

Queensland



Parliamentary Debates
[Hansard]

Legislative Assembly

WEDNESDAY, 27 AUGUST 1884

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY.

Wednesday, 27 August, 1884.

Gympie Gas Company Bill.—Skyring's Road Bill.—Pettigrew Estate Enabling Bill.—Questions.—Formal Motions.—Crown Lands Bill.—second reading.—Messages from the Legislative Council.—Adjournment.

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

GYMPIE GAS COMPANY BILL.

Mr. BAILEY, by permission of the House and without previous notice, moved that the proceedings of the House on the Gympie Gas Company (Limited) Bill, since the Report of the Select Committee on that Bill was brought up to the House, be rescinded; and that the Report be referred back to the Committee for amendment of its proceedings in relation to the 164th Standing Order.

Question put and passed.

SKYRING'S ROAD BILL.

Mr. BEATTIE, by permission of the House and without previous notice, moved that the proceedings of the House on the Skyring's Road Bill, since the Report of the Select Committee on that Bill was brought up to the House, be rescinded; and that the Report be referred back to the Committee for amendment of its proceedings in relation to the 164th Standing Order.

Question put and passed.

PETTIGREW ESTATE ENABLING BILL.

Mr. FOOTE, by permission of the House and without previous notice, moved that the proceedings of the House on the Pettigrew Estate Enabling Bill, since the report of the Select Committee on that Bill was brought up to the House, be rescinded; and that the Report be referred back to the Committee for amendment of its proceedings in relation to the 164th Standing Order.

Question put and passed.

QUESTIONS.

Mr. NORTON asked the Minister for Works—

1. Was the final certificate for Section No. 1, Maryborough Railway, on account of which the contractors have been awarded £1,834 lss. 10d. by Mr. Wade, signed by them without protest?

2. Were written instructions given by the Minister, or the Acting Commissioner, to Mr. Wade to waive any of the general conditions of Annear and Company's contracts?—or were instructions of any kind given him in writing?

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

1. The final certificate is never signed by the contractors, but the final voucher, for balance due on No. 1 Contract, was signed by contractors without formal protest. (See Chief Engineer's letter, 2nd May, 1884, page 11 of printed papers.)

2. The only instruction given to Mr. Wade was that conveyed by the Acting Commissioner's letter to him, dated 29th April, 1884. (See page 11 of printed papers.)

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

Whether the survey from Herberton to the Coast, ordered at the end of 1882 or the beginning of 1883, was made?—and, if so, would he lay the Surveyor's Report on the table of the House?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS replied—

Several surveys have been effected, and I have no objection to lay reports received in regard thereto, on the table of the House, if required.

Mr. BLACK asked the Minister for Works—

1. When he will be prepared to call for tenders for the Sydney-street Bridge across the Pioneer at Mackay?
2. When he will be prepared to call for tenders for Court-house, Mackay?
3. When he will be prepared to accept tender for extension of embankment of Pioneer River, Mackay?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS replied—

1. I am unable to state definitely the date when tenders can be called for the bridge over the Pioneer River. The Engineer for Bridges, Mr. Daniels, is expected to arrive to-morrow and no unnecessary delay will take place.

2. I hope to be able to call for tenders in about a month's time.

The COLONIAL TREASURER (Hon. J. R. Dickson) said he would be prepared to answer the third question of the hon. member for Mackay—which should have been put to him—to-morrow.

FORMAL MOTIONS.

The following formal motions were agreed to:—

By the HON. J. M. MACROSSAN—

That there be laid upon the table of the House, a copy of the conditions and specifications under which the contracts for No. 1 and No. 2 sections of the Maryborough and Gympie Railway were executed.

By the HON. J. M. MACROSSAN—

That there be laid on the table of the House, a return showing the number of selections, both homestead and conditional, the rents of which will cease in each year, from the 1st January, 1885, until the 1st January, 1890; also the total rents of such selections, year by year, for the same period.

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN, in moving—

That there be laid on the table of the House, a return showing the number of homestead selectors to whom deeds of grant have been issued under the different Acts for the alienation of Crown lands in force for the time being in the colony; also the number of selectors occupying homestead selections at present in the colony—

said that with the permission of the House he would explain to the Premier what was his intention with regard to the motion. The first part was simply to get the number of deeds of grant issued up to the present time, and the second part to get the number of homestead selectors at present in occupation of homesteads, qualifying to get them. It was quite simple; the second part he knew could be furnished in ten minutes.

