Queensland

Parliamentary Debates
[Hansard]

Legislative Assembly

THURSDAY, 21 AUGUST 1884

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ERRATA.

August 21.—Page 396, column 1, line 27, in Mr. Jordan's speech, for the words "a million" *read* "three millions."

August 21.—Page 398, column 1, line 9, in Mr. Jordan's speech, for the word "two" *read* "five."

August 28.—Page 473, column 2, lines 7 and 8, in Mr. Horwitz' speech, for the words "when cleared is worth up to £3 an acre," *read* "cost up to £3 an acre to clear."

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY.

Thursday, 21 *August*, 1884.

Gympie Gas Company Bill.—Questions.—Motion for Adjournment.—Question without Notice.—Formal Motion.—Jury Act Amendment Bill.—Skyring's Road Bill—second reading.—Pettigrew Estate Enabling Bill—second reading.—Succession Act Declaratory Bill—second reading.—Wages Act Amendment Bill—second reading.—Crown Lands Bill—second reading.—Adjournment.

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

GYMPIE GAS COMPANY BILL.

Mr. SMYTH, as Chairman, brought up the report of the Select Committee on the Gympie Gas Company Bill, together with the minutes of evidence.

The second reading of the Bill was made an Order of the Day for Thursday next.

QUESTIONS.

Mr. NORTON asked the Minister for Works—

1. Have steps been taken to obtain a report upon the geological peculiarities of Mount Morgan and other recently discovered gold-bearing formations in the neighbourhood of Rockhampton?

2. If not, is it the Minister's intention to take special action in this matter?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS (Hon. W. Miles) replied—

1. No.

2. Not at present.

Mr. MIDGLEY asked the Minister for Works—

1. Do the Government expect to be able to place on the table of the House, this session, the plans, books, of reference, etc., of the Extension of the Fassifern Railway?

2. How far has the line been surveyed?

3. Where is it intended that the line shall terminate?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS replied—

1. Parliamentary plans are being prepared and will be ready in one month.

2. Eighteen and a-half miles beyond Harrisville.

3. For the present, on the Teviot Brook opposite the Dugandan Sawmill.

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN asked the Minister for Works—

If a Survey of the Railway from Herberton to the Coast has been ordered to be made from Herberton?—and, if so, when was it ordered?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS replied—

A verbal order for the survey referred to appears to have been given to the Chief Engineer by the Minister, either at the end of 1882 or the beginning of 1883, but there is no record of the exact date.

MOTION FOR ADJOURNMENT.

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN said, before the House proceeded to the general business, he wished to bring a matter under its notice, and he would conclude with a motion. In 1872, when Mr. Thompson, who was Minister for Lands at that time, introduced the Homestead Areas Bill, he had a map for the information of hon. members then in the House. It was laid on the table, according to the records of *Hansard*, but, from what he could ascertain from the officers of the House, it was never laid on the table as a parliamentary document; and no such map could now be found. There was no record of such a map in the Lands Office either; and what he wished to point out to the Minister for Lands was that at least one of the maps now hanging on the wall should be made a parliamentary record by being laid on the table of the House. It would then become the property of the House, and no person could take it away as had been the case with the map supplied in 1872. He moved the adjournment of the House.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS (Hon. C. B. Dutton) said he should be glad to lay the map on the table—the only difficulty was its size. The reason why the maps were hung on the walls was, because they were more accessible in that position than on the table.

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN, in reply, said that for present use the Minister for Lands was perfectly right in having the maps hung on the walls, but he (Hon. J. M. Macrossan) must not be misunderstood. He wanted the map to become a parliamentary record, which it would not become unless it was laid on the table. He begged to withdraw the motion.

The HON. SIR T. MCILWRAITH said that laying a document on the table did not mean actually and physically putting it there. All that was necessary was to put on the table a piece of paper referring to the map, which would then be laid on the table by command.

Motion, by leave, withdrawn.

QUESTION WITHOUT NOTICE.

The HON SIR T. MCILWRAITH said he should like to ask the Premier a question without notice, as he thought the hon. gentleman could give him the information. He (Sir T. McIlwraith) had not had time to look over the whole of the correspondence with England on immigration and other matters, and he would, therefore, like to ask, had all the correspondence between Gray, Dawes, and Company been laid on the table of the House—all the correspondence since Parliament last met? It would take a considerable time to look over all the correspondence laid on the table. He intended to move a motion to the effect that the correspondence in question be laid on the table; but if the hon. gentleman would do so, he need not take that trouble.

The PREMIER (Hon. S. W. Griffith) said probably the hon. gentleman referred to an offer lately made to the Government by Gray, Dawes, and Company.

The HON. SIR T. MCILWRAITH: I do not refer to anything specially. I know there has been correspondence with Gray, Dawes, and Company, and desire to see it laid on the table.

The PREMIER said he could not answer the question from memory. He knew that an offer had been received from Gray, Dawes, and Company, lately, which had not been laid on the table. It was an offer to make certain alterations in their present mail contract. He should be glad, if any hon. member moved for it, to lay it on the table. It was entirely distinct from the other correspondence that had been laid on the table, and would fittingly be a separate paper. Now he was reminded of it, he should be glad to lay it on the table of the House without any motion.

The HON. SIR T. MCILWRAITH: Is there more correspondence?

The PREMIER: Not to his knowledge. The correspondence on the table was complete as far as he knew. He had directed that it should be complete, and understood that it was so.

The HON. SIR T. MCILWRAITH said the hon. gentleman misunderstood him. The correspondence he wanted was the correspondence on the subject of immigration with the British-India Company since Parliament last met. The hon. gentleman would lay it on the table of the House?

The PREMIER: Yes, certainly.

FORMAL MOTION.

On the motion of Mr. KATES, the following motion was agreed to:—

That there be laid upon the table of the House, returns of areas under cultivation and quantities of various agricultural produce raised in the respective districts of Dalby and Warwick during the years 1881, 1882, and 1883.

JURY ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

On the motion of Mr. CHUBB, it was affirmed in Committee of the Whole that it was desirable to introduce a Bill to amend the law relating to jurors, and to amend the Jury Act of 1867.

The Bill was read a first time, and the second reading made an Order of the Day for Thursday next.

SKYRING'S ROAD BILL—SECOND READING.

Mr. BEATTIE said: In rising to move the second reading of this Bill, I may inform the House that the petitioners having asked permission to introduce a Bill for the purposes contained in the petition, and the matter having been referred to a Select Committee, they have brought up the following report:—

"The Select Committee to whom was referred, on the 30th of July instant, a Bill to close a road privately dedicated to the public, etc., in North Brisbane, have to report to your Honourable House, as follows:—

"1. Your Committee have carefully considered the subject of the Bill, and have examined the witness named in the margin, together with the documentary evidence which they deemed it requisite to call for.

"2. They find that the exchange of land, and the transposition of road proposed to be effected, and shown on an authentic plan signed by the owners, and a tracing of surveys of portion fifty-nine (59), parish of North Brisbane, county of Stanley, submitted to them through the Chairman by the Booroodabin Divisional Board, are for the public convenience, and are not injurious to any private interest, herein affecting only the parties applying for the Bill, the owners in fee of the land, in the voluntary alteration of its subdivisions and in the discharge and change of the dedication of part to a road.

"3. The preamble of the Bill is proved to the satisfaction of your Committee, who have gone through several clauses; and your Committee return the Bill to your Honourable House without amendment."

I may mention that the piece of land which is called in the preamble subdivision "A" was given to the heirs of Mr. Daniel Skyring, and in subdividing it and dedicating this particular road to the use of the public a great mistake was made. The road is really no benefit to the public, because it narrows the frontages to the Brisbane River by something like three chains; and the proposed new road does not interfere the least with anyone who has property in the vicinity. By closing this road, which is called in the preamble subdivision "A," and substituting a road further to the southward called subdivisions "d a" and "d b," a greater depth to the river will be given, and the owners of property and the public generally will be able to utilise the road. I have taken some trouble in making inquiry whether any vested interests would be interfered with by granting the prayer of the petitioner, and I find that the whole of the property on both sides of the road which it is proposed to substitute for that granted by Mr. Daniel Skyring belongs to Mr. Charles Skyring, and that the alteration does not interfere with anyone. It will be a great convenience to the people living in the locality and to the petitioners. I do not know that I can give any further information, but I shall be happy to show any hon. member a plan of the property, a certified copy of which has been laid on the table of the House. I do not think that, under the circumstances, there will be the slightest objection to this alteration, because, as I said before, it does not interfere with anyone and will be of advantage to the public; and, having confidence that the House will offer no objection, I now move the second reading of the Bill.

Question put and passed.

On the motion of Mr. BEATTIE, the consideration of the Bill in committee was made an Order of the Day for Thursday next.

PETTIGREW ESTATE ENABLING BILL —SECOND READING.

Mr. FOOTE said: In moving the second reading of this Bill I do not think it is necessary to take up the time of the House at any great length. It is a measure which is asked for by the trustees and other parties interested in the estate of the late John Pettigrew, of Ipswich. By his will, the late John Pettigrew directed the trustees to carry on his business in a way which they find it impossible to do without serious injury to the estate, and without themselves incurring a responsibility which they do not feel justified in undertaking. It is shown in the evidence, which has been distributed amongst hon. members, that at the time of the decease of that gentleman the amount which he had in the business was considerably more than he directed that the trustees should have in it, and also that the liabilities which were to be incurred by the trustees were considerably greater. In fact, they amounted to £6,000, while it was directed in the will that the trustees should not incur debts to the estate to the amount of more than £2,000. That is to say, they were not to have a liability of more than £2,000 upon the balance at the end of any year. The trustees have found it utterly impossible to carry on the business on those lines without causing the business to dwindle, and without the estate being seriously injured. In the second place, the trustees had to render themselves responsible for considerable liabilities to enable them to carry on the business. They therefore seek relief by this Bill, and they show, I think, very clearly in evidence, that it would be to the benefit of all parties concerned that this measure should be passed enabling them to dispose of the business, and to deposit the sum of £10,000, which was directed by the will to be kept in the business, together with any balance over that amount, for the benefit of the children who are not of age, and who are petitioners for this Bill. By this means the trustees, as they show in evidence, would be able to carry out their trust to the advantage of the parties to the will, and without incurring any financial responsibilities themselves. The object of the Bill is set forth as follows:—

"1. The late John Pettigrew by his will directed the trustees of his estate to carry on his business of a general merchant till his youngest child attained the age of twenty-one years. The youngest child is now seven years old.

"2. The trustees were not to employ more than £10,000 of the testator's capital in the business; any amount over that sum was to be taken out at each yearly balance, and invested apart from and outside the business.

"3. The trustees were not to incur liabilities on account of the business to an extent of more than £2,000.

"4. At the death of the testator the amount of capital in the business was over £10,000, and the liabilities were very much over £2,000.

"5. The trustees have not been able, and are not able, to bring the capital and liabilities of the business within the limits prescribed by the will, without irreparable injury to the business, and to the estate generally.

"6. That the testator's youngest child is now exactly seven years of age, so that unless relief is afforded by the passing of this Act the trustees will have to carry on the business for fourteen years from the present time.

"7. That the only two of the three trustees capable of carrying on the trust are elderly men, and cannot be expected to live out the period of the trust.

"8. That the trustees could not apply to Parliament at an earlier date in consequence of the testator's eldest son having certain rights under the will.

"9. That the testator's eldest son came of age in November last; has since then renounced his special rights under the will; and is a party to this application to Parliament.

"10. That the testator's eldest daughter, who is of age, and her husband, are also parties to the application.

"11. That the power asked for by the trustees is to enable them to sell the business; to invest £10,000 of the proceeds of such sale in the manner directed by the will; and to divide the balance among the testator's children, in manner directed.

"12. That in consequence of being compelled to carry on the business, the trustees have a very heavy personal liability, which they object to continue."

Those matters are all set forth in the preamble to the Bill. The Select Committee to whom the Bill was referred, after examining witnesses, and carefully investigating the matter, brought up their report as follows:—

"1. That they have examined the witnesses named in the margin, and have taken other than oral evidence in the shape of documents, appended hereto, as they deemed requisite.

"2. The promoters of the Bill include the executors and trustees and the principal beneficiaries under the will of the late John Pettigrew, as shown by their signatures to the petition presented to the Legislative Assembly, and by their letters before your Committee, consenting to and concurring with the proposed disposition of certain trust property in which the widow, the eldest son, the eldest daughter and her husband, are interested, with younger children of the devisor.

"3. As the trust has not been, is not, and cannot be, fulfilled, according to the terms and conditions of the will, and as the relief asked for under the Bill is reasonable and necessary to save the estate of the late John Pettigrew and to realise the greatest advantages from it—more particularly his business of general merchant in Ipswich, which it is now proposed to sell or otherwise dispose of—for the benefit of all concerned, your Committee have found the preamble proved.

"4. Your Committee, having considered the several clauses in detail, now return the Bill without amendment."

I do not think it necessary that I should dwell further on the matter. The evidence is fully reported in the document before hon. members, and I beg to move, therefore, that the Bill be now read a second time.

Mr. FERGUSON said that, as one of the members of the committee who heard the evidence in support of this Bill, he was very much in favour of its going through the House. He knew that all concerned would benefit by the Bill if it passed. The trustees were relations of those who were interested in the will, and had taken trouble which he was satisfied no one but relations would have taken. But for that, he believed things would have turned out very disastrously for the family in question.

The HON. SIR T. MCILWRAITH said the Bill required a good deal more explanation than the House had received. So far as he could gather from the remarks of the hon. member, and from hastily glancing at the Bill itself, the case was something like this:—Mr. Pettigrew, who was for some time a member of the Assembly, and had earned the reputation of being a good business man, made a will to the effect that his business should be carried on under certain restrictions. The trustees were to keep only £10,000 in the business, the balance being taken out and invested otherwise, and at no time were the trustees to incur a greater liability than £2,000. Mr. Pettigrew knew very well that a safe small business of that sort would be best for the interests of his children; but the trustees seemed to have gone quite against the wishes of the dead man, and to have made up their minds to carry on the business with the £18,000 he invested; and, instead of limiting the liability, they had run it up to £7,000. Then they came and said that they were running great risks which they did not want to run, and asked the House to relieve them. Why in the name of common sense could they not do what the dead man wanted? The impression on his mind was that the trustees had not carried out their trust, and it was a matter of opinion whether the House would be doing the right thing in granting relief. He thought himself that the trustees had acted in a most reprehensible manner in not making some endeavour to carry out the deceased man's wishes.

Mr. ALAND said that he was one of the members of the committee on this Bill, and he thought the leader of the Opposition had stated the case correctly. At the same time, it should be borne in mind that the testator required his trustees to do what it appeared from the evidence he himself was not capable of doing.

The HON. SIR T. MCILWRAITH: He distinctly directed them to reduce the business after his death.

Mr. ALAND said that at the time of the testator's death he owed some £6,000, and he expected that liability to be reduced by the trustees to about £2,000; but the trustees found that the business could not be carried on successfully if they reduced the liability, and in fact they had been obliged to increase it, making themselves personally responsible for the increase. Nearly the whole of the trustees were persons of advanced years, and he (Mr. Aland) did not think that two out of the number, at all events, would live to see the time when the period of the trust would expire. The question was, what was to become of the estate then? Already, one of the executors had given up his trust, and so far as he could learn there was nothing to prevent any one of the remaining executors doing the same. Not only that, but the executors themselves plainly stated that it was only because they were relatives of the widow of the testator that they accepted such a trust at all. This was a question which he himself had asked the manager of the estate:—

"How do you know the business is conducted on the same lines as when the testator was alive?"

He (Mr. Aland) thought the testator would wish his executors to carry on the business on the same lines as it had been conducted by himself. It was well known that Mr. Pettigrew was a successful man of business, and knew how the business should be carried on. The reply to that question was—

"I judge of the manner of carrying it on by the books, and other things—by the manner in which he dealt with customers."

Another question he asked was, whether it was possible to carry on the business with profit to the estate in any other manner than that in which it was being carried on; and the opinion of the manager, and the opinion of Mr. Gill, as one of the executors, was that it would be impossible to carry it on in Ipswich in any other manner. It seemed to him that it would be safer for the parties interested in the will that the business should be closed. The money could be far more profitably invested than in this business. When the testator died he had a clear balance of £12,345, and in the course of five years that balance had only been increased by something like £1,500, which was a very small return for so much capital in five years, with only a small charge on it.

Mr. MOREHEAD said it would be a very dangerous thing for the House to interfere with the dispositions made under wills. He did not see that any case had been made out by either of the hon. members who supported the Bill for its acceptance by the House. It seemed to him that the trustees had accepted a responsibility, knowing perfectly well what it was; they did not make a leap in the dark; they need not have acted at all unless they chose. But they elected to act, and apparently had made a great mess of it; and, being afraid to appeal to the Supreme Court for relief—which would be the natural course to adopt—they came to the House to be whitewashed for their action. That appeared

to be the state of the case, and he thought they should be very careful indeed before they interfered with dispositions under the will of any man, more especially a gentleman whom they had known when a member of that House as a shrewd hard-headed man of business, whose will appeared to be an intelligible one, and one easily administered. One of the trustees had wisely retired at an early period from the trust, and the remaining trustees now came down to the House and asked that a Bill should be passed to give them a clean sheet and wipe out all the errors they had committed, if they had committed any. He thought the House should be chary of passing a Bill of that kind. He did not suppose the Bill would be refused a second reading; but having read through the evidence—though not as closely as he could wish, and as he certainly should do before the Bill went into committee—he thought there would be a good deal of trouble with it before the Bill was allowed to pass. There were many matters which he should have something to say upon in committee. The hon. member for Toowoomba had shown that the trustees had not benefited the estate much; and though it appeared to be about £1,000 better, probably if the book debts and other matters were looked into it would be found in a worse position than when Mr. Pettigrew died. He did not think it was the duty of that House to relieve trustees from responsibilities they had incurred under a will of that kind, for the reasons that were urged for setting the Bill on one side; because that was really what the Bill meant. He thought the Bill would require more attention in committee, and probably it would come out in a very altered state to what it was now.

