Queensland

Parliamentary Debates
[Hansard]

Legislative Assembly

TUESDAY, 12 AUGUST 1884

Electronic reproduction of original hardcopy

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY.

Tuesday, 12 *August*, 1884.

Member Sworn.—Maryborough Racecourse Bill.—Patents, Designs, and Trade Marks Bill—third reading.—Formal Motions.—Native Birds Protection Act Amendment Bill—third reading.—Oaths Act Amendment Bill—third reading.—Question without Notice.—Crown Lands Bill—second reading.—Message from the Governor.—Crown Lands Bill—second reading.—Message from Legislative Council.—Adjournment.

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

MEMBER SWORN.

Mr. John Thomas Annear took the oath and subscribed the roll as a member for the electoral district of Maryborough.

MARYBOROUGH RACECOURSE BILL.

Mr. BAILEY, without notice, moved for leave to introduce a Bill to enable the Trustees of the land described in the deed of grant No. 17,135, situated in the parish of Maryborough, in the county of March, being the Racecourse Reserve, to mortgage or lease the same, and sell or exchange certain portions thereof, and for other purposes.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a first time and ordered to be printed.

PATENTS, DESIGNS, AND TRADE MARKS BILL—THIRD READING.

On the motion of the PREMIER (Hon. S. W. Griffith), this Bill was read a third time, passed, and ordered to be transmitted to the Legislative Council by message in the usual form.

FORMAL MOTIONS.

The following formal motions were agreed to :—

By Mr. SCOTT—

That there be laid on the table of this House, all Papers in connection with the Consolidation of Pre-emptives on Urana No. 1 Run.

By Mr. CHUBB—

That the House will, at its next sitting, resolve itself into a Committee of the Whole to consider of the desirableness of introducing a Bill to amend the law relating to Jurors, and to amend the Jury Act of 1867.

By Mr. BAILEY—

That leave be given to introduce a Bill to enable the Council of the Municipality of Maryborough to sell or mortgage certain land granted to the said Council as a site for the erection of a Town Hall, and to apply the proceeds to the building of a new Town Hall on other land granted to the said Council as a reserve for a Town Hall.

Bill read a first time and ordered to be printed.

NATIVE BIRDS PROTECTION ACT AMENDMENT BILL—THIRD READING.

On the motion of Mr. DONALDSON—in the absence of Mr. Archer—this Bill was read a third time, passed, and ordered to be transmitted to the Legislative Council for their concurrence, by message in the usual form.

OATHS ACT AMENDMENT BILL—THIRD READING.

On the motion of Mr. CHUBB, this Bill was read a third time, passed, and ordered to be transmitted to the Legislative Council for their concurrence, by message in the usual from.

QUESTION WITHOUT NOTICE.

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN asked the Colonial Secretary, without notice, when he intended to introduce an Additional Members Bill? It was a question in which his constituents felt very much interested.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY said: It depends very much upon the progress of business during the session. It is impossible to give a definite answer to the question just now. The Bill will be introduced as early as possible.

CROWN LANDS BILL—SECOND READING.

On the Order of the Day for the resumption of adjourned debate on Mr. Dutton's motion, "That the Bill be now read a second time," being read—

Mr. MOREHEAD said: Mr. Speaker,—Before proceeding to discuss the various provisions of this Bill, I would ask members of this House seriously to consider whether—in the face of the statement made in the Governor's Speech, that it was intended to introduce an Additional Members Bill—this Bill should be proceeded with before that other Bill has passed this Chamber and become law. It is admitted by both sides of the House that additional representation is required. As to how that additional representation is to be given, will be a question to be debated, and a decision arrived at upon it in this Chamber. It is admitted also, I take it, by the framers of this measure, that this Bill is one which greatly alters the existing land laws of the colony; and, that being so, I take it the colony should be fully represented in this Chamber before we are asked to lock up almost the whole of the lands of this colony for periods varying from fifteen to fifty years. I maintain that if we require additional representation at all—and it is admitted on both sides that we do—a Bill to provide that should precede any land legislation. There is no denying that; and I was very much astonished to hear the answer given just now by the hon. Premier to my friend the hon. member for Townsville. I do not, however, intend to delay longer upon that point. I think it is patent to everybody that there is truth and justice and propriety in the contention I set up, and I am certain that the truth and justice and propriety of it will be upheld by the people of this colony. Now, with regard to this Bill, I regret very much that the matter was not brought in in a different manner by the Minister for Lands. I regret very much also that it did not fall into other hands. I think myself it was almost unfair to put it into the hands of a tyro in politics—a gentleman not accustomed to such an arduous task—instead of its being brought forward by one of his colleagues. I think also it was not altogether a wise thing that a gentleman holding such highly pronounced, and, as far as our present land laws are concerned, revolutionary views, as the Minister for Lands holds, should have brought in this Bill. I think, further, that if this sudden and complete change in our land laws was necessary it would have been better if the Bill had been brought in by one of those gentlemen who could have explained and justified the change. I sympathise a great deal with the position in which the Minister for Lands is placed. He was, I believe, dealing with a measure which was brought in in a very different form to that which he would have brought it in had he been allowed to make it on his own lines, and, therefore, he introduced it in a very half-hearted way. It was perfectly easy to see that he did not believe in the changes that had been made in the measure as it was drafted by him. Going over some preliminary matters before discussing the merits of the Bill, I think there are several things connected with it on which we ought to have a fuller explanation than we received from its introducer. The hon. gentleman did not, in the speech he made to this House, explain to us

the why and the wherefore and the reason for this sudden change in our land system. He gave us no reason whatever; he simply introduced the Bill without any explanation of why this radical change is to be made, save and except with regard to conditional purchases. The only information we received during the recess with regard to the proposed Land Bill was this—I am sure the Minister for Lands will not impugn the accuracy of my statement: The Minister for Lands, the Minister for Works, and the Colonial Treasurer, before this House met, in various public orations, told their audiences that it was the intention of the Government to borrow a large sum of money—to borrow from £6,000,000 to £9,000,000 from the British public—and that the interest was to be provided by an increased rental from the public lands. Now, the Minister for Lands, in his speech in introducing the Bill, was perfectly silent on that point. He did not tell us how much he expected; how much the increased rental was likely to give, or whether it was the intention of the Government to borrow money, the interest of which was to be paid by the Crown lands of the colony. He never told the House that. Yet it was a most important fact if it be a fact, and one on which this House should have been fully and amply informed by the hon. gentleman. I do not myself approve of the principle that the Crown lessees, whether having small or large holdings, should pay the whole of the interest on the debt incurred by extending railways into the interior. I am sure of this: that greater benefits have been derived from that extension by the inhabitants at the terminal points on the seacoast than have been obtained by the Crown lessees. I maintain that, excepting so far as the certainty of carriage, the Crown lessees have not gained by that railway extension. Owing to the excessive charges made by the Railway Department on the staple product of the pastoral tenants—that is, wool—the rate of carriage has not in any way decreased since those tenants have brought in their wool by rail. Of course there is the certainty of traffic; that is all the gain. But what have the inhabitants of the towns gained? I should like the hon. gentleman opposite to tell me. If report is true, he paid £2,500 for some land outside Townsville which is now worth £25,000—a rise in value due to a great extent to the traffic brought in to the town through the construction of the railway. Yet it is not proposed in any way, so far as we are aware, to tax suburban lands or city property; on the other hand, we are told that the whole of the interest on the money borrowed for the further extension of railways is to be paid by the lessees of Crown lands. I think, on the face of it, that the House will admit that there is the grossest injustice in this, and that they should share and share alike. I am not a Crown lessee in any way, and I am perfectly willing—and I am sure the inhabitants of Brisbane, who benefit by the increased traffic, are also perfectly willing—to pay our fair share of the interest on the debt so contracted. I further take exception to the very sweeping change which will be effected by this measure becoming law. I protest on the part of the homestead selector and the conditional selector. Their rights are to be destroyed by this measure. The Minister for Lands has told us, in language that he cannot go back from, that he believes in the abolition of the homestead system. He quoted America and stated that it has been a failure there, and that he did not wish to see such a state of things here. He may not wish to see such a state of things here; possibly he does not; and there may be good reasons, which I may show afterwards, why he does not wish to see homesteads. But let me say that we do; and we want to know from hon. gentlemen opposite, and especially from the Minister for Lands, what is the meaning of this sudden change in their policy, when they always professed to desire to settle men on the soil? We must have some explanation on that point. With regard to conditional purchases, the hon. gentleman has told us that the Lands Office is a perfect atmosphere of perjury; that the place is full of false declarations, and that the air resounds with false oaths. He gave us a most pathetic description of the sufferings he endured in that Lands Office, and he also told us that men, who are certainly as honest as himself, are perjurers. He has quoted from the report of Mr. Commissioner Hume—a report which, I think, is likely to become historical. I will not read the quotation from that report; but what the hon. gentleman himself said upon it was—

> "That, I say, is a very correct summary of the condition of things that obtains in almost every district of the colony where homestead selections have been taken up under the Act of 1876."

That is the deliberate opinion of the Minister for Lands, after having carefully gone over this report, and considered it in all its bearings. What does the Government organ say last night with regard to that statement of the Minister for Lands. It says:—

> "It is no wonder that, though this report was written to order, it was suppressed. The Minister could not venture to let it see the light. Nevertheless, most unfortunately, a new Minister, unpractised in the crooked ways of politics, finding it in his office, and probably without consulting his Under Secretary, who could surely have told him its history, takes all this for gospel:—Was it not written as a parliamentary paper by the Land Commissioner of the district?—and makes it the basis of that part of his land policy which does away with homestead selection."

If the statement be true—and it looks very like it;—if the hon. gentleman has taken that report as the basis of his policy for abolishing homestead selections, what may not be the basis of the other portions of his policy? They may be just as shadowy, as unreal, as baseless. With regard to the provision for conditional purchases, no doubt it has in many instances been improperly made use of; but in very many other instances conditional selections have been an unmixed good to the selectors and to the country. Because certain individuals may have broken the law, is that any reason why the honest conditional selector should be debarred in the future from those rights which he has hitherto enjoyed? That is a very Cromwellian way of dealing with questions of this sort; and if the hon. gentleman sweeps difficulties out of his way in that style it is not one which will commend itself in this nineteenth century to the people of this colony. With regard to the Bill itself, one of the most important parts of it, so far as the pastoral tenant is concerned, is the 6th clause. It is quite evident, from the manner in which the Minister for Lands expressed himself the other night, that he was, and is, of opinion that the right conferred by the 24th clause of the Act of 1869 is an absolute right. The opinion of the Premier is apparently different; but the Premier will have to explain a great deal before he squares that opinion with the one he has embodied in the laws of the colony. He will have to explain, in a way which I expect he will find very difficult, the clauses that he drafted in the Western Railway Act and the Railway Reserves Act, both of which were passed by the Ministry of which he was a member. The subsection in each Act is identical, and if I read one I read both. I will take the subsection from the Railway Reserves Act, which was the later of the two, showing that no

change of opinion on the point had occurred during the interval. The right had been exercised over and over again under the Western Railway Act, and when the Railway Reserves Act was introduced the identical clause was repeated. If the hon. gentleman had seen that any impropriety or injustice had been done under the Western Railway Act, he would certainly have corrected it in the Railway Reserves Act. The 4th subsection of the 4th clause of the Railway Reserves Act states that—

"The lessee shall have and may exercise the right of pre-emption conferred on him by the 54th section of the said Act over any part of his run that shall not for the time being have been so reserved or selected, or have been proclaimed for sale by auction, or open to selection by conditional purchase, or as a homestead area."

Not only does the later Act show that the right was an absolute one, but the right given first in the Western Railways Act is increased and extended in the Railway Reserves Act. The 14th clause provides that—

"In cases where one person or firm is the lessee of two or more runs in the Western Railway Reserve adjoining each other, he may, within three months from the passing of this Act, apply to the Secretary for Lands to have such runs consolidated into one, and thereafter they shall be considered as one run, and the lessee may, if he has not heretofore exercised the same, exercise his pre-emptive right in the same manner as is provided by this Act."

Those clauses were no doubt drafted by the Attorney-General at that time—the hon. member who is now the Premier—and they have been the law of the land ever since. Can the hon. gentleman tell the House that that right is not an absolute one? Can he say that that right has not always been considered an absolute one? And I say that if this right is repudiated it will be one of the grossest acts of repudiation ever permitted by any Legislature. That right has been bought and sold, and paid heavily for, as the Minister for Lands knows. He has sold his pre-emptive right over and over again in the holdings he has had in the Western country, and he was of the same opinion then that he is now, that it is an absolute right; and I am extremely sorry that he should have become a party to this attempt to repudiate a bargain—taking the right from the person or persons who purchased pre-emptives from him. The 54th clause of the Act of 1869, read by itself, might perhaps seem somewhat ambiguous; although even then, I take it, the precedent created under that Act would have established the right of pre-emption. However, if there is any doubt about that clause, any hon. member who reads the 55th clause will see that it was a definite bargain arrived at between the Government and the Crown lessee, who chose to take advantage of the Act. The 55th clause says :—

"The Governor in Council may, by notification in the *Government Gazette*, resume from lease any portion of a run not exceeding in the whole 2,560 acres."

And it goes on to provide that if any further portion shall be resumed by Parliament—

"The lessee of all lands so reserved may require that lands alienated or selected for sale in virtue of such reservations shall be computed in deduction of the rent paid by such lessee, and the amount of rent to be remitted shall be determined by arbitration in reference to the grazing capabilities of the said leasehold."

There is the *quid pro quo*. It is also clearly laid down that there is a right on the part of the tenant in order to secure permanent improvements—which permanent improvements are set forth in the interpretation clause of the Act. It is quite clear that the intention of the Legislature was that that right was given to the tenant in consideration of the right of resumption given to the State. There can be no justification whatever, I maintain, for endeavouring to take away that pre-emptive right; and I am perfectly certain that the legal position of those who now hold under the Act of 1869, with regard to their unexpended pre-emptive rights, is a perfectly good one, and will be maintained in any court of law in the world. The Premier, I am also certain, must believe the same when he looks calmly back at the Acts which he framed, and in which the pre-emptive right of the tenants is distinctly recognised and asserted. I trust that this House, whatever land measure it may pass, will never be a party to repudiation. It was said by the hon. the Minister for Lands, that if the pre-emptive right was surrendered this Bill would provide compensation for it; that is to say, a fresh bargain would be made between the Crown tenant and the State. Some pastoral tenants may consider that this Bill provides adequate compensation, but I think the number of those who think so is very small. I maintain that the faith of the State is at stake, and must be upheld at all hazards; even if the bargain which the State has entered into is a bad one, it should be fulfilled. I will turn now to the second part of the Bill, which contains one of the most important features of this proposed change in our land law—namely, the method of administration. The Minister for Lands, it appears to me, is only too anxious to shirk the responsibility which is already becoming too irksome for him; but because that gentleman wishes it, or because his colleagues may think he has too much to do, he surely cannot expect this House to delegate his power to an irresponsible board. He stated the other night that this board was not irresponsible; but I say that in almost every particular it is an irresponsible board from which there would be no appeal, and which, with regard to many sections of the Bill, would be above this Parliament.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: A good job too.

Mr. MOREHEAD: The hon. gentleman says "A good job too," but I do not know that he will get the members of this House to delegate its functions to any board. If the hon. gentleman thinks it is a good job that the functions of Parliament should be handed over to a board, let us abolish Parliament and have all the business of the country carried on by boards. This land board is to consist of two fit and proper persons who are to get £1,000 a year each and have powers far above those of Supreme Court judges. Does the hon. gentleman imagine for one moment that two such men can be found, even if the salary were ten times the amount, who would faithfully and conscientiously carry out the provisions of this Bill? He knows very well they cannot. He amused me, and no doubt he amused the House, when he told us he could not possibly conceive that these two gentlemen could differ. If the hon. gentleman was one of them, I should like to see the other who would not differ from him. Why, I do not believe he could agree with himself for five minutes.

MESSAGE FROM THE GOVERNOR.

The SPEAKER announced that he had received a message from His Excellency the Governor, forwarding a Bill to make better provision for securing and maintaining the public health.

On the motion of the PREMIER, the message was ordered to be taken into consideration in committee to-morrow.

Mr. MOREHEAD: I think, Mr. Speaker, that some notice should be taken of these interruptions; as I know has been done in another place. It seems to me that His Excellency's Private Secretary, knowing that a debate of some considerable importance is to take place, might manage to be here earlier or wait till a little later.

CROWN LANDS BILL—SECOND READING.

Mr. MOREHEAD, resuming, said: I maintain that no two men could possibly be got to carry out the provisions of this Bill effectually—that is, if they are human.* I do not know whether the hon. the Premier has arranged to be provided with superhuman assistance. I heard a gentleman outside say that if two such men could be found they should be deified at once. The 13th clause is a very peculiar one. The first portion of it states—

"The members of the board shall hold office during good behaviour, and shall not be removed therefrom unless an address praying for such removal shall be presented to the Governor by the Legislative Council and Legislative Assembly respectively, in the same session of Parliament."

That would almost lead one to think that these gentlemen could not be removed except by action of Parliament; but, going on further, the second portion of the clause says—

"Provided that at any time when Parliament is not sitting the Governor in Council may suspend any member of the board."

So that as long as Parliament is sitting these men can do exactly what they like without fear of removal, but as soon as Parliament is out of session, the Governor in Council—that is to say, the Minister for the time being—by making representations to the Governor in Council, can suspend them. Then they can only be put back by address from either branch of the Legislature. I do not know why it should be "either branch of the Legislature"; I take it it should be by petition from both Houses. I think myself that this House will be doing a very dangerous thing if it relieves the Minister for Lands of one iota of his responsibility. Here and in all the colonies possessing representative government, as well as in the mother-country, we have always fixed the responsibility for any misdoing upon the Minister in charge of the department concerned; but by this Bill we would be providing a shelter behind which the Minister for Lands could skulk and hide himself when any wrongdoing is discovered. He would simply hold out his hands and say—"It has been done by the board; I have no power in the matter." I maintain that this is a direct interference with the rights of every inhabitant of the colony. No board should be beyond appeal. No decision arrived at by the Minister or by the Government is beyond appeal; but if this board is appointed, in nine cases out of ten provided for in the Bill there would be no appeal whatever. These men would have the absolute right of fixing the amount to be paid by the tenants of a very large portion of this colony, during the two second periods of the fifteen years' lease. No maximum is fixed, and they could put on just as much as they chose. I say we would be putting a frightful power into the hands of men who are after all but human, and must have human likes and dislikes, and human failings; we would be putting the power of financial life or death into the hands of an irresponsible board. It is a power this House would refuse to give any Minister, and would not give even to the Crown without surrounding it with such limitations as would make the subject perfectly safe. Here the power is an absolute one—absolute for good or evil. I am perfectly certain this House will never consent to pass these clauses as they stand in their present shape. While on this Part II. of the Bill I may say that I was very much surprised at not getting any information from the Minister for Lands as to the probable cost of working this new system. I maintain that the cost would be enormous. The Minister for Lands, I have no doubt, was afraid to face it. He has not the least idea how much it will cost, but he must know the cost will be a tremendously heavy one. The cost of working such a system will be five times that of dealing with our lands under the present system. I am perfectly certain of that.