The PREMIER (Hon. S. W. Griffith) said he had thought it included people who had got their deeds of grant and were still living on their selections.

CROWN LANDS BILL—SECOND READING.

On the Order for 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 intention 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 *bona 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 in 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 indications have 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. NELSON said : Mr. Speaker,—In continuing the debate on the second reading of this Land Bill, I shall occupy the time of the House for a very short time indeed, for one very good reason—that so far we are quite in the dark upon a very important question. One of the main considerations which we were told induced the Government to bring forward a Land Bill this session was that they might be enabled to carry on their extensive public works policy by deriving a largely increased revenue from the management of the lands, by the new system they proposed to introduce. So far we have had no information how this proposed scheme is going to increase the revenue from the land. Members on this side of the House have asked for the information, and I believe the Colonial Treasurer is going to favour us to-night with his views on this subject. The country has been led to anticipate that, from the extra-parliamentary utterances of nearly all the Ministers. The Premier has frequently referred to the subject, and promised the people of the colony that he would introduce a measure by which the land would be made to contribute so much of the revenue that we would be able to go in for a very large and vigorous policy of improvements throughout the colony. The Minister or Works, also, at a very recent date, pro-

pounded the same idea. This is what he said to the people assembled at Emu Vale :—

"He had asked the Treasurer to make provision for six millions of money for railway construction, and he must have it; and he should look to the Minister for Lands, in piloting his Land Bill through the House, to assist him, and by bringing people to settle on the land to help to pay the interest on that large amount of money."

The Colonial Treasurer also wound up a very eloquent speech to very much the same purport. He said :—

"He must tell the people that if they wanted railways they must also provide an increased revenue for their construction. They must not be blind to the fact that the money had to be borrowed, and that they had to pay interest on it. They must, therefore, be prepared to support the Minister for Lands in his attempt to reform the land administration, by which means the Treasury would be replenished."

As we are unable to perceive how this largely increased revenue is to be derived, I, and others who think with me, can only postpone any observations we may have to make on that subject until we hear from the Colonial Treasurer how it is to be done. The Government is committed to the Bill, and if it does not provide this largely increased revenue the whole thing is a failure, because it is expressly for that purpose that any change in the land laws is proposed to be made. Otherwise we might have gone on very well as we were. The proposed change is to be made solely to enable the Minister for Works to raise his six millions or more for public works. Leaving that question, many hon. members on this side have expressed the disappointment they felt when they first saw the Bill. That was construed by the Premier to mean that they were disappointed because the Bill was too good, much to their surprise. I can say honestly that I was both disappointed and surprised at this Bill when it was introduced by the Minister for Lands; because, having been for many years connected with the working of lands, and having at one time been greatly smitten with the glorious idea of doing away with alienation altogether and substituting leasing, and having failed to invent any feasible measure that would satisfy myself and others with whom I came in contact, I was under the impression from what the Minister for Lands had told his hearers that he had discovered a practical way in which that idea could be carried out. At that meeting the hon. gentleman said :—

"He had now an opportunity of offering to the people a system which was totally different to any other in the world. That system was not a new one. It had been advocated by far-seeing and intelligent men for a hundred years or more, but it had never yet been applied anywhere in principle, so far as he knew. The principle to which he alluded was to substitute leasing for alienation, and that the basis of all their future land legislation should be leasing—leasing pure and simple. He felt quite sure that any intelligent man, looking at the matter from an unselfish point of view and disabusing his mind of the morbid prejudices which were the result of bad training, must come to the conclusion that the land was theirs only for their lifetime for their use, and was to be handed on for the use, in like manner, of those who came after them."

That is a grand idea, and I was led to believe from what he said that he had discovered a solution of all the difficulties that had beset me. I may be excused, therefore, if I say that I was very much disappointed indeed when I came to read this Bill over, and to listen to the speech of the Minister for Lands in introducing it. Almost at the beginning of his speech the hon. gentleman told us that he had failed, and found he could not carry out his idea :—

"The departure in this Bill from the true principles of leasing, I may explain, is a concession to the sentimental objections and prejudices of a large class of people in the country."

And he went on to say that if he attempted to go against them he would be considered a fool. Still he says:—

"I consider that the principle of leasing is the only true one."