Mr. MACFARLANE said that when he saw the Bill, on its first introduction to the House, he thought it was rather a dangerous expedient; but when he became aware of the facts, and more particularly when he saw the evidence that was brought before the committee, he felt compelled to alter his mind a good deal with reference to the way in which the House should deal with it. He knew the business very well, and he had also known the late Mr. Pettigrew well. Looking at the balances given in the evidence, he found that the last balance-sheet showed the capital to be £13,918—nearly £14,000. The business, which was at present conducted by the manager, was one that he (Mr. Macfarlane) would not find difficult to work with a capital of £14,000; at all events that was the way he looked at it. The evidence clearly showed that the business was not making money; that during the five years the capital had only been increased by a little more than £1,000. That was no profit at all for a business of that extent, spreading over nearly five years. With that capital they should have added to their capital account at least 10 per cent. per annum. The estate, therefore, was evidently suffering: the fact being that they were not getting common interest for their money. A business of that kind ought to return at least 10 or 12 per cent.; but, as it had not done so, it showed that there was something wrong. Either too much credit had been given, or something; any way, the estate was not paying, and it would be far better for the persons concerned if the money was laid out at interest; even 5 per cent. would be quite as good as they were getting now. The House would see that the business was likely to go to ruin if it were carried on under the present conditions; and as the trustees were old men, and in the natural course of events would depart this life in a very few years, not living to see the end of the term when the youngest son was twenty-one years of age, he thought, all things considered, the wisest for all persons would be to allow the Bill to pass. He should therefore support the second reading.

Mr. PALMER said that, as one of the committee, he must say a few words in support of the second reading of the Bill. He quite agreed with the hon. member for Balonne that it was a very serious matter to upset a will, and a course that should only be taken after very careful consideration. He was quite certain that the members of the committee used their utmost endeavours to consult the interests of the younger members of the family who were concerned in the will. From the evidence given by the manager of the business, they were quite satisfied that the money would have been safer invested at a fixed rate of interest than it was in the business, because the manager assured them that it was more like a banking or a money-lending business; that money was lent to selectors and farmers in the district, and that if it was refused, then the business lost customers; in fact, he instanced several customers they had lost since the Bill had been brought before the House, for that very reason—that they would not advance them money. He also stated that the business must either be an increasing or a decreasing one; and that the capital required was greater than could be obtained under the will. As to the trustees also, he said that, one having resigned, the others would have done the same had they not been relatives of the family. He (Mr. Palmer) was quite sure the committee took particular pains to examine every point. He thought it was a very serious thing to change a will like that, when the youngest member of the family was only seven or eight years of age; and it was only when the committee were quite satisfied that a benefit would be conferred on the family that they came to the decision contained in the report.

Mr. CHUBB said he had no desire to oppose the Bill in the interests of the beneficiaries; but he would like to point out that it seemed to him that a question of principle was involved; that was to say, was it the function of that House to enable trustees—who were appointed to administer property of a particular kind and received positive instructions—to do by means of the authority of that House that which the court would not allow them to do? He was quite satisfied that the trustees would never get the sanction of the court to carry on the business in the way they had done. They were obliged to carry on the business of general merchants until the youngest child attained the age of twenty-one years, subject to the provisions mentioned—that the eldest son of the testator should be enabled by way of purchase to take an interest by way of partnership to the extent of one-third share, and also with the right of purchasing the whole of the business when the youngest child reached twenty-one years of age. Now, it seemed to him (Mr. Chubb) that the trustees were bound to carry on the business until the youngest child became of age, in order to allow that portion of the will to come into effect, unless it could possibly be shown that the business could be carried on only in such a way that the whole estate would lose; then, perhaps, the court might interfere. He had always understood that where a will distinctly said that the trustees must take a certain course, and that that could not be done owing to some defect or some omission in the will, then Parliament had supplied the deficiency. In the present case the trustees asked the House to give them power to do what the will had not done. It seemed to him a dangerous thing to establish such a precedent,

because trustees, whenever they got into a mess, would come to Parliament to ask for a bill of health—a certificate that would enable them to say, "Well, you cannot object to our breach of trust; we have got the authority of the House in what we have done." That was rather a dangerous thing to establish. If the House did accept the Bill, he trusted that it would be on the understanding that people must not expect that the House on a similar occasion would grant the same favour. It would be a dangerous thing to establish if the wills of persons who had disposed of their property in a solemn and clear manner could be set aside, and the trustees act as they chose, and then ask for parliamentary authority, as it were, to shield them from any possible consequences to which they might be subjected.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL (Hon. A. Rutledge) said there could be no doubt that it was not a very light thing to set aside a will that had been made by a man in full possession of his faculties and who might be supposed to make the best provision possible for his children. He would point out that the hon. member for Bowen was labouring under a slight mistake in assuming that there was any precedent sought to be established by the Bill.

Mr. MOREHEAD: When it is passed it will be a precedent.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: A precedent "sought to be established." He did not retract or alter his words in any way. He said a precedent "sought" to be established. The hon. gentleman contended that to pass a Bill of that sort would be to establish a bad precedent. He (the Attorney-General) was going to say that one of the first select committees upon which he sat after becoming a member of the House was in connection with a matter of a similar nature. The Tooth Estate Enabling Bill was then before the House, and it was referred to a select committee, and he was one of the members of that committee. It was clearly shown that, if the provisions of the will of Mr. Tooth were carried out in their integrity, the result would have been that the whole family would be reduced almost to destitution by the time that the youngest child became of age. The trustees of that will thought it was far better to apply to that House for authority to depart from the terms of that will than to allow a calamity of that kind to overtake the family of Mr. Tooth; and there was no demur whatever on the part of the House to the passing of a Bill giving the trustees power to do what the will forbade them to do. In the first place it seemed to him that it would be a very great hardship indeed to the members of this family if the House were not to pass the Bill. The provisions of the Bill were, no doubt, very clear that Mr. Pettigrew's trustees should be empowered to employ only £10,000 in carrying on a business that he was carrying on with a greater capital than £10,000. It did not require a man to be a very smart business man in order to know what would be the result if the trustees were cut down to a capital of £10,000. The result would be that instead of showing any profit whatever on the year's transactions the £10,000 would be speedily swallowed up in losses. When a man wanted to buy an article in a shop in Brisbane and could not get it, he would probably not go to that shop again. If he went twice to a shop where they did not keep a sufficient stock—and not keeping sufficient capital meant not keeping a sufficient stock to supply customers—if he could not get the articles he wanted he would go to some other place where he could get the articles he required to purchase. How these trustees were going to carry on business in a town like Ipswich, and successfully compete with other shops in the town that had no limit to their capital, he was unable to see. But he did not think it required a very large gift of common sense to understand how that, by the trustees being obliged to stick to the literal terms of the will, they would soon have the family without even the £10,000 that they would require to employ in the carrying on of the business. He should support the Bill.

Mr. SCOTT said it appeared to him that there were two points in the evidence which were in favour of the Bill being passed. The first was the statement on page 15 of the evidence. The liabilities for the year ending November, 1878, were £6,044; for the year ending August 31, 1879, £3,668; for the year ending August 31, 1880, £2,966; and on August 31, 1881, £2,671; showing distinctly that the trustees were endeavouring to carry out the provisions of the will to the best of their ability. The other point was that the trustees were men who were up in years and not likely to live for many years, in all probability not till the youngest child came of age. If that was the case he could not see what was to become of the estate at all; if the present trustees died it would go to the bad altogether, and the children would get nothing.

Mr. MELLOR said he had had an opportunity of considering the evidence which had been taken by the committee, and had also made inquiries on the subject. He certainly thought that it was a very serious matter to interfere with the will of any person, especially one whom they had known so well, and had always known to have been possessed of business qualities. It appeared to him that those trustees were not possessed of those qualities to the same extent as the gentleman who made the will. He certainly should support the second reading of the Bill, and trusted that it would grant the relief sought.

Question put and passed, and the committal of the Bill made an Order of the Day for Thursday next.

SUCCESSION ACT DECLARATORY BILL—SECOND READING.

Mr. CHUBB: Mr. Speaker,—In rising to move the second reading of this Bill the House will not require very much information from me. In 1867 we passed an Act relating to estates, called the Succession Act, the preamble of which is as follows:—

"Whereas it is expedient to consolidate and amend the laws relating to dower, inheritance, succession, wills, powers, uses, and remedies against realty: Be it enacted," etc.

Now, the Succession Act consolidation embodied in it the Act of Charles II., providing for the distribution of the estates of intestates; but the Act did not contain an Act of James II. which provides for this case—a case where the son of a deceased father, dying intestate, and having at that time alive his mother, and brothers and sisters, or brothers without sisters. In such a case, according to the law in England, the brothers and sisters share with the mother, and, without that statute of James, the mother would take all. It has been stated that this statute is not in force here, though some think it is; at any rate, doubts have been expressed as to whether it is or not; and, inasmuch as when the Succession Act of 1867 was passed that statute was left out, it has been considered advisable to put it in now. This is explained in the preamble of this Bill, which says:—

"Whereas doubts have arisen whether the provisions of the 7th section of the Act of the first year of King James the Second, entitled an Act for reviving and continuance of several Acts of Parliament therein mentioned, have been repealed by the Succession Act of 1867, and it is expedient to remove such doubts: Be it therefore declared and enacted," etc.

And the section referred to is declared to be in force by the 1st section of this Bill, which is as follows :—

"The provisions of the 7th section of the said first-mentioned Act are and have always been in force in the colony of Queensland, so that if after the death of a father any of his children shall die, or shall have died intestate, without wife and children, in the lifetime of the mother, every brother and sister, and the representatives of them, shall have, and shall be deemed to have had, an equal share with her in the surplusage of the estate of such intestate."

That section is practically the part of the statute of James II. dealing with the question. It is undoubtedly in force in England, and though, as I have said, it is thought by some to be in force here still, inasmuch as the preamble of the Succession Act of 1867 is "to consolidate and amend" the law, and the statute of James has been omitted, it might be argued that this House did not intend to introduce that provision, it is thought better now that it should be put beyond any doubt by means of the short statute the second reading of which I now beg to move.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL : I think there can be no doubt that it is very desirable to clear up the uncertainty existing upon this subject. There is no necessity for me to say anything further than that I agree with the Bill brought in by the hon. gentleman, and I have no doubt that it will save, not only a considerable amount of doubt, but of expense which, in the absence of such a provision, might some day be incurred by a suit in the Supreme Court. I shall cordially support the Bill.

Question put and passed, and the committal of the Bill made an Order of the Day for Thursday next.

WAGES ACT AMENDMENT BILL—SECOND READING.

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN: Mr. Speaker,—In 1870 the then Colonial Secretary, now Sir Arthur Palmer, introduced and passed an Act for the purpose of paying the wages of labourers employed upon farms, plantations, and stations all over the colony. I believe he was under the impression when he did pass the Act that he had secured all labourers' wages. But it seems that such is not the case, because a few weeks ago I saw an article in the *Figaro* newspaper, stating that certain miners upon the Palmer Gold Field had been defrauded out of their wages. After having worked for a certain time under a leasehold the mortgagee came down upon the claim and took possession, and refused to pay the miners their wages, although they had been working for five or six weeks and their wages had amounted to something over £200. It is to remedy that defect in the law that I have introduced this Bill. I took occasion to verify the statements made in the newspaper. I found them to be correct, and consulted with my friend the hon. member for Bowen, and this Bill is the result of the consultation between us. I think it requires very little for me to say on the subject, because I believe that all members of the House must be quite as willing that miners should be paid their wages, as labourers engaged in any other employment. I therefore move that this Bill be now read a second time.

Mr. SMYTH said he did not know whether any provision was made in any existing Act for contractors ; but very often shafts were let on contract, and there was sometimes great difficulty in recovering money from shareholders. He therefore thought that contractors and tributors should be included in the Bill.

Mr. CHUBB said the remarks of the hon. member for Gympie were pertinent, but if he referred to the 2nd section of the Masters and Servants Act he would find that the point to which he had drawn attention was covered there. In the definition of "servant," miners were included. A servant was defined to be a person "hired and engaged in this colony either by verbal or written contract, either for a time or for piecework." That, he thought, would cover contracting work such as that to which the hon. member had referred.

The HON. SIR T. MCILWRAITH said he did not catch, from the explanation of the hon. member for Townsville, the exact effect the Bill would have, nor could it be seen without reference to the Wages Act. From his recollection of that Act, he thought mortgagees were made responsible to the extent of something like six months' wages; and it seemed to him that mining would be damaged rather than supported by such a provision, because no mortgagee would advance anything on a mine under those conditions. It was the custom of mines to pay the men once a month, and on most mines once a fortnight. He believed that wages should be secured, but the amount should be limited to actual pay regularly received by the men.

Question put and passed, and committal of the Bill made an Order of the Day for Thursday next.

CROWN LANDS BILL—SECOND READING.

On the Order of the Day for resumption of adjourned debate on Mr. Dutton's motion—"That the Bill be now read a second time"—upon which the Hon. Sir Thomas McIlwraith had moved, by way of amendment, that all the words after the word "that" be omitted, with a view to the insertion in their place of the following words, namely :—

"While earnestly desirous of remedying the defects in the land laws, of correcting the abuses developed under them, and of generally strengthening their administration for the more effectual carrying out of the intentions of the Legislature, this House regrets its inability to approve of the present Bill for, *inter alia*, the following reasons, that is to say—

"Because the Bill, while providing no additional safeguard against the fraudulent acquisition and monopoly of land, would, by abolishing solemn declarations now required to insure *bonâ fide* settlement, open the door to fresh abuses of an aggravated nature.

"Because the substitution for the Governor in Council of a nominee board would not be in harmony with the principles of responsible government.

"Because the Bill, instead of strengthening land administration by judiciously enlisting the aid of trusted representative men, possessing local knowledge of the various districts, would unwisely entrust the entire administration to a central board, hampered by legal technicalities, and delayed by the difficulty and cost of procuring local information.

"Because the repudiation of the pre-emptive right involved in the repeal of the 54th section of the Pastoral Leases Act of 1869 would not only be a breach of faith towards the holders of existing leases, but also be injurious to the good name and fame of the colony.

"Because the Bill materially affects the land revenue of the colony, and no indication has been given by the Minister introducing it of the means by which the probable deficit shall be made good.

"Because, by abruptly substituting for the much-cherished freehold tenure a system of mere leasehold, except in respect of holdings termed agricultural farms, the Bill would give an impolitic and unjust preference to one class of selectors, and prejudicially affect the reputation of the colony as an attractive field for enterprising immigrants.

"Because the entire abolition of the much-prized facilities now offered for homestead selection would be a disastrous reversal of the most successful provision of the existing land laws."

That this House therefore requests the mover to temporarily withdraw the Bill, with a view to its early reintroduction in a form better calculated to check abuse, and encourage the legitimate settlement of the people upon the lands of the colony.

Mr. JORDAN said: I am glad, sir, that it did not fall to my lot to follow the hon. member for Townsville in the very elaborate speech he delivered on this most important question last night. I know anything that I can say will appear very poor indeed in comparison with the speech made by that hon. member. Every hon. member listens to the member for Townsville with pleasure when he addresses the House. He always has something to say, and he always says it well. I did not, however, listen with so much pleasure yesterday to the hon. member for Townsville as on every previous occasion, because I am very desirous, in common with most members of the House, of seeing this great and all-important question—the settlement of the land in this vast colony—dealt with in a calm, deliberate, and sincere way. I will not say, of course, that the hon. member did not deal with it sincerely, but I was impressed with this idea while listening to his eloquent speech that it was a masterpiece of special pleading, full of sophistry from beginning to end. I do not wish to say anything at all disrespectful of the hon. gentleman, but I cannot think, from all the views I have heard him so well express in this House on many occasions, showing that his sympathies are with the people and that he desires the progress of the colony, that that speech can be taken as a sincere expression of his views generally on this great question. I think, sir, that he, finding himself connected with the hon. members on the opposite side, who are determined to oppose the Bill, had to make the best of a bad case—and that he can always do exceedingly well. The hon. gentleman said, sir, what I will now read, so as to be quite sure of the words:—

"If the members on this side of the House, who represent squatting constituencies, act in the interests of party and not in the interests of the country, they will accept this Bill in its entirety, because it is the best Bill from that point of view that they could have."

Yet, sir, that hon. gentleman told us that he was entirely opposed—if I understood him correctly—to the raising of the rents. He is the champion of the squatters where the question of rents is concerned, but presently, sir, on the other hand, he proves himself their bitterest enemy, I think, because for thirty years or more the great Crown lessees of Australia have been asking for indefeasible leases and compensation for improvements. The hon. gentleman, however, objects entirely to indefeasible leases, and pours the utmost contempt upon the idea of giving compensation for improvements as contained in this Bill; that is, as far as I understood him, and I think I understood him correctly. Now, sir, he calls this idea of indefeasible leases, and compensation for improvements, a "new bogie." I think that justifies what I said: that he pours upon this idea his inexpressible contempt, ignoring altogether the fact that these indefeasible leases are to be given to the Crown lessees on certain equitable conditions—that is, that they give up half of their great holdings for close settlement, and that they pay a fair rent for the remainder to the State—that is, to the people who are to be benefited by it; for if we derive revenue from our estate it will save that taxation which otherwise the people will be subjected to, in order to meet the expenses of making our railways and carrying on the government of the country. I do not think, from the way in which the hon. member for Townville treated this particular question, that he can be taken as an authority upon the matter. I do not think he understands the interests of those whose interests he thought he was advocating last evening. He proceeds to apply this "bogie" idea to small squatters. He said of them:—

"Let us examine more closely into what will be the condition of the country thirty years hence, when this Bill has been in full operation. If it has been successful, there will be a large class of small pastoral tenants—a very numerous class indeed."

I thought that was what the colony wanted—a very large settlement. We have 427,000,000 acres, and we have a very small population, and we want a very numerous class indeed to do the work of settling the land. And why should they not be settled on the land? When we talk of settlement we have been too much in the habit, I think, of attaching the idea of settlement to tillage of the soil; and many hon. gentlemen believe with the great pastoral lessees, that the idea of farming is utterly absurd—a fact which found expression many years ago, as you are aware, Mr. Speaker, in the statement that a cabbage could not be made to grow. I think we have made a mistake in always associating the idea of settlement in this colony with the tillage of the soil. Why should not a number of men with small capital, hundreds and thousands of them, be settled in this colony as small pastoral tenants? I do not know any reason whatever why the monopoly of that industry should be in the hands of great capitalists. Why should they possess 400,000,000 acres of pastoral land for their own particular use? I have no feeling against the pastoral tenants of the Crown. On the contrary, I regard pastoral occupation as the greatest industry of the Australian colonies, and would do nothing to injure that industry. But I say this: that the great Crown lessees have no right to a monopoly of that industry. I should like to see what this Bill proposes to effect—that a large proportion of that 400,000,000 acres should be given up for occupation by small squatters. We were told the other day, if I understood the Hon. Sir Thomas McIlwraith correctly, that squatting is not now a profitable occupation, and that those gentlemen who had made large sums of money had cleared out.

The PREMIER: Had made it by clearing out.

The HON. SIR T. McILWRAITH: I referred to a particular part of the colony, and to a particular class of squatters.

Mr. JORDAN: Well, I beg pardon——

The HON. SIR T. McILWRAITH: It makes a great difference.