An HONOURABLE MEMBER: No.

Mr. MOREHEAD: The hon. the Premier says "No."

The PREMIER: I did not.

Mr. MOREHEAD: Then the hon. gentleman admits that I am quite right, and, if that is so, why was his Minister for Lands not instructed to inform this House as to the probable cost of working this measure? He has given us no such information; he has not attempted to give us any information at all with regard to the probable cost of working this Bill, but confined himself chiefly to reading the marginal notes as he went through the Bill, after having introduced it in a very cursory sort of way. If hon. gentlemen who have read the Bill—and I think most of them have—will just look over the various clauses; if they will look at what the commissioners will have to do, and what the board will have to do, they will confess that the Bill will be utterly unworkable. Before it can come into operation, can hon. gentlemen not see what will have to be done, before even the runs can be divided? The 25th clause will explain what I mean. Let hon. members just look at what has to be done by the board in determining what the rent is to be:—

"In determining the rent, regard shall be had to—

(*a*) The quality and fitness of the land for grazing purposes;

(*b*) The number of stock which it may reasonably be expected to carry in average seasons after a proper and reasonable expenditure of money in improvements;

(*c*) The distance of the holding from railway or water carriage;

(*d*) The supply of water, whether natural or artificial, and the facilities for the storage or raising of water;

(*e*) The relative value of the holding at the time of the assessment as compared with its value at the time of the commencement of the lease:

Provided that in estimating the increased value the increment in value attributable to improvements shall not be taken into account, except so far as such improvements were necessary and proper improvements, without which the land could not reasonably be utilised."

As far as the latter part of the clause is concerned, I do not think even the traditional Philadelphia lawyer would care to have to make it out. A large number of those leases to be surrendered under the Bill will be falling in, of course, at the same time. Now it is absolutely necessary, in order to ascertain honestly and justly—and I assume that those men who are to be appointed as a board will be honest and just—that they will have to go through such a minute examination of the holdings that it will take fifty or a hundred members of a board to determine what the rent should be. The thing will be utterly unworkable, as well as enormously costly. Now, to go back to clause 24, dealing with the existing pastoral leases, and what is to be awarded to the lessees who surrender their leases under this Bill, I will point out one thing that the Minister for Lands ought to have taken into more serious consideration: A great injustice is done by the way in which he has apportioned the resumptions of different holdings. Take, as an instance, a case where the holding has been held for twenty years, with one-half of the run to be taken. Now, the hon. Minister for Lands must know that there are very few—I only know of one case—where country has been

occupied for twenty years. There may be one or two, but I do not suppose there are half-a-dozen; and in the meantime these holdings have changed hands sometimes at very high prices indeed. I may say further—which hon. members may not generally know—that those holdings were most unfairly dealt with under the Act of 1869. Under that Act there were holdings taken up under the Acts of 1861 and 1863, and their rents were fixed as at the 30th September, 1869. Most of the old holdings are on the Thompson and Barcoo; and the consequence has been that those holders who took up land under the 1869 Act have to pay a rent three times as high as those who have come after them, and further, they have been paying a very considerable rent in consideration of the time they have been occupying. In ninety-nine cases out of a hundred the runs are not in the hands of the original occupiers, who are now paying a rent double and treble that of those who have taken up land since. It must be borne in mind, further, in reference to the case of the occupant of a holding for twenty years, that he is the one who went out in the first instance and took up the country, and who in reality is the one who made and created that country. That consideration ought to have very great weight in dealing with the question of the resumption of runs. With regard to the rent that is to be paid by those lessees who put themselves under this Act, in the 3rd subsection of the 25th clause it is said:—

"The rent payable for the first five years of the term of the lease shall, in the case of runs held under the Settled Districts Pastoral Leases Act of 1876 or the Settled Districts Pastoral Leases Act of 1882, be at the rate of forty shillings, and in the case of other runs, at a rate to be determined by the board, not exceeding ninety shillings, and not less than twenty shillings, per square mile."

I do not know whether it is intentionally done or not, nor do I know whether it is usual to put the maximum before the minimum; but it appears to me to be an indication on the part of the Government as to the rent which they expect to extract from the pastoral lessees. Those holdings cannot possibly be made to pay at such a rental, and with such a reserve as is proposed to be given. Then with regard to the second and third periods no maximum is fixed at all, but I trust that, whatever else is proposed, this House will fix a maximum for both those periods. It will be certainly a very shameful thing if a lessee were at the end of five years to be weighted out by the enormous rents that may be put on him by this board. Let the occupiers of the land know that there is some finality, and that they will not have to pay a rent not fixed within the four corners of this Bill. I say it is not fair that it should be so; and I think myself that the settled districts are very badly treated in this Bill. Those districts have been treated badly by not only the present Government, but by every Government that has preceded it. I maintain, further, that the time has come when this absurd and anomalous distinction between the settled and unsettled districts should cease, and that the whole of the lands of the colony should be dealt with in the same way, excepting the sugar lands along the coast. It is not within the knowledge of all hon. members of this House that it is not from the coast runs that very great revenues are derived. There is very little, if any, sheep country in the coast districts at all; the stations are almost entirely cattle stations, a class of property that does not return anything like the sheep properties in the West; and yet this House apparently—I do not know with what show of reason—is persistently blackmailing the coast districts—giving them short tenure and high rents for many years past. I hope that when this Bill gets into committee that absurdity will be altered. I come now to the 27th clause, which appears to be a just one, but which I maintain is perfectly unworkable:—

"If in the opinion of the board any lessee exercising the right of depasturing is injuriously using the land over which the right to depasture is exercised, by overstocking the same, the board may require him to reduce the number of his stock thereon to such an extent as the board may think fit; and if the lessee fails to comply with such requisition within six months after receipt thereof, his right of depasturing shall be determined."

That is to say, that if he is injuring the land resumed from him, upon which he has a right of depasturing until actual occupation or selection takes place; but who is to prove that he is doing so? How is that provision to be carried into effect? It is another of those serious difficulties in connection with the working of the board. I now pass on to what, after all, is the most important portion of the Bill, and on which, to my mind, the future welfare or damage of this colony will really depend. We have here, Mr. Speaker, an intimation on the part of the Government that the day has come for the destruction of freeholds, small or great. They have all to go together, save and except those which will come under the extraordinary provisions relating to agricultural farms, where a man is to be compelled to live twelve years on his farm before he can get possession of it in the form of a freehold. I maintain, Mr. Speaker, that there is an innovation—a revolution—in the law which will never be tolerated in this colony. I am perfectly satisfied that the majority of this House will not say that the simple freeholder of this country shall be destroyed, while at the same time the suburban men and the town men are to be allowed to enjoy their freeholds. I hold, sir, that if we destroy homestead selection, or the right of acquiring freeholds in this colony, we might just as well shut up shop, so far as immigration is concerned. It must be evident to everyone—in fact, we all know that what brings out men from the mother-country is the desire to have a piece of land which they can call their own. That desire is implanted in every man—in every civilised being. It is a proof of civilisation; and if this is to cease to exist—if people are no longer to be allowed to acquire land of their own upon which they can make a home—we might as well strike the word "home" out of our dictionary altogether. What men would come here under such circumstances? How could we hope to compete with other countries? We are already severely handicapped by Canada and the United States, and we shall certainly be able to get no immigrants at all if we deny them the right to acquire the very freehold that they seek. I cannot imagine any more disastrous legislation for the country than that now proposed by the hon. the Minister for Lands and the Government. I have not the slightest doubt, Mr. Speaker, that it will not become law, for I am certain that no man who has any regard for the welfare of his fellow-beings, or who wishes to see the country settled—that no member of this House will support such a proposition as is contained in this clause. It cannot be shown that there is any necessity for it. The whole Press of the colony, on both sides, we find opposed to this portion of the Bill; and I am satisfied that this last shred of "Georgeism" contained in the Bill will have to be abandoned by the Minister for Lands, or his place as Minister will know him no more for ever. With reference to grazing farms, it appears to me that in its way it is quite as decided an innovation on the existing law as the destruction of freeholds. A grander scheme for dummying was never devised by the squatter's best friend. The hon. gentleman was very good in dealing with that matter up to a certain point, where he declared that his life was made weary

and his heart was made sick with all the false declarations he was compelled to read in the Lands Office, and the immense amount of corruption that was carried on by men who were previously honest, but the moment they touched land they became suddenly rogues and the whole thing was changed. The hon. gentleman's cure—his panacea for all those evils—was to invent a system making dummying easy for the tenderest conscience. That is exactly what he has done by abolishing all conditions and declarations—which, so far as they went, were of a restrictive character, as all hon. members, and the hon. gentleman himself, must know. There are hundreds and thousands of men in this colony, I thank God, who would not be guilty of making a false declaration to acquire land. Many men have had their runs taken from them because they would not do so, or because they would not wink at the breaking of the law. Therefore, I say, the hon. gentleman went a little too far, as he sometimes does, when he stood up the other night and said that almost everyone—in fact everyone, for he put them all in the same basket—who has taken up land has been guilty of making these false declarations. But this provision, sir, is to make dummying easy—easy to the most tender conscience. I am certain, sir, that should the Bill become law in its present shape the bulk of our western country would be dummied from end to end; that the whole of the resumed halves, quarters, or thirds of the runs out there would go, and the rest would go afterwards. And then, sir, what would be the position of the country? We should have fixed upon us, men and bodies of men;—because there would be combinations; that odious animal to the Minister for Lands, the syndicate, would spring into life;—we should have fixed upon us men holding enormous tracts of the best of our western country without conditions.

The PREMIER: Occupation!

Mr. MOREHEAD: Occupation can be evaded, sir, as it has been in the past, as the hon. member knows. There is nothing in the Bill about compulsory occupation.

The PREMIER: Yes.

Mr. MOREHEAD: The 54th clause is intended to prevent dummying by preventing a man from taking up land on his own half of the run; but what is there to prevent a friend taking it up for him? That is rendered easy now that the Minister for Lands has swept away all restrictive conditions whatever; and it is greatly assisted by the mortgaging clauses. I maintain that if these men get hold of those blocks of 20,000 acres you cannot shift them; and I assert also, without fear of contradiction, that if you grant them leaseholds for thirty years there is no power in the colony that will be able to move them. Once they become fixed under the Act its death-knell is sounded. Would the Government dare to evict them? Did not the Minister for Lands admit the other night that the rents of land at Allora had not been paid, and he had not the heart to demand them? Well, sir, will he dare to evict men who have held their land for twenty years, or ten or twelve years, when, perhaps, they have had to fight against most severe seasons? Will he dare to turn those men adrift and play the Irish landlord? I say no Government ever will do so; and the sooner we make up our minds to that view of the matter the better it will be. I sincerely trust that that portion of the Bill, and many others—at any rate that portion—will never be allowed to become law. It will simply strangle the colony. The mortgage clauses give an additional advantage to those who wish to dummy—a very great advantage, and a very great power. The 67th clause is one, I think, that will not be ever very largely availed of. It reminds me of the nursery rhyme—

"Dilly, dilly duck, come and be killed."

I do not think that a conditional purchaser is likely to come under the leasing provisions of this Bill. That clause will have to be left out, or I am certain that applications under it will be few and far between. The 68th clause I have dealt with before in referring to the question of the acquisition of freehold. I do not think that clause will become law. With regard to scrub lands, I would recommend the hon. Minister for Lands to read a poem which, I believe, was written by the hon. member for Maranoa, and appeared in the *Queenslander*, dealing with this question. The hon. gentleman will see it if he will look at page 217 of the last *Queenslander*. I will not read it, because the hon. gentleman might take exception to the fact that it is written without the preface "honourable." With reference to these scrub lands, I hold that scrub lands contain sometimes the best pastoral country in Australia. Some of the best pastoral country is gidya scrub. I daresay the hon. gentleman says it is not so.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: No.

Mr. MOREHEAD: Although we find that it is not the intention of the Government, under this Bill, to allow any person in the country districts to become a leaseholder, their course is very different with regard to the inhabitants of towns, and those who wish to speculate in suburban lands—who cut it into sixteen-perch allotments, which cause hotbeds of fever in a closely settled population. There is a provision made here that town and suburban lands may be sold. That is to say, the inhabitants of a city, or speculators, may be allowed to possess lands, a privilege which is denied to those who do not make their homes in centres of population. There has been more money made in large towns on the seacoast—more especially Townsville, Rockhampton, and Brisbane—by jobbing in land, within the last few years, than there ever has been made by the squatters during the same time. Now, we should all like the hon. Minister for Lands to explain why it is that these people are not to suffer. It is by no work of their own hands that they have made money. It has been by the possession of a few pounds to purchase a suitable piece of land that they acquire all these fortunes. Surely, "unearned increment" ought to suffer, and there would be no better opportunity of making it suffer. Maybe the hon. Colonial Treasurer is prepared to start a property tax, in addition to these other taxes. If he is prepared to do that, there may be some sense in the fiscal policy shown in this Bill. The 87th clause is to prevent the hon. Minister for Lands from being "had"; at least, that is the marginal note I have attached to it. He was "had" very badly a short time ago. The 89th clause amuses me. The Minister for Lands has always vaunted inside and outside the House that he is utterly opposed to the principle of exchange of any sort whatever, and yet we find a clause in this Bill for the purpose of exchanging land, and a very necessary clause too.

The PREMIER: That applies to exchanges for roads.

Mr. MOREHEAD: That clause applies to a great deal more than that. Then with regard to resumption and compensation. These clauses are most important ones; and here again the whole power of arriving at the amount of compensation is determined by the board. I say again that is a tremendous power, and a most unjust power, to put into the hands of those two men. I say that

compensation should be arrived at in the same way that compensation is arrived at with regard to railway matters—it should be by arbitration; by calling skilled witnesses and by arbitrators who are cognisant of the matter they are dealing with. The Bill says:—

"The amount of compensation to be paid to a pastoral tenant or lessee under this Act shall be determined by the board in manner hereinbefore provided."

That and the next clause deal with this matter, and I sincerely hope that both will be very much altered in committee. As the Bill stood, it will give power to this board that no judge of the Supreme Court has, or any Parliament in these colonies.

The PREMIER: Did you read the 17th clause?

Mr. MOREHEAD: Yes. It does deal with the matter; but the amount has to be determined by the board. The clauses are inconsistent. The same remark applies to clause 100. We come to some very important matter at the end of the Bill, which is certainly not the least important. It is that dealing with the lands included in the first schedule; and having looked at it, hon. gentlemen will quite agree that the term which was applied by the Chief Justice, when a Redistribution Bill was brought in—"gerrymandering"—would certainly apply very well to the boundary that was there laid down. The hon. Minister for Lands stated that the reason the southern portions of the colony—one portion of which I have the honour of representing—are not included in the schedule is because there will be danger of people coming from New South Wales and taking up the country, and doing business with New South Wales. Was ever such an excuse invented, even by a schoolboy? The hon. gentleman knows perfectly well the true reasons; he is behind the scenes. Some of the oldest holdings in the colony, out of which more money has been taken and less money put in, are in that excluded district. It is well known who occupies a large portion of the Lower Warrego. It is well known that that country is very little improved, and immense sums of money have been made out of it. On the other hand the hon. gentleman has included in that schedule the men who have made the Mitchell estates at the present time. I will take the hon. gentleman's own case—the case of Nive Downs, which had 5,000 or 6,000 sheep upon it and was not improved, but worked by blackfellows, and left almost in its primitive state. It has since fallen into the hands of those hated capitalists, who now make it carry over 200,000 sheep, and something like 10,000 or 15,000 head of cattle. All that, I take it, although benefiting those who had the courage and pluck to spend the money, has been a great benefit to the State. I do not think anyone will deny that. Then proceed a little further north and get to Tambo. The same remark applies there, on a smaller scale, the runs being smaller. Then go further down—that run, and in fact both those runs, were sold at a very large profit by Mr. Dutton and his partners. I am giving these as cases in point of runs included in the first schedule of the Bill—runs taken up with a handful of cattle, and subsequently sold, with all pre-emptive rights, for a very large sum. In the case of the South Warrego, however, we know that no such expenditure has taken place. The country is now very much the same as it was when taken up—except that from the quantity of stock put upon it it is perhaps not so good as when first taken up. We find that the punishment put upon those included in the schedule is because they are "Melbourne speculators" and "Melbourne capitalists." That seemed to be the string upon which the Minister for Lands principally harped in his concluding remarks the other night in this House. I hold that if the principle of this Bill is affirmed it should embrace the whole colony. If the principle is a right and good one, let it be applied to the whole colony. If it is to do good, let it be applied throughout the colony, so that everybody may have the benefit of it; and if it will do harm it should also, if passed, be distributed as much as possible, so that a minimum of injury may occur to any one individual. I think this an excessively inopportune time to approach any such Bill as this. No one knows better than the Minister for Lands himself, and the hon. Minister for Works too, the present state of the pastoral industry. No one knows better than they do the enormous losses the pastoral industry has recently suffered from, and I am sorry to say is still suffering from, as the relief up to the present time has been very small indeed. And yet, without any sufficient reason, even if things had been favourable for bringing forward such a sweeping alteration in our land laws, the Secretary for Lands has thought fit to add the finishing blow to an almost perishing industry, and has crowned the edifice of his folly by bringing in this Bill at this particular juncture. The losses of stock in this colony recently have been something enormous. Men who bought at high prices a few years ago and have taken nothing out of their runs—I assert, without fear of contradiction, they have not taken one shilling out of their runs, for since they bought them they have had to put everything into improvements. Now, after holding a few years, they are losing, some of them one-half, and others more than that, of their stock; and it is at this particular period that the Minister for Lands thinks fit to introduce such a measure as this. I say it is not the act of a statesman, but the act of a man who, having got particular praise in a particular direction, has deluded his colleagues into following him. I think myself that at a critical period of our history—that critical period being now reached in regard to the pastoral industry—it is a matter for extreme regret that because a man has a particular "fad" or craze, no matter of what nature, he should attempt to carry it into effect, especially when it will have the effect of locking up the lands of this colony for periods varying from fifteen to fifty years. I shall certainly oppose the second reading of this Bill, for the reason that I hold that the Bill is wrong in principle in so far as it deprives the small man of any chance of getting a freehold. It utterly destroys his chance of getting a freehold. In the second place I hold that no sufficient reason—and I should perhaps have mentioned this first—has been given for the introduction of this measure, nor has it been shown that by this measure, if it becomes law, a sufficient revenue will be derived from the Crown lands of the colony to enable us to pay the interest on the large sums of money proposed to be borrowed. Thirdly, I consider the introduction of this measure an act of repudiation, in attempting to take away the pre-emptive rights of the pastoral tenant. Holding as I do these views, and believing, and firmly believing, that if it ever gets upon our Statute-book it will do more to throw Queensland back than any legislation ever attempted, even by the party at present in power, I shall oppose its second reading.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS (Hon. Mr. Miles) said: Mr. Speaker,—This Bill is "A Bill to make better provision for the occupation and use of Crown Lands." I merely say that I have been very much disappointed in the speech just delivered by the hon. leader of the Opposition,