I did not certainly expect that the Minister for Lands, in framing his great measure, would have made concessions to our ignorance and prejudices. I thought that a Minister in his position, with a large and, as was generally thought, too docile following—though I am glad to see that they are not all so docile as people gave them credit for being—would have been able to press forward a measure which he believed to be the best for the colony, and which he could advocate with his whole heart and soul. Instead of doing so, he brings in a Bill which is neither one thing nor the other, neither leasing nor alienation, and says he was obliged to give up what he considered the better way of managing the lands, in order to make a concession to the prejudices and ignorance of the poor benighted people of Queensland. With regard to the general principles of the Bill—I do not intend to go into the details of it—many hon. members on the other side, I notice, talk about the Bill as if it was leasing pure and simple. But we know very well that that is not the case. The land is to be alienated in the very parts of the colony where it may be said to lose by alienation—that is, town and suburban allotments. It is only in those places that the "unearned increment" ever accrues at all. I do not believe it ever accrues in country lands in a new colony like this. Whatever enhanced value attaches to those lands has been hardly earned by the improvements that have been put upon them. The re-purchase of alienated land was always in my scheme of leasing, and that might be easily done. I believe you could get back all the country lands without much difficulty. I will undertake to buy the whole of the Darling Downs, which is the oldest settled portion of the colony, leaving out a few towns, for less than they cost. Hon. members would hardly believe that; but I am perfectly satisfied it is true. If you take into consideration all the labour that the small homestead selector spent on his land—which is capital, and the very best of capital too; if you take into consideration the wages spent and the improvements made, you could buy the whole of the Darling Downs for less than it cost the present owners. Why should we be so frightened of alienation? That is what I cannot understand at all. I may as well tell you that I have given up the ideas I had about the leasing theory altogether. I am now satisfied that the only system of dealing with the land properly—the only system which will induce people to settle and devote their energy, toil, and money in developing the resources of the colony, bringing all the resources of the land into productive fertility—is alienation; I am fully satisfied on that point. What is alienation? I always think the word is very much misused. Alienation, considered etymologically, really means parting with the land to an alien.

The Hon. Sir T. MCILWRAITH: Lifting it from the earth to the moon.

Mr. NELSON: Yes; lifting it outside the colony altogether. If you sold the land to Count Bismarck, for instance, or the President of the French Republic, or any other alien, that would be alienation. But we cannot do that; we have no power. We can only give land to our people; that is to say, if people like to come from the outside, we take them in as partners, and induce them by telling them that they can have a piece of land which they can call their own. It is not really their own, strictly speaking; because, as far as regards the whole

of the land in Great Britain as well as in the colonies, whether it is alienated or not, whether it is private property or not, it is the property of Her Majesty Queen Victoria; and she is simply the embodiment—the personification—of the British people. You cannot really alienate land; the idea of alienation is wrong altogether. The only difference between land that is let out by fee-simple and land that is leased is that the one is better tenure than the other; but really it is all held under Her Majesty the Queen. The question then comes, is it a right thing to lease? I think all the arguments are in favour of not leasing. The Minister for Lands may call it sentiment, or prejudice, or anything he likes: I do not care what he thinks. The possession of land is a natural-born instinct in the Anglo-Saxon, in the German, and other nations. All their training is in the direction of acquiring the possession of land. And you cannot help a man looking forward to leaving his wife and family with a home secured to them, should he be taken. It is, I say, one of the grandest instincts in human nature, and instead of trying to sneer or run each other down or call bad names, I think it is our business to make use of it: draw people by the cords of nature, and not go against them, as if trying to make water run uphill. The Minister for Works and other hon. gentlemen talk about this colony having lost millions of money through what is called "alienation." To my mind we have not lost a single farthing by any land we have given away or sold in fee-simple. I do not exactly know how this great loss has arisen. I suppose it is that if we had held the land we could now have got a much higher price for it. That may apply to the towns, but not to the country; it may apply to places like Brisbane, Townsville, or Toowoomba. Land at Toowoomba, which was originally sold at £1 per acre, is now worth £40 to £50 per foot. If it is meant that we have lost money in that way it is possible there may be a little truth in it; but as far as land in fee-simple in the country districts is concerned, I cannot conceive how the colony is one sixpence the worse. I think it is a great deal better. For instance, the land I took up fourteen and a-half years since cost me £1 per acre. If that money had been put out at interest, say at 5 per cent., it would be £2 now, because money doubles itself in about that period of time. That simply means that if the colony, instead of selling the land, had kept it, nothing would have been gained unless it could now be sold at £2 an acre at least; and I know nothing like that could be got. Any enhanced value of the land I take credit for myself. In the same way we have people giving reins to their imagination, and telling you how many millions of money we should have gained if we had only leased the land. They might just as well talk in that way about alienation; you can indulge in just as good dreams in that way as you can with regard to leasing. For instance, we have 400,000,000 acres of land still left to give away in fee-simple. Suppose we only got 10s. an acre for it, that would give £200,000,000 at once, or about £10,000,000 a year. Why, we should have our way clear. Look at the immense amount of money it is. We should require no Lands Department, and we could do away with boards and everything else. We could let loose all our Custom-house officers and other people, and let them go and live on the land. We would not require any Customs then, and we would not require to be taxed at all. We would be all as contented and happy as possible; we would have no need for judges—there would be no prisoners—and we could turn the prison at St. Helena into a pleasant resort. The imagination is like fire—a very good