Mr. JORDAN: However, I see in to-day's paper, in a telegram from Melbourne, that—

"Messrs. Raleigh, Aitken, and Company report the sale, on account of Messrs. Blackwood and Patterson, of a portion of their Currawinya Station, situated in the Warrego district, Queensland, near Hungerford, and containing 440 square miles of country, together with 25,000 sheep, horses, etc. The purchasers are Messrs. Fowler and Company."

What are Messrs. Fowler and Company about? I am afraid they are taking leave of their senses. We have had a bad season; but in spite of that Messrs. Fowler and Company have bought 440 square miles of country in this colony, together with 25,000 sheep, for we do not know how much—but it must have been a large sum. Again, I have here a prospectus, which is a little curiosity.

The HON. SIR T. McILWRAITH: How do you make Fowler and Company out to be fools for buying that station?

Mr. JORDAN: Because it is understood that pastoral occupation is no longer a profitable occupation, and yet we find a vast estate like this finding a sale as reported to-day in the

extract I have read. The prospectus to which I was referring is the prospectus of—

"The Northern Territory Corporation of South Australia Limited, incorporated under the Companies Acts 1862 and 1883.

"*Abridged Prospectus.*

"Full prospectus, plan, and report can be obtained from the bankers, brokers, solicitors, or secretary.

"Capital, £1,000,000, divided into 100,000 shares of £10 each, of which the vendors take 33,000, with £5 per share paid up, and a contingent liability of £5 per share. * * * * * * *

"The object for which this corporation is formed is, to acquire from Messrs. C. B. Fisher and Mr. Lyons"—

I think Mr. Lyons was, not very long ago, a solicitor in Brisbane—

"Pastoral properties in the Northern Territory of South Australia covering an area of about 34,700 square miles, or, say, 22,200,000 acres, and 35,500 acres of agricultural land, more or less, together with homesteads, improvements, and about 20,000 head of cattle and 750 horses, and to further develop the same by carrying on the business of cattle, sheep, and horse breeders, etc. The magnitude of the properties may be briefly described by stating that their area is about two-thirds that of England and Wales."

A nice little property!

"It is a well-known fact that most of the great fortunes made in Australia have been realised by the owners of well selected pastoral properties."

Yes; that, I think, is a well-known fact; and it is used in the prospectus very well.

"The properties to be acquired by the corporation were selected by Messrs. Fisher and Lyons, men of admitted colonial experience and good judgment in these matters, who were amongst the first to foresee the great future in store for this part of Australia."

Lucky men!

"And being large capitalists were enabled to secure a very considerable portion of the cream of the country. The properties taken up are well grassed and watered, there being no less than seven navigable rivers running through them, viz.:—The Adelaide, Roper, Mary, Waterhouse, and Victoria, and the South, East, and West Alligator Rivers, besides many smaller streams, springs, and watercourses; this in connection with the annual rains renders the corporation's property comparatively free from drought, the great drawback to so many pastoral properties in Australia. The rivers being navigable render communication both easy and cheap, and in addition the transcontinental railway"—

That is, of course, the Transcontinental Railway of South Australia—

"Now in course of construction will run through portions of the property, as does the existing line of telegraph, which places the territory in direct communication with London.

"The want of a market, the source of so much anxiety and sometimes loss, in some parts of Australia, is almost wholly obviated by the proximity of these properties to Port Darwin, the nearest Australian port, not only to Europe but also to Java, Singapore, and India, where a large demand exists for cattle and horses, which can be sold at remunerative prices, independently of a largely increasing local demand.

"Port Darwin as a harbour is second only to Port Jackson (the harbour of Sydney). The Government of South Australia is about to expend upwards of a million sterling in the construction of the Transcontinental Railway and Harbour Works, which when completed will make Port Darwin the central port for Australian trade."

That I think, sir, is a very interesting document; and I think it will be interesting also if I read the names of the board of directors. They are as follow:—

"Alfred Denison, Esq., chairman of the Trust and Agency Company of Australia, chairman; A. Scott, Esq., chairman, London Board, National Bank of Australasia, and chairman, London Board, R. Goldsbrough and Co. (Limited), Australia, deputy chairman; Sir T. Douglas Forsyth, C.B., K.C.S.I., chairman, West Indian Portuguese Guaranteed Railway Company (Limited), and director, East Indian Railway Company, etc.; Right Hon. the Earl of Lytton, G.C.B., G.C.S.I., director, Bank of Australasia; F. W. Lowther, Esq., director of Latimer, Clark, Muirhead, and Company (Limited); His Grace the Duke of Manchester, K.V., Kimbolton Castle, St. Neots; Charles Ridley Smith, Esq. (Messrs. Green, Tomlinson, and Company, 32, Nicholas lane)."

My hon. friend, Mr. Brookes, alluded to that prospectus last night; but I have seen it since, and thought it would be well if I took the opportunity of reading it to the House for their special behoof. I think it shows, sir, that there are still a great many men in England and elsewhere who do not think that squatting in Australia is altogether defunct. They are prepared to take up a great many shares, and introduce a great amount of capital into the colonies yet; and vast areas of Australian territory are exploited by great syndicates who are directly opposed to the views contained in this Bill. The idea of this Bill is that the vast continent of Australia should be populated. It will take hundreds, thousands, and millions to do it. If there are thirty-four millions of people in Great Britain; and if Queensland is twelve times larger than England and Wales; and if it is found that we are in possession of pastoral land better than we ever expected, such as the great western lands, then we ought to have no difficulty in populating this country. It was thought once that Central Australia was a great desert. When I first came to Australia that was the general belief; but we find now that the vast interior is a magnificent country. To use Mr. Edward Wienholt's description, it is something like this: "By far the largest unbroken expanse of rich pastoral country to be found in any part of Australia." I say we want to get the country populated; we want hundreds of thousands of small and large capitalists, who are willing and waiting to come to this colony; and this Bill makes the land available for them.

The HON. SIR T. MCILWRAITH: No, it does not! That is just what we deny.

Mr. JORDAN: We give compensation to the pastoral tenant for improvements, on condition that he gives up half, or a third, or a quarter of his present holding. Therefore, I say this Bill is one of the grandest Bills that has ever been framed in Australia; and if it becomes law—of which I have not the slightest doubt, any more than I have that I am standing here—I believe that we shall see an immense increase of emigration from Great Britain—if other proper means are taken—a vast influx of capital, and a very much better state of things than would be brought about if we encouraged by our land laws such a system as that set out in the very beautiful prospectuses which I have just read to the House. Now, as to these small squattages. The hon. member for Townsville, although he says the Bill will lead to a great settlement of the country, on the whole, yet he proceeded to say that it would not be successful. He pictured forth the wretched, helpless, hopeless, downtrodden condition of men who will become the small squatters under this Bill. He said in bitter tones that they will require to fence in their runs. Unhappy men! Why, what if they did not? If we get thousands of these people settled as small squatters, what a state of things we should have if they were not to fence in their runs! What use would the grass be to them when the big Crown lessee had got his cattle running about outside? To add to their misery, they have to build their own houses too! Did anyone ever hear of such an enormity as that? They have to cut down trees, cut them up and make them into huts, which I think are good enough for any man to live in, in this beautiful country and climate. The hon. member forgot that every pound those men expended in putting up fences and building houses is expend upon land of which they have an indefeasible lease for thirty years at 1½d. an acre—5 per cent. on the estimated value of 2s. 6d. an acre—and that they will get compensation if

they choose to throw up their leases—they will get full compensation for all the unexhausted improvements. He did not tell us that. Then he proceeded to descant further upon the terrible condition that the farmers will be in. The hon. gentleman professes to be the poor man's friend, and I really believe he is.

The PREMIER: No; he used to be.

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN: When I sat beside you.

The PREMIER: Yes.

Mr. JORDAN: The hon. gentleman believes in universal suffrage. I have heard him advocate the rights of the people, and he has some large ideas; and I think it is his misfortune that he has got closely allied—accidentally, perhaps—with hon. gentlemen on the other side. I do not say that some others of them had not large and liberal ideas, but unhappily they have changed, and are now opposed to liberal government. They have to make the best of it, and they are making a gallant fight. I cannot help admiring the pluck and courage they show when fighting in the face of an overpowering majority on this side. I say they are making a gallant fight, but they have a bad cause, and many of them know it and feel it. We can feel that when we hear them speak. I could feel it when the Hon. Sir Thomas McIlwraith was speaking yesterday; an admirable speech it was—fair and noble; but he felt, I think, that he ought to be the leader of the Liberal party.

The HON. SIR T. McILWRAITH: I would not head such a lot.

Mr. JORDAN: I feel assured Sir Thomas McIlwraith would not mind if he had the position of my hon. friend sitting on this side. His best sympathies are with the people, I know.

Mr. MOREHEAD: Hear, hear!

Mr. JORDAN: The hon. member for Townsville went on to talk about the dreadful position of those down-trodden small squatters, and said they would have to pay four times as much as the great Crown lessees.

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN: That is so.

Mr. JORDAN: That is a mistake. The Bill provides that the great Crown lessees in the outside districts shall pay from 20s. to 90s. per square mile, and that the small squatters shall pay 1½d. per acre. The rent of the former at 90s. is a little more than 1½d.: how can he say that the small squatter will have to pay four times as much as the big man? It is nothing of the kind. The great principle of the Bill is that the rent of the land leased by the pastoral tenant shall be appraised in accordance with its value; it may be from 20s. to 90s. After the description given by Mr. Wienholt, we know something of the value of those lands in the West; and I have myself witnessed something of this beauty and this wealth. We know how rich some of the land is, and we also know that some of the land between this and that is poor; and I say this is the grand principle of the Bill—that the rent is to be fixed by assessment according to its value. The hon. member for Townsville said the rent of those small squatters might be raised upon them after some years, but he forgot to say that the Bill provides that the rent cannot possibly be raised on the small squatters for ten years. At the end of that time it may be raised, but only in proportion to the infinitesimal rent they have to pay during that first period of ten years. I know very well that agricultural settlement is not a subject which hon. gentlemen on the opposite side care much about—at least they did not in days gone by, when I had the honour of a seat in the House before, although some change has come over their opinions since then which is greatly to their credit. But I know that gentlemen belonging to the pastoral tenant party have not generally much patience to listen in this House to persons advocating farming by small men. They were accustomed years ago to associate farmers with branding-irons, blackmailers, and so on; and that is the case still in New South Wales. It would be almost impossible to get a real squatter of the old type to believe that a man could make an honourable living by the tillage of the soil in Australia. They see the difficulties a farmer has to contend with; and they say it is a wretched existence. They say that such men do not live: they only exist; they starve. Only this very day I heard a gentleman say that farmers starve on their land. Well, I have been many years in the colony, and have visited many farming districts in it. I lived six years on the Logan, where I was surrounded by farmers; and I could take hon. gentlemen to several places there now where they would find the farmer located in a good house, often neatly painted outside and nearly always clean and wholesome inside; and if you happen to go there about 12 o'clock in the day you will see the table spread with almost everything you could wish to eat. Twenty-seven years ago, a man, who was then a working man, bought some cattle from my station. On my return from England I met him again. He asked me to go into his house. It was about 12 o'clock, and the table was spread. I asked him how he was getting on, and he replied, "I can just make bread." Well, he had on his table bread and meat, pastry and puddings, pickles, preserves, and I think, cheese and butter, and plenty of them. His children surrounded the table like olive branches, and looked as if they had a good dinner every day. On my expressing a wish to see an old friend in the neighbourhood he offered to drive me over; and he brought a buggy to the door—better than I use, although that is not saying much—which must have cost £40, a good horse and capital harness. I was not rude enough to ask him if it was all paid for, but I have no doubt it was. That man is now wealthy, and so are his sons; and there are hundreds and thousands of men in the colony now who were poor when I came here, and who are now wealthy by farming the land. We never see here what Sir Thomas McIlwraith must have often seen during his visit to the old country—beggars in the streets. Indeed, Sir Arthur Kennedy used to say that the one thing that struck him on his arrival was, that amongst the vast crowds who welcomed him there were no poor beggars. Those small farmers have always enough to eat for their children; they keep them well clothed, and they can get them educated at the national schools for nothing. They are prosperous. They may not have much money in the bank, but their land is their bank. Every additional stroke of their axe or spade improves the value of their own land; and it will be the same thing if we lease them the land for fifty years, especially if they get compensation for improvements. I want to see in this colony hundreds and thousands of that class of people, who have been so much despised and ridiculed for the last quarter of a century in these colonies, and especially in Queensland; who are called sometimes "cockatoo farmers." Only multiply them sufficiently and the colony will become really wealthy. Gold is not wealth, if Adam Smith be correct; but that is wealth which those men will bring out of the ground. When speaking on the revenue part of the question, the hon. member for Townsville drew a very terrible picture of what would be the result when the State had to buy up £50,000,000 worth of those improvements which will be made all over the country under this Bill. The State will not have

to pay for ixpence worth. Compensation for the improvements is given by the buyer of those improvements—by the incoming tenant, if I read the Bill correctly.

The PREMIER: Hear, hear!

Mr. JORDAN: I was glad to hear the hon. member for Townsville say that under this Bill £50,000,000 worth of improvements would be made before the leases run out. That is the reason why we give compensation for improvements and indefeasible leases. As to the squatters, they are generally long-headed men, men of experience and education, and who know what they are about. What squatter, then, would be foolish enough to lay out £100,000 on his runs if he had not an indefeasible lease and compensation for improvements? That is the reason why many of the squattage properties of this colony remain as they were many years ago with very little done upon them. If the great pastoral leased lands of this colony had £50,000,000 expended on them in the next twenty or thirty years, then this magnificent estate, the colony of Queensland—with which we are entrusted by our Queen, not for our benefit only, but for hundreds and thousands of the people of our own native land—will be worth twenty times as much as it is now; and it would be a very difficult thing to estimate its value to-day. I shall not follow the hon. gentleman's figures, because I think they are very confusing, though no doubt they are right enough, from his own point of view. The hon. gentleman is evidently disposed to take this view: that we should continue to collect revenue by selling the public estate, and spend the money in building our railways and carrying on the expenses of government. That to my mind would be something like a man living on his capital instead of on the interest of his money—killing the "goose that lays the golden egg." As far as this Bill goes, I heartily approve of the application of what has been ridiculed as "Henry-Georgeism" to the great question of the settlement of the land of this colony. The great principle of the Bill is leasing pure and simple, as applied to pastoral lands exclusively. Then the hon. member for Townsville said a good deal about homesteads, and we know how much capital has been made out of them. I think the hon. member for Townsville claimed for the party with which he is now allied the great credit of having originated homestead settlement in the colony. Now, sir, what is the history of the homestead clauses in this colony? I could take the hon. member back to the first session of the Queensland Parliament, but I will not go back as far as that. In 1868 a Bill was brought in, and the late lamented Hon. Arthur Macalister—for whom I had the greatest respect as one of the greatest statesmen that ever led the Liberal party in this colony—a man who impoverished himself to benefit the colony—that gentleman, writing to me in England when that Bill was before the House, said it was a Bill to give cheap land to the squatters. He was so pained and distressed at it that after he had expressed his own views on the subject on the second reading he would not take any part in the work of the committee; as he saw the Government were likely to carry it with the assistance of some of the Liberal party who made a compromise with the Government—promising that they would help the Bill through committee on condition that the American homestead clauses system was introduced into the Bill. So, sir, the homestead system was forced into the Bill, which was to give cheap land to the squatters, by the Liberal party, because the Government could not carry it without their help. Now, sir, the hon. member for Townsville quoted from that remarkable piece of literature the report of Mr. Commissioner Hume, and he said, I think, that Mr. Hume did not say that the homestead men had dummied the land, but only selectors—meaning, I suppose, the larger selectors—and that these selectors had not dummied in that district more than about 20,000 acres, which did not amount to very much. But what does Mr. Hume say?—

> "It may not be out of place here to offer a few remarks on the subject of acquiring lands by evasion of the statute, or what is commonly known as 'dummying.' So far as my knowledge goes, I do not think that more than 20,000 acres under the Act of 1876 have been applied for by large landholders in that manner."

It is by "large landholders," not by the selectors, as the hon. member for Townsville seemed to think last night.

> "It goes on among the smaller class of selectors in the most wholesale way."

