their stations in one lot, as it would not pay them to cut them up. If they commenced to do that, they would have to withdraw their stock, and it would take them seven or eight years to do it. They preferred selling at 15s. or 20s. an acre less than they would get if cut up in lots. He had good authority for that statement.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: Name!

Mr. KATES said the hon. gentleman could find that out for himself if he liked. He knew

for a fact that some of the gentlemen holding 60,000 and 70,000 acres would be satisfied in retaining 5,000 or 6,000 acres for themselves for stud breeding, and would dispose of the rest of the land at a reasonable figure for settlement adjacent to the railway. For some stations on the Darling Downs he would not give 10s. an acre, but he referred now to land adjacent to the railway.

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS: What will you take for your lot?

MR. KATES said he would tell the hon. gentleman that directly. The hon. gentleman told him the other night that he had a large quantity of land which he (Mr. Kates) did not utilize for wheat-growing. The land he had obtained he had not come by the contrivances the Minister for Lands tried to make out, which was a false statement. Every inch of the land that he had that was fit for agriculture was brought under agriculture and was under wheat. He was one of the largest wheat-growers on the Downs, and that was the answer to the hon. gentleman as to what he did with his land.

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS: No one believes you, though.

MR. KATES said the Minister for Lands had talked about crops, and said that in good seasons farmers could not sell their crops. Could they not turn their crops into wool, if they liked? He did not like to see it go forth to the world, time after time, that it was only the owners of 20,000 or 30,000 acres who could grow wool. He held that small men, by combination of farming and the cultivation of artificial grasses, could produce five or six times as much wool, and a five or six times better class of sheep, than the big man. Only a fortnight ago Headington Hill sent down some crossbred sheep, and obtained 40s. a head, and they were fattened by the hay and pumpkins grown by farmers. Why could not the farmer do this himself? With regard to the loss that the Premier was afraid of he could tell him that he had got £8 15s. an acre for some of the exchanged lands. He could prove to the hon. gentleman that he was making an immense profit on the resumption of that land. He had given 40,000 acres of Prairie land for 20,000 acres of Goomburra land. The Prairie lands were not worth a penny more than the Cecil Plains lands, which were sold at 15s. an acre. Two acres of the Prairie land were therefore worth 30s., for which he got £8 15s. an acre. The hon. member for Mackay had told them that only 5,000 acres had been sold out of those 20,000 acres. He (Mr. Kates) might tell him at once that there were only 7,000 acres proclaimed, and how could they take up 15,000 acres of land where it was not proclaimed? There were 5,000 acres sold, when the report was sent in by Mr. Tully, out of 7,000; and since that report had been sent in there was another 1,000 acres taken up. That made 6,000 acres, and the last thousand would have been taken up also, but the people were waiting for the hon. Minister to throw open more land—and the best land had yet to be thrown open. At the price that land had sold at, the Government had cleared money and had settled a very desirable class of population. He would not again refer to the remarks of the Minister for Lands, but he would point out that Mr. Tully had stated distinctly that those lands were all taken up *bonâ fide* and settled upon. Mr. Hume also said that there was no more land left on the Darling Downs fit for cultivation, and that some parties had taken up land even where there was no inducement. It was the scarcity of land on the Darling Downs which induced him to bring forward this motion. There was plenty of land in Mackay, but there the people were sugar growers, and if farmers went to Mackay they could not grow wheat—it had not been proved that wheat could be grown

there. There was not a sufficient land on the Darling Downs for farmers to take up to grow wheat. The hon. gentleman also told them about tenant farmers, and said that the squatters on the Darling Downs would cut up the land and let it, but that was the very thing he wanted to avoid. He had read a list of fifteen or twenty farmers already on the Darling Downs who were compelled to accept leases in consequence of the scarcity of agricultural land. That was the very thing he wished to avoid, his object being to give more scope for the people to settle on the lands. They had already constructed the line from Toowoomba to Warwick, but it could not pay so long as the land on both sides of the railway was a wilderness. The line from Warwick to Kilarney would never pay unless they repurchased the Canning Downs lands. For that reason it would be desirable to take some certain steps to recover those lands by repurchase or exchange. He was not altogether bound by the principle of repurchase. Let the principle of exchange be introduced; that was in his motion. If the owner of Canning Downs wished to take up some land on the Barcoo or on the Diamantina, he could do so. That gentleman already had a run out there; and he believed he would be very willing to exchange land on the same principle that Mr. Wienholt did. They would get good land where the railway was to be constructed, and they would not lose very much by giving him two or three acres for one on the Canning Downs. The whole thing was very simple: it would become a necessity; it would have to be done. He did not want the country to lose a shilling, and if the hon. Premier did not see his way to purchase those lands at a reasonable figure that would pay to resell them, he need not do it. He had had occasion to speak upon this subject to a good many people on the Darling Downs, and every one was of the same opinion—that this should be done. It was a matter of political economy. Previous Governments had made mistakes in dealing with the lands of the colony, and succeeding Governments were justified, and were almost in duty bound to rectify these mistakes whenever such things could be done without loss to the State or loss to anybody.