We all know very well that there is no subject which can be brought before any Parliament in the Australian colonies upon which members will differ more in opinion than on the subject of the land laws, and I do hope sincerely that hon. members will approach this measure in a friendly spirit, point out its defects and endeavour to remedy them. I will just go back to the passing of the first Land Bill passed by a Queensland Parliament. I will not detain the House very long. I do not wish to alarm hon. members, or that they should think I am going to make a very long speech because I propose to go so far back. I would point out that the first Land Bill passed in a Queensland Parliament was the Agricultural Reserves Bill. I do not know whether you, Mr. Speaker, were in the House at that time or not, but I have no doubt the framers of that Bill thought they were doing a very good thing; but, somehow, when they came to select the agricultural reserves, all the stony ridges and barren and useless country were selected. That was the cause of the failure of that Act, and I am only surprised that the unfortunate agriculturists ever subsisted upon those reserves at all. The next Land Bill passed was that of 1866, and that was the commencement of dummying. That introduced dummying into Queensland, and since that day it has been rampant. The consequences of that measure were the loss to the country of some of its very best lands, and lands which will have to be repurchased for the purpose of agricultural settlement some time or other—not perhaps in the way proposed by the hon. member for Darling Downs, but I am perfectly certain that much of that land will have to be bought back for the purpose of agricultural settlement. Small Bills were passed subsequent to that of 1866 to make it more convenient to get a title and so forth, but the next important Bill passed was the Land Bill of 1868. I maintain that if that Bill had been administered by a board and not by the Minister for Lands we would not need to be here to-day attempting to pass a Land Bill for the settlement of people upon the land. I thoroughly believe that if the principle and spirit of that Bill had been carried out by a board, and administered by a board, we would not be here to-day trying to pass a Land Bill for the settlement of the people upon the land. That Bill, however, also turned out to be a failure. Though it did not actually do good there was a good deal of settlement, and *bonâ fide* settlement, under it; but there was a good deal of land acquired under it in a way that was—well, rather "fishy." I do not desire to say anything unpleasant. I desire that we should all approach this Bill in a friendly spirit and endeavour to pass a Bill which will do justice to the whole community. Then we had another Bill—that of 1876. I have no doubt the framers of that Bill thought it was a step in the right direction; but I believe it was the most iniquitous land measure ever passed in Queensland. I say that, for this reason: that the Minister for Lands had the whole power, the whole control. He had the power to say how much land should be open for selection, what the area should be, and what the price should be; and in fact he was supreme in dealing with the Bill. Now, I think hon. members will agree with me that such a state of things should not exist. I do not care who the Minister for Lands may be, with all that power in his hands, and with the fact that political pressure is brought to bear upon him, the country must come to grief. Do we not know that a large quantity of the very best land in the country was sold at auction at 10s. an acre? The Minister for Lands had the power to do that, and to do it without consulting anybody. Will anyone say that, if we pass a Bill handing over the control of the lands to a board, such a state of things will exist? I think not. I say that the country has lost millions by the sale of that land. With regard to the pre-emptive right, the object of that was to enable the pastoral tenant, if his land was improved, to secure his improvements. It was never intended that the right should allow him to pick the eyes out of the country at 10s. an acre; that, I say, was never the intention of the law. This Bill provides that the improvements of a pastoral tenant will be paid for. What more does he want? A great deal has been said by the leader of the Opposition as to the formation of a land board. I have no hesitation in saying that that is the keystone of the Bill, and if it is to be excluded I should strongly recommend the Minister for Lands to throw the Bill into the waste-paper basket. It is no matter what Land Bill you pass, so long as you leave it in the hands of the Minister to control, it will fail; and therefore I hope that the Minister for Lands will see that that portion of the Bill is agreed to. We are told that we cannot get honest men on this board. Well, all I can say is, that if ever a Minister for Lands can be honest, he has to come yet. Put any gentleman in the position and he could not act honestly; but I hope that with this land board we shall obtain honesty. We are told that we cannot get two men who will agree; that any two men will quarrel. The Bill only provides for two to constitute the board, but there is no reason why there should not be a referee, and I would not mind if the Minister for Lands were appointed to act in that position. In the event of the two members of the board disagreeing, then I think it would be a fair thing if the Minister for Lands accepted the responsibility of deciding. The hon. member for Warrego shakes his head. Well, there will be two on one side and one on the other; or the Minister for Lands might appoint a third member of the board. I do not think the hon. gentleman would have any great objection to that. But still I am of opinion that the board could administer the law without any referee at all. The members of the board are to hold office during good behaviour. If they could not agree on the best settlement of the country, I should consider that as bad behaviour, and should get rid of them. I myself have the greatest confidence that if the Bill passes, and this proposed board is appointed, it will be the best thing that has ever happened to this country for all concerned. Political pressure would not then be brought to bear on the Minister for Lands. We know very well that members of Parliament sometimes get very angry when their pressure is not effectual, and threaten the Minister for Lands that they will vote against the Government. We want to get rid of all that; and I am perfectly satisfied that no member of this House, unless he wants to do some little jobbery, will object to vote for that portion of the Bill. I know myself, and not so very long ago, that if any individual wanted to purchase land by auction, if he went to a certain firm he would get what he wanted; but if he did not, the consequences were different. It is to get rid of things of that kind that the Minister for Lands proposes that this Bill should be administered by a board; and I am satisfied that if you give it a trial it will be satisfactory to all classes of the community. In its dealings with the pastoral lessees, this Bill is a permissive Bill. It does not force them to do anything, and I am really surprised that hon. members opposite should be so alarmed about it. Pastoral tenants have the option of either coming under it or staying out: if they think it is no good, they can leave it alone. We only give them a

kind invitation to take advantage of what I call the most liberal Land Bill ever presented to any Parliament in the colonies. Anyone who takes advantage of it can do so, and to no one does it apply compulsion; and I am somewhat surprised that the leader of the Opposition did not see the Bill in that light, and deal fairly with it. The hon. gentleman made some remarks about the consequences of surrender, objecting to the fact that where a lease had been held for twenty years half the run was to be resumed, while, where the lease had been held for less than ten years, only a fourth was to be resumed by the Crown. I consider that the very best principle in the Bill. Why should those who have only occupied their runs for a short time, and who are located where land is not likely to be required for settlement for years to come, be disturbed without an opportunity of recouping themselves? In my opinion, a more reasonable, fair, and just Bill was never framed. The leader of the Opposition said that, in many of the leases which had already run for twenty years, the original lessees were not the lessees now. I admit that at once, and we cannot help it; but the incoming purchaser takes the whole of the responsibility of the previous tenant. I do not know whether it is so now, but formerly, when runs were advertised for sale, if the lease was a long one—if it had fourteen, fifteen, or nineteen years to run—you would see that fact set forth in big letters, showing distinctly that there was an understood period at which the lease would terminate. There was nothing wrong in that, of course; but it showed that whenever a party wished to dispose of land, the lease of which had several years to run, he was sure to put that fact forward in the advertisement, so that the incoming purchaser knew exactly what he was buying. The hon. gentleman talked a great deal about repudiation. There is no such thing in the Bill as repudiation. We ask no one to come under the Bill except of his own free will, and we offer inducements to people to do so. We offer them security for one-half the run on giving up the other half, and we propose, on the half they give up, to pay them for their improvements. The most ultra squatter cannot object to that as illiberal. I maintain that there was never a fairer proposition put before the country. We ask nothing unreasonable. We say, "We will give you half your run on a secure tenure for fifteen years if you come under the Bill, and pay you for your improvements on the resumed half;" and we ask them to do so voluntarily. What can be fairer than that? We shall settle the land easily enough. Under the Pastoral Leases Act of 1869, the Government held the right to resume 2,560 acres on every block of leased land, and they can take the whole of the remainder on giving six months' notice. That will show the liberal nature of the measure now proposed. We are told that we are trying to unsettle the whole of the country. We have not the slightest intention to do any harm to any single individual, more than is necessary to secure the land to settle people upon it. If the first Parliament of Queensland had passed a Bill such as this is, and given people an opportunity to take up land, instead of a paltry 300,000 we should have had a population of 1,000,000. I am very anxious to see this Bill become law, and I shall say nothing unkind that will prevent it, because I am thoroughly satisfied that it is the very best Bill that ever was brought before any Colonial Parliament for introducing population to occupy waste country. What is the use of our great western territory with nobody in it? We have been told over and over and over again by the late Premier that that country is fit for close settlement. We are going to take him at his word; we are going to close-settle it. Under the Bill, a grazier can select 20,000 acres of land, but he cannot become the freeholder of it. The reason we came to that conclusion was that he makes his profit out of the natural grasses on the land. He simply puts a fence around his 20,000 acres, puts on his stock, and at once begins to grow wool or fatten cattle for the market. The agriculturist, on the other hand, has to fence the land, clear it, plough it, and before he can get a crop off it it must have cost him from £1 to £1 5s. an acre. The grazier can go in with little or no cost, and get a return the first year. That is the reason why the Government came to the conclusion that it was a fairer thing to allow the agriculturist to make his holding a freehold after ten years' residence. I feel perfectly certain that, long before that term expires, both the agriculturist and the grazing farmer will be content to remain as leaseholders. They will find that if they have any spare cash they can employ it far more profitably than by laying it out in the freehold of land. If this Bill passes we will not have the agriculturist coming down to the Government for relief. We know that under the existing law many selectors are unable to pay their rents, not from want of will, but from unfortunate circumstances beyond their control; and a good many of those who do pay have to borrow the money at enormous rates of interest. This Bill will do away with all that. It provides a small rental, which I am sure they could all afford to pay under almost any circumstances, and still a rental which is big in comparison with what we are now getting from the pastoral lessee. The hon. the leader of the Opposition twitted the Minister for Lands with not giving some figures, showing what revenue he expected to receive from the land. I am very sanguine that if this Bill becomes law we shall in the beginning get at least four times the amount of rental we are getting now, and it would be hard to tell what the amount is likely to be in five years' time. Those opposed to this Bill want to make out that the agriculturist will not be able to take up anything under 320 acres. That is perfectly absurd; they can take up any quantity they like. Then again we are told that the Bill is going to do a great deal of harm by abolishing the homestead clauses. Now, I am not going to say that the homestead clauses have not done some good. I was a party to endeavouring to get these clauses passed, for I have been always ready to accept the smallest donation in the shape of reform of the land laws; and I thought that it would be a means of settling the people on the land, and that if we did that we got a good price for the land. But what have we done? We gave away the land and did not get the settlement; and the Minister for Lands was perfectly justified in saying that these homestead leases were demoralising. You know yourself, sir, and every member of this House knows, that parents have brought up their young children to make false declarations, and magistrates have actually taken the declarations of children a little over thirteen years of age. Ought we to encourage such immorality as that children of tender years should be brought up to make declarations that they are taking up land "for their own use and benefit"? I say this is a good reason why these clauses should be repealed. They have been in operation since 1868, and, though penalties have been provided for false declarations, I defy any member of this House to say that there has ever been a single conviction; and yet we know that millions of acres have been taken up under these clauses. This Bill is not intended to encourage squatters; but we did not wish to hamper selectors

so that they could not turn round on their holdings, and so we considered it was a reasonable thing to allow an agriculturist to select up to 900 and odd acres, in order that he might have a small grass paddock for his horses and cows while cultivating the rest. The agriculturist is not debarred, if he does not choose to purchase the whole of his holding, from purchasing a part at a time. He has fifty years to complete his purchase, but when he does purchase he must pay cash. The land will be valued when selected, at so much an acre; and the price then put on it is the price at which he can buy it at the end of the first ten years. After that, the purchasing price will increase in proportion to the increase in the rent. Hon. members know as well as I do that a family, if they have sufficient capital, can take up a selection of say 20,000 acres, and the father and sons, while their stock is increasing and their wool growing, can fence in that selection, and in three years have a substantial fence surrounding the whole of it, and all that time the stock will pay the working expenses. I feel perfectly satisfied that there was never a better scheme propounded or laid down for settling small grazing farmers on the land than this Bill, and I hope hon. members will give it their support. If they do not they will be sorry for it afterwards. Whether or not hon. members opposite will support the passing of this Bill, I hope it will become law. An objection has been taken to the clauses dealing with scrub lands, but I think it is one of the most admirable schemes we could have for reclaiming a great quantity of land at present almost useless. There may be some details which require looking into, but I am sure the Minister for Lands will listen to any feasible scheme which may be proposed from either side of the House. The class of timber found on any land is quite sufficient to indicate what sort of country it is. I know of a large tract of brigalow scrub between Dalby and Roma which I should like to see taken up; and I believe these clauses will assist in attaining that object. I have not known anyone to cultivate that scrub extensively, but I believe it is capable of cultivation, and if we can offer inducements to cultivate such lands it must be admitted that we are doing the very best thing for the country. The land at present is perfectly valueless as it is, but if these clauses dealing with scrub lands are not found to be comprehensive enough and to require amendment, the Minister for Lands, I am sure, will accept suggestions from hon. members. I may say again that I do not think it is possible to frame a measure more just and more fair to all classes of the community than the Bill now before this House, and I sincerely hope that hon. members will give it their best attention. Reference has been made by the leader of the Opposition to an Additional Members Bill, and I understood the hon. gentleman to say that this Bill should not be dealt with until such a measure is passed. But why should we postpone the introduction of such an important piece of legislation for the sake of two or three members? There are enough members here to deal with the measure. I have no desire to see an Additional Members Bill put off, but I think this Bill is of much more importance than any Additional Members Bill that could ever be brought in. The leader of the Opposition has taken exception to clause 27, empowering the board to interpose if a lessee overstocked his holding, but I think that a very reasonable clause. We all know that in the old country when a landlord is letting his farms he makes a bargain with his tenants to do certain things, to grow certain crops, or to put manure on the land; and the fact of the matter is that the Government are in the same position as the landlord, to the waste lands of the colony, and it is their duty to see that they are used and not abused, and I think the clause is therefore a very useful one. You will find private owners overstocking their land and impoverishing it, but of course the Government cannot interfere with private property. The board will give the holder of the land notice that he is to reduce the number of his stock within a certain period; and if that is not done the penalty will be enforced. It is a very good provision, and one that ought to be adopted. I need say nothing of Part VII. of the Bill, which refers to town and suburban lands. Reference has been made by the hon. the leader of the Opposition to the subject of taxing those lands, but I think it is rather too late in the day to commence to deal with them. I should have liked very much if, from the commencement, the Government had dealt with them as the other lands of the colony are now proposed to be dealt with, but unfortunately that could not be done. On the whole, I think the Bill an extremely fair and just one, which will be for the benefit of the whole community if passed, and I trust that hon. members on both sides of the House will assist in making it become law.

Mr. NORTON said: I have listened with a good deal of attention to the hon. gentleman who has just sat down, thinking that he would be able to throw more light upon some of the provisions of the Bill before the House; but, in spite of the time the hon. member has spoken, he has hardly given any definite information to the House with regard to the effect which this Bill will have if it becomes law. The country, I think, is to be congratulated on the fact that the hon. member has spoken with such extreme definiteness with regard to the homestead clauses. That, at any rate, is a very great advantage—that the second Minister who has spoken should follow up the statements made by the Minister for Lands, who introduced the Bill, and who spoke in such exceedingly strong terms in condemnation of the homestead clauses. Now, before I go on, I would say, with regard to what fell from the leader of the Opposition with reference to a Bill dealing with electorates, that the hon. Minister for Works seems to have entirely overlooked the leader of the Opposition's intention. What that hon. gentleman intended to say was, not that there were not sufficient members to pass through the House such a measure as the present Land Bill, but he called attention to the fact that some of the constituencies are under-represented, and before a Bill of such importance should be passed it was a matter of very great necessity that those electorates should be fully represented in the House. The Minister for Works has told us he is very sanguine, and I hardly credited, until I heard him to-night, that he was half so sanguine as he professes to be; but I hope I may be excused if I say I do not think he is so sanguine as he pretends to be. The hon. gentleman spoke of the Bill as more liberal, more fair, and more just, than any other Bill ever introduced in this House—or, I think he said, than any that had ever been introduced in any one of the Australian colonies.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Hear, hear!

Mr. NORTON: Well, sir, that I totally deny.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I expected that.