Who are the smaller class of selectors if they are not the homestead men; and how can it be said that he did not accuse the homestead men of dummying land? Now, sir, a word about the board. I understood the hon. the Premier to say that the administration of the board would not be the administration of the Lands Department, but that it would be the administration of that part of the new Act—when it becomes an Act—which deals with rents, and with the amount of compensation to be given for improvements. I think all hon. members in this House will agree that it is very desirable that this part of the administration of our land should be removed out of the range of political influence; in fact, that was admitted by Sir Thomas McIlwraith. He said, I think, that something in this direction was perhaps desirable, but he objected to the constitution of the board, and thought there should be local land boards. The hon. member for Townsville followed, I think, on the same lines, and said he approved of the thing as it was in New South Wales under Mr. Farnell's Bill. He told us how the local land boards were constituted—two gentlemen who were resident in the district, and one official who was paid. Now, sir, I should not approve of the assessment of rents and valuation of land being in the hands of gentlemen who are locally interested. I think that would be a great mistake, and I think this is a much better plan. We know now what is the value of much of our pastoral land of which we knew very little many years ago; and the principle contained in this Bill is the assessment of rents according to value. We know, of course, that there is a vast tract which I have spoken of before in the far West of great value, and we know that there is a great tract of land between this and that of comparatively little value; and there are coast lands, which are fit for cattle and not fit for sheep; and, therefore, it is a fair and reasonable thing, this principle of assessment according to value. Then comes the question how this assessment is to take place? It would be physically impossible for one man, the Minister, to determine what the rents of all these different squattages should be all over this vast colony; and how is it to be done? The Bill provides that it should be done by commissioners on the spot, in the districts, who shall sit in open court and determine these important questions; and if any difficulty arises there is a central board which has an appellative jurisdiction, and to which difficult cases are to be referred. What are the functions of the board? They will only deal with questions that are referred to them. The hon. member for Townsville said that the board were to initiate everything, and he went on to describe how they would get their information. Then I say that the board are

judges. They sit in open court. Their court is a public tribunal. Are we content to leave our lives and property in the hands of judges in the Supreme Court—we know how much depends on the summing-up to the jury—and shall we be afraid to rely upon two honest, able men to determine such questions as may be referred to them, also the rent of land, and which they decide in public court? Now, as to the constitution of the board. That is another question. Whether is it to be one person only who is to decide these difficult questions, or whether is it to be a board consisting of two or three? I believe in two rather than one, because two are better than one, because then there is counsel; and I believe in two rather than three, because if there were three it would be a committee. Now, we know that a committee is the most dangerous of all things. There is no responsibility in a committee, even if there are only three in it. When any difficult case comes on, one person can always get out of it by saying that he was overruled by the others. Somebody has suggested that the board should appeal to the Minister, and that he should have appellative jurisdiction. But I do not think that would be the best plan; it would be going back again to the old thing. One man, only human after all, and under such a system, would be physically unable to hear all the cases that would be referred to him. I believe in the board as it is. I think it is admirable; and if I were the Minister I would not yield one inch on this question. It was a difficult and delicate question to solve, and I think it has been solved wisely. The more I look at it the more pleased I am with the board; and I have seen it highly extolled in the Melbourne *Argus*. I have listened carefully to the able speeches made on the other side, and I have taken a deep interest in this question, knowing, as I do, something about it, having been so long in the colony. My first feeling, when I read the Bill;—and I read it with intense anxiety; I had, of course, had no communication with Ministers about it;—my first feeling was that I was a new man. I felt that it was the Bill we had been looking for in Australia for the last quarter of a century. I do not say that it is without defects; it would be absurd to suppose that any Land Bill, if it were drafted by—well, whoever might draft it, it would not meet with the approval of a great number of gentlemen. No two minds are constituted alike. When the Bill of 1868 was brought in, one Minister said, "There it is for you to worry." That was an extreme position to take up. If the Minister for Lands said, "There it is for free discussion, which is invited; any alteration made with the approval of the majority of the House, if it does not in any way affect the principle of the Bill, I will consent to" —if the Minister for Lands said that, I think he would be acting the part of a statesman and an honest man. Well, what are the principles of the Bill? The Crown tenants have been asking for many years for compensation for improvements, alike for large and small holders. Here we have security of tenure, compensation, leasing, pure and simple, applied to all pastoral lands; the rents are to be according to the value fixed by assessment by the commissioners in open court, in the district where the land is situated; and there is to be an appellative jurisdiction in the central court sitting in Brisbane. As to whether the rent should be more or less; as to whether a man should hold 5,000 or 20,000 acres, those are matters of little importance compared with the main principles of the Bill. They will all have free discussion in committee, and I believe they will be dealt with fairly by both sides. I feel sure that so important a measure as this, coming at this particular juncture, will receive fair play at the hands of every member of the House. As I have said, hon. members on the other side were bound to oppose their victors, and they have done it in a manly way. I have been often astonished at the perseverance, the fairness, and the ability which, on the whole, those gentlemen have shown. I believe this Bill is a wise and comprehensive measure. It is susceptible, no doubt, of improvement in committee—it would be a strange thing if it were not—but the alterations that will be made will not interfere in any way, I think, with the great principles of the Bill such as I have endeavoured to describe. I think it deals fairly with the most important pastoral interests in Queensland. For thirty years the Crown tenants have been asking for what is called fixity of tenure and compensation for their improvements, to encourage them to spend their money in making wells and dams. They have under this Bill all they want. They have to give up one-half their runs to provide for close settlement, and they will have to pay a fair rent for the remainder. Then, as to pre-emption, the hon. member for Townsville does not believe we shall be doing the right thing; he thinks we should not be behaving honourably to the Crown tenants by doing away with what is called the "pre-emptive right"; but after listening to the Premier the other night I do not think it is a "right." It is called a "right" in the marginal note; but I have seen a great many mistakes in marginal notes, and certainly they should not be quoted as the Bill. No lawyer would expressly defend the right on the ground of what the marginal notes might indicate. The 2,560 acres, or 4 square miles, was to be given for improvements; that is to say, if that amount of improvements had been made. Supposing it was a right, which I do not admit, I say that it has been abused. The general practice was to take the choice spots—the water frontages, and beautiful spots all over these runs. On the consolidated runs they have five or six of these places—or fortresses, as the hon. the Premier said—which enable them to keep possession of land which does not belong to them, but belongs to the people of the colony, which they rent at three-quarters of a farthing per acre. The hon. member for Townsville thinks it should be continued at that rate—9s. 1d. per square mile. Speaking about pre-emption, the hon. member thinks that although pre-emption has been injurious, yet the Crown lessees—I do not like the word "squatter"—should have their "bond"—"pound of flesh"—no matter how the country may bleed for it; no matter how it has been abused, they must have their "pound of flesh." Here is another "Daniel come to judgment!" I do not think they should have their "bond '—"pound of flesh." I think if this is the way in which what is known as the pre-emptive right has been carried on, there has been an injury to the public estate. They should not have their "pound of flesh" and the country should bleed no more in that direction at all events. I do not think it is advantageous that the pastoral tenants should be placed in the position of being obliged to buy their lands. The price which they can afford to give is too little for the State to receive—I mean in fee-simple. We know that in New South Wales, where, under the vicious system of free selection before survey, the great Crown tenants were compelled in self-defence to buy large portions of land, the consequences have been disastrous in the extreme; ruinous to the Crown lessees, demoralising to the selectors, and damaging to the public estate. Thirty million acres have gone in that way, and where is it now? In the hands of the banks, as the commission which inquired into the

subject told us—the banks and other monetary institutions of the colony—and the close selection which was to have been effected so triumphantly has not been effected at all. It is less to-day than it was twenty years ago, strange to say. In 1861, the commission tell us, the rural population was to the whole population 52·25 per cent., and in 1881 it was only 41 and a fraction per cent. I think this Bill deals fairly with the pastoral tenants in the matter of rent. The time was when it was a fair thing enough for the pastoral tenants who were the pioneers, and, in a sense, the discoverers of our country, to have their land at a merely nominal rent. But that time has passed away. They have had their land long enough on those terms to pay for the discovery and first settlement of the land. It is time now that the pastoral lands, or a large portion of them at any rate, should pay a fair rent to the country. We know, as I said just now, that our pastoral lands are a great deal better than we thought a great many years ago. We have made three great trunk lines of railway to pierce that magnificent country described by Mr. Wienholt, and bring it into connection with the great seaports on our eastern seaboard. These cost at least a million of money.

The HON. SIR T. MCILWRAITH: They have not got near it.

Mr. JORDAN: I think they are about 300 miles each and they are to be extended each 100 miles more. So that almost all the pastoral tenants in the country will be brought within 100 or 200 miles of communication with the ports for the carriage of their wool. The rent determined upon, I think, is a fair thing — 40s. per square mile in the settled districts and from 20s. to 90s. in the unsettled districts, or ¾d. an acre in the settled, and from ¾d. to 1½d. in the unsettled. In New South Wales, in Mr. Farnell's Land Bill, it was proposed that the rents should be 2d. and 3d.; 2d. in the western and eastern districts, and 3d. in the central districts. In passing through committee, that was modified, and it was fixed at 1d. and 2d.

Mr. DONALDSON: It was reduced to one-half.

Mr. JORDAN: Yes; I was mistaken. It was reduced to just half, 1d. and 1½d. I think we can compare favourably with New South Wales in that respect. Their Bill was debated for I do not know how many weeks in the House, and had been very well sifted; and this is the conclusion they have arrived at. I approve of this Bill especially because it unlocks the land. It makes room for great settlement in the colony of a more profitable kind than that primitive and patriarchal settlement which existed under the old-style squatting. First of all we have the grazing farms—small squattages, to encourage pastoral occupation by small capitalists—thirty years leases' with compensation — everything to encourage the small capitalists, who come from Great Britain with their money in their pockets to improve the public estate for their own benefit—to dig wells, make reservoirs for water, grow fodder for their cattle, and raise farm produce for their family consumption. I have read carefully the report which the hon. member for Townsville read—and he reads everything—of Messrs. Morris and Rankin. It contains, as he said, a mass of evidence, and if it points conclusively to anything it is this: that the water system of Australia—and especially in the dry country—if it is properly made use of, will be more valuable than all our gold. Geologists tell us that there are rivers of water running underground in many directions, and they tell us that they know where to sink for that water, and, so far as those experiments have been tried, what they have said has been perfectly borne out by results. Immense sums of money have been expended by the Crown lessees of New South Wales in making reservoirs for water, and sinking wells in that part of the country where they were protected by the fact that they chose to settle in what was called desert country a few years ago, as it had no surface water; and because there they thought they might be out of the reach of the free selectors. They have expended from £10,000 to £100,000, and the results are marvelous. That is the basis of this Bill—compensation for improvements. That land in New South Wales, which was known as "desert land," and was not worth 5s., is now selling at from £2 to £3 an acre. Speaking of that, I hope that before long an Irrigation Bill will be introduced by which people may be enabled to borrow money for that purpose. I want to read a short passage from the mass of evidence taken before the commission, held in New South Wales, referred to by the hon. member for Townsville. The evidence given before the commissioners in New South Wales is truly astonishing, and strange to say the short extract which I shall read might have been written after this Bill was introduced by the Minister for Lands, in order to prove that it was the very Bill the colony wants. This extract is from the evidence of a squatter whose runs are on the Darling River, in New South Wales; and this gentleman says:—

"I am a selector and squatter. Twenty-three years ago I went to the Darling River as a working blacksmith in the employment of the Bogan River Company. I selected 40 acres of land at Louth on the Darling, which by additional purchases first increased to 320 acres, and after 1875 to 640 acres. My six sons and my son-in-law selected seven lots of 640 acres each, one of which is on a leased run of mine, and includes my head station, so that among my family we hold 5,120 acres of conditionally purchased land."

A description follows of the property possessed by this witness. He is now very wealthy, leasing from the Government 239,000 acres, on which he is very prosperous. He says:—

"There was no surface-water on any part of my run. I have gone to great expense in conserving water. At my head-station I have erected, at a cost of £3,500, a stone dam 133 yards long, to which are attached two bywashes paved with stone."

This enterprising man says he has erected twenty-four dams, of from 3,000 to 7,000 cubic yards each, besides thirteen tanks and some wells which he describes. He says:—

"I have expended £13,000 at my head station, and £47,000 in various improvements all over the run. * * I now depasture, on a country which in a state of nature could not have supported, for want of water, one beast the whole year round, 40,000 sheep and 7,000 cattle. * * I have not failed to observe that it has been proposed to take half the runs from the squatters in the north-western portions of the colony, and that such halves are to be open to selectors, while the remaining halves are to be left to the present lessees on a fixed tenure with greatly increased rents."

He proceeds to say that he would rather remain as he is, the waterless condition of the country in a state of nature being his best protection against the free selector. And he says he cannot forget that not so long ago he was a hard-working man on small wages, having no prospect of ever possessing land, or cattle, or sheep, or an extensive run. He says:—

"Fortunately, I have had nothing to do with dummying, and have, therefore, some conscience still left me."

He proceeds—

"I will tell you frankly that there is a way by which these purely pastoral lands with their sparse pasturage can be settled. Let the halves of the runs which are proposed to be resumed be open after survey to selectors on lease. A man can live fairly well on nine square miles, or 5,760 acres of the purely pastoral country, if he

has capital with which to fence them in, and to conserve plenty of water. To enclose nine square miles will take twelve miles of fencing, and will cost £60 a mile, or £720, and the conservation of water and other improvements will bring up the capital necessary for settlement to £1,000; but this, of course, is exclusive of money for buying stock. To such a man the squatter will readily sell all the live stock he requires to start with, on long credit. The small leaseholder on his 5,760 acres divided into small paddocks, well supplied with water, will be able to carry 1,200 sheep and their increase. The sale of the surplus stock will more than cover all the expenses of a man who with his family does most of his own work, and all the wool should be profit. An industrious and capable man—and no other will ever succeed with live stock—ought, when he is firmly established in his holding, to save £300 every year, and by breeding nothing but the best sheep—that is, breeding from none but those best suited to the pasture and climate—he will do much better. To induce so valuable a class of colonists as I contemplate to accept leaseholds, they should receive indefeasible leases with absolute right to the whole of their improvements—that is to say, should their leases not be renewed to them the incoming tenants must pay for the improvements. The rental in these distant and sparsely grassed lands should not exceed for the first four years of the tenure more than 1½d. per acre, which is at the rate of 5 per cent. on the real value of the land—namely 2s. 6d. per acre. Afterwards the rental could be increased. The rental for the first term of the lease would be £36 a year, or £4 for each square mile. Men with grown-up sons and daughters could take the leaseholds together and work cheaper than one man alone can. But I must guard you against one serious danger, and that is one springing out of the proximity of the squatter to the small leaseholders. Unless ample provisions are made he will very quickly get back the half of his run which has been resumed, and a law must be a very stiff affair indeed that he cannot ride through. If the new land law can provide against all abuses, and if leasing instead of sale of the public lands becomes the policy of the country, then"—

He proceeds to say that success is certain. He adds—

"All squatters like myself recognise the fact that the great north-western interior can only be settled by a numerous and permanent population by a system of leaseholds."

That is the only way, he thinks, by which settlement can be accomplished. Now, sir, that man in his way is a statesman—on this question of land, at all events; and, what is better than that, he is a practical man. He was a working man; he is now a wealthy man. He has made his money on that land—on that "desert land." He has spent £60,000 in sinking wells and making dams. He is an enterprising man, and his evidence is invaluable to these colonies, and particularly to this Bill. Now, I believe in family settlement. A good deal has been said about young men—so important is it to have a good Land Act to settle our young men; and we can get hundreds of young men in the colony to settle on the land under this Bill. I am a great believer in young men. The older a man grows, if his heart only continues young, the more he believes in young men. But, sir, there is something I believe in ten times more than young men.

Mr. MOREHEAD: Young women?

Mr. JORDAN: Yes; young men and young women—men, women, and children—and children, any number of them. If a man has a hundred children he need not be afraid to come to Australia. What is the good of a man if he has not got a wife? He is not more than half a man. There are of course exceptions to every rule, but, generally speaking, a man has not much enterprise who has not got a wife and family. Lord Erskine, when he commenced to achieve his brilliant success at the English Bar, was not a young man without encumbrances, but had a family of children. After his first speech in court, by which he electrified the judges and made their wigs stand on end almost by the brilliancy of his oratorical power, he was asked by a friend how he could speak with such confidence and at such length before the judges. "Oh!" said Erskine, "that is easily accounted for; I felt my children dragging at my skirts." That is the secret. It is home influence. It is the loved ones at home who make the sharp spur of necessity which urges a man forward on the road of enterprise and industry, keeping his wits awake and his heart all aglow with the certain confidence of success. I do not believe in bringing out cargoes or shiploads of young men unless you also bring out shiploads of young women. That is the principle we acted upon years ago—a shipload of young men and a shipload of young women. I remember that the first shipload of young women was brought by the "Bowen." They were a lot of domestic servants—carefully selected, respectable girls. A number of people came down from the country to hire them with perfect confidence, but when they came to town they found the girls were all gone. They were all married up! The hon. member for Townsville said that several members on this side of the House opposed the extension of the homestead areas, but that hon. gentlemen on that side, being in favour of the selecting classes, were the means of increasing the homestead selections from 80 to 160 acres. That may be; I do not dispute it. Gentlemen on this side hold—most of us believe—that it is the man who has a small selection and works it thoroughly—like the Germans—who is the successful farmer. The hon. gentleman also fell into another error. In speaking on this point he said hon. members on this side were favourable to small selections, and I have been informed by one gentleman that the hon. member for Townsville misunderstood what he said. The hon. member for Townsville stated that you, sir, in speaking of the exchanges at Allora of agricultural for pastoral lands, said a man could do better on 80 acres there than on 160 acres. But I think what you did say was that 80 acres on the creek, where there is rich alluvial land, was better than 160 acres on the ridges. That is what I understood. Now, with regard to agricultural farms, the hon. member for Townsville put them in the same category as small squattages. He compared the condition of the men on those farms to the condition of the ryots of India, three-fourths of whose produce is taken by their cruel and arbitrary landlords. Now, to divest the thing of all eloquence, of verbiage, and of roundabout talking, it comes to this: that under this Bill a man can take up 80 acres or, say, 40 acres. For the latter area he would pay 3d. per acre—that is, 10s. a year for the whole area—and he has a lease for fifty years. No one can turn him out. His improvements are his own, and if he should go out the incoming tenant pays for them. How then can the hon. member compare the position of those men with the position of the ryots in India? There is no justice in the comparison. That 40 acres of land will be in an agricultural district; no doubt it will be fit land, and near town, where there is a market for the produce of the farm; and the farmer will be one of that class of whom I spoke just now, whose children are well fed and well clothed, and who have all the necessaries and many of the luxuries of life, and whose property is continually improving in value. These are the kind of men who are compared with the wretched ryots of India by the hon. member for Townsville. I should not go into this matter so particularly, except that I do not like it to go forth to the world that the farmers under this Bill would be as bad as those wretched men in India. It is not a fact. I think, however, that within these agricultural areas, which

are, in varying quantity, from 20 to 960 acres, there should be smaller areas—fixed areas of, say, 160 acres. These might be leased at 3d. per acre per annum for five years, with the right to convert the leasehold into freehold at the end of five years; the annual payments to go towards the payment for the freehold, which should be sold to the occupier at half-a-crown per acre—the fencing to be completed any time within the two years.

Mr. ARCHER: That is what we are contending for.