Question put, and the House divided:—

AYES, 19.

Messrs. Griffith, Dickson, Garrick, Kates, Rutledge, Macdonald-Paterson, O'Sullivan, Fraser, Foote, Bailey, Grimes, Groom, Miles, Aland, De Poix-Tyrel, De Satgé, Beattie, Horwitz, and Rea.

NOES, 15.

Sir Arthur Palmer, Messrs. McIlwraith, Macrossan, Perkins, Low, Sheaffe, Scott, H. Wyndham Palmer, Stevenson, Black, Norton, Archer, Henry Palmer, Baynes, and Lamley Hill.

Question, therefore, resolved in the affirmative.

SUPREME COURT AMENDMENT BILL.

On the motion of Mr. MESTON, leave was given to introduce a Bill to amend the Supreme Court Act of 1874.

The Bill having been introduced, was read a first time, ordered to be printed, and the second reading made an Order of the Day for the 29th instant.

WITHDRAWAL OF MOTION.

MR. FOOTE said, with regard to the notice of motion No. 8 standing in his name, that, having obtained most of the information required on a previous occasion, he desired to withdraw the motion.

Motion withdrawn accordingly.

MOTION FOR CORRESPONDENCE.

MR. ALAND said he thought it desirable to give some reasons for asking for the correspon-

dence referred to in the motion standing in his name. He might say that, personally, he had no interest whatever in the matter. It appeared from what Mr. Crawford had told him that he had sent a letter of complaint against the police magistrate of Toowoomba, and that the police magistrate was requested to give a report on the same. In giving that report he said something to this effect—that Mr. Crawford was unfit to be a magistrate for the territory, that he never sat on the bench unless he had purposes of his own to serve, or a friend to serve, or something to that effect. Naturally enough Mr. Crawford did not like such an accusation as that to be made against him, and he informed him (Mr. Aland) that he sought, at the hands of the Colonial Secretary, that an inquiry be made into the matter. That inquiry was never instituted, and the result had been that Mr. Crawford's name had been left off the list of magistrates. That, however, was a question which he did not wish to say anything about. He begged now to move—

That there be laid upon the table of the House, copies of all correspondence between the Honourable the Colonial Secretary, the Police Magistrate of Toowoomba, Mr. William Crawford, and any other person, having reference to certain complaints made by Mr. Crawford against Benjamin Cribb, Esquire, the present Police Magistrate of Toowoomba.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY said he had no objection to produce the greater part of the correspondence, but there was a confidential part which he would not produce under any circumstances. He would suggest that the hon. member withdraw the motion.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS said he did not wish to offer any obstruction to the motion, except in the interests of Mr. Crawford. He had seen the correspondence, and the hon. member should take the advice of the Colonial Secretary and withdraw the motion.

Mr. ALAND said he would pay all deference to the Colonial Secretary and the Minister for Lands on this matter. He was free to admit that the Colonial Secretary a week ago, when he (Mr. Aland) tabled the notice of motion, advised him, in the interests of Mr. Crawford, not to press it. He (Mr. Aland) had mentioned this to Mr. Crawford; but a wilful man would have his way, and Mr. Crawford wished to have the correspondence produced.

Mr. KATES could endorse what had fallen from the hon. member. He himself had occasion to see Mr. Crawford last week, and, from what had fallen from the Colonial Secretary, he advised him to let the matter be withdrawn; but he gave him the same reply as he had given to the hon. member for Toowoomba. Mr. Crawford was determined that the correspondence should be produced.

Question put and passed.

RAILWAY EXTENSION.

Mr. DE POIX-TYREL said he did not know what course the Government intended to take in the matter he had to bring before the House—a proposal with regard to the extension of the railway from Stanthorpe to the Border. It was one that affected the finances of the colony very materially, as he intended to ask for a sufficient sum, whatever that sum might be. In the meantime he was prepared to move—

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: Better postpone it.

Mr. DE POIX-TYREL said he should be most happy to postpone it if it was the wish of the House. He begged, therefore, to postpone the motion for a fortnight.

Motion postponed accordingly.

DEBATE ON FINANCIAL STATEMENT.

The PREMIER stated, in answer to the leader of the Opposition, that the Committee of Supply would be taken as the first Order of the Day on Tuesday next, so as to give an opportunity for the debate on the Financial Statement.

ADJOURNMENT.

On the motion of the Premier, the House adjourned at thirteen minutes to 10 o'clock until the usual hour on Tuesday next.