Mr. NORTON: I hope the hon. gentleman will allow me to go on: I did not interrupt him much, and I shall be prepared to take his correction whenever he likes. I disagree with the statement entirely, and I think I can show that

the hon. gentleman has taken altogether a wrong view; that instead of being most liberal it is most unfair, and that instead of being just it is most inequitable. I must express my surprise that any Ministry which professes so loudly to be friends of the people should have introduced a measure of this nature. I have looked for the principle of the Bill, and it has many principles; but what we were led to suppose from speeches made by Ministers, before the Bill was introduced into the House, was to be the main principle of it—to abolish the sale of land—is not in it; but it is a Bill to sell land to one particular class of the people. Did not the Minister for Lands declaim the other night against "the greedy cormorants and sordid capitalists, who desire to use the land, not for the good of the State, but for their own exclusive right"? Now, sir, I would ask the hon. gentleman if that is not the class of men to whom this Bill panders? Who are the greediest of cormorants with regard to land in the whole of this colony? Is the greed with regard to land, shown by the pastoral lessees on the Downs, anything compared with the greed exhibited by town capitalists? I say it is not a patch compared to it. These are the men who are to make big profits out of the operation of this Bill at the expense of unfortunate settlers who take up small patches of land, whether they are agriculturists or grazing farmers—the men who are denied even the small concessions they have under the present Act. These town speculators are the men who are to enjoy the "unearned increment" referred to by the Minister for Lands, and which is created by the hard-working tillers of the soil; and who, as mentioned in Mr. Hume's report that has been quoted, undergo hardships in taking up and working their selections that people in town have no conception of. Take up any newspaper at the present day and read the flaming advertisements of the sales of land in the neighbourhood of town, and you will find a shameless want of truth in the descriptions given, which, to my mind, can have only one object—to deceive those who do not look at the land, and to make them believe to be of great value what is perfect rubbish. Of course it must not be understood that I refer to the hon. the Treasurer or to any member of this House in connection with this sort of business, because, of course, we know very well that they never describe anything as other than what it really is; but, according to some of the descriptions given in those advertisements, we must be living in a Garden of Eden, or some other equally perfect place. I am sure that no one who reads these advertisements and compares them with the land described can recognise the slightest resemblance between the two. And these speculators are the men who are to get the benefit of the "unearned increment"—who are to grow rich by living upon the toil of the producer; because the Minister for Lands said that they were a go-between "between the producer and the consumer." I do not hold with that statement; these are the people whom he by his Bill would enable to batten at the expense of the people who live in the country, and who have to pay enormously to save these men from extra taxation. That, sir, is what the Minister for Works now declares to be the fairest Bill ever introduced. I say the Bill is neither fair nor equitable to the people who wish to take up selections in this colony. Neither is it fair to those who now occupy the country under lease; but I shall come to that presently. If we look at the position of parties in this House, we may then get some idea of the reason why there is no attempt made to interfere with the sale of lands in the towns and suburbs. On which side are the speculators and syndicates who go in for the sale of those lands? Are they not on the Government side of the House? Those are the men who cry out about the harm done by crowding people on the land to such an extent as to be unhealthy, and yet they go and cut up the country, miles away, into what they call "suburban allotments" of fifteen perches, and sell them to unfortunate men who cannot afford to buy larger lots. I say, compare with this the condition of the tillers of the soil, who have been described as the men who are to take a similar position in this colony as the yeomanry of England. Under the present Act a man can take up a homestead selection at 2s. 6d. an acre, with five years to pay that amount, and he has to expend 10s. per acre upon it. He may take up 160 acres, for which he pays 2s. 6d. an acre, extending over five years, and on spending £80 in improvements the land is his own. The Minister for Lands says that those homestead clauses have been used to dummy lands, so that afterwards they might be transferred to the large landowners. I ask him in how many cases has that been done? Why did not the Minister for Lands, when he said that that was the case, quote from a paper to show that such was the case? What was the quotation he made use of in this report of Mr. Hume? The word "homestead" was never mentioned in it. If homesteads were referred to at all they were referred to under the term of general selections only. The greater part of that quotation referred to selections made under the conditional clauses; there was barely a reference in the whole paper to homesteads. We all know perfectly well—we do not doubt, at any rate—that great quantities of land have been taken up illegally, or, at any rate, improperly, under the conditional clauses. There is not the slightest reason to doubt that great quantities of land have been dummied in that way, and afterwards transferred to the large landholders. Hon. gentlemen on the other side say it has been done under the homestead clauses. Let them bring in their proofs. That report of Mr. Hume does not refer to the homestead clauses. In one or two places, speaking generally, it says that the dummying has been done under the conditional clauses—that, as a rule, the agricultural settlers who take up their land under the homestead clauses are not those who fail with their land. That is what the commissioner says in his report. Although he admits that it has been done in some cases, I think anyone who reads the report with any desire to get at the truth will see that there is not the slightest intention to condemn the homestead clauses as a rule, on account of the dummying which takes place in them; and I challenge hon. members on the Government side of the House—those who think or say that the homestead clauses have been used for these purposes—I challenge them to bring forward their proofs. I know that a great number of members on the opposite side—at least, I do not doubt from the dissentient cries they gave when the Minister for Lands referred to the matter—are in favour of the retention of the homestead clauses. They know that under that Act an immense deal of settlement has taken place, and will take place. I do not believe hon. members on either side will allow any Minister to abolish these clauses. They know if they do they will never come back here; at any rate, those who represent populous constituencies. Under this Bill, not only will there be no more homesteads, but no man is to get a selection at all until he has lived upon it, first, during the time he is putting up his fence—which may be two, or possibly three, years; and afterwards he must live there ten years before he can claim to

be allowed to purchase it. And what are the conditions under which he purchases it? He is not like a homestead selector now; but let us see what his position is. In the first place, he makes application for a piece of land, before he can get a license to occupy from the commissioner. That is to be referred to the board, and goodness only knows how long they will take. We must remember it is not merely a case of one or two applications being made; there may be hundreds and hundreds. All must come before the commissioners of the district in which they are made. Then the bundle of them are to be sent to the board to receive their confirmation before the man can go on the land. It may be three or six months before he can do so, and what is he to do in the meantime? He cannot commence his work; he must get outside employment if he can, or else do nothing. Is that a favourable position to put a man in who has not too much money to spare? The Government, in introducing these clauses, profess to make them available for men who have small means, and this is the way they begin to exhaust the small means such men may have to their credit. Then, having received this authority to go upon the land, they have to fence in the whole of it within two years. If we take a selection of 160 acres, which is equal to the maximum homestead selection now, it takes two miles of fencing to go round that if it is a square block; for those which are not square blocks it may take a little more. So that, if the selector has a limited amount of capital, the whole of it will be exhausted during the time he is putting up that fence. If he has no capital to go on with the improvements he will have to clear off. If there is a hard-hearted board he will be turned out. He has not only to put up his fence, but he has to live as well in some way. He will probably want a garden and yard for his milkers, and one or two other things, which will take a considerable amount of money, and when all the land is fenced in he begins his lease for the land. The minimum rent is equal to paying for ten years what he now pays for the rent of his homestead for five. The payments are extended over ten years, and £1 is the minimum purchasing price per acre mentioned in the Bill. He must reside on the land, or he must put someone else in his place. I will ask the House, is a selector who takes up land under these conditions in a more favourable position than he is now? I say he is not, and no hon. member in the House can contend that he will not be in an infinitely worse position than he is now, because he may, now, if he finds his selection is not all that he anticipated, hold on for five years, then sell it if he pleases, or leave someone else to work there, or merely keep it as a home for his family. If the five years is doubled he might be in a very different position, and the probability is that lots of men who cling to their selections, because they intend to make a home of them, will forfeit them and throw them up altogether rather than be bound down for ten years. I know many men who have not had the means to carry on and have had to go to work elsewhere. Men in that position cannot take up land at all under this Bill. The Minister for Works says we do not want men to take up land if they have not a little capital. The present Act is to make provision for men who have teams working on the road, who leave their families on their selections while they are away, and then, as they get a little money together, they are able to fence it in, and turn the land to good account. I have been speaking of the provisions for selectors under the homestead clauses under the present Act, and for selectors under the agricultural areas as proposed in this Bill, and I have endeavoured to point out the difference in the position in which selectors under this Bill in the agricultural areas would be, as compared with those who selected under the homestead provisions of the present Act. The difference is this: So far as the actual payment is concerned, under the homestead provisions of the present Act, a man who takes up a selection of 160 acres has to pay at the rate of 2s. 6d. a year for five years. He is obliged to expend 10s. per acre for improvements, that is £80; and, excepting the cost of survey, his whole expenditure in connection with his homestead at the present time is £100, and that he has to pay in five years. Under the Bill now before us, a man selecting 160 acres will have to pay the same amount in rent, with the exception that he will have ten years to pay it in; but if at the end of that time he wishes to buy the land, he will have to pay £160 in cash, or at the rate of £1 per acre, and will have to fence it in. That will be two miles of fencing, which will cost at least £60 per mile, or £120; and in addition he will have the expense of putting up his house and whatever extras he wants. The whole expense under this Bill which a selector would be put to, if he wished to select 160 acres in an agricultural area, would be £340, as against £100 under the present Act; and yet the Minister for Works told us just now that a selector would be in as good a position under this Bill as a selector of a homestead is, under the present Act. It seems absurd. Not only that, but in the first instance he must dawdle about until the survey is completed. Then he must put up a fence at a cost of £160, or if he fences it himself he will be spending his money in hand while he is doing it, and his own labour is to be taken into account; so that instead of getting his home really and truly—instead of being able to make a home in five years—he is tied down to the land for ten years, and then pays the Government £240 more for it than he now does. But this is not all, because the minimum rate which the lessee may be called upon to pay is 3d., and it may be 6d. According to the proclamation declaring the rent for an agricultural area, 3d. per acre is the lowest rent a lessee may be called upon to pay. Not only that, but he may be called upon to pay a higher rent; and whereas the lowest purchasing price is £1, he may be called upon to pay £2 or £3. That is the position. The lowest cost to him, under any circumstances, is £240 more than he pays now. I ask any reasonable man to say whether the selector who takes up land under this Bill is anything like in as good a position as the selector is now. I say he is not. Then with regard to the area of these homesteads. The Minister for Lands says that no man can make a decent living under the acreage allowed him in the present Homestead Act—that is, 160 acres. Now I ask you, sir, what is your experience? You must remember that we are dealing not with a man who takes up land merely for grazing, but who takes it up as an agricultural holding. I suppose, Mr. Speaker, you know as much in connection with this matter as anyone in this House. Do you not know, and is it not known to hon. members of this House, that on the Downs around Toowoomba and Warwick—and, in fact, on all the agricultural land of the Downs—selections of forty acres are taken up, on which men make a first-class living? Some of them are as low as twenty acres, and on one of these a man will make an excellent living. You know that perfectly well, Mr. Speaker. If the Minister for Lands went to the Downs amongst the farms as much as he should do, he would see men with less than fifty acres, making a far better living than they would do if they had 640 or even 960 acres of grazing land. Your colleague, sir, also knows that perfectly

well, by the number of men who are making a good living around Toowoomba. As to the particular portion of the Bill in reference to agricultural land, I think it has been shown very well that it is not at all essential that the limit should be 960 acres. And, with respect to that matter, the Minister for Lands the other night quoted from the report of Mr. Hume, as to what had taken place in his district. In that report Mr. Hume speaks of land a little way beyond Toowoomba, up towards Dalby, as being in fact not agricultural; or at any rate, that the selectors had tried agriculture and had not been successful. I think the hon. gentleman should bear in mind, when he quotes that report, that there are many districts in which there are just the same difficulties with regard to agriculture. But it should also be borne in mind that, where land is cultivated, it is far better to cultivate a small patch well than double the quantity badly. That is the real secret of the success of the small farmers around Toowoomba. I remember, when reading a book some time ago, seeing an old saying "that if a man farms a small quantity of land well he will get richer than if he farmed a greater quantity badly." It mentioned an instance where a man, who was not particularly well off as a farmer, gave his daughter away in marriage, and as a marriage portion presented her with one-half of his land. The result was that he became a far richer man with his smaller quantity of land to cultivate than he was before. And that is always the case with regard to husbandry; if a man fails in cultivating a small piece of land he is not likely to succeed with a larger piece. But I need not say much about that, because I know perfectly well that the intention of the Bill is to allow a man to take up as small a quantity as he likes. Why should those men not be allowed to buy land? Why should they not have homes of their own because they do not choose to cultivate the land? I have not heard any sufficient reason for it. The reason, rather suggested than assigned, is that when pastoral selections were allowed to be made people put dummies upon them, and by that means were able, in course of time, to procure large quantities of land and to form large holdings. But every man does not desire to play the part of a dummier. There are hundreds of men living now on small holdings who do no agriculture, except perhaps putting in a few acres of maize or something of that kind—who are to all intents and purposes graziers on a small scale. Why, in the name of fortune, should those men not be able to purchase land and form homes which are really homes, as well as others? I cannot conceive any reason why it should not be done. They are virtually in the same position as the agriculturist. When they take up land they have to hang about perhaps for months until the land is surveyed and the application confirmed before they can go upon it all. During the time they occupy the land they are expected to pay at least 1½d. per acre, or, it may be, as high as 3d. They are tied personally to the land, or else they must have someone in the same position as themselves to occupy it for them. They have to occupy the land, year after year, and can never by any possibility hope to get a title to it. They are simply ground down, because as soon as the land becomes of any increased value the rent may be increased; and although its value increases by their own labour the rent is increased every few years. Is that an encouragement to any body of men to make the most out of the land they settle down upon? I say it is an absolute discouragement, and there is no prospect of their getting out of it any of that "unearned increment" which falls to the lot of people who have land near towns. Those unfortunate men who take up land in the country are bound down to the most stringent conditions, and, if they fail to carry them out, forfeiture is the consequence. So far as the leasing principle is concerned we have not heard very much argument in its favour. I, for one, object to the leasing principle, although there was a time, a good many years ago, when I admit I held opinions on that subject similar to those which the Minister for Lands has advocated since he has been in the House. I was connected with another place, and in a weak moment I sent a circular round, suggesting that the land should not be dealt with by sale, but by giving perpetual leases, and charging so much an acre. I thought I was going to set the Thames on fire, but I did not. The Thames rather quenched me, and I fancy the Thames will pretty well quench the Minister for Lands before he has done with it. The leasing principle is one which a good many men have held at different times, but it has hardly ever been applied with any successful result. The only country where it is carried out on a large scale is India, and I do not think the land system of India can be applied with any sort of satisfaction to this country. In dealing with this subject we must bear in mind, as was said by the leader of the Opposition a while ago, that there is a large number of men who are animated by a desire to get a piece of land, and to make a home on it of their own. That is the inducement which has led thousands to leave the old country for Canada, the United States, and these colonies. They come out with that object in view, and few will say that it is not a right and desirable object. They do not wish to take up land simply for their own benefit, but for the benefit of those who follow them; and apart from that, men who live upon land of their own are far more likely to turn it to good account than those who hold it on a lease from the Government. In England the land is not held by the Government, but mainly by private owners, who let it out in farms of different sizes. Those owners screw all they can out of the people, just as the Minister for Lands proposes to screw all he can out of the grazier leaseholders. The result in England has been that, after a succession of bad seasons, farmers have found it absolutely impossible to carry on, and numbers of them have left the country, while the landlords have had thousands of acres thrown on their hands, to farm themselves, to graze them, or do the best they could with them. In Ireland they do not desire leaseholds. They have had leaseholds there long enough, and what they want now is to get possession of the land. Every man who occupies a farm there wants to have it for himself, and for his children after he has gone to those regions of the future which we know very little about. People in the old country are giving up leaseholds which it does not pay them to keep, and are migrating to other countries where they can make their homes on land of their own, and which their children can farm after they have gone. The desire for possession of land is one of those instincts implanted in human nature which it is impossible to eradicate. We cannot call it a prejudice, because it is shared in by all men; it is an instinct inherent in human nature. Turning to France, we find there a good many occupiers of freehold land.

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN: Seven millions.

Mr. NORTON: Do we find that there the country is reduced to an impoverished state because of there being so large a number of freeholders? We find the very contrary. We find that when France was reduced to such a

condition that no other country in Europe was ever reduced to before, she recovered herself in a comparatively few years, and that that recovery was attributable very largely to the fact that so large a number of her people were freeholders. The Minister for Works has described the present Bill as the most liberal, the most fair, and the most just that ever was introduced into this House; but it would not be difficult to show that it is exactly the reverse. It is a Bill which sacrifices the real toilers of the country; which extracts from them the very uttermost farthing that can be wrung from them; which allows the great bulk of them—the graziers—no interest in the land; and which compels them to pay an increased rent for the increased value of the land which their labour may have given to it. The Bill throws the land into the hands of the capitalists; the capitalists whom hon. members on the other side profess to despise are the men to whom every opportunity is to be offered of growing rich while paying the minimum of taxation, and at the same time the men who toil to increase the value of their land, and who can only make a living out of the soil by their own labour, are to be those who pay the maximum of taxation. Now, sir, I must say a few words about the extraordinary schedule attached to the Bill. It struck me as a most remarkable division of the country when I looked at the map which has been hung on the wall of this Chamber; and the explanations which I have since listened to, about cutting that slice out of the bottom, do not seem to me to be at all satisfactory. I cannot conceive that it would be such a terrible thing for the people of this country, if a few men from New South Wales settled down there, and were to send their goods to New South Wales, because it was cheaper than to send them here. What do those who are there now do? Would it be worse for us that a number of smaller men should have business connections with New South Wales, than that the large landholders who now occupy the land should do so? Are we to wait till we get a railway down there, in order that the men who hold those millions of acres should continue to hold it? If the New South Wales lines can carry their goods more cheaply than ours—as has often been asserted in this House, though I do not think it is the case—then we shall not secure the men who settle down after the railway is completed. I cannot help thinking there is some other deep reason behind that. That country has been occupied for years; a great deal of it had been occupied for years before I came up in 1860; and I ask why the people there should be cut off when others are within the boundary, who have only taken up their runs during the last few years. What is the necessity for this division between settled and unsettled districts at all? Why should men who have taken up their runs inside that boundary within the last two years be placed in a worse position than those who have held runs outside for twenty or thirty years? I ask hon. members to look at that narrow strip on the map running along the northern coast; there are men there who have taken up their runs only during the last two years in country never settled before, and they are to have leases of only ten years, and others who have occupied the country for twenty years or more are to have leases of fifteen years. I have always objected to that arbitrary division of settled and unsettled districts, not that I wish the settled districts to gain any particular benefit that they ought not to have, but simply because there is no principle at the bottom of it. They are just as much entitled to consideration as those who live on the outside; yet, as the leader of the Opposition said, they have always been sacrificed to the settlers who live outside the boundary. I should like to hear a better reason than has yet been adduced for cutting off the lower part of the country. I think anyone who knows the condition of that country—the terms under which it is held, whom it is held by, and how—will come to the conclusion that there is every reason why it should be included in the first schedule—that is to say, if there is to be a first schedule at all. There is no reason why some should be left out and others put in. If it is a benefit to runholders—as hon. members on the other side claim it is—give all the benefit of it; do not make fish of one and flesh of another. Let us have all treated in a prejudicial way, or all beneficially. Now, I have a few words to say with regard to that clause which provides for the abolition of pre-emptive right. I was glad to hear the Minister for Lands speak of pre-emptive right as a right, during his speech here last week, although I noticed his hon. colleague the Premier was in a great hurry to correct him. I do not think anybody who has gone carefully into this matter will fail to admit that it is a right which was intended to be given at the time the Act was passed, and which has been a right ever since. I shall read a short extract from the 173rd page of vol. ix. of *Hansard* for 1869. Mr. Taylor was Minister for Lands when this Bill was introduced, and this is what he said in reference not only to pre-emptive right, but to leases:—

"He now passed on to the 40th clause, which provided for a further extension of lease, and made the full term of lease thirty-five years."

That applied to the renewal of fourteen years when the first lease of twenty-one years now current had expired. It will be seen that the Government of the day intended this fourteen years as an inducement to lessees to settle, for we must bear in mind that at the time this Bill was passed there had been a great many failures on the part of the pastoral tenants to occupy that northern country. Numbers of runs had been deserted, and the liberal intention of this Act was to induce people to go back and occupy that country, and therefore the terms were made of the most tempting character. Mr. Taylor then went on—

"The next clause he considered to be of importance was the 54th clause, which was as follows:—"

That is the clause applying to the pre-emptive right, which I need not read. Having read the clause he said—

"He thought that was a kind of pre-emption that was liberal, and should be acceptable to all parties. He recollected that the Darling Downs members, at one time, were very much abused because they would not concede to the northern and outside squatters the right of pre-emption. He must say that he did not see the use of such right to the squatters in the outside districts; for there was not the remotest chance of their runs being interfered with for very many years to come. However, this clause gave the right of pre-emption, and though it said only 2,560 acres, he had no doubt the quantity might be extended."