Mr. JORDAN: Very well; that, I say, would be right. One hundred and sixty acres would cost £20. The annual payments at 3d. per acre per year would amount to half that sum at the end of five years, and the farmer might then get the freehold by paying £10. I am satisfied, as the hon. member, Mr. Brookes, said yesterday, that the spirit of this Bill is a proof that the present Government are in earnest in endeavouring to settle the land; that they would not put the slightest impediment in the way of the poorest man who is disposed to settle on the land, and put it to its highest use by tilling the soil. What we want is people, and then we want money. Now, talking about revenue, I have a very short way of expressing my opinion upon that aspect of the question. If this Bill is properly worked, I again say—though the remark elicited so much laughter from hon. gentlemen the other night—I hope the Government will populate the country. As to the revenue we might obtain, this Bill may be made to apply to the whole of the colony, and if the resumed 200,000,000 acres of land were leased at 3d. per acre, that would give two and a-half millions of money a year. What is the use of this vast area of land which we possess unless we bring people here to settle upon it and develop its wealth? For, as has been said, all wealth comes out of the soil. The thing has been well put by one of the ablest writers of the day. People may laugh as they choose, but I say he is one of the greatest writers of the present day. I refer to Henry George. He says that if Robinson Crusoe on the arrival of "Friday" had read to him the declaration of American Independence, had told him that all men were equal, and therefore he would not think of making him his slave, but had reminded him that that island was all his own by right of discovery and possession, and if he (Friday) meddled with the land—even to the extent of growing a single cabbage—he should be down upon him, poor Friday would have been a worse slave than he really was. He would have had to starve. What is the use of land unless married to labour? "The great producing forces of every country are man and the land. Bring these together and you will develop an all-sufficing superabounding plenty." We have the land in Queensland—427,000,000 acres; where are the men and women? They are in our own country; they are in England, Ireland, and Scotland; in Germany, Denmark, Norway, and Sweden—but especially in our own country. A thousand people leave England every day; more than that now, because the excess of emigration over immigration in 1882 was 335,020. Now, sir, we want those people here; we want their money. The bulk of them go to the United States of America, pay their own passage, and take millions of money with them. We want the money here; any quantity of it. Where shall we find it? It awaits us crowding the wharves of all the great shipping ports of Great Britain, in the possession of those people. It is going away to increase the wealth and build up the power of a foreign nation—the United States of America—which puts prohibitory duties on British manufactured goods. Those of our countrymen who come to Australia expend in British manufactured goods 20s. to every 1s. expended by those who are suffered to go away to America. I say it is a shameful waste—it is a crime—it is worse; to use the words of Lord Derby, "it is a blunder." If Professor Seely is right when he says that in these days of electricity and steam, when Australia is brought practically as near to England as America was fifty years ago, England should regard this magnificent possession of Australia as a part and parcel of Great Britain, just as much so as the counties of Kent or Sussex; and if ever we are to realise this grand union, then the two countries must join hand in hand to arrest this flow of wealth, of money, and men, and women and children out of our own country to the United States of America. They are more precious than rubies; they are wanted here, every one of them, as separate stones in the great fabric of England's greatness. I believe that Australia will remain connected with Great Britain while the sun and moon endure—while the world lasts. There is in the hearts of all Australians a feeling of deep, earnest, heartfelt, enthusiastic loyalty towards the person of the Queen and the Constitution of Great Britain. This vast estate is given to us as trustees: not that it may be used to make rich men much more wealthy; not that we should exploit the country in the manner the prospectus I have read would indicate; but that we should make it the home of millions who shall here build up the greatness of the British Empire until it becomes the greatest nation on the face of the globe. If England is to hold her own against the United States of America, we should stop this sinful waste which has drained from her shores the cream of her population—going on during the past half-century—and should turn the tide of her surplus population towards her colonies. I am sorry I have kept the House so long, but I want to make one more modest suggestion. I should like to see these agricultural areas that I have spoken of—I would not call them homesteads, because that is an American word, which the people in England do not know the meaning of as Americans do; I would call them small farms, and I should like to see them selected in all suitable localities near the great ports, and especially near the sugar plantations; and divided exactly in half, the one half to be open to any people who liked to occupy it, and the other half reserved exclusively for the use of new arrivals if they chose to settle there. I would give a bonus in land to all who paid their own passages in full, and I would also give a bonus to those indented immigrants who served their full term with their employers. Sir, I shall support the second reading of the Bill.

Mr. BLACK: It takes a few minutes, Mr. Speaker, to get away from the theoretical speech of the hon. gentleman who has just sat down, and get back to what I may call common-sense facts—something practical, and something that we may say is easy of application to the condition of this colony. I do not think that on an occasion like this we should waste time by going into any visionary schemes such as the hon. gentleman has propounded—schemes, no doubt, that would read well in a novel, but are certainly unsuited to the requirements of the colony. Why, sir, the hon. gentleman has almost given us a new Land Bill now! He has pointed out—and I must say that I agree with him to a great extent—the absolute necessity, if we wish to make this country progressive, to insist upon freehold tenure being one of the principles of the Bill. I entirely agree with the hon. gentleman, and I should be very glad to see him on that

account sitting on this side of the House, to which he properly belongs after making such a speech. The principles which he has so strongly, and I may say ably, advocated are those which we on this side, I believe, are insisting upon. They are the principles which the Government, and the hon. Minister for Lands especially, have endeavoured to strike away from the land legislation of the colony. They are the fundamental principles on which this Bill was introduced; that is, that freehold tenure shall be abolished and that for future generations the State itself shall become the landlord. It is quite true that they have, almost at the last moment, inserted a clause apparently giving people the right of acquiring freehold; but, sir, the conditions attached to that clause are so onerous, and almost impossible of accomplishment, that I doubt if anyone would ever expect to obtain freehold on the conditions offered by the Bill. Hon. gentlemen on the other side, I notice, whenever any hon. member gets up on this side and states any plain opinions about this Land Bill—which every hon. gentleman should do—are told that their speeches are special pleadings. That is an expression made use of by the hon. member for South Brisbane, because we do not hold the same views which hon. members on the other side have expressed. If we propose—knowing from our experience of the past that the success of settlement was always hinged on freehold tenure—if we propose to insist that that condition shall be re-inserted in this Bill, we are sneered at as professing to be the friends of the working man. I can only say that in an important measure like this, affecting the prosperity of the whole colony, it behoves every member of the House to state his opinion fearlessly and frankly; and he can be a friend of the working man as well as of the wealthy man. What is the use of capital without labour, and what is the use of labour without capital? Either is inoperative to obtain its proper results without the other. Labour will always hold its own, and obtain its just rights, as against capital; and capital, again, without labour, might be just as well buried in the ground. Any attempt made to stigmatise capital—to hold up capitalists, syndicates, speculators, or any of that class to contempt—simply recoils upon those who make it, and really goes for very little with those in the colony who have any common sense. We have been told that the object of this Bill is to promote close settlement, and to prevent the aggrandisement of the few by the accumulation of large estates. On those principles both sides can be entirely in accord. We profess that we want to secure close settlement. We also maintain that the accumulation of landed property in large estates is detrimental to the welfare of the colony, and we certainly wish to prevent it. But we maintain that the principles which the Government propose to adopt under this Land Bill are not likely to achieve those results. We maintain that the very object which they profess to deprecate will be brought about, should this Land Bill become law, and I hope to be able to give my reasons for thinking so—why it will not promote close settlement, and why it will not prevent the accumulation of estates in large areas, but will on the contrary actually facilitate the accumulation of land much more than any Land Bill that ever was introduced into this House. But there is another thing that we must consider. We must take a common-sense view of this very important question. We must bear in mind that the colony has a debt of something like £15,000,000, and that we have to pay an annual interest on that debt amounting to, I may roughly state, £650,000. We must also bear in mind that our present land revenue is about enough to pay the interest on this public debt. No matter what land legislation becomes law, we have to pay that debt; and at present we look, I think, to our land revenue as the fund from which we draw the payment of this heavy debt which the colony has incurred for public works. We cannot afford to play "ducks and drakes" with the finances of the colony; and one weak point, in my opinion, of the Ministerial policy is that they have most carefully shirked any reference to the effect which this land legislation is going to have on the finances of the colony. The Minister for Lands, in introducing this Bill, I think I may say, said absolutely nothing on the subject. He naturally wishes to carry his theories into effect, and entirely ignores the financial side of the question. The Colonial Treasurer did, I think, throw out a slight suggestion that the revenue of the colony was not going to be increased by this Bill—at all events not immediately. The Premier, as we might naturally expect from a gentleman of his strict legal training, seemed to trust to Providence and to the future—if we can settle the land on this principle, the revenue will come somehow; but he did not vouchsafe to the House any information as to how it was going to be brought about. The hon. member who has just sat down has gone a little further. He has told us that if we lease one-half the land of the colony at 3d. an acre we shall get over two millions and a-quarter in rent. I have no doubt that, if such a thing were practicable, that very likely would be the result; but any practical man will admit that such a possibility is entirely out of the question, at all events during our lifetime. If I remember rightly, when the Warrego Railway Bill was going through the House—with what result we all know—the present Government, then sitting on this side of the House, used frequently to adduce as their strongest argument against that Bill that the lands that were proposed to be given to the syndicate were too valuable to be given away; that they were worth 3d. an acre per annum, and that, therefore, we should be sacrificing the public estate if a measure of that sort became law. We were also told that the land revenue required to be increased in order that railways might be extended, and that other public works of great importance might be carried out. Just before this session, the Minister for Works certainly gave the country to understand that a loan of either six or nine millions was pending for the purpose of carrying out a good scheme of public works and railway extension, and that it would be necessary—so he led the country to infer—to get the interest on that huge loan out of the public lands of the colony; because he intimated that unless this Land Bill became law it would be impossible to borrow that large amount of money, and the public works which he was prepared to promise on condition of the Land Bill becoming law would not be attempted if the Bill was thrown out. It is evident, therefore, that it would be absolutely necessary that the land revenue of the colony should be enormously increased. I am very much afraid—and if I am wrong in my calculations the Government have themselves to blame in not giving us any information on the subject—I am very much afraid that the land revenue, instead of increasing, will decrease to an enormous extent during the next few years. I regret that the information has not been provided by the Government, because it will be necessary for me to support my view of the case by reading the calculations which I have made—which I know are always, to a certain extent, uninteresting to

hon. members, but which I feel bound to lay before the House, and also before the country. I shall refer chiefly to the rents of homestead and conditional selections falling due from now till the year 1893. Of course it will be assumed that if this Land Bill becomes law those homesteads having from five years downwards to run, and conditional selections having from ten years downwards, will all expire during the next ten years; and as this Land Bill supersedes selection by homestead and conditional purchase, so far there must necessarily be a considerable reduction in rent every year. This, of course, will have to be made up by the provisions of this new Land Bill when it becomes law. The rents for homestead and conditional selections collected last year, on the 30th March, were £246,000. About the same amount was derived from the rents of the pastoral lessees, which I need not at present refer to. In the year 1885—that will be next year—instead of £246,000 there is £173,480 only, showing a deficit of £72,520. Now the year following—1886—there is £163,607; in 1887, £148,624; in 1888, £133,169; in 1889, £137,340; in 1890, £124,992; in 1891, £99,635; in 1892, £59,717; in 1893, £19,206. That is all the rent the Government will collect, and after that the whole of the rents of conditional purchases and homesteads will have run out; those lands will have become absolutely freehold. The Government can expect to derive no more rents beyond those I have quoted. Let it be understood that this new Act has got to make up that deficiency, assuming that £246,000 is the money required at present. But, sir, with this huge loan which we propose to contract we want to increase the land revenue; and this calculation is only based on the supposition that we must keep up the revenue to £246,000. Let us see what quantity of land would have to be selected at an annual rental of 3d. an acre to make up this amount. I will take 3d. first; by doubling that will be shown the amount which would be required in the grazing areas at 1½d.; and then striking a balance between the two will give this House an idea of the large quantity of land which would have to be selected, in order to prevent the revenue from falling below what it is at the present time, without taking into consideration the enormous expansion which must take place in the land revenue, in order to justify us in borrowing £9,000,000. Now, sir, next year, in the agricultural areas, at 3d. an acre, we should have to dispose of 5,801,600 acres in order to provide for the deficiency of £72,520. The next year we must dispose of an additional 789,840 acres; the year following, 1,198,640 acres; the next year, 1,236,400 acres. In 1889 we may expect a surplus representing 466,320 acres. In the year 1890 we must dispose of 987,840 acres; the year 1891, 2,028,560 acres; the year 1892, 3,193,440 acres; and the year 1893, 3,240,880 acres; that is to say, that during the next nine years, allowing for the surplus I have mentioned, we should have to dispose of 18,110,880 acres, at 3d. an acre rent. But, as the Government expect a great measure of success from the grazing area, it is right to assume that a very large extent of land will have to be selected under that tenure. Well, if we double the 18,110,880 we get 36,221,760 acres at 1½d.; and by taking an average between the two we find we want to dispose of 27,000,000 acres under this new tenure during the next nine years. Now, during the last sixteen years we have had a liberal land policy which has had a fascination for the people—that is, granting them freehold tenure—a policy which I believe has been the means of introducing the bulk of our immigrants. The one thing they aspired to in leaving the old country was to be able to come out here and acquire what they could never hope to get at home—a piece of land, which, after complying with certain conditions, they could call their own for ever, never needing to dread the appearance of a landlord or a man coming to raise their rent. When we consider that with a liberal land policy—and it has been undoubtedly liberal as far as settlement has been concerned—during the last sixteen years we have only alienated about 8,000,000 acres of land under conditional and homestead selection—that is an average of half-a-million acres per annum, though during the last year or two it has been up to about 600,000 acres—how can we expect, in the face of this experience of the past, that during the next nine years we shall increase that average to 3,000,000 acres? And besides this 3,000,000 acres which we should have to alienate to prevent any reduction in the present revenue, what about the huge interest we shall have to pay if we contract this new big loan? And then there is another item which has been left out of calculation—the sales of country lands. There is to be no more land sold—it is to be the leasing system pure and simple. Then there is the sale of pre-emptives; if that is going to be abolished, of course there will be another loss to the revenue; and then there is the purchase money of selection purchases—land put up to auction, but not sold, and open for selection by purchase. These three items, I am informed, average something like £100,000 a year additional land revenue; in fact, the two items of £264,000 each for conditional homesteads, and also for the Crown lessees, added to this £100,000, bring up the land revenue to what appears in the Treasurer's statement as a little over £600,000. To provide for this additional £100,000 a year, at 3d. an acre, if we are going to lease land for it, means another 8,000,000 acres to provide against a deficiency in revenue alone; so that really we have got to alienate about 11,000,000 acres in order to prevent a loss to the revenue. That is the way, I say, that the Government have not fulfilled their duty in trying to force such an important measure as this through this House without giving the fullest information as to the way in which it is going to affect the revenue. Really we are in the dark. The calculations I have made were, I admit, to me so astounding that I had to go over them again and again to check them, in order that I might be perfectly certain I was not making a mistake. It is quite possible that in some slight matters I have made mistakes; but with the information at hand—the difficulty of getting information from the Government, and their refusing to give this House information, which they ought to have given—I can only say that any errors in these calculations must be attributed to them rather than to me. I give the figures for what they are worth; I believe they are substantially correct. I think if there is any truth in them, that no matter how much hon. gentlemen may be inclined to try the leasing as against the freehold system, the finances of the country will not admit of the experiment being made. We are here to do our duty as an Opposition, and see that the people of the country get fair play. We know what will come should there be a heavy falling off in the revenue. It cannot be made up under the proposed land policy. There are to be no more sales of land. The Government cannot speedily bring in a measure to reverse this policy. What will be the result therefore of a deficiency? The people will be additionally taxed. That is the inevitable consequence. In the elastic land legislation we have had in previous years, the Government have always been able, in time of need, to sell land, and provide for a deficiency in the revenue. And I am quite prepared to admit that, from my point of view, the quicker the

Government sell the land the better it will be for the country. I do not consider it is doing any harm to sell the land so long as it is sold under proper conditions of clearing, occupation, and improvements. I consider it a very good thing. The land won't run away. Were it sold at 10s. an acre—and we know that hon. gentlemen refer to that price as inadequate; but if the Government got 10s. an acre they would actually receive 5 per cent.—they would have got 6d. per acre rent per annum for ever. I do not consider, I say, that there is any harm in selling the land, under proper regulations. Sell the land, settle the people on it, and give them reasonable facilities for making their industry reproductive. You can then tax them and they will gladly pay. Let a deficiency be caused by this new land policy; let the Government have no means of increasing the land revenue as has been done in years past—and I say that the people of the colony will have to submit to increased taxation in order to carry out the theory of the Minister for Lands. Now I think there are three important points, in passing a Land Bill, that should be secured. First, the revenue should be protected. I think I have pointed out that the revenue will suffer to a very serious extent if the Bill becomes law in its present state. Another matter which certainly ought to be provided for is, that it should encourage settlement; and the third point is that it should be a measure easy and speedy in its administration. With regard to settlement, I doubt very much if this Bill is going to achieve all that hon. members on the other side expect from it. I can only repeat what I have already said: that if under our previous very much more liberal land administrations we could only achieve certain results, then this Bill offers no sufficient inducements to people to come out; on the contrary, the inducements are far less. You have taken away that inherent principle—some hon. gentlemen call it prejudice, but I say it is a principle—that everyone wishes to secure a piece of land for himself, and something that he can leave to his family. And it seems to me monstrous that in a colony like this, in which we have over 428,000,000 acres of land, out of which we have only alienated 11,000,000 up to the present—and it has taken 20 years to do that—we should begin to be afraid that the land is being too rapidly alienated. I have given my views on the alienation of land; I consider it a good thing, if accompanied by proper conditions. I propose to show how, in my opinion, the Bill will not conduce to the settlement of the country; but that, on the contrary, it will be the very means of accumulating more land than ever in the hands of individuals, and with less restriction; in fact, without any regulations, or, if any, of such a slight nature that they cannot really be considered regulations for the occupation of the soil. But before I go to that point, I will say a word as to what is, in my opinion, the danger of the State as landlord. The Minister for Lands told us on a previous occasion how his heart had been wrung at a poor selector having to sell his horse and cart to pay his rent. The hon. gentleman did not say whether he relented so far as to forego the rent. I believe he did, and very rightly so too. But as was remarked by an hon. gentleman last night, if this Bill becomes law, the selector would not go back to the Minister for Lands or the board; he simply would not pay, and he would be endorsed and fortified in his view by thousands of others placed in a similar position. I should like to know whether there is a single provision in this Bill as to forfeiture of a lease except by absolute forfeiture. I should like to know whether a Government, under our system of responsible Government, would go and eject tenants of the Crown on a wholesale scale. They dare not do it. We have not far to go for an example which, to a certain extent, bears out my view of the question. The South Australian Government, a few years ago,—they did not certainly abolish the freehold clauses in their Land Bill—gave twenty-one years' conditional purchases on very easy liberal terms. The selector had to pay little or nothing; he could go on the land so long as he ploughed and sowed, and showed he was a *bonâ fide* occupant. He could pay little or no rent, and whatever rent he paid was to go ultimately to the part purchase of the land. Bad times came—the very thing that is liable to occur in a colony like this—the crops were bad one year, and the selectors were unable to pay their rents. The Ministry, even in that early stage, were not prepared to eject them, and rightly so. Another year came, and they were still unable to pay their rents; but the third year they found that they were allowed to keep their land, and they did not pay at all, and what is the consequence there at the present time? That the Government have been unable—owing, of course, to the force of public opinion which would be brought against them—to eject those tenants; and at the present moment the South Australian Government have had to forego £750,000 in rent to the agricultural tenants of South Australia, and they expect before long that that £750,000 will have been increased to £1,000,000. What is the present result in that colony? That there is a deficit of £400,000, with no corresponding land revenue—no elastic land revenue—and the further result will be the taxation of the people. That is a case, to a certain extent, analogous to what will occur here if our State professes to be the landlord. A State is the very worst landlord a country ever had. They dare not eject. If advantage is taken of this Land Bill to the extent which the Government fondly hope will be taken, there will be such a preponderance of the agricultural interest in the colony that they will return men of themselves, who are pledged on the hustings to convert those leaseholds into freeholds, before ten years expires. They would convert those leaseholds into freeholds, and the rent would go as part-payment of the purchase money. That is my own opinion: I may be wrong, but I firmly believe that that will be the result. If the hon. Minister for Lands thinks he can frame a Land Bill that is going to last for fifty years he quite misunderstands what voting by ballot means in this country, and what universal suffrage means. The people will govern. If a class of people see that it is to their advantage to have a modification of the land laws they will have it; they will insist upon it. A new land law to be satisfactory to the colony must be an improvement upon the land measure that preceded it. This is no improvement; it is going back; it is taking away from the people a privilege which they enjoy and which they prize—that of becoming their own landlords and acquiring freehold. I say this unhesitatingly; you may just as well try to take away universal suffrage from the people as take away the right of acquiring freehold which they have been enjoying for a number of years past. The Government are already seeing it. They are already fearing the public opinion upon this point. We see it in the different members as they speak. They are gradually going to re-insert—first the homestead clauses, and I can tell hon. members it is not going to stop there. There are other men in the colony besides the homestead men. They are very good men, and have done an immense amount of good. There are 5,300 of them at present in the colony; each homestead will represent about four people, so that there is