servant but a very bad master: the lands of promise which we can conjure up by giving reins to that faculty generally disappear like the mirage when we reduce them to sober reason. It is the same in this instance, if we follow it out. Leasing is right so far as it goes, but it is a subsidiary thing altogether; it is a temporary thing to lead up to the proper leasing—leasing by fee-simple—and that is the only way in which we can ever work our Crown lands in this colony. But I look upon this Bill as worse in a great many respects than all that. I do not know if hon. members have detected it, but there are a great deal of these new socialistic and communistic ideas contained in it; for instance, this restraint put upon any man to acquire more land in fee-simple than 960 acres. I look upon that as nothing but an insidious blow at property of all kinds—not only land, but every kind of property. If we are going to apply this principle to land it, should apply also in other cases. Do not the same social duties belong to a rich man, whether he is the owner of land, or of a large mercantile business, or anything of that sort? He undoubtedly has the same social duties, whether he be the owner of land or engaged in business. This Bill says, however, to the man who goes and settles upon land, and devotes his toil and energies to it: “You shall get up so far, and as soon as ever you get up to 960 acres you must stop there; you dare not go further.” Why should that apply to that class alone in the community? Why should this one class be singled out above all others, to be so restrained? They want, as well as other people, to get on in the world; and when a man has got 960 acres, has improved it, and is getting a good income, we have no right to expect that he will be satisfied with that amount. He may like to go on further and get another 960 acres, and get a large property; but this Bill says, “No, you shall do nothing of the sort.” Suppose a draper starts in Fortitude Valley in a small way of business, would we not think it an atrocious thing to make a law that he must never aspire to get a business in Queen street; to say that, no matter how he got on in his business, he dare not go beyond a certain point? What would we think of passing an Act to limit the warehouses of merchants to a certain number of cubic feet? The thing is too absurd altogether, and so it is, not to apply it to any other class except us poor people who work upon the land. We are to be held down, and considered as serfs—a lower class of people—and be restrained from ever getting our heads any higher than 960 acres. I can certainly see no reason in it whatever. The whole thing is very absurd. These things are all very captivating, however, to those who live in the towns. We have to sit and listen to them while they tell us how we ought to meet them, but they do not care to tackle it themselves. It suits them very well to stop at a distance. It is a very patriotic sort of thing to come up occasionally to our agricultural shows and tell us what a good sort of people we are; but they do not do the work themselves. They get all the “unearned increment,” and we get nothing at all. It just falls in with their self-interest, and that is really the impulse which is at the bottom of all our social communities. The Minister for Lands was very wroth about our previous land legislation. One remark he made about the 1868 Act, I think, was, that it had failed because it gave the people too much credit for honesty—it was too optimistic in its views. But is not the present Bill open to the same fault? I think it not only gives us credit for too much honesty—which may be just possible—but it also takes for granted, as I