Now hon. members on the other side say, and say very properly, that that right was given in order to enable the pastoral lessees to secure their improvements. So it was, but that is not the question we have to deal with when talking of the abolition of that right. It is not a question of what was intended to be given altogether, but what the Act then gave. Now I say the Act gave people that right, that if they only put a hut on the land they had the right to the selection. If they only put a four-railed yard on that land they had a right to take up the whole of that selection if they pleased. Improvements in the Act are defined as "permanent buildings, reservoirs, dams, and fencing." But there is no reference to the amount of money to be spent at all. It is no matter what the improvements amount to, because, as described in

the interpretation clause of the Act, be they ever so small, the lessee of the land is entitled to take that pre-emptive selection. I know what the intention of the Act was, but that is not the question. The question is, what a tenant can claim if he goes to law, and I believe there is not the slightest doubt that if he puts a small horse-yard, or a hut, or well, or any improvement of that kind on the land, he is entitled by law to secure the improvements. I do not say that it is a desirable thing that tenants should have that right, but I think, if they have it, and if they have had it, although it was not intended, we have no right to take it from them without giving them what they consider full and fair compensation. The Minister for Lands says, "We propose to give them compensation;" but I would point out that if they are to have compensation at all the compensation allowed under this Bill would apply only to those tenants within the land mentioned in the 1st schedule. If the 6th clause of the Bill passes it will take the pre-emptive right from every holder of a run under the Act of 1869; whilst the compensation which it proposes to give applies only to the men inside the boundary, and all those outside of it will have the right taken from them. Then again, we are told that, by way of compensation, if the land is taken from them, they are to be allowed the value of their improvements. They are allowed the value of their improvements under the present Act. If land is resumed under the present Act, the holder has to be paid for the improvements, and the only compensation which is not allowed under the present Act is for taking any portion of a run while the lease is current, and giving the value for that part taken. Now, under the present Act, pastoral lessees have to get six months' notice, and that is all they get for the loss by resumption. They get no compensation for the land taken from them; and rightly so, because the object in putting in that resumption clause is, that if land is wanted for any public purpose it shall be taken from the lessee for that purpose. The land is leased with that understanding, and therefore the lessees are not entitled to any compensation. All the compensation they are entitled to is given by the present Act. The Minister for Works, when he was speaking a short time ago, referred to the intention of this pre-emptive clause. We know what the intention was well enough, but if we were to be guided by the intention we might also be guided by the intention with regard to other portions of the Act; and it is as plain as it possibly can be, and no one who chooses to read the debate that took place on that Act can doubt, that the intention was not only to grant twenty-one years' leases, but to give the lessees an additional fourteen years' right. It is plain that the intention was to give them the right of that extension; and if we were to be guided by the intention of the Act, then we might give them the benefit of that intention to extend their lease for fourteen years. If we are to take intentions into consideration at all we must take the whole of them, and under those conditions we must give them their pre-emptive and their extension of fourteen years. Now, with regard to this land board, I cannot understand any Government professing to feel respect for representative government proposing to appoint such a board. I can understand a Minister for Lands proposing to appoint a board which will not take the responsibility off his shoulders; but this is a convenient way of disposing of his responsibility and shunting all the onus on the board. The Minister for Lands said he would have a much higher responsibility if this board were appointed, but I would like to know what Minister would be likely to accept a higher responsibility than he has at present. I do not think any man would, and I am sure the hon. gentleman's responsibility even now is greater than he cares to acknowledge. And, feeling that, I do not think it at all likely that he would expect that any Minister would be likely to accept voluntarily any higher responsibility, such as he says this Bill will entail upon him. The board, I believe, will be unworkable in every respect. It is impossible that any two members can work together as has been proposed; and not only that, but I believe the work thrust upon them will be so great that it would take a dozen boards all their time to keep the work clear. The Minister for Lands knows that it is very hard to get through the papers that come before him now, but if a board like this was formed and the whole land transactions of the colony had to pass through their hands, there would be an immense deal of fresh work thrown into the office. All that would have to be dealt with by the board. There is scarcely any one thing which would not have to be referred to them for their approval, and the result would be that a selector would not be able to go upon his land as soon as it was surveyed and within a reasonable time, but would have to wait for his application to be confirmed by the board. Why, sir, I believe that, with a board of two working this Bill, a selector applying for land might have to wait eighteen months or two years before he could get a chance of going on. I do not believe for one moment that the board will work in any possible way. Possibly one man might work, but the Minister must take his own responsibility. It is all very well in a Crown colony to shuffle responsibility on to the heads of departments; but I say that, in any other colony that values responsible government, the very last thing that should be allowed is the establishment of a board of this kind, which is supposed to take the whole working of the Act on its shoulders and bear the responsibility of it. But the board is bad in another respect. It is said that the Minister would be unable to interfere with the board; but I say he would be able to interfere with them in a much greater degree than at first appears. During the time the House is not sitting he may suspend either or both members of the board, and when Parliament met, if neither House wished that the member of the board should be reinstated, then his suspension would become permanent—in fact, equivalent to dismissal. Now, what might be the position of a corrupt Minister who wished to influence the members of the board? We may suppose that any Government—any strong Government, at any rate—can command a majority in both Houses, and if the Minister of such a Government were corrupt, and he used his undoubted influence on both members of the board—which he could do by threatening them with suspension which actually meant dismissal—he would be free to take almost any action he liked, and could exercise the most improper influence upon the board. With regard to the settled and unsettled districts, I wish to say a few words. It is proposed that in the settled districts the lease of a run shall be ten years, without any regard to its position; and that in the unsettled districts the tenure shall be fifteen years for the half left to the lessee. What is the reason for this? Is the mere fact of drawing an arbitrary line through any part of the country, and calling one part the settled and the other the unsettled districts, any reason why a man on one side should be placed in a different position from a man on the other? There are men outside the settled districts who have held their runs for years and years, and I say that that country

should be given up to the public whenever it is required, whether it is inside or outside the settled districts. And I say, also, that to place men in the northern country, who have only recently taken up the land, which cannot possibly be required for years, in the same position, and limiting them to ten years, while holders in the unsettled districts are to have fifteen, is absurd. I hold that, whether the country is in the settled or the unsettled districts, the lessees should be placed in the same position with regard to the rent under the Bill; in the settled districts it is to be at the rate of 40s. per square mile for the first five years, and in the unsettled districts anything from 20s. to 90s.—probably it will be placed somewhere near the lower sum. Now I would ask anyone who knows the country whether that inside the settled districts, along the coast, is worth as much as the country in the unsettled districts? At any rate I am quite prepared to give the hon. gentleman my run for his, if he will make an exchange. I will be quite willing to do that, and I think that any gentleman who holds runs in the settled districts would be quite as ready to exchange their holdings for land in the unsettled districts, with their present rent. There is no mistake that, for pastoral purposes, land outside the settled districts, or a great part of it, is worth double the land inside; and yet it is insisted that in the settled districts the rent shall be 40s. per square mile for the first five years, and in the unsettled districts it shall be from 20s. to 90s. for the first five years. For the second five years the minimum in the settled districts is to be 40s.; and in the unsettled districts, the second and third periods of five years, the minimum is to be 40s. and 60s. respectively. I say there is nothing like equality in that, and that if the Bill was framed fairly, as the Minister for Lands said it was, the outside men should be charged much higher than is proposed to be charged to the inside men. Then they would pay rent something in proportion to the value of the country. The present system, I say, is most unfair to both, and it has always been so ever since I have had anything to do with it; and the object of this Bill is to perpetuate that unfairness under the professed intention of introducing a liberal measure. One other matter strikes me as being very extraordinary. Under the 54th section of the Bill, no person who is a lessee or owner of a run is to be allowed to take up a selection on the half of his run which has been resumed, and the reason given is that he should not interfere with other selectors. That simply means that a man shall not select on the resumed half of his own run; but he may do so on his neighbour's run. If that is not one of the most villainous things that could be introduced into a measure of this kind, I do not know what is. It would set every man against his neighbour. The Minister for Lands knows very well that some men do not object so much to their neighbours coming in; at any rate they prefer them to strangers; but I say that to encourage men to come in in the way proposed under this Bill is disgraceful. There is no reason whatever why a man should not be allowed to select land on his own run. The only difference is that it is more valuable to him than land elsewhere; and I suppose that is the reason why he should be refused. I do not intend, sir, to go through all the clauses of the Bill. The hon. leader of the Opposition has already said a good deal that I might have said had he not referred to these particular matters, and I have no doubt that other hon. members who are to speak will touch upon them. There was one statement made by the Minister for Works to-night, however, that I cannot help referring to. The hon. member, in trying to bolster up his recommendation for the appointment of a board, said that whoever undertakes the position of Minister for Lands will not be long in office before he is a rogue. Did he think of what is the meaning of his words? There are a good many men who have held that position in this country, and does the hon. member mean to say that any man who has held the position of Minister for Lands is a rogue? Is that really the hon. member's opinion? I am sorry for him if it is. There is an old saying that "One who can think so low of his fellows must have a very peculiar twist in his mind." I do not believe the hon. member does think it. He knows that every man is subject to influence. He may be subject to improper influences; but I do not think there are many men who occupy that position who will deliberately become rogues during the time they are there. Those who are rogues when they leave that office are rogues when they go there. They may not have shown themselves so before; but at any rate they must be rogues at heart, if the rascality is developed in so short a time. The Minister for Lands also said that he believed the present Act would have been a very good one indeed; but it was bad in its administration, and if it had been administered by a board instead of a Minister, it would still have been a very good Act in every respect. In fact, we should never have been called upon to pass another Bill of the kind. I do not agree with him in that: I believe if the hon. gentleman had had to deal with a board instead of a Minister he would have found how much more difficult it was to satisfy those who desired to utilise the land than it is at present. I think it very possible that, at times, Ministers may have allowed an improper influence to sway them to some extent. I have said all with regard to the board that it is necessary to say, and I believe that if the Bill is passed, with the board constituted as it is proposed to be constituted, there is not a member in the House who is most in favour of it who will not, in a very few months, come to the conclusion that it is a failure. However good two men may be, I believe it is utterly impossible that they should fail to clash on important matters. If there is to be a board at all, let it be a board of three or five: do not have an equal number. In preference to a board, if the Minister is not competent to do the work—if he feels that he is incompetent to do it—I say that it would be far better to appoint one man who can undertake that responsibility of, or, rather, undertake the practical working of the Act, and make the Minister be responsible for all that he does. The Under Secretary occupies very much the place that this board would occupy. He has not the same power, but he has almost all the powers that he ought to have; and although he is responsible to the Minister, the Minister is responsible to this House; and every Minister, whatever office he may occupy, ought to be responsible to this House and responsible to the country. I cannot conceive anyone who professes to value responsible government proposing a board of any kind which can have the effect of relieving a Minister of the responsibility attaching to his office. For my own part I think there are things in this Bill which are most objectionable. I believe that the leasing principle, instead of the freehold, is objectionable. I object to the responsibility being taken from the Minister, and I object, if the principle of leasing is to be adopted at all, that the power of buying should be taken from grazing farmers, who are as much entitled to select land, and form homes of their own, as men who go in for agriculture.

I may point out that although we may, by legislative enactment, force a certain amount of agriculture to be carried out, it is just possible, in doing so, to make the country pay sixpence for a loaf of bread, which, without these legislative compulsory clauses, we might buy for twopence.

The COLONIAL TREASURER (Hon. J. R. Dickson) said: Sir, I have been giving my attention, during the speeches of the hon. member for Balonne and the hon. member for Port Curtis, with the object of discovering some tangible ground for the objections which these hon. gentlemen have directed against the Bill, and I may say that, although the speeches have been of a fair length, the hard nuts of objection, when the chaff is all winnowed away, are very few in number. I think that my hon. colleague, the Minister for Lands, has shown great ability and statesmanship in the able manner in which he has produced this Land Bill this session, and the criticisms which have hitherto been directed against it have signally failed in weakening any parts of it, or any of the observations made by my hon. colleague. I am of opinion that the country must now admit that the Minister for Lands has produced a measure which, in all respects, goes far in advance of anything which could have been anticipated. I believe that even those hon. gentlemen whose duty it is on the other side to be in opposition to the measure must themselves admit that it possesses a greater number of good points than of evil features; and, from all I have heard yet said against it this evening, the matters objected to are more matters of detail than actual principles of the Bill. I do not claim for the Government that they are likely to introduce a measure of such vast importance as a Land Bill which will be acceptable to the country in all particulars; yet I am convinced, from the discussion on the Bill so far, and from an attentive perusal of it, that it is a measure which is calculated to do an immense amount of good. It is introduced at an appropriate time, and I trust that before it passes through committee it will be as perfect a Bill as it can possibly be made. I claim, therefore, for my hon. colleague, the Minister for Lands, that instead of having exhibited himself as a tyro in land legislation, he has introduced a measure which, I believe, if hon. gentlemen opposite would speak their own feelings entirely apart from political proclivities, they would admit is one which far surpasses anything which they really expected could be introduced from this side of the House. It has been said that every gentleman who aspires to be a statesman has a Land Bill of his own in his pocket, and we know from experience that of all subjects which can be introduced for legislation—in this colony at any rate—that of the land laws is essentially the most difficult. It raises at once class antagonism; and its introduction and discussion come within the category of party politics, and usually raise very hostile party feeling. Such a subject is sure to evoke a considerable amount of warmth in its discussion. In that light alone, land legislation is surrounded with considerable difficulty; and, under such circumstances, many Governments do not care to face this very important question. Very important it undoubtedly is, when we remember that we have only settled what we may call the fringe of the colony, and that we have yet nearly 500,000,000 acres of land to be settled, and, I hope, in time to be closely settled, in the true development and prosperity of this country; when we recollect that we are merely the pioneers of this immense country, and that all our legislation hitherto has as yet been of a tentative character, we must all agree upon the vastness of the subject before us. We should endeavour to meet it in as friendly a spirit as possible. I believe it is almost impossible for us to divest ourselves of our own views and opinions, as seen through our political spectacles, and perhaps it is our weakness that it should be so; at any rate this is a measure which should have very careful consideration, if the question is to be settled on a satisfactory basis. It undoubtedly unsettles everything to have land legislation frequently tinkered at and tampered with, and I trust that, whatever form this proposed land legislation may take in committee, it may be shaped in its passage so as to be, after due deliberation and consideration, placed on our Statute-book and prove a permanent benefit to the country for many years to come. One of the first and most forcible objections to the Bill as it appears before the House was raised by the hon. member for Balonne, and I fully recognise the force of the argument he made use of. He stated, what was perfectly true, that Ministers, and myself amongst the number, when addressing our constituents, laid considerable stress upon the fact that by this land legislation of the present time an augmented revenue would be derived, which would be a sufficient justification for entering upon an extensive and vigorous works policy, which I trust will in due time be enunciated to the House. It was a fair statement for the hon. member for Balonne to make, and I accept the position. An answer could not be given directly at the time, but it will doubtless be shown when the Financial Statement is made. In anticipation of that I will direct hon. gentlemen to what the revenue now is in connection with land held by the pastoral tenants of the Crown. We have at the present time under pastoral occupation in the unsettled districts an area of 304,384,640 acres of land; or, as the rent is paid per square mile instead of per acre, it might be more intelligible if I mention that the area in square miles is 475,601. That is in the unsettled districts. In the settled districts we have 11,162 square miles of country.

Mr. MOREHEAD: What!

The COLONIAL TREASURER: I say we have in the settled districts 11,162 square miles held under pastoral occupation, or 7,143,680 acres. These figures are taken from statistics in the Lands Department, and hon. gentlemen opposite need not imagine by any interruption that they will interfere with the proposition which I wish to submit to the House. It is totally irrelevant whether there are 300,000,000 or 400,000,000 acres, or so many square miles. It is this: We are deriving from territory held in the unsettled districts, in the way of revenue, £216,000 per year, or at the rate of 9s. 1d. per square mile; and from the settled districts we are deriving revenue at the rate of 38s. 4d. per square mile. In the one case we are receiving a little less than a farthing per acre per annum, and in the other a little less than three farthings per acre per annum. Now this is what I want to point out, and hon. members will at once see where the obligation of increased revenue undoubtedly comes in under this Bill, because under it, from the unsettled districts, instead of 9s. 1d. per square mile, which we are now receiving——

Mr. MACROSSAN: The rent is 12s. 7¼d., not 9s. 1d.

The COLONIAL TREASURER: I have got later returns than that. Hon gentlemen will see that by the Bill the rate payable for the first five years shall in the case of runs in the settled districts be not less than 40s., and, in the case of other runs—namely, in the unsettled districts—not exceeding 90s. per square mile, and not

less than 20s. I need not, I say, pursue the question as to where the increase of revenue comes in—it is evident in itself. Again, that is only to be on one half of the runs, and the other halves of the runs, held under grazing farms and agricultural areas, will, of course, produce a very much larger rental. I do not anticipate, immediately, a very large income from the Bill. It will take time to be introduced, and bring the pastoral lessees within its limit. It will also take some time to induce the selectors of grazing farms and agricultural areas to come under its operation. But there can be no doubt whatever that the provisions of the Bill must very largely conduce to an increased revenue from our land occupation. I say, therefore, that the hon. member for Balonne has entirely failed in his contention that the Bill does not give an increase in the revenue. That is a matter which I shall enter into more fully at the proper time, when the finances come under discussion; but in the meantime I think I have shown that the Bill does provide for an increased rental from the pastoral tenants, and also a considerable increase from land in agricultural and grazing occupation. Now, sir, great stress has been laid on the fact—and hon. gentlemen opposite spoke in an injured tone—about the pre-emptives being abolished in this Bill, assuming that that was an unassailable right conferred by the Act of 1869. Hon. gentlemen seem entirely to ignore the fact of the *quid pro quo* given by the Bill. A pastoral lessee can come under the operation of the Bill if he chooses; if he does so he will surrender one-half of his run, and get what may be called a permanent tenure for fifteen years of the other half, on one condition—a condition that has been entirely lost sight of by hon. members opposite—that is, that when the fifteen years expires he receives full compensation for his unexhausted improvements. He is therefore placed in a better position than he stands at the present time with what is called a "right." That right is a point on which I shall not enter, because there is a difference of opinion as to whether it is or is not a permanent right conferred by the Act of 1869. Be that as it may, I hold that pastoral tenants who come under this Bill will, with compensation for unexhausted improvements at the termination of the fifteen years, be in a great deal better position than they are now. I say again that hon. gentlemen have entirely ignored that fact. The hon. member for Port Curtis asked why holders of grazing farms should not have the right of acquiring the fee-simple of their land in the same way as holders of agricultural areas. I contend that if the hon. gentleman had paid any attention to the remarks of the Minister for Works he would not have troubled the House with such a question, because the Minister for Works clearly pointed out that the holder of grazing land has the grass-right of his land only; while the agricultural holder puts into the soil his time, his money, and his labour, and for such investment he has the right to acquire the fee-simple. The former, with only his grass-right for thirty years, has not the same claim to consideration as the holder of an agricultural farm. It seems to me that the hon. member for Port Curtis mistakes the very scope and intention of the Bill. The intention of the Bill, and also of the Government, is not to induce the alienation of land by sale of the fee-simple, but to encourage settlement by lease, thereby providing a larger and more permanent revenue in the future. That is entirely what hon. gentlemen opposite seem to have misconceived. They think the Government are restricting—and undoubtedly we are—the inducements to the public to buy land in fee-simple. We say we want such an Act as will encourage the profitable occupation of the land by leaseholders, because no man can lease unless he occupies. That is what the Government desire to enforce. They want to see the country occupied profitably, both to the occupier and the country. That is where a distinct issue has been raised, and I am glad the hon. member for Port Curtis has put it so forcibly. In his remarks he deprecated the action of the Government in restricting land alienation. We admit it; and we accept it as laudation. We say that we do not wish so much to encourage alienation as occupation, and that in such a manner that people who take up land must occupy it if they wish to retain possession; if they do not want to remain in occupation they will not retain possession. They are bound to make use of the land to put it to such profitable use that it will promote, not only their own prosperity, but the great future of the colony. I was sorry to hear the hon. member for Balonne make an *ad misericordiam* appeal on the state of the perishing industry of the pastoral tenants of the Crown. I do not think that any hon. member of this House, or the public, will believe for a moment that the pastoral industry is perishing. I should be sorry to recognise the fact, because it undoubtedly has been the great mainstay of the colony—the great pioneer of industry in Australia. It has really attracted settlement and opened up the country, which was still further developed by the subsequent discovery of gold. I am sure, however, that no one who considers for one moment will believe that it is either a perishing industry, or that it is, in the slightest sense in a state of decay. This Bill is intended to encourage grazing occupation. It is undoubtedly a fact that since Australia was occupied pastoral enterprise has been chiefly confined to men of large means. They must either be wealthy, or they must form syndicates, to carry on pastoral occupation on anything like the scale in which it is now carried on. I think it is unsatisfactory—to use the mildest word—that the very backbone of the great staple industry of the colony should be solely confined to men who count their capital by hundreds of thousands. Why should not pastoral men of small means have an opening in the same direction? We know that at the present time there are plenty of men who have had large colonial experience—men who have served for years on stations—who are entirely precluded from advancing beyond the position of "supers"; there is no possibility of them acquiring an interest in any large pastoral holding. Why should not those men have the opportunity of taking up grazing farms? That is what the Bill contemplates. The object is to legislate so as to provide an opening for these men as well as for other classes in the community. The hon. member for Port Curtis, in his opening remarks, said that the Minister for Works had more strongly opposed the homestead principle than the Minister for Lands.