already a population of some 21,000 people connected with the homestead clauses. The Government are not game to strike out that clause; they tried to do it, and we see they are going to put it in again. There is another class of people who, I maintain, in the agricultural districts of the colony, have done just as much good and are entitled to just as much consideration as the homestead selectors. Those are the conditional selectors—men we wish to encourage, who come here with more or less money—a very necessary thing for a country. I do not care where it comes from, so long as it comes here. I am not going to rail against syndicates. I think a Sydney or Melbourne sovereign is as good as a Brisbane one. If we are going to discourage capital and raise a tirade against speculators and investors, who think they can invest their money satisfactorily in this colony, and whom the present Government appear to me to wish to discourage in every way they can, I think that the present Government, holding those views, should scorn to go into the English money market and borrow money there. That is foreign capital. The interest of that capital is not spent in the colony. The interest of the money we borrow from home goes home, and it is spent there. We do not rail against these people as absentees; we think they are entitled to do as they please with their money, and I claim the same right for investors, whether in Sydney, Adelaide, or Melbourne. If they like to come here and invest their money and conform to our laws, it seems the height of madness for the Government to be persistently pointing the finger of scorn against them by calling them syndicates, capitalists, and speculators. I think that the conditional selector will have something to say when he finds that the homestead selector is going to be reinstated. I know that I represent an agricultural constituency, and I think there are several other hon. members in the House who do the same. I think that I would not care about facing my constituents again if I were to allow the homestead clause to be re-inserted without giving a corresponding right—I will not call it "advantage"—to the conditional selector. When you have conceded this right to the conditional selector, as I am perfectly certain the Government will have to do if they want the Bill to go through, someone else will step in. We are not going to allow townspeople and suburban people to be the only ones who are going to enjoy freehold. I am not aware that they have done anything to entitle them to this privilege more than the individual who has gone away from the centres of population, and spent his money and made use of his experience and his life in developing the country, which, I may say, townspeople have never done. I do not see why townspeople are to be the only ones; I do not discourage them at all. It is a right that they have as well as everyone has, to acquire land as freehold. We are not going to have any law making "fish of one and flesh of another." The Government say we have got too many lessees holding too much land, and we are going to put a stop to it; we will not have people holding large areas and a large number of holdings. We are going to equalise it; we are going to equalise the principles of the Bill all through; we will have a reasonable amount—I do not say an excessive amount, but a fair amount — of freehold to every man, woman, and child who wishes to come to this colony. That is my view of the right to freehold, that everyone enjoys who comes into the colony. I will briefly refer to the position that the pastoral lessee will occupy under this proposed Bill. It has been referred to by almost every hon. member who has spoken, that the pre-emptive right is held to be a right by some, and by others it is held to be not a right; but, at all events, right or not, this Act proposes to repeal it. I am not a squatter, and I do not approve of the principle of pre-emptive rights; I never did. I maintain that when the Land Bills were passed, giving the squatter the right of pre-emption, it was considered a justifiable thing to do. It was considered necessary as an inducement to squatters to go out into the far West and open up the country which was left comparatively idle—in fact, quite idle for years. It was considered justifiable to give them the advantage called a pre-emptive right. I do not think that can be doubted at all. We know this pre-emptive right has been recognised for years; but we also know now that abuses have crept in, in consequence, I think, of the pre-emptive right not having been properly defined when the Act was passed. It appears that any squatter is able under that right to take up 2,560 acres as a protection for his improvements. The weak point, it appears to me, is that the value of the improvements was never clearly laid down, and, so far as I can see, a squatter who puts up only £20 worth of improvements may claim as his right the right to select this large amount of land. He cannot claim less, and he may claim 2,560 acres for every block of twenty-five square miles. I say it is not a good right: at least it is not a good principle in the present condition of affairs in this colony. But that it is a right, and has been used by the squatters as a right, I firmly believe, and, as a substantiation of my view, the Government no later than last session distinctly acknowledged that right, because they brought in a Bill for the purpose of repealing it. If the Government had not been satisfied that it was a right they would certainly never have needed to have brought in a Bill to abrogate it. As is well known, that Bill did not pass through this House: I say very rightly too. Although I do not approve of the principle of the pre-emptive right as applied to the present condition of affairs in the colony I maintain that it was a right, and the Government have no more right to take that right away from the squatters, than they have to tell him that they will take away the other two conditions of his bargain with the State—the one giving him a twenty-two years' tenure, and the other that his rent shall be 5s., 10s., and 15s. for every seven years of his lease. They have no more right to strike away one-third of the bargain in this pre-emptive right, than to tell the squatter now that he shall have only a seven years' lease or a fourteen years' lease. I consider those were three conditions of the bargain made at the time between the squatter and the State, and any attempt to strike away this pre-emptive right, which is a part of his bargain, without giving him reasonable compensation for it, is in my opinion an act of repudiation. It is an act which of course a powerful majority may be able to accomplish, but it will never be done without the most determined opposition from those on this side of the House who agree with me. The effect of it will be that it will disparage this colony in the eyes of the world. Investors at home, who look to this colony as a safe field for their investments, will have a feeling of distrust when they find that any Government, for the sake of a temporary pecuniary advantage which they may derive, is prepared to repudiate—and it is repudiation—one of the chief principles of legislation which has led to the pastoral occupation of this country. I have given my views about that pre-emptive right; but I think, myself, that if this Land Bill ever becomes law the squatters have got something very much better than any pre-emptive right. I think that if the squatting party are willing to forego their pre-emptive right, they

have got very full consideration indeed under this Bill—not in the way which the Minister for Lands intends, but in a way which I am prepared to point out. The squatter loses one-half of his run when this Act comes into force; he is to surrender that, and he retains the other half at a rental of 20s. per square mile—at present he is paying only 12s. The hon. member for South Brisbane threw a slight bombshell into the camp of the squatting party this evening, by intimating that it was not £1 he would have to pay, but £4 10s., with a possible reduction, which I think is totally different from any view which hon. members in this House entertained before. I take it that £1 is to be the minimum and £4 10s. the maximum, and I think the rents will be fixed more properly at the minimum, for the first five years at all events, of the tenure. The tenant loses one-half of his run and he gets a lease for fifteen years over the balance, and the resumed half is thrown open to selection in the shape of grazing areas; and these grazing areas are going to enable the stockman, the shepherd, and the young man of colonial experience, who, according to the Minister for Lands, has been acquiring experience for a number of years—these areas are going to enable them to become squatters on their own account. The capitalists are not to have it all their own way any more. The small man is to come in. And now, let us just see what sort of a chance the so-called "small" man is to get. He is supposed to be the poor man, and the man whose special care and consideration the present Government have in charge. If any man requires special consideration it is this man. But what are we told? Whereas the squatter has, we will say, his 200 square miles at £1 per square mile for rent, for fifteen years, the man who has got to compete with him on equal terms, so far as grazing is concerned, has to raise his stock, and has the same expenses in getting his wool to market and taking his cattle to market, and all the consideration he gets from the poor man's friendly Government is that he has to pay four times the rent which the squatter has to pay. He must pay £4 per square mile, while the squatter only pays £1.

Mr. MILES: Don't you believe it!

Mr. ARCHER: You have put your foot into it too often.

Mr. BLACK: We will assume that this man takes up 20,000 acres in a grazing area, and he sets to work. He has got to fence it in to begin with, and this is a very strong point against the grazing-area man—that he actually does not get his lease until he has fenced it in. He is allowed two years, or possibly three, in which to fence it in. Now, it will take twenty-four miles of fencing, nearly, to go round that 20,000 acres; and it will cost this man, in fencing, £1,680. I believe £70 a mile is the average cost at which he can fence it. Hon. members must understand that this is a boundary fence, and that he may put up subdivision fences a little cheaper. I am credibly informed that to put up a substantial boundary fence, he will have to pay £70 a mile. However, it is immaterial to me whether the cost is £60 or £70—hon. members may make their own calculations, and £70 per mile is the calculation I make. He will have, in addition, to put up subdivision fences, and he will have to pay probably for the conservation of water, so that I do not think we can set down the other improvements which he will have to make at less than £1,000. He would also have to put up a woolshed, stockyard, and other buildings—that makes £2,680 before he gets his lease, or at all events before he can offer any security over this piece of land. And then he has to get his stock. I do not think any man can expect to make a living with less than £3,000 worth of stock; so that he has to expend £7,000 before he can expect to do any good. That is one case. Then take another man—the dairy-farmer. He has 300 or 400 head of cattle; and he travels out and takes up 20,000 acres. I do not think any sensible man, who knows anything about squatting life out west, would consider himself justified in taking up less. And it must be borne in mind that when once he has secured 5,000 or 10,000 acres, he will be surrounded by other selectors, so that if he wishes to do any good for himself, he will at once take up the maximum area. So he takes up his land; but at first he can only get a licence to occupy; he cannot get a lease without the expense of fencing to the extent of £1,680, besides other expenses. At the same time that the so-called poor man has no show at all, the fifteen years' tenure of the man alongside of him, whose improvements are in full working order, and who has ten times the area of land, is just as good as the thirty years' tenure of the grazing area man. And what will be the result of this description of legislation? I venture to say that the moment these runs are resumed the squatter, unless he is very different from what he used to be, will pick out all the eyes of his own run. He will not do it himself; he will put in a married couple; he will put in an overseer; he will give them a so-called start in life; he will provide the money for the fencing; he will provide them with stock; he will have a mortgage over the whole lot; he will pay those people a good salary, and when they wish to go he will transfer the mortgage to someone else. Did ever any Government wish to bring in such a Bill to facilitate dummying—under another name? What used to be called "dummying" is rendered perfectly legal here, but it is called "power to mortgage." It explains to any squatter what he has to do if he wishes to protect himself. Instead of being confined to 2,560 acres he has the right to 20,000 acres; and he need not take it in one piece, but in blocks of 1,000 acres, in different parts of his run if he likes. Therefore, he very likely will take up the maximum area of 20,000 acres, because a 20,000-acre block, when fenced and subdivided, makes a very nice paddock to run either sheep or cattle. I look upon this Bill, sir, as I said before, as the best Bill ever devised for dummying under another name. It will be the grandest system of dealing in leases ever invented. There is not a single word providing that the land shall be stocked. A man can take up 20,000 acres, put up his fence, and sit down quietly till someone comes round to buy it from him. He need not put a single hoof on the land; and if it is any good I am certain that as the colony advances and settlement increases he will be able to sell out his lease to advantage. It is all allowed—he can sell, sublet, or mortgage his lease—he can do anything he likes except acquire the freehold. But though the State may get an increased rental, it will not get increased settlement—the land will not be *bonâ fide* occupied. An hon. gentleman said last night, "What does it matter to the State as long as people settle on the land." I never heard such outrageous views. Surely there should be a clause in the Bill stipulating that stock should be put on the land? But all a man has to do is to put up a fence; and he has three years to do it in. After he has done that he gets his lease for thirty years. I say, I think the squatter under this Bill will do better than ever he did before, because, though he loses the pre-emptive right, he gets a secure tenure for fifteen years, and

at the end of that time he gets compensation for his improvements. Now, sir, I would very much like to know who is to pay for those improvements. It does not say so in the Bill, but I take it that the State will have to pay, undoubtedly, for the squatter's improvements at the termination of his lease. It is not the incoming tenant who will have to pay; but the State will have to pay such a price as the land, together with the requirements, would be worth to an incoming tenant; and I want to point out to this House what that means—what amount of money the State will have to provide, and how utterly beyond all probability it is that this colony will ever be in possession of such a large amount of money as to be able to buy out the squatters, as they would have to do in resuming their runs in order to throw them open to selectors. We have 486,763 square miles under lease as runs in the settled and in the unsettled districts. We will assume that the Government, at the end of the tenure, want to resume those runs, and we will assume the value of the improvements to be only 1s. per acre. I am prepared to show that the fencing alone of these 20,000-acre blocks costs 1s. 6d. per acre; but on the basis of calculation at 1s. an acre for improvements—not only fencing, but dams, stockyards, woolsheds, houses, and everything — all come under the name of improvements—to resume that land for settlement at £32 a mile, it would take £15,500,000, assuming the colony wanted to resume the whole of the land. I do not mean to say that is likely to be done, but it is quite likely that one-half would be resumed. The halves to be left in the hands of the squatters by the Bill would have to be resumed, and that would take the half of this vast amount, or nearly £8,000,000 of money. That is far better than a pre-emptive right to the squatter. That right merely gives the right of selection, but no actual compensation for the improvements made. I maintain that it would be utterly impossible, owing to the magnitude of the sum, for the State ever to redeem these lands when once they got into the hands of the squatters. First, all the grazing areas would certainly drift into their hands for thirty years; and by putting such improvements on their runs that the State would never be able to afford to resume them, they would retain the whole of their runs. In connection with this I will refer to an article which appeared recently in the *Sydney Morning Herald apropos* of this question of improvements. As hon. members know, the second reading of the Crown Lands Bill in New South Wales has just been passed by the Council. And this is what Mr. Dalley says on the subject: Referring to the value of improvements put on Crown lands only, not on alienated lands, by the Crown lessees of New South Wales, and for which they get no compensation from the Government when their runs are resumed—that has been distinctly understood—he said:—

"While there were depastured upon the public lands (of course exclusive of the live stock sustained by the pasturage on alienated lands) 20,000,000 sheep, 1,200,000 horned cattle, and 200,000 horses, he would say nothing of the tens of millions which had been spent in fencing alone (of which it was calculated there were in round numbers nearly 1,000,000 miles, representing a capital of £40,000,000—(hear, hear)—nor of the £5,000,000 which had been spent in wells, and dams, and tanks; nor of the many millions which had been expended on buildings, machinery, and other improvements. (Hear, hear.) At the hands of men with any pretensions to statesmanship, this was an interest which required to be dealt with only with the very greatest care and anxiety, so that its enormous benefits to the country should not be needlessly abridged, nor its development arrested. Its just treatment was indispensable, not only to those who had built it up—had embarked their lives, their labours, their fortunes, and their enterprise in it—but to the prosperity of the whole country."

Now, sir, a comparison of the stock referred to here, with the stock in this colony, will give the House some idea of what may possibly be the value of our improvements. We are told by Mr. Dalley that the value of the improvements of the Crown lessees in New South Wales is not less than £45,000,000. New South Wales has 20,000,000 sheep; we have 11,250,000, a little more than one-half. New South Wales has 1,250,000 cattle; we have 4,250,000. The number of horses is about the same in each colony—namely, 250,000. I think we may safely say that our preponderance in cattle—we have 3,000,000 more than New South Wales—about compensates for our deficiency of 8,250,000 sheep. So that we may say that the value of live stock depastured on Crown lands is about the same in both colonies. If, then, it requires an expenditure of £45,000,000 in New South Wales, I think I was not very far wrong in the calculation I made just now, when I put down the value of improvements at 1s. an acre at something like £17,000,000. And that amount the State would have to pay whenever they wish to resume what is their own. There is another thing in connection with these leases on grazing areas, and that is the enormous disadvantage that the *bonâ fide* lessee of a grazing area has when competing against a Crown lessee. When the run is divided the Crown lessee, as I pointed out before, at once pays £1 per square mile for the portion which he retains, but for the balance he only pays the old rental, which, it appears from the statement of the Minister for Lands, averages 12s. The lessee pays 12s. for the resumed portion until it is open to selection: but the moment it is opened to selection he only pays one-third less—namely, 8s. This is a disadvantage against which the grazing area selector has to compete, and an advantage to the Crown lessee. If the Government were really sincere in their wish to settle men on the lands of the colony, in the grazing areas under this Bill, the grazing area man should have had the land at £1 per square mile instead of £4. The squatter should pay the higher rent, and the grazing area man should have undoubtedly been entitled to the low rent, instead of which it is the reverse. There is another clause which seems to me a very harsh one indeed if the Government wish to secure settlement on these grazing areas, and that is the one which provides that the lessee is only allowed to vacate his land once for want of water. We know how impossible it is for any one in a climate like we have in the West to depend for a permanent supply of water on his land, and yet the grazing area man is allowed only one exemption during the whole thirty years of his lease. If he should vacate his holding for want of water—if the dam that he has made should prove insufficient for his requirements, and he has to travel his stock—he is liable to have his grazing area forfeited. There is no provision whatever made beyond that. It is a most unjust arrangement. The squatter may travel his stock as often as he likes—he may vacate his land as often as he likes; but the grazing selector cannot. I will now refer briefly to the conditions to be observed in the agricultural areas. It appears that by this Bill a man can take up 960 acres as a maximum area at 3d. per acre per annum, which is equal to £8 per square mile; and he has his lease for fifty years. Well, I do not consider, although the hon. member for South Brisbane pointed out that a man can get his 40 acres by paying 10s. a year for fifty years, that that is of any practical value. About a town like Brisbane, or close about Toowoomba, a man might do a great deal of good with 40 acres of land. But the rich

agricultural lands in the north of the colony are far away from any settlement, and a man must have the maximum area. Why, the Minister for Lands said the other day, that no man could do any good with even 160 acres of rich agricultural land. I believe he made a mistake in saying that, because I know that a man with 160 acres of really rich agricultural land near a market can do very well indeed. The Minister for Lands based his information on that report of Mr. Hume's, and he made a very great mistake. I have no doubt Mr. Hume spoke conscientiously as far as settlement on the Darling Downs was concerned when he wrote that report, although it appears that the late Ministry did not attach any value to it, and consequently it was never laid on the table of the House. It seems monstrous to me that the Minister for Lands should frame the most important principle in his land legislation on such a report as that. He said, as I have already stated, that 160 acres was not sufficient. I maintain that it is, under certain conditions, but not always, if away from a market. Now, sir, the conditions in the agricultural areas are specially unfavourable to the selector. It has been already pointed out, last night, by the hon. member for Townsville how the homestead selector was affected by it. We know that by the present Act he has power to select up to 160 acres at half-a-crown an acre, and gets five years to pay the money in, and having to expend during that time 10s. an acre in improvements, whereas by this proposed new Act he pays the same rent extended over a period of twelve or possibly thirteen years. He pays the same rent, and at the end of the time he has to pay a minimum of £1 an acre in order to make it freehold, which, I maintain, is no additional inducement to settle on the land. But in addition to that he is at this still greater disadvantage—that he has to fence within two years, and he actually has to fence before he can get his lease. Well, sir, this necessarily involves the expenditure of the whole of the small capital that he is likely to possess. You must bear in mind that under the present homestead clause he is not bound to spend any money at all as long as he occupies, until near the end of the five years, when he must prove that he has expended not less than 10s. an acre on his land. Now, the conditional selector under the present Bill, if he wishes to make a freehold out of his land, has to prove that he has expended 10s. an acre within three years and then he applies for a freehold, but should he not wish to do so, he can continue to pay the tenth part of the purchase money for the whole period of ten years, and when he applies for his fee-simple at the end of the ten years, all he has got to do is to show that he has expended a sum of 10s. an acre on the whole of the land. He then acquires the fee-simple at a total average cost of 13s. an acre, and 10s. an acre for improvements—that is 23s., and under this Bill the same fencing condition again crops up, and he is bound hand-and-foot by that condition. He has to spend this large sum of money—a sum very frequently beyond the small man's means—on fencing, which in many cases may not be necessary in order to profitably work his selection. Well, when he has fenced he occupies his land, and then what happens? He gets the land for ten years, and then the Government or the board send round a man to re-assess his rent. He may fancy that this rent of 3d. an acre is the rent he will have to pay for his land, but nothing of the sort. He not only has his rent raised, according as the land has increased in value during the ten years, but actually the improvements he has put on it in order to profitably work his farm are taken into account, and he has to pay an additional rent in proportion to the amount of money he has spent on improvements. I will point that out by the clause in the Bill. Here is clause 53, subsection 4 *(e)*—

"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."