think I have shown from the extract I made from the Minister for Lands' speech at Emu Vale—it also takes for granted that we are to sink what he calls our selfishness, but what I believe is self-interest. We are to sink all that, and be filled up with patriotism—we are to work for the State, and not for ourselves. That is what the people in the towns would like to see. They would very much like to see all of us in the country reduced to the condition of serfs; to be hevers of wood and drawers of water, in order that they may enjoy a happy life—in order that the gentlemen of Queen street may live at home at ease, and pay no taxes, and that we may pay them all. That is the idea contained in this Bill. I do not think I need enlarge upon these things, as I have said enough to explain to the House what my views are on that subject. I should like to make one more remark concerning the Minister for Works' statement about our losing millions of money by alienating land. Let him take, as an instance, our goldfields. Those goldfields really do not give us any direct revenue at all. Nearly the whole of the money we get from goldfields is swallowed up in paying officers to look after them; but nobody will say that the colony is losing money by her goldfields. I dare say if we reckoned it up there has been as much gold taken out of the colony, and sent clear away, as would pay our national debt. I dare say there has been about £16,000,000 of gold sent away from the colony. Does the Minister for Works mean to say that is all lost to us? I do not think he will go so far. But it has been more of a loss than the alienation of the land; because the lands are here yet, and are a great deal better, and are worth a great deal more than they were. I say that the moment a piece of land finds an owner it becomes doubled in value; it is worth double as much as it was as merely Crown lands. The gold which has gone out of the colony may not have given an adequate return, but the lands of the colony are here yet, and increasing in value every day whether they are alienated or not. I will only add one word about the pre-emptive right, because that is a very important question. It is said about the pre-emptive right—in fact, it has been said of the whole Bill—that it is simply permissive; that it does not compel anybody to do anything at all—it is simply optional. I cannot see how the Minister for Lands can apply that term to this clause about the pre-emptive right. If there is any permissiveness about it at all, it seems to me to be the clause which permits the Minister for Lands to do what he would never dream of doing in his private capacity—that is, to break through a contract; because there was a contract made. That has been made sufficiently clear by a great many previous speakers. Independently of that, I think it would be a mean thing on our part, because we stand in the position of landlord, and the pastoral lessee is our tenant—it would be a mean thing for us to take advantage of a mere quibble, or a mere different reading of a clause, that has only been found out recently by a legal Premier. The Premier says: “Go to law; that is all you can do;” but we do not want to go to law; we have had enough of that lately. We had enough of it in the *Courier* prosecution just lately to satisfy us in that respect. We do not come here to interpret the law, or go into matters of that sort; all we have to do is to do that which is fair and honest between man and man; and as long as we do that, and apply the law of common sense, it is quite sufficient to guide us in our actions here. In one of those former cases, I recollect we were enlightened very much in relation to the matter of waiver, and this is something of the same kind. Here is a landlord, who, for fourteen years, has been carrying on a contract with his

tenant and allowing this privilege or this right—I do not care what you call it—to take effect and be acted upon. I think, if there was nothing else but that, that by so doing, we, the landlord, have waived our right to read this clause in the way that the Premier asks us to read it, even if his way were correct. I do not think that, even if the Premier's construction were put upon the clause, we have a right to put such a construction upon it now. It may be presumptuous for me to give any advice to the Minister for Lands, but I think that if he will intimate at once that that element of repudiation will be withdrawn from the Bill it would very much facilitate our business and get on with the work. With regard to the appointment of a board to assist the Minister, I can give the Minister credit for the very best motives. I think his intention is perfectly honourable; but it does not follow that because we have had instances brought before us showing how bad it is, and what a precious thing it is for the colony to have our land laws administered by a Minister, that the principle is bad. The Minister for Works, indeed, went so far as to say there never had been an honest Minister for Lands yet, and I suppose he meant it—present company, of course, excepted. The hon. gentleman appears always to me to have a sort of pharisaical complacency about him—a sort of intimation to the people of the colony to take notice that “we,” who give utterance to this expression, are different from other men; “We do not descend to do these things.” I think that is going a little too far; I believe that all previous Ministers have been as honest as the present one; and I know that he is honest, and that his intentions are the very best. I feel satisfied of that. But, bad as the present Act may be, it is still possible to jump “out of the frying-pan into the fire.” I am inclined to think that this board arrangement will be a case of that sort. I should like to see the management of the Lands Office placed outside of party politics if it were possible, but I am afraid the land board will not be a success. Of all possible landlords you can imagine, I think that this board would be one of the very worst. I am looking at it from the point of view of a private selector, and that is the point of view from which we all ought to look upon it. The leasing principle in some countries answers very well, and in some cases very badly. In Scotland it has done very well, and has lasted for a long time. In Ireland, to a large extent, it has broken down. I consider that the main thing that has enabled it to survive so long in Scotland has been the fact that the leases have been secured by statutes passed in the fifteenth century, and another thing is that the landlord and tenant have been brought, till lately, constantly into contact. They have worked more as partners—in the relationship of partners—than in that of landlord and tenants. The landlord there provides everything; he builds the house, does all the fencing and draining of the land, and, in fact, provides everything except what may be called the working-stock. That is all the tenant is required to do, and it says a great deal for the landlords in England and Scotland that the system has survived so long as it has done, and it is still going on, and will probably go on for some time to come. This system we cannot possibly have here, because we cannot get those landlords. If we have a board you can get nothing out of them. They cannot be depended upon in any possible way, and will act principally like detectives—to see that the selectors are not trying to defraud the State. The tenant has to take every risk—to risk bad seasons, do all the fencing, find all improvements, and, over and above that, he has got to take the risk of the market. Whatever he is