Mr. NORTON: As strongly.

The COLONIAL TREASURER: I certainly did not understand my colleague, the Minister for Lands, to condemn the homesteads themselves, so much as the abuses which had been connected with the homesteads. That was the light in which I understood him, and that was the direction in which the remarks of the Minister for Works chiefly went. I frankly say that I received *cum grano salis* the statement of Mr. Hume; I prefer my own observation to any official reports. I cannot shut my eyes to the

fact that a great deal of good has been done by homestead selections, and I should certainly like, if possible, to see some attempt to formulate the principle in this Bill. I am amused at the great interest which hon. members opposite are now taking in the poor man.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS on the Government Benches : Hear, hear !

The COLONIAL TREASURER : It is quite a new *rôle* for them to assume. One would think a general election was approaching, for their consideration for the poor man is somewhat distressing. And if we, on this side, who are supposed to trot out that amiable gentleman on certain occasions, are charged with insincerity, what shall we say of those gentlemen who profess so large an interest in him this evening? I say I admit, from personal observation, that the homestead clauses have done great good though they may have been abused, and I would like to see an approach to their being formulated in this Bill. But hon. gentlemen must remember, when they talk about the homestead clauses and the easy acquisition of land, that those clauses did not enable a man to rent his land for fifty years. Here a man need not acquire the fee-simple of his land for a much longer time than under the homestead clauses. It is perfectly true that under those clauses he acquires it at a very small rate of purchase, but he has to pay for five years continuously. Here he can take up an equally small area. True, the rent is larger, but he has a longer time to pay it in, and that is a feature which hon. members opposite have overlooked. Whether that can be considered a *quid pro quo*, as a compensation for the omission of the homestead clauses, is a matter on which hon. members will, no doubt, express an opinion. Something, perhaps, may be evoked by discussion in committee on this matter. And there is this further to be said: that the man who takes up an agricultural area under this Bill, if he surrenders at the end of his lease, gets paid for his improvements, a consideration which the homestead selector does not receive at the present time; and that of itself shows that, while the small selector under the Bill may not acquire his land in such a short time as the homestead selector, yet he can acquire land on very easy conditions indeed. Hon. gentlemen opposite have shown, as I have stated, a very great interest in the poor selector this evening ; and I am somewhat surprised that their sympathy has not been directed to the 50th clause. Why did they not come forward and say that the selectors may impound the squatters' cattle, as the squatter now does with the selectors'? Why did they not come forward in a complete *rôle* of philanthropy on the present occasion? Instead of that, they simply catch at the homestead clauses, and omit any reference to the present state of the law regarding fencing, the only reason for the continuance of which in the present Bill is that it is the existing law. I must confess it is a very bad law and very unfair, but I have not heard a word about the advisability of altering the principle from hon. gentlemen on the other side.

Mr. MOREHEAD : It is your Bill.

The COLONIAL TREASURER: But hon. gentlemen opposite criticise it, and in the interests of the class whose champions they profess to be on the present occasion they might say something more on this subject.

Mr. MOREHEAD: You are the squatters' friend.

The COLONIAL TREASURER: I do not intend to follow the hon. member for Port Curtis in—what I consider to be quite outside the mark—his endeavour to institute a comparison between the action of the Government in dealing with their Crown lands, and the action of private individuals in cutting up lands for sale ; but I will follow him in one argument. He said, in pointing out the great wealth of France and its ability to stand the immense strain caused by the exaction of the German indemnity, that it was entirely due to the fact that the land was divided into small freeholds.

Mr. NORTON : I did not say so.

The COLONIAL TREASURER : The hon. gentleman said that France is extremely wealthy through the scheme of subdivision of the land, and the land being held in small freehold areas by a peasant proprietary, who cultivated it to the fullest extent. To that he attributed her accumulation of wealth, which enabled her to bear the strain of the German indemnity. But the same thing would have resulted if the land were held on leasehold. It is not the size of the holding, but the manner in which it is cultivated, that tends to the wealth of the holder, and to the wealth of the country. That wealth is not necessarily due to the mere fact that the land is freehold.

Mr. NORTON : I never said so.

The COLONIAL TREASURER : The hon. gentleman laid stress on the fact of the holdings being freeholds ; but my contention is that, whether freeholds or leaseholds, it is the close occupation and settlement of the agricultural districts of France that has tended to make it such an immensely wealthy part of Europe. A further objection was to the constitution of the board—in fact, to a board at all. I am inclined to think that hon. gentlemen will agree it is well to remove the land administration of this colony from political influences as much as possible, and in that light I am certainly of opinion that a board is much more desirable in the true interests of the State than having it entrusted to a Minister, who, though he might not be a rogue, as the hon. member for Port Curtis said——

Mr. NORTON : No ; it was your colleague. I repeated what he said.

The COLONIAL TREASURER : Without becoming dishonest or losing his integrity, would be subject to political pressure.

Mr. NORTON : I hope the hon. member will allow me to correct him. I was quoting the words of the Minister for Works, who said that any Minister who was long in the Lands Office was bound to become a rogue or a thief.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS : We shall have a leading article on that to-morrow.

The COLONIAL TREASURER : I am not willing to support my hon. friend in the opinion that a Minister for Lands, under such circumstances, would become a rogue ; but I will support him in saying that a Minister for Lands is only human, and being human it is almost impossible to resist the pressure constantly brought to bear upon him. I am, therefore, of opinion that the formation of a board—whether of two or three members is a matter for the House to determine—is a decided improvement on the administration being confined to a Minister. It has been said that the tenure under which they will hold office is faulty, but it is the same as that under which the Auditor-General holds office. He is removable by a vote of both Houses of Parliament. The position of the proposed board will be exactly the same as that of the Auditor-General.

An HONOURABLE MEMBER : No.

The COLONIAL TREASURER : An hon. gentleman says "No." I think he had better refer to the Bill again and to the Audit Act.

The hon. member for Port Curtis then proceeded to argue that a corrupt Minister, having a large majority in both Houses, could displace this board if he felt so inclined. That is a puerile argument. The hon. gentleman might as well say that a government could do most unjustifiable acts when supported by a large majority. If that kind of thing were carried to its fullest extent, it would be subversive of the fundamental principles of representative government or government by majorities. I am surprised that the hon. gentleman, who occasionally gives the House some creditable speeches, should raise an objection that is totally unworthy of him. Then the hon. gentleman objects to the schedule. I have little to say about the schedule except this: that those pastoral lessees whose runs are outside the land intended to be dealt with in this Bill can by their motion come under the Bill. They are not excluded, but to a certain degree it is unwise that the whole of the colony should be proclaimed at once to come under the Bill. The advantages of coming under its provisions are very obvious, and I have no doubt many of the lessees will follow that course. I do not intend to trespass longer on the time of the House. I have confined myself to dealing with what I consider the most valid objections advanced by hon. gentlemen opposite, and I trust I have refuted them. I hope the House will proceed with this measure, and judging from the criticisms directed against it by hon. members opposite, who have signally failed to make any breach in it, I trust we may congratulate ourselves upon having submitted to the country a measure which, when it passes this House—and I have no doubt it will pass very much in its present shape—will be a vast benefit to the country.

Mr. NELSON: I move the adjournment of the debate.

The PREMIER said: I am surprised at hon. gentlemen on the other side moving the adjournment of the debate at this hour. The debate was adjourned from last Tuesday, at the request of hon. members on the other side, that it might be proceeded with this week, and now it is proposed to adjourn at this early hour. Surely, hon. members do not wish to protract the debate unnecessarily! I apprehend that it will proceed in the ordinary manner by speeches from one side or the other. Of course, the Government cannot consent to an adjournment at this hour.

Mr. MOREHEAD said: I think the hon. the Premier cannot have given due consideration to what his hon. colleague the Colonial Treasurer said. The hon. gentleman indicated a complete change of policy in connection with the Bill, and told us that the homestead clauses would be restored to the Bill. Surely, when he has given us a complete change of the policy of the Government in regard to this measure, it is time we should consider an adjournment of the debate! We have had two distinct expositions from different standpoints, one from the Minister for Lands and the other from his hon. colleague the Colonial Treasurer. I am sure that every member on this side of the House, and every member on the other side, who listened to the Colonial Treasurer must have been startled at what he said about homestead selections; and that being so, the hon. member for Northern Downs or any other hon. member is perfectly justified in moving that the debate be adjourned. It is not unreasonable to ask for an adjournment. Had things gone on on the lines laid down by the Minister for Lands, the debate would no doubt have proceeded; but we have an entirely new departure introduced by the Colonial Treasurer.

The COLONIAL TREASURER said: It is almost unnecessary that I should rise to knock down the statement or argument which has been advanced by the hon. member. I introduced no new feature whatever into the Bill, and made no promise to introduce any new feature. I simply expressed my own opinion upon the past operation of the homestead clauses, and I also expressed a hope that something approaching them may be considered by the House. I made no promise whatever on behalf of the Government. The Bill is not under my control; it is under the control of my hon. colleague the Minister for Lands. It is not the slightest use hon. gentlemen attempting to adjourn the House upon such a fictitious representation as this.

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN said: I should imagine, from experience, that the Bill which we are discussing was discussed in Cabinet by all members of the Ministry. We were told distinctly by the Minister for Lands, when he moved the second reading, that he gave up or subordinated his principles to the prejudice existing in favour of freehold lands. That must have been thoroughly discussed in Cabinet before the Minister for Lands consented to abandon his principles in favour of any sentiment or any prejudice. Therefore the Colonial Treasurer must have had sufficient time to consider whether it was advisable to abolish the homestead clauses or not. That hon. gentleman has now come out of his shell, in consequence of the criticism the Bill has received, to say he thinks the Bill could be improved by some modification which would allow the homestead clauses or something like them to be introduced. That is certainly a great departure from the principle laid down by the Minister for Lands. The Minister for Lands has also departed from his principles, which I consider unworthy of a gentleman holding the opinions of Henry George, as he is understood to do. All who have read Henry George know well that that gentleman asserts that the possession of land by a private individual is public robbery—so much so that the land should be taken from him without giving him any compensation, by imposing such a tax on the land as will prevent his obtaining any of the usufruct beyond the poor living the occupier can get out of it by tilling. If, therefore, the Minister for Lands is a disciple of Henry George, he must be abetting what he believes to be a robbery, in giving way to the sentiment to which he says he did give way. With a principle of that sort in the breast of one Minister, and a principle of another sort in the breast of another Minister, who believes in the alienation of land, as far as the small selectors are concerned, there must be something very incongruous; and we are certainly justified in considering that a new departure has been taken, and that the Minister for Lands will still further have to sacrifice his principles to sentiment and prejudice. The Colonial Treasurer has told us—though I do not think he quite believed what he said—that we were posing now in a new attitude as the poor man's friend. If we are posing in that position, the hon. gentleman and his colleagues are posing as the squatters' friends, as I shall prove by-and-by when I come to speak on the main question. The reason for that is because there are strong squatters in the Ministry. The Minister for Lands, with all his proclivities in favour of Henry George, cannot give up his old ideas about squatting, and even Henry George cannot overcome the old man in the hon. gentleman. As far as hon. members on this side are concerned we are not posing as the poor man's friends; but as far as the homestead clauses are concerned, the poor man, if you choose to call him so, is indebted to hon. members on this side for the privilege of taking up 160 acres at half-a-crown an acre. The homestead clauses originated with

hon. members on this side; afterwards, the number of acres was curtailed one-third by hon. members on that side; and, finally, we reimposed the clauses giving him leave to select 160 acres. We are not, therefore, posing for the first time as the poor man's friends, if we are posing so now; but we are posing in favour of settlement and selection of freeholds. It is nothing new to us to advocate the homestead clauses; it is what we have always done, and we shall make it our endeavour to reimpose the homestead clauses in this Bill in such a way as to induce even a greater settlement on homesteads than has taken place hitherto. The hon. gentleman might very well adjourn the debate. It would not take very long to discuss the principles of the Bill, so as to come to a division on the second reading. Another night, I am certain, will be enough.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: No fear!

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN: Then there must be a good deal of speaking to be done on that side, because not only are we few in number but some of those do not speak at all, and those who do speak are not in the habit of making very long speeches. Under the circumstances, it might be as well for the hon. gentleman to give way and adjourn the debate.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS (Hon. C. B. Dutton) said: One would suppose there was nobody in the House but the hon. member who has just spoken who knew anything about the origin of the homestead clauses, or the way in which they came to be supported by the other side. I happen to know something about the question. Those clauses were thrown as a sop to the poor people of the colony so that the squatting party might, under the operation of that Bill, secure to themselves the enormous freeholds they now possess in the settled districts, and for no other purpose. Those who are now posing as the poor man's friends were securing the bulk of the country for themselves. Look at the condition of the Darling Downs at this moment! No matter where you go, you find a small fringe of 160-acre settlement round those enormous holdings. The men who brought about that state of things are now trying to make the 160-acre men believe that they are to be shut out from the occupation of land in small quantities; but the latter do not seem to understand that, through the action of those men, when they look over the boundary fence of their 160 acres they can see only enormous freehold estates, without any opening to their sons, except as labourers to those large freeholders or tenants on their estates. That is the ultimate outcome of it. The opportunities given to small freeholders under this Bill are infinitely greater than those given under the homestead clauses, because they are not restricted to such miserably small areas. If they are not misled by the arguments of hon. members on the other side—and I do not believe for a moment they are likely to be—they will take up land on far easier terms than they can under the old system, and far more of it, so far as is consistent with fair dealing to every other class in the community. It is a principle of the Bill that no one class, whether poor or rich, shall have any special privilege over any other class; and I am quite certain that the homestead selector will never claim any special privileges for himself. Our desire is to give equal rights to all, and no privileges to any. No class will be able to acquire large freehold estates, simply because it has possession of capital, or to use it in such a way as to bring those men who have no capital under their control as tenants or labourers. That is what this Bill does amply provide for; it enables these men to secure their holdings on the same terms as men with larger means can acquire theirs. That is a fair and equitable principle, and the only one upon which a free State should ever act, giving equal rights to all and privileges to none.

Mr. BLACK said he was sorry that the Minister for Lands should display such gross ignorance on a subject with which he, above all members of the House, especially as a Minister, should be conversant—that was, the amount of land held under different conditions in the colony. He had led the House to believe now that the acquisition of large estates—which he (Mr. Black) admitted was to be deprecated in a colony like this—had its origin in the abuse of the homestead clauses.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS on the Government side: No, no, no!

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: I object to such a misinterpretation of what I said. What I did say was that they offered this as a sop to the men who occupied these small freeholds, whilst they were securing large ones for themselves.

Mr. BLACK: The Minister had given them to understand the other day that these homesteads were taken up for the purpose of being turned into big estates.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: No.

Mr. BLACK said the whole of the Ministry were going back on their principles, and it was hard to know what they did mean. The hon. gentleman had undoubtedly said so the other night, and had given the House to understand just now that the Homestead Act had led to the formation of large estates. Well, what were the figures? Out of 10,000,000 acres alienated up to the present time only 621,000 had been taken up under the Homestead Act, and the conditional selections amounted to 3,422,534 acres; so that there were only about 6,000,000 acres of freehold in the colony; and a very small portion of that had been taken up under the Homestead Act considering that that Act had worked marvels in the country generally. It might not have worked well on the Darling Downs, but he maintained that throughout the colony generally, and especially the agricultural portion of the colony, it had been the chief means of promoting the settlement of the colony. The Homestead Act had been the chief inducement to immigrants to come out from home; and the action of the Minister for Lands in denouncing the Homestead Act, and saying it had been a fraud on the country—an opinion in which he believed the Minister for Works had supported him—would not be received with favour amongst the *bonâ fide* settlers. The Colonial Treasurer, seeing the weak spot in the Bill, had endeavoured to lead the country to believe that he at all events was innocent of this change of programme. It was undoubtedly a change of programme, and a most decided change. The Ministry themselves were so divided on the principles of the Bill that he thought the members on his side were perfectly justified in asking for an adjournment; because the Ministry might come down on a future occasion with a perfectly different Land Bill. This was not the Bill the Minister for Lands had given them to understand during the recess that he was going to introduce. He had given them to understand that he was opposed to freeholds of any sort in the colony. He had abandoned that principle, but he had abandoned it only as far as the poorer classes of people were concerned, leaving the principle of freeholds intact in all the large centres of population where he was afraid of the votes being turned

against him in case of an election. They found a new phase had been imported into the Bill; one Minister was in favour of homesteads and two were opposed to it; and so he thought they were perfectly justified in asking for the adjournment of the House, especially as he understood it was the intention of the other side to propose an adjournment till next Tuesday.