Now what is the meaning of that? It means that if a man takes up a piece of forest land to convert into a farm without fencing it or grubbing it, it can be of no value and cannot be utilised. Without ploughing it, it cannot be converted into agricultural land, and if he does do these things they will add £10 an acre to the value of the land; and the consequence is that instead of capital value of £1 an acre, he will be assessed at £10 or £11 an acre when the readjustment of rent comes round. The agricultural lessee has the power to mortgage or do anything with the land except sell it again. Here I can plainly see that there will be a system of dealing with these lands compared with which dummying never had any show. There is another peculiar clause in the Bill—clause 67. The Minister for Lands, with his tender heart, thought it was quite impossible to eject selectors who were unable to pay their rents; and, believing that this is the one grand Act calculated to make everyone prosperous, he actually invites the conditional and homestead selector to come under the operation of the Act: to surrender their right of making a freehold, and to accept a leasehold instead. If the hon. gentleman had the courage of his opinions, one would think he would have been glad to offer some inducement to make this grand scheme applicable to the whole of the colony. But what does he do to the poor man who has been unable pay his rent—the man who, if any, above all others, requires special consideration? He says, "Come into my fold; I will look after you, but I will mulct you of the half of all the rents you have paid up to the present time." That is the sympathy he gives to the one man who, of all others, is deserving of it—the man who, through bad harvests or bad seasons, has been unable to pay his rent. The Minister for Lands is quite willing to change his tenure, and to give him what I consider a far worse tenure than he had before, a tenure which he will hardly ever be able to convert into a freehold, but he says, "I will stick to half the rents you have paid up to the present time." A more monstrous proposition I never heard from a professedly Liberal Government. That is the consideration they profess to show to the unfortunate selector who has been unable to pay his rent. If they believe in the principles of the Bill, and wish to show any consideration to the unfortunate selector, they should invite him to surrender his present lease and come in under the fifty years' tenure, and simply accept the rents that have been paid as payment under it. Why should they be called upon to forfeit anything? I can imagine nothing more likely to tend to the success of this Bill, if it were passed—that is, of this particular portion of it—than for the Government to be able to induce some of the existing conditional selectors, men with farms in active operation, by giving them some special advantage, to surrender their present tenure and come under this Act. The principle would have a good, fair start, and it would show the country, at all events, that some people believed in it, so much so that they had surrendered their freehold right and accepted a fifty years' tenure instead. I will just say a few words with reference to the so-called freehold clause in

the Bill. There is no doubt that a selector who has *bonâ fide* resided from twelve to thirteen years on his selection may apply to make it a freehold at the end of that time; but we must bear in mind that during the whole of those twelve years he has been paying rent at the rate of £8 per square mile, and that if he has once vacated that selection—if he has employed a bailiff or manager to work it for him—his right of freehold has gone for ever. He must reside there personally, and not by any overseer, manager, or bailiff. Do the Government seriously believe that people will settle on land in the expectation of at some time being able to make it a freehold, with such a severe clause as that put in? They wish the public to believe that they left the right of freehold in the Bill, but the conditions which convey it are such that they know perfectly well there is not one selector in a hundred would ever be able to avail himself of them. Under another clause, the selector is allowed to sub-let—the very thing the Government have been frequently suggesting—that estates should be cut up, that a central mill should be started and surrounded by portions of the original estate in small farms. That is specially provided for in the Bill. Supposing an agricultural selector does cut up his selection and sub-let it, another condition crops up at once. The failure of any sub-lessee to reside personally not only forfeits that sub-lessee's piece of land, but it actually forfeits the whole selection. A more harassing and vexatious principle of land legislation I do not think was ever before laid on the table of this House. If hon. members will only look at it carefully, they will see the oppressive way in which those clauses can be made to work by an irresponsible board. The Premier, in referring to the board, told us that its duties were judicial, not ministerial. I can only say that that interpretation is not borne out by the Bill. I will point out what the duties of the board really are, because it seems to me that hon. members are not altogether aware of the enormous power which that board have in their hands, and the apparently irresponsible position in which they are placed. I can only say that if a colony like this, that has enjoyed the benefits of responsible government, is going to allow any Government—I do not care who they are—to allow a Minister to shelter himself behind a board like this, our free institutions may just as well be swept away altogether, and we may start afresh as a Crown colony. The essence of representative government, such as we enjoy, is the responsibility of the Ministry. If the Ministry do anything that is wrong, they should be open to the attacks of the Opposition; and therein lies the safety of the country. It is all very well for a country to have a strong Government, and it is all very well for the members of a Government to feel their strength, but it is equally important to the safety of a country to have a vigorous Opposition. If you get an Opposition who will not exercise that right of free criticism which is absolutely necessary to the safe government of a country, the laws of that country will go to the dogs with the greatest rapidity. It is the fact of the presence of a vigorous Opposition that makes a Ministry do what is honest, right, and straightforward. The principle of allowing a Minister to shelter himself behind a board, to profess ignorance of what the board are doing, to express regret that the board did so-and-so, as it was not done by his orders, would be a farce. Any Minister who admits his weakness and soft-heartedness, and who bemoans his fate in being brought into contact with so much crime in his department—any Minister who cannot rough it a little better than that is such a weak-kneed Minister that he certainly will not inspire the country with any confidence in his administration. That is not the sort of Minister a progressive country like this wants. I would rather see a Minister for Lands make a mistake and be criticised; and admit the mistake or else justify himself. The country would always look with leniency on a man who confessed his faults, but shall we allow a man to hold office as a Minister of the Crown—responsible to the country and subject to the criticism of the Opposition—and yet be able to shelter himself behind a board, not appointed by this House but by the Ministry for the time being, and irremovable and independent? The members of the board can snap their fingers at this House; they cannot be compelled to move if they do not wish to move. If they do not choose to agree—and I cannot imagine how it is possible for a board of two members to legislate on the land affairs of this colony without at times disagreeing—then there is no appeal from them. They may sit down quietly and do nothing, no matter how much the public may clamour for alteration in the land legislation. We might just as well have an irresponsible board to work the whole of the Government departments. I trust that hon. members in this House will never agree to allow the responsibility of a Minister to be removed from that Minister, while allowing him to retain the position of Minister of the Crown. This is what the board has to do; and why a Minister is unable to do it I am at a loss to see. I do not attach any importance to the arguments that have been brought forward in favour of this land board. It is repugnant to our principle of responsible government, and I do not believe the country at large would have any confidence in such a departure from the recognised way of conducting public business. Well, sir, the board defines first of all what parts of the colony are to be included in the agricultural and grazing areas. I think that is ministerial, at all events, although the hon. the Premier says their duties are only judicial. They have got to determine the rents for runs and the amount of compensation for improvements, or loss of portions of runs. I think that is ministerial too. They have to call on the lessee or tenant to furnish valuations; they then hear the case in open court, and examine witnesses on oath if they think fit. Very likely it is an oversight, but it appears to me that although the land board may examine witnesses on oath if they think fit, there is no provision whatever for lessee or tenant to appear either personally or by counsel. If it were intended to make this board so irresponsible that the tenant should have no appeal whatever from their decision, and not even be allowed to appear by counsel, then I say that is one further reason why this board should never be allowed to take the place of a responsible Minister. They settle disputed boundaries; they may bring any part of the colony, outside schedule 1, under the operation of the schedule; they confirm or they need not confirm the decisions of the commissioners; they may require runs of more than 500 miles to be subdivided; and they recommend the commissioners for appointment—"commissioners and other officers"—bailiffs, I suppose. They may cause stock to be reduced on the resumed portion of runs—I do not know how that can be called a judicial duty; I should certainly think it is ministerial. They may make any country lands an agricultural area in schedule 1, or withdraw them from agriculture and put them in the grazing areas; they have to approve of all surveys; and they have to arbitrate about improvements if the pastoral lessee and commissioner disagree. They may grant an extension of the fencing term from two to three years. I think that is a ministerial duty and not a judicial one. They must gran

leases on the commissioner's certificate; they decide which of two leases shall be forfeited—that is to say when a man becomes possessed by mortgage of more than 960 acres. That is a point I shall refer to on another occasion. I shall have an opportunity when speaking on the second reading of this Bill of referring to many matters which I have omitted to-night. I am now speaking to the amendment. Besides the terms of the rental of conditional and homestead selections which are surrendered, the board has to define what are scrub lands—I do not know whether that is a judicial or ministerial duty; I think it is ministerial. They fix the rent of occupation licenses without any appeal. They can resume from lease any or all of a holding; they may reduce the rent; if land is selected they decide the compensation to pastoral lessees or tenants; and they decide, in cases of appeal, about timber licenses—which is another very injudicial proceeding. I think that is a ministerial proceeding. In fact, it is very hard to find out what the Minister himself has to do. But there is a weak point in the whole duties of the board, and it is this: that although permission is given to the board to do certain things, the Minister can step in and disallow them, and accept nearly the whole responsibility in connection with the administration of the land. But he has the advantage of always having the board to act as a buffer between himself and any very critical members who may be on this side of the House. He may always throw the blame on the board, and "regret exceedingly, but it was not his fault." On this occasion I shall not take up the time of the House any further. I think I have been able to show that this Land Bill is not framed on what we may call strictly liberal principles; that it is certainly not a Bill which is in any way going to add to the revenue; it will not in any way promote rapid settlement of the country; and I am perfectly certain that the administration of this Act is so complicated that it will do more than anything else to delay and retard settlement, and exasperate those who wish to become Crown lessees.

Mr. MIDGLEY said: On a subject so large and so important as the one now engaging the attention of the House, it is almost impossible to speak with brevity. There are so many aspects of the subject, that the very long speeches to which we have listened probably have been perfectly justified by the circumstances of the case. I have a good deal to say, but I shall say it as rapidly and as briefly as I can, consistently with clearness. Personally, I must express my gratitude to the gentlemen who have spoken on the subject for the close reasoning which they have brought to bear upon it. I feel especially grateful to the hon. gentleman at the head of the Government for the clear and able exposition of the measure which he gave us at an early stage of the debate. I also listened with great pleasure to the speech of the leader of the Opposition. I should have listened to the prophecies contained in that speech with a great deal of concern and anxiety, if it were not that I have heard him prophesying before. When I was not a member of this House, I frequently listened to him when he expressed himself as perfectly satisfied that this thing, or that, or the other was going to follow. I am sure that the hon. gentleman must be highly gratified that these events have not followed. When he comes back to the colony and finds that a man may make a mistake; that while he has been away there has been no bursting of a volcano; that the loan floated in London so well while he was there; and that, taking all things into consideration, we are getting on very well—I am sure he must be gratified. I would also like to allude to the excellent behaviour of the Opposition. I have really—and I say now what I mean—admired the conduct of the gentlemen of the Opposition; the courtesy and consideration that they have shown generally to speakers on this side. They make a most excellent Opposition, and the Government makes a very good Government; so that the inference I draw from this is that it will be to the interests of good government if the present Opposition are always in opposition. The searching criticism which this measure has received at the hands of hon. members is not to be wondered at. Any land measure will always evoke a considerable amount of favourable and adverse comment. This measure is one of so urgent a character, so radical and sweeping in its provisions, that the criticisms and the comments will, perhaps, be more searching and varied than is usual on a Bill of the kind. When first I learned that a Land Bill was to be introduced—and afterwards, when I read it—the questions which presented themselves to my mind were something after this fashion: I asked myself—Is the Bill needed? Are its objects and aims good and desirable? Is it worth anything? After reading it carefully two or three times, the reply which my judgment gave to each of these questions, taking the Bill generally, was a prompt and emphatic "yes." I know it has been objected that the Bill is one that is not required, that it is premature, that the people are not asking for it, and that there is no urgent necessity for it. Well, I think if it were for nothing else than that the Bill is a codification of all existing land laws; if it were for nothing else than that it is exceedingly clear, plain, and simple, it would be a great good to the colony. It is not only simple and clear, but it is brief, because I hold that a Bill of only 128 clauses, dealing with so many aspects of the question, is a brief one. Since they came into office, the Government have dealt with a codification of the law with regard to promissory notes and bills of exchange. When I saw that, I thought that if that was going to be the only codification from a Government largely constituted of members of the legal profession, it was a poor experiment; what would it be amongst so many laws needing to be dealt with? But this Bill is a summarising and simplifying of the land laws of the colony. Now legal phraseology is no treat to me. Language in which Acts are couched is not very interesting reading; but I claim that though on some points I may be obtuse—especially on one point to which I will draw attention shortly—that though it may be dry hard reading, I understand the Bill. I understand its provisions, and I think I understand the benefit that will accrue to the colony if it is passed. I take it that simplicity is an important matter. It is important to graziers and settlers, and to the hard-working man, who may be, and in many cases is, illiterate. They want to know simply and clearly what they are required to do in order to secure their properties. I regard the measure as being opportune because it provides for doing away in time with the system of pre-emptive selections. In saying that, I am not committing myself to an endorsement of the retrospective action of the Government with regard to pre-emptive rights. I shall have something to say on that point before long: but, so far as the provision as to pre-emptive rights applies to the future, I say that the Bill is opportune and will be useful, because it condemns to death a system that has been greatly abused, and which has resulted in a great deal of perjury and wrong-doing. I hail the

Bill gladly because it is to do away, in the future at any rate, with the system of pre-emption. The objects of the Bill have been clearly explained by the Minister for Lands and the Premier. One of those objects is to settle people more closely on the land. Now, I hold to the opinion that, while it is calculated to do that in itself, it will only do so properly if taken in conjunction with a liberal, generous, and confident system of immigration. We must have the two together. The progress of the colony in the past, compared with what might have been, has been exceedingly slow. If we have in connection with the Land Bill a system of immigration—a scheme under which there shall be no fear, no timidity, because of merely passing seasons of temporary depression—it will be greatly to the advantage of the colony. I consider that the introduction of so many suitable immigrants by the last Government was one of their best acts. I do not care to be cynical as to their motives. I am not particular as to the details. I say that the bringing of thousands of people into the colony was one of their best acts. If this Bill is to be a success, if it is to bring about a great increase in the revenue, there must be in connection with it a large introduction of suitable immigrants. Another object of the Bill is to prevent the monopolising of the lands of the colony by a few to the exclusion of the many. It has been objected that it is not yet time to introduce the Bill, but it will be too late to introduce a Bill if the time should come before the introduction of a measure of this kind, when the lands have been secured by the few to retain possession of them to the exclusion of the many. If there is anything whatever desirable in the theory contained in a book of which we have heard so much, now is the time to put those theories into practice. I can quite imagine many countries in the world where it would be an exceedingly difficult matter to put into practice the theories which Mr. Henry George has propounded in that book ; but those difficulties are reduced to a minimum in a land such as this, where the land has not been already alienated. The Bill before us provides for all manner of people, and desirable settlement. It provides—and in this matter I hold that it is inferior to no measure that has ever gone before it—it provides for men settling upon the land in something which will be as near akin to homesteads as anything can possibly be to anything else. The hon. member for Townsville, for whom I entertain a growing respect the more I see and hear of him, last night drew a far-fetched comparison between what might, as he thinks, possibly be the state of things in Queensland, and what has been the state of things in Ireland. I cannot imagine under this Bill, in this land, it will be even possible for there to be anything answering to the evictions of which we have heard so much from the old country. How can there be evictions? A man may take up, under this Bill, an 80-acre farm, if that is the extent of his ambition, for which he will have to pay a rental of 3d. per acre, or about £1 per annum. He will be able to take up a 960-acre farm, for which he will be only required to pay £12 per annum for a period of ten or twelve years, and at the end of that term he has the option of securing the freehold. If a man with bone, with sinew, and with courage—a man at all suitable for a settler in this colony—with the advantages that this Bill puts before him, and the great broad field of Queensland also before him, is not able to earn enough to save sufficient in twelve months to pay £1 for an 80-acre farm, or £12 for a 960-acre farm, he had better "throw up the sponge" in the battle of life at once. There will be this difference between the relations of the State and settler, and the relations of the tenant and landlord in the two countries. The relation between the Irish landlord and his tenants is this: that he resides away from the land in many instances—in a large proportion of instances—and he takes away entirely from the land all he receives as rent, and spends it somewhere else, so that the tenant derives no benefit and the country derives no benefit. But here the State, in the relation of the landlord to the tenant, is not going to take away the rent and spend it somewhere else. The benefit accruing to the revenue will, in a large measure, go back to the tenant, and he will be the recipient of many advantages resulting from it. The rent which these settlers pay will be expended again in some way by the divisional boards—in an endowment, or some way—and will be spent in the colony, and the settlers will derive a benefit from the money which is received from themselves. I think this Bill, in this respect, cannot possibly produce anything answering to the miserable and heart-broken relations of the Irish landlord towards his tenants. This Bill provides also for grazing farms. When I read the clause dealing with grazing farms, I saw looming before me in the distance the possibility of being a bloated aristocrat—possibly also of seeing the junior member for North Brisbane a bloated aristocrat. I can clearly imagine him at no very distant time—it is within the bounds of possibility that the two of us may have runs contiguous to one another, and be immense landed aristocrats in the colony, inasmuch as we can take up a maximum of 5,000 acres for grazing farms, and the large amount we will have to pay for the rent of those grazing farms will be £31 5s. per annum. We may either of us take up a 20,000-acre grazing farm, and all we shall have to pay for that will be £125 per annum. I see in that a possibility of being something far better than a seller of maize and potatoes at 5 per cent. I think there are many men in the colony who will hail this as the opening of a door which they did not anticipate would be opened to them. I have already intimated that I shall endeavour to tread very carefully on this ground: that there are some parts of the Bill to which I object. I was pleased with a remark which fell from the lips of the Premier when speaking upon the Bill. He invited careful consideration of it, and made use of these words: that the members of the House would endeavour to find out its defects, and endeavour to remedy them. To my mind, the most serious and most glaring defect in the Bill is its action with regard to pre-emptive right. I have made this subject, since I saw the Bill, a matter of examination and study, and have read up the various lines of discussions in the past dealing with the matter, and I have deliberately come to this conclusion: that in the course the Government have adopted in administration, and the course they propose to justify and give colour to under this Bill—for that course they have not the extent of the surface of a pin legally to stand upon. I have spoken generally in approval of the Bill so far ; but I still speak now especially with reference to the abolition of the pre-emptive right. Of course, as I said before, if this enactment dealt with pre-emptive rights in all future agreements—that there should be no such thing, that they were to become a thing of the past—I should go with it heart and soul. But I cannot agree with this proposal when it strikes at the rights which have already accrued to men, and belong to them under agreements, into which they have already entered, under the legal protection afforded to them by the clause under which they took up their selections. I know that in discussing these points I shall have to part company with members on this side of the House. Perhaps I shall be alone ; I have