Mr. KELLETT said he was rather astonished at the idea of adjourning the House at so early an hour, especially when the subject was one which had attracted so much interest that they found the galleries all full of people who had come anxious to hear the discussion. He thought it was rather indecorous of hon. members, to say the least of it, but perhaps the hon. gentlemen on the opposite side had not so good a view of the galleries, and so were unable to appreciate the interest displayed in the debate. He thought, however, that there was one reason in favour of the adjournment; that was that the hon. members on the other side were all abroad; they were like lost sheep in the wilderness. He was happy to say that the shepherd, Sir Thomas McIlwraith, was coming, and he hoped he would bring his flock round and get them into better order. He thought that perhaps, under those circumstances, the Premier might agree to this adjournment.

Mr. STEVENSON said he hoped that when their leader did come back he would not sack them as he did the hon. member who had just spoken. He hoped they would not be banged about as that hon. gentleman had been by Sir Thomas McIlwraith. The hon. member was wrong in saying that an adjournment of the House had been asked for; it was only the adjournment of the debate; and he thought it had been asked for on very fair grounds. He had heard an honourable member opposite say he desired the adjournment, and that it could be arranged if the members on their side wished. It was well known that it had always been the custom—a custom of which he disapproved—to adjourn the House for the Toowoomba Show; and if the House sat late, hon. members would not care about getting up as early in the morning as they would have to do. He himself would like to go to the show, but he could not very well do it unless they adjourned at an early hour. He thought, too, that there was something in the contention of the hon. member for Stanley. It seemed to him very desirable that the leader of the Opposition, Sir Thomas McIlwraith, should be considered in this matter. He was perfectly satisfied that there was not a member of the House who would not be glad to see that hon. member taking part in the debate. He thought it would only have been courteous on the part of the Premier—knowing that this was the only day this week on which the Bill could be discussed, and that if it were adjourned to next Tuesday the leader of the Opposition would be able to attend—if he had not brought on the debate at all, but had had it adjourned without waiting for any motion from the Opposition side of the House.

Mr. ALAND said he believed the hon. member who had just sat down referred to him when he spoke of a member on that side wishing for an adjournment of the debate. He certainly had expressed his readiness to support a motion for its adjournment, but he had no idea it would be proposed so early in the evening. He thought it would be a fair thing for the House to adjourn about 10 o'clock. However, he had no objection to the adjournment of the debate, and he would support the motion now before the House.

Mr. MACFARLANE said the hon. member for Normanby, in sitting down, said it would be a good thing for the Premier to adjourn the debate, in consequence of the expected arrival of Sir Thomas McIlwraith. Now, he (Mr. Macfarlane) respected Sir Thomas McIlwraith perhaps as much as any man in that House did; but the Premier had a duty to perform to the country. The country had been looking forward to the Land Bill for a considerable time. The debate had been adjourned for a whole week for the purpose of giving hon. members on both sides time to take the measure into consideration. The night had now come for the debate to be resumed, and there had been a considerable amount of feeling and interest displayed outside of the House, as could be proved by the crowded state of the galleries that night. He was, therefore, sorry that the adjournment of the debate had been proposed; but if it was intended to go on with other business, he should not oppose the motion. If it was intended to go on with the debate, he would say now what he had to say upon the measure.

Question—That the debate be adjourned—put.

Mr. NORTON said: Before you put that question, Mr. Speaker, I would like to say a few words by way of correcting a mistake made by the Colonial Treasurer. The hon. gentleman accused the Opposition side of the House with posing as the poor man's friends, and he referred particularly to the argument which I had used with regard to homestead selections. Now, I do not wish any mistake to be made about my argument. I contended that hon. members on the other side pose as the poor man's friends, and do so in the most ostentatious manner. I say this Bill before the House, so far from being a poor man's Bill, is a Bill which panders to the capitalists and land speculators. That is my impression. The Bill prevents selectors from taking up land under the same conditions under which they can take it up under the present Act. There is no comparison between the advantages that they enjoy under the homestead provisions and the provisions of the Bill now before us. Under this Bill they will have to pay for a homestead of 160 acres £240 more than under the present Act. Now, my contention is this: that the Bill shuts out the rights which the poorer classes of the community now have—the poorer classes who live in the country—it shuts them out and excludes them from the privileges they now enjoy, but it makes things easy for the capitalist who wishes to speculate in town and suburban land. It is all in favour of the capitalist and speculator, and the advantages which working men now have of making a home for themselves are taken from them. They can only secure a home of their own, provided they go in for agriculture and remain on their selections for ten or twelve years. As compared with the homestead clauses, the opportunities for the poorer classes of the community of benefiting themselves are as different as they possibly can be. That was my contention; and what I say now I said before, and will say again, that the Bill is a Bill for the benefit of the capitalists and landsharks. That is the term I think was used the other night. It enables land-sharks to speculate in land, to cut it up in little allotments and sell it to the working man who prefers to have a place of his own in or near town rather than pay rent. It enables capitalists to make large fortunes out of their speculations. Why, I know of members on the other side of the House who have done so. I have had a piece of land pointed out to me, out of which a great deal of money has been made by an hon. gentleman opposite; and I know a piece at Toowong that the Attorney General has made a nice little "pot" out of. If such men can get advantages like that, why should the poorer class be denied the same privilege?

The PREMIER: We are discussing the Land Bill.

Mr. NORTON: I am sorry the Premier should get so cross—there is not the slightest reason for it. I do not choose to accept the statement made by his hon. colleague. It is not my fault that the hon. gentleman has brought in this Bill for the advantage of capitalists, and has ignored the working men. It is his own doing, but I am not going to accept the position which the Colonial Treasurer proposes to thrust upon me, in order to evade the position in which he has placed himself.

Mr. PALMER said he believed he was in possession of an invitation to the Toowoomba Show. He also had an invitation last year and enjoyed himself on that occasion very much, and he was looking forward to the trip to-morrow; but he was certain that if the House sat late he should have to forego the pleasure. He intended, of course, to support the adjournment of the debate, and thought it should be adjourned, if only in deference to the expected arrival of Sir Thomas McIlwraith.

Mr. SMYTH said it was not fair to the country members that they should be kept waiting in town week after week during adjournments. He had been waiting since last Thursday for the House to meet that day, and now, after sitting a few hours, it was proposed to adjourn again until next Tuesday; at least, so he understood. Some hon. members wished to adjourn until the leader of the Opposition arrived; and others so that they might attend the Toowoomba Show. Last week they adjourned for the Rosewood Show; next week there would be the show at Bowen Park, and then, perhaps, there would be some other excuse for adjourning. What were hon. members such as the members for Burke, Gregory, Rockhampton, Wide Bay, and other places to do during those adjournments? He should certainly support anyone who objected to such waste of time.

Mr. FOOTE said it was a great mistake that the business of the country should be delayed for the purpose of allowing members to attend country shows. He did not wish to speak disparagingly of any show. No doubt the show at Toowoomba would be a very interesting one; but he quite sympathised with country members who came down to do the business of the country and were compelled to waste their time walking about Brisbane until the House met again. He also thought the other reason advanced by the Opposition in support of the adjournment—that they should wait until the return of Sir Thomas McIlwraith, so that he might be able to take part in the debate on the Land Bill—was not sufficient. Under any circumstances, the debate on the second reading could not be concluded this week, and therefore Sir Thomas McIlwraith would have ample time to take part in the debate on the second reading and also in committee, which was an equally important stage, because it was in passing through committee that all amendments were made, and a Bill was really made a good or bad measure. He should support any hon. member who called for a division against the adjournment.

Question—That the debate be adjourned—put and negatived.

Mr. MACFARLANE said: I should like, at the outset, Mr. Speaker, to say that with the leading principles of the Bill I agree pretty much, but there are some details that I hope to see very considerably amended in committee. I shall not refer to-night to any particular clauses, but propose to deal with the leading parts of it. I approve very much of the appointment of the board, provided for in Part II., for this reason: that in the past there has been so much land lost or wasted to the colony, that I think it is high time that some change was made for the purpose of securing our lands for the purpose of settlement. It has been said by some that the board will not work, because the Minister at the head of the Lands Department ought to take up his proper position and work independently of the board. But, sir, the difficulty in the past has been that Ministers at the head of that department have not been able to take up the position they ought to have taken. We have never yet had a Minister so immaculate that, when pressure has been brought to bear upon him, he has steadfastly refused to give concessions to his friends; and hence large areas of land have been given away. To obviate that evil, the Minister for Lands very wisely proposes to establish a board, and if the Bill is ably and honestly administered it will prove of great benefit. I think honesty has as much to do with the matter as ability. There are plenty of able men in the colony, and there is no reason why an able man should not be an honest man, and I say that with one honest man in the board—one man above suspicion—a man who will not only give satisfaction to the Ministry, but satisfaction to the country—I say if we get one able man and one honest man on that board it will be impossible for the country to be robbed in the future as it has been in the past, because the honest man will keep the able man right. I do not intend to make a long speech, but will pass on to the next part of the Bill, which deals with existing leaseholders. Now, sir, in the past the existing leaseholders in this colony have had great advantages, and the Bill proposes to give them great advantages also; in fact, I look upon the Bill as a honest attempt to do justice to all classes of the community, and yet not to favour any. I think it would be well if the Bill was a little better understood outside the House. I do not intend to say that it is not understood inside the House, but outside a considerable number of people do not really understand the working of it, and I think when it has been discussed it will be better understood than it is at the present time. In reference to the present pastoral leaseholders, I think they have held long enough the privileges that they possess, and that the attempt made in the Bill to halve the stations and cut up the resumed halves into smaller stations, as it were, and into agricultural farms, is a very fair way of endeavouring to settle the people on the land. There is, however, one thing I should like to throw out as a suggestion. I think it would have been more satisfactory to the country if the Bill had not proposed to give renewed leases to the stationholders in the inside or settled districts, because I believe that, if we halve the runs in the inside districts, the demand for small stations of from 5,000 to 10,000 acres will be so great that we will not have sufficient land to meet the demand. Not only will present farmers, who have worked themselves up from something very insignificant in the colony, want to take up grazing farms, but I believe there are hundreds and thousands of men in the other colonies, as well as people from the old country—England, Ireland, and Scotland—who will be only too anxious to take up land in that way; and therefore I fear, if we resume only half of these runs, there will not be sufficient land to supply the demand. I should therefore have been glad if the Bill had had a clause in it providing that the leases in the inside districts should not be renewed. In the outside districts I think the persons who risk their lives and go to a long distance are

entitled to some compensation. They are entitled to more than those in the inside districts. Therefore I think they would be justly entitled to at least a twenty years' lease, and if their runs are required at any time for agricultural purposes or for smaller stations they are justly entitled to compensation for all their improvements, and also for being turned out before their leases have expired. In reference to grazing farms and agricultural farms, I think the Bill proposes to give too much. In some districts it proposes to give 20,000, and in others 5,000 acres. We cannot settle too many people on the land, and I am afraid that we will not have so very many blocks of 20,000 acres to give away; more especially as one person may have 20,000 acres in one district, and 20,000 acres in another, not ten miles away. That is a dangerous clause. If a man get 20,000 acres, he ought to be satisfied with that, and leave the other 20,000 acres to some other person who comes in at a more recent date. I shall be very glad if the areas are not so large as the Bill proposes, and I hope hon. gentlemen will do what they can in committee to make it a Bill that will be satisfactory to the country at large. There is another thing in the Bill which I find is giving a great deal of dissatisfaction to nearly all classes of the community, and the farming portion in particular. That is, that they have to complete their fencing in two years. If a farmer is ambitious and takes up 960 acres, the amount of money it would take to build a house in the first place, and then fence the land, will be more than most men with small means will be able to accomplish. I think that in the case of anyone taking up land, either as an agricultural farmer or a grazing farmer, it will make very little difference to the Government whether the period for fencing is two years or five years; because the farmer who takes up the land has it to his interest to fence it to keep everybody's cattle from running over it. Therefore, it is to his interest to fence as soon as possible, and, seeing that he is paying rent, I do not think it would make much difference to the Treasury if the period is extended. That is, however, a point which will very likely come up in committee, and if no one else does anything to improve it in the direction I have mentioned, I shall take the opportunity myself to increase the time from two years to five years. Much has been said about homestead selections, and that homesteads are not mentioned in the Bill. The hon. Treasurer threw out a hint, as they took it on the other side, that the Ministry had departed from the principles of the Bill; but I did not understand him to mean that they had given up any part of the Bill, or that they would make any alteration in it. The hon. gentleman simply wished to meet the opinion of the people outside. The Bill proposes to give a fifty years' lease to the agricultural farmer, and also that at the end of ten years he may purchase his land. It will be far better if we allow them to purchase the land during the whole of those fifty years, at the original upset price of £1 per acre, or the amount that was proclaimed at the time it was taken up; selectors will be very anxious to make their holdings freeholds, and that is the object many people have who come out here, and have hardly any capital to start with. I suppose that in the neighbourhood of Ipswich we have as many settlers as any town in the colony. Many of those selectors started without a penny, and many have borrowed money to enable them to sow the first year's seed and purchase a horse, and so forth. But if they are compelled to build a house and fence in two years they cannot do it. It takes a capitalist to do that; but if they are given fifty years to purchase if they choose, and if they do not choose let them continue to pay rent, it will be equal to a homestead, and will be very satisfactory to the majority of people. I have come in contact with a great number of people outside the House, and those are the two great objections to the Bill. If they are given five years for fencing and fifty years for purchase, every objection will be met, and it will be a Bill that will be the means of bringing in to the Colonial Treasurer a very large increase over the land revenue that we have been receiving in the past. I have very great pleasure in supporting the principles of the Bill. There are some things in it I do not approve of, and in committee I shall do my best to alter them; but with the principle of the Bill I entirely agree, and hope it will be carried through the House for the sake of the country at large.

Mr. KELLETT said: As I find hon. members on the other side are not likely to speak to-night, I rise to support the second reading of this Bill, and, in doing so, I have great pleasure in congratulating the Minister for Lands, and along with him the members of the Ministry, for the very careful and able way in which they have studied all the details of this very comprehensive measure. I think this House and the country may well be congratulated upon the Bill which has been brought in; and I believe the country will, from end to end, be satisfied if it passes through committee in anything like its present form. One of the greatest difficulties a Ministry has to contend with in this colony is to frame a Land Bill which will be satisfactory to a majority of the people. They found difficulties in New South Wales many years ago, and passed one Land Bill after another, and are now about passing another which has taken them a very long time before they came to a final conclusion on it. Before going into the principles of the Bill before us, I may say that it has been stated very broadly in several newspapers in the colony that repudiation was to be the order of the day—that the pastoral lessees, as they are called in this Bill, were to be thrown on one side, their interests damaged, and themselves put in such a position that they would be unable to borrow money to carry on their business transactions. That cry is kept up without any foundation whatever. I am perfectly satisfied, from what I know of men at the head of large monetary institutions, that they are satisfied that if this Bill passes the pastoral lessees of this colony will be in a better position than they were ever in before. I have spent a great part of my life amongst pastoral tenants, and I would be very sorry to see any measure brought in opposed to their interests in any way. I am satisfied this Bill has been carefully framed, and that no damage will be done under it to any existing industry. Clause 54 of the Pastoral Leases Act is proposed by this Bill to be repealed. We know that the intention of that clause was to take pre-emptives for securing improvements, and many *bonâ fide* pre-emptives were made. But we know also that there has been a great deal of laxity in carrying out that provision in the department, and lessees have been allowed pre-emptives without any improvements at all. If, as some persons claim, this has become a right by having existed so long, and a right recognised by the Ministry, the Ministry are prepared now, when the runs are resumed, to pay the lessees full value for all improvements. I do not see how they can want more than that. I am perfectly satisfied, from what I know of men who, though they do not happen to be members of this House, are leaseholders and intelligent men; and they are satisfied that no damage is intended to be done to the present leaseholders of the country. The next part I come to is the administration by a land board. I thoroughly believe in this principle, and I believe it is the only

satisfactory way of dealing with the lands of the colony. I believe the appointment of a land board will ensure a careful inquiry into matters brought before them, and a careful consideration of evidence received by them, as they are not likely to be influenced in any way by political pressure. I am satisfied, however, that it will be found that two members of the board will not be enough for the working of the Act. The colony is a very large one, and the position which those men will hold will be a very responsible one. I think they will require a certain number of the board to be sitting in Brisbane, and one or two, perhaps, travelling through the country, holding local land courts, to find out really what is the local knowledge necessary to be acquired before the Act can be advantageously administered. When the Bill gets into committee I hope to see some such clause as this proposed, because I think the general opinion of the country and of the House is that the principle of the land board is good, but that two members, sitting in Brisbane, would not as advantageously carry out the operations of the board as is intended. I was glad to hear the Minister for Lands state to-night that, though it was not stated in the Bill, he proposed to give his veto upon any decision of the board. I quite agree with that, because I think a Minister responsible to this House should be able to say to the board that he was not satisfied with their decisions, and it would then be a matter to be brought before the House and considered; and the House could decide whether or not the board were right in their judgment. I do not believe the Minister for Lands will have to use his power of veto in one case out of twenty if the proper gentlemen are chosen to form the board. Still they will be very careful, knowing that their decisions can be vetoed and argued out by the Minister himself in this House, and agreed to or not as may be the case. It will make them a great deal more careful in their decisions than they would otherwise be, and it will thus work, I believe, for the benefit of the country. There are other matters which I intended to allude to to-night, but I will leave them over, as there seems to be an anxiety on the part of some hon. members that they should not be kept up late to-night. I shall go on to the 25th clause, and speak of subsection *(e)* of that clause, which defines what is a necessary improvement. That is a section on which is most difficult to arrive at a settled opinion, and I believe it will require alteration as it at present stands. Then in the 27th clause, where the board may be in a position to tell a lessee that he has too much stock on his country or his run—I think it would be advisable if that were struck out altogether.

The PREMIER : It does not apply to lessees, but only to men having a grazing right.

Mr. KELLETT : Just so. As to the grazing right, I think it will be advisable if the clause is struck out altogether, because I consider that no one can be in a better position to judge whether he has too much stock on his land or not than the occupier of the land himself. Another difficulty arises in connection with it, which is this : We will take such a season as we have just had, and it has been a very hard one. The leaseholder might be able to keep on his holding last season three, or even five, times as much stock as he can keep at the present time, but after a good season he has the stock on his hands, and what is he to do? Everybody else may be in the same position, and he has no place to send his stock to; yet the board may come in and tell him he must move them off. The only thing left for him to do in such a case would be to slaughter them. It does not matter whether it is the present lessee or any other lessee; the board should not have such an arbitrary right, because I do not think they are half as good judges as the owner of the property himself. In the 33rd clause the marginal note says "sale of leases by auction," but the clause itself says that, if any lease is forfeited, the land will be declared open to be leased to the first applicant for the remainder of the term of fifteen years. From that I think the marginal note must be wrong; though I believe the lease should be sold by auction. That is the proper way to dispose of it, and the country would then get its full value. With regard to agricultural and grazing farms, my opinion is that in all these selections, before anyone is allowed to take them up, they should be surveyed. I am satisfied, from my knowledge of the country, the outside country especially, that if you let men go and take up the land they will pick out the eyes of the country, and leave all the back land, which you will not be able to utilise. I think that if the Bill is to bring a number of small agriculturists into the colony—which I am satisfied it will do if it is properly worked—these lands must be surveyed into square blocks with a certain amount of frontage; otherwise all the best land will be taken up. It is well known that, where there are creeks, a good deal of back country has been left and has become "no man's land"; there is in that way so much revenue lost to the Crown and the land is no benefit to anybody. I therefore think, if the Bill passes, before this part takes effect all the specially large selections should be surveyed. I suppose there is some intention of that kind, because the Minister for Lands stated that at the starting point of every selection there is to be a peg or large post put down. But I think the law ought to go further and say that all selections, without exceptions, should be surveyed, so that people might know exactly what they are taking. I believe in that way the country will be taken up to great advantage. Coming to clause 40, I find that it says that no person who is under the age of eighteen years, or who is a married woman not having obtained an order for judicial separation or protecting her separate property, shall be allowed to hold land. Now, this is a measure which, I hope, will continue in force for years, if it is carefully attended to by hon. members in Committee. I hope the youngest member of the House will not live to see it repealed, and that it will not be necessary even to amend it. In such a measure, I say, I think it would not be advisable to confine it to persons above eighteen years of age. I think there are parents whose children under eighteen years should be allowed to take up land as well as any new chum who comes into the country. The age, therefore, might be reduced to twelve years. That I am satisfied would be a benefit, because we wish to have the land taken up, and there are young men who may be about to marry, and under this clause as it at present stands they would have no hope of seeing their children settling on the land, because the best of it may have been taken up. A subsection of clause 41 says that—

"Provided that if two or more applicants shall be present at the time of opening of the commissioner's office, the applications lodged by them shall be deemed to be lodged at the same time. In such case the right of priority shall be determined by lot in the prescribed manner."

I think auction would be preferable. It was the law previously, and it was found to work well. When the lot business was on, I have known a dozen applicants for a selection that was intended for one man. The others withdrew in

consequence of not paying, and it fell to the lot of one man. I think it is far more satisfactory to have it put up to auction. With regard to the area, I see that 20,000 acres is defined as the maximum for grazing farms, but it would be advisable to have that increased in some cases. I do not think a hard-and-fast rule should be insisted on in some districts. I am satisfied, from my knowledge of the western part of the colony, that with less than five miles by ten—that is, 32,000 acres—no man can satisfactorily carry on the smallest grazing business. Now I come to clause 52, which says that within two years from the issue of the license the selector must fence in his land. I certainly disagree with that. I am satisfied, especially with regard to agricultural land, that it would be the means of preventing a great deal of settlement. It is well known that men who go into agriculture are men of small means; that is the only class which has gone into it, with very few exceptions. If a selector takes up 960 acres—and most men will try to get the maximum—what with the rent and survey fee, the fencing, and the plant and machinery, he will require £1,000 capital before he can go on to the land. Every attempt is made in the Bill to encourage *bonâ fide* settlement in every way, but I believe it would be an improvement to allow a substitution for fencing. Fencing a portion of an agricultural selection and clearing a portion should be made equivalent to fencing the whole, for in that way there would be more *bonâ fide* settlement on the land than would otherwise be the case. Allusion has been made to homesteads. I believe that homesteads have been of great advantage to the colony, and I disagree entirely with the report of Mr. Hume. I am satisfied that some of the homestead selectors are the most valuable colonists we have, and the homestead clauses have encouraged men to go on the soil who would not otherwise have done so. Further than that, I am sorry to say that the homestead areas, as a rule, up to the present time have consisted of very inferior land, instead of which they should be the picked lands of the country. Take, for instance, the men who took up land at the Rosewood Scrub. If we gave them the land for nothing, and a little bonus on which they could live till they tilled the soil, the country would gain by it in the end. I am satisfied that the homestead clauses, if introduced into this Bill, will give satisfaction, not only to the farming community, but to all the people in the settled districts. The 55th clause says—

"No person who is beneficially entitled to any freehold land in any district may become the lessee under this part of the Act of any farm in the same district, the aggregate area whereof, together with the area of the freehold land, exceeds the area allowed to be selected by one person in that district."

The objection I have to this clause is that a selector holding land in the district who is successful—I am speaking of agricultural land—if a man has done well, and wishes to take up more land, he is debarred from doing so by this clause. I do not think that is fair. I think that when a man holding a small area improves that land to its highest point he should be allowed to extend his area and improve a little more. Such settlers as those should be encouraged in every way. The 63rd clause—"Right of mortgage"—will require careful consideration. It is, no doubt, framed with the best intention to prevent people too easily acquiring money and too easily getting rid of property; but it must be looked at in another way. Very few men have made money out of their own capital, but mostly out of borrowed capital; and to put too great restrictions on borrowing money is not advisable. And there is another thing to be said in connection with this right of mortgage. No man beneficially interested in an estate in any district can purchase property mortgaged in that district, and the question is—Who is to purchase it? It is not likely that a man is coming from the North to purchase property in the South, or that a man in the South is going to the North to purchase; and if men in the district are not allowed to purchase there will be no purchaser, and the consequence will be that no advances will be made on property at all. I am not prepared to state the best way of dealing with the matter, and will leave it to the legal members; but I can see that a great deal of trouble will come in if those clauses are not altered. The 68th clause deals with the acquisition of freehold. I perfectly believe in this acquisition of freehold, and I am satisfied that the opportunities afforded here for acquiring freehold have brought out a great portion of the people now in the colony. They came from countries where, long before their time, the land had gone into the hands of big proprietors, and where there was no chance of a small man acquiring freeholds. As I said before, I believe in freeholds; I feel convinced that if the agricultural freeholds of the colony had been leaseholds many of them would have been thrown up in bad seasons. The men would have let the land go and turned out to work if the land had not been their own. Men have held on one, and even two years, while nearly starving, content to live on pumpkins and a bit of maize in the hope that next year they would be able to pull through. The possession of freehold is the means of keeping an agricultural population on the soil; anything that will take that away I am sure is not good. I believe in leasing also. If leasing were better understood by the small holders they would go in more for leaseholds; but it will take many years to teach them, and that is where the trouble comes in. But up till the time they are taught, I believe in allowing them to acquire freeholds. I believe that many men would consider land held under a lease of twenty, thirty, or even fifty years, not their own, and would rather live anyhow in a bark humpy than make improvements. They would not look upon a leasehold as a piece of land they could improve and afterwards leave to their children. In a new country like this the acquisition of freehold is of the greatest importance. But, instead of ten years, I believe five years are quite long enough for a *bonâ fide* settler to reside on land before it becomes his own. When a man has to wait that long, and fulfil all the conditions, he will not dummy much. In most cases where a man holds land for five years, he will want to settle on it himself; in only a few cases will he want to part with it. My special reason for referring to this point is that if a man through sickness or necessity goes to some other part of the colony, and has to part with his land, no man in his district will be able to buy it, because every man in that district will hold land himself; and consequently he will not be able to get a purchaser unless it is someone just arrived in the colony. For that reason I think that the term of ten years should be reduced to five where all the conditions are fulfilled. Those are the principal clauses to which I wish to allude. I am satisfied that the debate on the second reading of this Bill will be anxiously looked for by all classes of the community. The Bill has been talked of throughout the length and breadth of the colony. I have no doubt that in such a comprehensive measure as this many amendments will be proposed in committee. I take it that it is the part of the Minister for Lands in such a measure to carefully consider the amendments proposed, if they are proposed in proper form and will assist to carry out the objects of the Bill. He must be prepared in small

matters, and in a good many matters too, to give in and meet the opinions of hon. members on both sides of the House; and I think it is very likely that our present Minister for Lands, being a sensible man, will carefully study the different arguments brought forward, and will concede whatever he thinks will improve the Bill. I hope that the debate on the measure will be carried on in good temper, because it is undesirable that there should be any angry feelings in the discussion, or that the debate should be protracted to a very late hour. I am satisfied that if the Bill is carefully considered in committee, and the speeches on the second reading are carefully considered by members on both sides of the House, a measure will be passed which will be a credit to Queensland; and which I am confident will be the means of introducing population, not only from the old country, but from the other colonies, and will be conducive to the welfare of this colony generally.

Mr. PALMER moved that the debate be now adjourned.

Question put and passed.

The PREMIER, in the absence of the Minister for Lands, moved that the resumption of the debate be made an Order of the Day for to-morrow.

Mr. MOREHEAD said he did not wish to interfere with the arrangement of the business, but he thought the hon. member for Burke was out of order in moving the adjournment of the debate a second time without any other motion intervening.

The SPEAKER said: On the point of order raised by the hon. member for Balonne, the hon. member for Burke, Mr. Palmer, is quite in order. The previous motion which was moved by the hon. member for Northern Downs was, "That this debate be now adjourned." That was negatived and the debate resumed, after which the motion that the debate be now adjourned was moved by the hon. member for Burke, and carried.

Mr. MOREHEAD said it appeared to him to be repeating the same motion. As he understood the Standing Orders, some other motion must intervene. It was laid down by May that—

"If a motion for adjournment be negatived, it may not be proposed again without some intermediate proceeding; and in order to avoid any infringement of this rule, it is a common practice for those who desire to avoid a division upon the original question, on that day, to move alternately that 'this House do now adjourn,' and 'that the debate be now adjourned.'"

That had always been the practice heretofore in that House.

The PREMIER said the motion for the adjournment of the debate had been put and carried. The question now before the House was that the debate be resumed to-morrow. The point of order related to the previous motion, and he did not think it was worth while discussing it now.

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN said it was quite true, as the hon. gentleman had stated, that the question before the House was the resumption of the debate, but the adjournment was only carried recently.

The PREMIER: I cannot help that.

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN said the House could rescind it. He thought the Speaker put the motion inadvertently. They ought to keep up the forms and precedents of the House as far as possible, and now was the time to deal with the question. The Premier should be the first to maintain the order and decorum of debate. It had always been the practice that the adjournment of the debate could not be moved twice without the adjournment of the House or some other motion intervening.

The PREMIER said it had never been the practice of the House to discuss points of order that were not actually before it. What they were now discussing was merely an abstract question, and was out of place. As to the point of order, the rule had been that, when a motion for the adjournment of the debate had been negatived, another hon. member could not at once get up and move that the debate be now adjourned, because such a form might be used for obstructive purposes, and might go on for ever. To prevent that, the rule had been laid down that another motion must intervene, and by that means the number of persons entitled to speak gradually got exhausted, and the debate came to an end in a measurable time. The quotation from "May," read by the hon. member for Balonne, had reference simply to a motion for the adjournment of the House, which could not be put twice without some intervening business. It had always been the practice of the House that, when everybody wished the debate to be adjourned, a motion to adjourn it was put to the House and carried. What a ridiculous rule it would be that because the House did not wish to adjourn a debate at 4 o'clock or 7 o'clock, therefore it should never be adjourned until a motion for the adjournment of the House had been put and negatived!

Mr. NORTON asked if it was open to hon. members to discuss, as a point of order, whether the Speaker had put the motion inadvertently or not?

The SPEAKER: The hon. member for Townsville is wrong in saying I put the motion inadvertently. The motion for the adjourment of the debate was moved, and at the request of the House I put it, and I do not see how any other motion could have been put. According to, May, in a debate of this kind, where the House has negatived a motion for the adjournment of the debate, and a desire has been shown for further obstruction, it is the practice to move the adjournment of the House before the same motion can be put again. Otherwise motions for the adjournment of the debate might go on *ad infinitum*. In this instance the motion was that the debate be now adjourned, and I put it at the request of the House, and not inadvertently, as stated by the hon. member for Townsville.

Mr. MOREHEAD said the Speaker was in error in saying that the motion might go on *ad infinitum*, because, according to the rule laid down by May, the number of members entitled to speak would soon become exhausted.

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN said that what he meant by saying that the Speaker put the motion inadvertently was, that, if the Speaker had been reminded that the adjournment of the debate had been put before and negatived, probably he would not have put it. He knew the Speaker was asked to put the motion, but he believed he did wrong to put it.

The SPEAKER: I may also mention that Cushing, on "The Practice of Legislative Assemblies," has the following on page 545:—

"The question of adjournment being one in which the element of time exists, so that a motion made to adjourn at one time is not the same motion as a motion to adjourn made at another time, the question of adjournment may be moved repeatedly upon the same day; but as there must be some lapse of time between the two motions, in order to render them different, this lapse of time can only be denoted by some parliamentary proceeding, for otherwise nothing would intervene to change the situation of the House.

That has been done by hon. members speaking on the main question. The question now is that the resumption of the debate stand an Order of the Day for to-morrow.

Question put and passed.

MESSAGES FROM LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

The SPEAKER announced the receipt of messages from the Legislative Council returning the Endowments to Divisional Boards Bill, without amendment; and forwarding, for the concurrence of the Legislative Assembly, a Bill to give effect in Queensland to probates and letters of administration granted in the other Australasian colonies and in the United Kingdom.

On the motion of Mr. CHUBB, the latter Bill was read a first time, and the second reading made an Order of the Day for Thursday week.

ADJOURNMENT.

The PREMIER moved—That this House do now adjourn.

Mr. ALAND said he desired to move as an amendment the addition of the words "till Tuesday next." Of course hon. members were fully aware that his reason for that motion was that the annual exhibition of the Royal Society of Queensland was to be held next day at Toowoomba. No doubt some hon. members would think the business of the House should not be interrupted on account of any exhibition or show which might take place, but he would point out to hon. members, especially new members, that it had been the custom of the House, he might say from time immemorial, to adjourn on the occasion of that exhibition. There was very little business on the paper for Thursday, and he was sure private members would allow their work to stand over for another week.

The PREMIER said that, on behalf of the Government, he could not accept the amendment. He did not think it was desirable that the House should adjourn over any day on account of a show; and he saw no reason why all hon. members who wished to go might not do so, and the business of the House still go on. He had always opposed a similar adjournment, and he should do so now. He thought it was only fair to hon. members who came from a distance that the House should go on with its work. He had consented to an adjournment the previous week, but that was only for a few hours, and under such circumstances that no time was lost. The adjournment proposed now was practically for a whole week.

Mr. FERGUSON said he did not think the Toowoomba Show was of sufficient importance to stop the business of the House for a week, and he thought an adjournment would not be fair to hon. members who came from a distance. In early days when the precedent was established, the colony was in a very different position from that it was in now. Brisbane, Ipswich, and Toowoomba then formed almost all the colony, and the few electors in the North were represented by Southern members. All that was changed now, and he thought it was not just to country members, who had come at large expense, prepared to attend to the business of the country, that the House should adjourn for a week. He had been to the Toowoomba Show on two occasions, and what he saw determined him always to oppose a similar motion in future. No doubt the hon. member representing the district wished to be there, but he could carry out his wish without the whole House adjourning.

Mr. MIDGLEY said he had promised the mover of the amendment to support it, but he thought one day's adjournment would have been sufficient. However, he did not think the time would be thrown away by adjourning for a day or two on such occasions, as he was quite sure some very useful suggestions with regard to the Land Bill were the result of the adjournment for the Rosewood Show. Members of the House had gained useful information by rubbing shoulders with the farmers at Rosewood, and it was quite possible something might be gleaned from the expressions of opinion, favourable to the Bill and otherwise, of the farmers in Toowoomba.

Mr. BLACK said the only reason which would induce him to vote for the amendment would be, that all the Ministers should go up and hear the expressions of opinion of people at Toowoomba about this Land Bill. He thought it was very probable that there was some truth in the surmise of the hon. gentleman who had just spoken, as to alterations in the scope of the Bill being due to the Ministers' visit to the Rosewood Show. On other grounds he opposed the amendment, as he had always done since he had a seat in the House, from a belief that from a national point of view the object of the adjournment was a frivolous one. There were quite enough members in the House for all who wished to attend the show to do so, without the whole business of the country being suspended. The present amendment, that they should adjourn for a whole week, was the most monstrous suggestion he had heard. If hon. members would look at the matter calmly from his point of view they would see that the session would be prolonged something like a fortnight more than it would otherwise have been. They had adjourned last week.

The PREMIER: For two hours.

Mr. BLACK: Because the Premier was anxious to see his German friends; but he did not seem quite so anxious to go and see his English friends up at Toowoomba. It was unjust to Northern members specially, and to country members generally, and to all members who did not take any special interest in Toowoomba. If the House adjourned he would probably go up to the show, as he had nothing else to do. From a political standpoint, he considered that it was a most unreasonable thing to ask the House that the whole business of the country should be at a standstill for a whole week in order that hon. members might see what most of them had seen before.

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN said that on former occasions he had opposed similar motions, but for the reasons given by the hon. member for Fassifern there was some object in voting for the amendment. If it was possible that members had had their minds changed by rubbing shoulders with Rosewood farmers, it was also possible that a trip to Toowoomba would have the same effect. The motion should be adopted for that reason only. He quite agreed with the member for Mackay that for no other reason should they adjourn. It might be just possible that the Minister for Lands would find reason to change his opinion; and by making a trip to Toowoomba he might be able to discover a few selectors who could live upon less than 160 acres of land. For that reason he should vote for the amendment.

Mr. DONALDSON said he had a serious objection to so many adjournments of the House, because it kept country members so long in town. On this occasion he should withdraw any objection he had, because there were a number of members who were desirous of visiting the show. Besides that, it would be a cruelty to keep the Speaker in the chair when he himself wished to go to Toowoomba. He entered his protest now, and trusted the

authorities at Toowoomba would take care to hold the show on some different day for the future. Friday or Saturday would be a convenient day, and he hoped it would be so arranged next year. Every encouragement should be given to members to go to Toowoomba, but at the same time it would be far better to consult the interests of the House by fixing other days on which to hold the show.

Mr. HAMILTON said he objected to adjournments of this kind, as a rule, but at the same time he thought it very absurd for the House, after adjourning for the show at "little Germany," to refuse to adjourn for one of the most important shows in the colony. The Government should extend the same courtesy towards their English constituents as towards their German friends. He should vote for the amendment.

Question—That the words proposed to be added be so added—put, and the House divided :—

AYES, 26.

Messrs. Norton, Chubb, Nelson, Donaldson, Morehead, Aland, Isambert, J. Campbell, T. Campbell, Macrossan, Lalor, Bale, Kates, Mellor, Palmer, Grimes, White, Lissner, Hamilton, Macdonald-Paterson, Kellett, Govett, Midgley, Macfarlane, Wallace, and Stevens.

NOES, 18.

Messrs. Black, Jordan, Dickson, Miles, Rutledge, Griffith, Dutton, Sheridan, Moreton, Ferguson, Higson, Smyth, Horwitz, Bailey, Annear, Foote, Brookes, and Foxton.

Question resolved in the affirmative, and motion put and passed.

The PREMIER said that the business to be taken on Tuesday next would be the resumption of the debate on the Land Bill.

The House adjourned at nine minutes to 10 o'clock.