been alone before, and I have been right; and I have gone with the giddy multitude, and been wrong; and I feel convinced that the light of after events, when it comes, will show that in this matter, although it is not pleasing, I shall be right again. I know that some hon. members have an idea with regard to the faithful service of a party, that a man should be like the little lamb we read of in the nursery rhyme, which says that Mary had a little lamb, and this little lamb followed her wherever she went, and used to follow her till it got into trouble, and got kicked out of a certain place where it should not have gone. I am not going to be a little lamb, although I am as capable of rendering faithful service as any man in the party. But with this proposal I cannot agree, and I will tell the House why, though in doing so I will have to travel over some ground which has been traversed before. I regard the 6th clause of this Bill as being at once the very worst and the very best clause in the Bill. If the clauses were only intended to deal with future action it would be the very best clause in the Bill; but when it proposes retrospection and repudiation of agreements already made I regard it as the very worst clause in the Bill. I am going to endeavour to substantiate my statement and justify the ground I have taken up by quoting first of all from the Acts dealing with the subject, and then I shall quote briefly from the speeches of hon. members concerning it; and when I have done that I shall refer to the long unbroken line of custom and usage upon it. First of all, though I do not suppose this was really the origin of it, I find in the Crown Lands Act of 1868:—

"Pastoral tenants in settled districts may"—

That is, if it suits them. There appears to be no one else's will or judgment taken in the matter—

"previous to the expiration of the twelve months' notice of resumption make pre-emptive selections to the extent of one acre for every ten shillings value of improvements, at the same rates as those demanded from conditional purchasers to secure their homesteads and improvements, in lieu of compensation thereof. Provided always that such pre-emptive selection shall not in all contain more than two thousand five hundred and sixty acres, nor be in more than three separate portions."

I find in this Act, not perhaps the origin of this pre-emptive right, but the origin of this mischievous perversion of the pre-emptive right; the right of a pastoral tenant going over his run and picking the eyes out of it. We find that he cannot pre-empt more than 2,560 acres, nor shall his pre-emptive selections be "in more than three separate portions." Then, further on in the Pastoral Leases Act of 1869, I find the very clause which this Bill proposes to repeal. It says—

"For the purpose of securing permanent improvements it shall be lawful for the Governor to sell to the lessee of a run without competition at the price of 10s. per acre, any portion of such run in one block not being more nor less than 2,560 acres, and the boundaries of any such block shall, as nearly as the natural features of the country and adjacent boundaries will admit, be equilateral and rectangular."

When the hon. Premier was speaking upon this point the other night, I began to fear, or rather to hope, that the impression I formed upon the subject was altogether erroneous when read with the subsequent clause; but I would call the attention of the House to the fact that it is specially stated in this clause that the object of granting these pre-emptives is to secure his improvements to the squatter. This is the object of this clause, while the 56th clause deals with entirely another matter. It says, after the intervening clause dealing with resumptions was passed:—

"Notwithstanding any notice of resumption, the lessee shall have a right to depasture on the resumed portion until the same shall be actually alienated or otherwise disposed of by the Crown, when the lessee shall be entitled to claim, and be paid by the Crown the value of improvements enacted or made on the lands so alienated or disposed of, such value to be ascertained by arbitration under the provisions of this Act."

If I am right in my reading of these two clauses of this Act they dealt with two entirely different matters. I understood the Premier to say that the two clauses left the Government for the time being the option of either paying the squatter for his improvements, or granting him a pre-emptive selection. But, in my opinion, these two clauses secured to him both, unfortunately.

The PREMIER: No.

An HONOURABLE MEMBER: Yes.

Mr. MIDGLEY: Well, if I were a squatter I could not possibly take any more clear and decisive view than I do on this case. The first clause I have read—the 54th clause—secures to him the right to pre-empt, in order to induce him to make permanent improvements. He can make this pre-emption himself, and he can make it before there is any resumption at all; and then, if there is any resumption subsequently, he may have made numerous improvements which may be outside the selection, which may be given to him to induce him to make permanent improvements; and then, if the run is resumed, he may demand to be paid for the improvements on the resumed part of the run. That is the view I take upon the subject. It may be erroneous; and I shall be glad to hear further explanation of it, if I am in error. Next I find in the 5th clause of the 4th subsection of the Western Railway Act:—

"The lessee shall have, and may exercise, the right of pre-emption conferred upon him by the 54th section of the said Act"—

Nothing could possibly be plainer than that. It alludes to the Act of 1869—

"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."

Further, coming down a little later, the Railway Reserves Act of 1877 says exactly the same as I have already quoted; and in addition it is provided—

"It shall be lawful for the lessee of two or more runs adjoining to each other, subject to the approval of the Governor in Council, to consolidate in one block the pre-emptive selections which he may be entitled to make in respect of each of the adjoining runs as aforesaid."

And further, in the 5th subsection of the same clause, it says:—

"Where a run comprises a larger area than twenty-five square miles of available country upon which rent has been paid, it shall be lawful for the lessee to exercise his right of pre-emption to the same extent, and in the same manner as if the run had been subdivided into runs containing not less than twenty-five square miles each; and the area selected, may, with the approval of the Governor in Council, be consolidated in one block."

Now I take it there is no power left with the Governor in Council, except in the matter of interfering with regard to these consolidated pre-emptive blocks. He may think it unwise and inexpedient in any district to grant the squatter this right to put up his selections in one block. There he can interpose; but with regard to the abstract right of making the pre-emptive selections I do not see any veto in any direction anywhere by anybody. Those are extracts from the Acts bearing upon the subject. The hon. Premier stated his conviction that no lawyer in the country would be able to extract from these Acts an inference or conclusion that these men have a pre-emptive right. Well, if I were a lawyer I would wish for no better case. I should like to have half-a-dozen such suits with a good

fat fee attached to each; and I believe, with even my small powers of persuasion and eloquence, I could win every one of them.

The PREMIER: You might try.

Mr. MIDGLEY: It seems to me that these Acts, succeeding each other as they do, have something of this description: They seem to me like the case of a man writing a letter. He writes a letter in which he makes a certain statement. He repeats that statement, and may be, to make it more clear, underlines it. A little later he again repeats it, and then doubly underlines it and makes the lines as heavy as he can. These Acts so frequently allude to the—mother Act, I was going to call it—to the original law with regard to pre-emptives, that if the original were at all uncertain these frequent allusions, so much emphasised, remove all misgiving and doubt. Let me first quote two short extracts from speeches. One of these was made by the Postmaster-General. Speaking on the Western Railway Bill in 1875, he said:—

"The fifth clause gave the pastoral lessees certain rights, and subjected them to certain liabilities. After resumption, if the land was not reserved, selected, or alienated, the lessee would be at liberty to occupy it; and when any portion could be no longer leased by him, his rent would be reduced proportionately. His right of pre-emption, under the fifty-fourth section of the Pastoral Leases Act of 1869, was reserved to him by the Bill, as indeed were all other existing rights, except in so far as they were modified expressly by the Bill in dealing with the reserve."

The Postmaster-General of that Government was the Hon. George Thorn; and what he said is on record in *Hansard*. The Attorney-General of the Government, speaking on the Continental Railway Bill on the 9th June, 1875, said:—

"Hon. members should also remember that in every block of country there was a right of pre-emption over four square miles."

The Attorney-General of that Government was the Hon. S. W. Griffith. I go a step further, and say that not only do the law and the speeches made upon this subject place it beyond the region of doubt—mystical and uncertain as legal matters frequently are—but time-honoured usage and long-continued practice with regard to resumptions, if anything further were needed, supply the underlining of the passage in the letter, and this completes the matter. Now, Mr. Speaker, if these pre-emptions were being refused—I believe there are a considerable number of applications in the office—if they were being refused because of defects in the applications pending inquiry and proof; if because of fraud or attempted fraud, perjury, or wrong-doing of any kind on the part of the applicants—then I should say the Government were perfectly justified; but if these delays and refusals are simply and solely the result of a new reading of an old law, I say again that there is no justification in law for the course which is being adopted. I ask again—is it worth while, when we are come just to the fag-end of a system, when it is to be wound up—is it worth while to make a new departure on the subject? Is it worth while to put the country, as will inevitably be done, to the expense of vexatious and prolonged litigation in order to justify that course? Why, sir, a man of business, a private man, knowing what he is about, unless he has a very clear case—unless he is positively certain that he has been wronged and defrauded—such a man will generally say, "Anything rather than law." But the Government seems to have a tendency, a disposition, to appeal to the law in preference to any other course. I am sorry that such a course is taken, because it is only sowing the seeds of a rich harvest of litigation.

The PREMIER: Nobody will try it.

Mr. MIDGLEY: And the Government will not have the point of a rock to stand upon, and not a single crevice of a rock in which to retreat. They will not have a single technicality or doubt in the law behind which to shelter themselves. Now, I have spoken in this strain, not because I agree with pre-emptives in the abstract, and not because I know that the country has suffered injury in consequence of pre-emptives in the past, but because I am sure that the first loss will be the least, and that to resort to any other mode of proceeding now is too late in the day. These men will appeal to the law, and will win their cases.

The PREMIER: Let them try it.

Mr. MIDGLEY: Passing this Bill will not deprive them of their legal rights, and they will still have the right of appeal to courts of law. I do not want any man in this House to misunderstand me on this subject—or any man outside of this House—or any newspaper man to misrepresent me at all in this matter. I say that it is my firm conviction that these squatters have the right to their pre-emptives, and that the country will lose its ground, which it is desirable that it should, if possible, retain; and we shall lose the land in addition to the expense of going to law. With regard to the second part of the Bill—administration—I cannot fall in with what has been said by most of the members on the other side. I think it is desirable that there should be some mode of administering the lands of the colony different from that which has so far obtained. There is one matter I want to point out particularly, and that is a part of the Bill on which I am really very obtuse. I cannot for the life of me understand—I will try to make my difficulty as clear as possible—how this 3rd part is going to make the alteration in the manner specified. In the 5th clause we read as follows:—

"The third and fourth parts of this Act extend and apply to the part of the colony described in the first schedule to this Act."

I suppose that from the passing of this Bill, or from the commencement of the year 1885, the part which is scheduled will come under the operation of the 3rd part of this Bill. The part which we see on the map will of necessity come under the operation of the Bill. But the commencement of the 23rd clause reads as follows:—

"At any time within six months after this part of this Act becomes applicable to any run, the pastoral tenant thereof may give notice to the Minister that he elects to take advantage of the provisions of this Act, with respect to such runs."

Now, I want to ask the hon. gentleman at the head of affairs—supposing the pastoral tenant objects to come under this arrangement—supposing he absolutely refuses to do so—what will be his position?

An HONOURABLE MEMBER: He will be where he is now.

Mr. MIDGLEY: So far as I read the Bill, he will not be where he is; he will be absolutely outlawed, and there will be no law to touch him.

The PREMIER The 7th section provides for that.

Mr. MIDGLEY: I read in the 7th section first of all that—

"From and after the commencement of this Act so much of the several Acts specified in the second schedule to this Act as is not already repealed, and all regulations made thereunder respectively, shall be repealed, except as to any rights, claims, penalties, and liabilities already accrued or incurred or in existence."

And further—

"From and after the coming of the 3rd part of this Act into operation in any part of the colony, so much of the Pastoral Leases Act of 1869 as is not hereinbefore repealed, and all regulations made thereunder, shall

be repealed as to such part of the colony, except as to any rights, claims, penalties, and liabilities then already accrued or incurred and in existence."

If then, on the 1st January, 1885, this Act of 1869 is repealed, and those other Acts contained in the schedule—here is where my obtuseness comes in——

The PREMIER: Read the proviso—the last proviso.

Mr. MIDGLEY: I will refer to it:—

"And provided further that all lands which at the time of such repeal are subject to the provisions of the said Acts or any of them shall continue to be subject to the provisions thereof, until the same shall have been surrendered or resumed, or the existing title thereto shall have otherwise determined."

I see. As I acknowledged at the beginning, this was the particular part where my obtuseness came in. I sat up till about one or two o'clock this morning over this matter, but the longer I sat the worse it became—it seemed so mysterious. Now, I will only detain the House a very few minutes, while I allude to but two or three matters which I notice in the clauses. I think the squattages will have to be left as provided in the 23rd clause. The 4th part of the Bill with regard to agricultural and grazing farms is, I consider, the best part of the Bill. As I have pointed out, the wishes of those in favour of homestead areas can be gratified under this Bill. With reference to the 43rd clause, I am of the opinion that all selection should be after survey. The 48th clause, and I think the 54th clause—the latter especially—contain a very dangerous element. I think it would be advisable, if a man has selected 20,000 acres of a grazing farm, for the State to say to that man, "You have got enough, and you shall have no more." I do not think there is anything in the clause, even taken with the 55th, to prevent a man, if there were twenty or forty different districts in the colony having twenty or forty grazing farms of 20,000 acres each. This will lead to a great deal of abuse and to monopoly. The 57th clause contains a very arbitrary provision. It provides that if a father, or a grandfather, or anybody else, leaves a man an inheritance, he would be forced to sell, and to sell it in a very short time; and we all know that a forced sale means an unprofitable one. The person to whom the property is bequeathed loses any advantage which ought to accrue from the thrift and toil of those who have been thinking of him perhaps as much as of themselves, in the toil they have expended on it. I object—it may be because I am not a lawyer—to the provision for the payment of peppercorns for Crown lands. Paying interest on peppercorns would necessitate a great deal of ground pepper. If the lands are of any value, if they are of any commercial worth, the men who lease them should be required to pay something, if ever so little, in hard, solid, current coin of the realm. With regard to the objections of the hon. member for Mackay, his figures somewhat startled and staggered me, but I drew this inference: that if the land now furnishes a large revenue at a small rental, it must furnish a larger revenue if the rental is made higher; if the State has a considerable revenue at present, it must have a larger revenue when the country is settled. We are not to suppose that the growth of this colony in the future will be anything like what it has been in the past. We must not forget that the number of immigrants introduced during the past has only been a few thousands in the best year, and that during the best year in the alienation of Crown lands the quantity alienated has amounted to little more than 600,000 acres. We must not forget that we are passing through our infancy; that we have the British-India Company trading to these shores; that whereas at one time we had to send lecturers home to appeal to people to induce them to come to these shores, they are now coming in thousands; and that, as our population increases, the revenue of the colony can scarcely fail to be much larger than it has been in its infancy.

Mr. ARCHER said: I move the adjournment of the debate.

Question put and passed.

On the motion of the MINISTER FOR LANDS, the resumption of the debate was made an Order of the Day for Tuesday next.

ADJOURNMENT.

The PREMIER moved that the House adjourn till Tuesday next, and said the discussion on the Land Bill would then be proceeded with.

The COLONIAL TREASURER said he would take advantage of that opportunity to ask the hon. member for Townsville whether the report in *Hansard* of the financial part of his speech was substantially correct, as he might possibly have occasion to refer to the figures.

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN said, in answer to the hon. gentleman, he would remind him that the figures he gave the House were collected by himself. When the hon. the Colonial Treasurer produced his figures—which would no doubt be accurate—he (Hon. Mr. Macrossan) would then be in a position to criticise them; but the hon. gentleman could hardly expect him to stand by figures which he prefaced by stating he could not say they were absolutely correct. If the hon. gentleman meant that he was going to criticise his (Hon. Mr. Macrossan's) figures in a speech on that Bill, and introduce others of his own on the Financial Statement, he (Hon. Mr. Macrossan) would have an opportunity of answering him. In the meantime, he would ask the hon. gentleman to give as much information to the House as possible, so that hon. members might be able to speak on the subject with the same intelligence.

The COLONIAL TREASURER said he merely wished to know whether the figures which the hon. member gave to the House the previous evening were correctly reported in *Hansard*, or whether, in correcting his proofs, he had any reason to find fault with the figures there given.

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN: I find no fault.

The COLONIAL TREASURER said he merely wished to satisfy himself that the figures were correctly recorded in *Hansard*,

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN said he had not gone through the figures appearing in *Hansard;* but what he had seen he found no fault with—none whatever. The hon. gentleman must understand that he (Mr. Macrossan) made an approximate estimate of the loss of revenue, the same as the hon. member for Mackay did, to-night, from his point of view, making it different from that which he (Mr. Macrossan) had made it. That was the position that every member of the House would be placed in until the figures were placed correctly before them.

The HON. SIR T. MCILWRAITH said the House was to be congratulated, at all events, that there had been one result from the figures quoted and the remarks made by his hon. friend the member for Townsville, and that was, that the Treasurer of the colony had been roused at last to notice one of the most important parts of the Bill which he had before neglected. He was glad to know that they were at last to have a speech on a vital part of the subject which had been hitherto ignored.

The House adjourned at eleven minutes past 10 o'clock until the usual hour on Tuesday next.