going to grow, whether it is agricultural produce, or wool, or anything else, the market may be looking well when he starts, but before he is able to realise anything on his produce it may be down. There is only one thing he is certain of, and that is that his rent will be raised in due course of time. It is bound to rise; the board cannot help themselves. There is no limit to the amount; there is only a minimum. It has got to rise 15 per cent. the next valuation, and so on until it gets up to three or four times what it started at. If a bad season comes the board can kick him out; they will not have one drop of the milk of human kindness in them; they will not do the slightest thing to help him in any possible way. I do say that there is nothing to induce a man to take advantage of the Act. Look at the number of immigrants who come out here to a new country from home. They invariably stop in the towns if they can get employment. Then it is said that the rent is so very low, and the hon. member for Toowoomba quoted an instance where he said a man was paying equal to 2s. 10 $\frac{1}{2}$ d. for land; but he forgot altogether that the land so taken up is highly improved land—land upon which thousands of pounds have been spent, upon which there is a large head-station, woolsheds, garden, and every possible convenience for the working of the property. It is land upon which an amiable gentleman, a member of this House, has spent his time and money for years, and out of which, until he sold it, he had not realised one brass farthing. Well, it is a very good thing that a young man has taken up that land, because he will now contribute to the trade of the country in a larger degree than his predecessor did; he will have to do so if he wishes to make it productive. If our land board will provide us with the same conditions—give us a house and fence in the land—we will be inclined to give the same rent. But the board will do nothing for us—not a single thing. Another point has been mentioned with reference to the aggregation of large estates, but I do not see where the danger comes in at all. I do not know whether it would be judicious of me to imitate the man who goes to church and comes home and swears at the minister who preached at him; and I do not know whether I shall be included in the category of those fearful ruffians who aggregate large estates. The Minister for Lands did not define what a large estate is. I do not know where a small estate ends and a big one begins, unless, as I said before, we take the definition given in the Bill, and understand that every man who is possessed of a larger estate than 960 acres is one of these fearful enemies to his country. I did not know, sir, before, that I was such a bad character. I have got along very well; I am surrounded by small selectors, and they come and work for me, and I am very glad to get them. I prefer them to anybody else. I pay them good wages, and get their services in return; and more than that, if anybody will take a ride across the Darling Downs and ask the selectors there how they were enabled to become selectors, I think that you will find that a very large proportion of them will tell you they were enabled to do so by saving up the wages they had earned from larger proprietors than themselves. Now, how would they have ever come into their present position if there had been nobody to employ them? The fact of the matter is, we all depend on one another; it is no use arguing against that. But the Minister for Lands wants the people of this country to be nothing but poor men. It is extraordinary how the Government have “slobbered” the poor man and the German until even the Germans themselves are

nauseated with what has been said about them. I would like the Government to talk about Scotchmen in the same way they have done about Germans. Nobody in creation, surely—or at least nobody in this House—would ever dream of trying to prevent the small men getting holdings of their own and obtaining a stake in the country. It is the very thing we should all strive for. We know very well that small men are the best colonists, and we want as many of them as we can get. We know that the capital they bring into the country, even if it does not amount to one sixpence, is worth more than money. They bring a strong constitution and willing hands, and devote their labour to the cultivation of the soil. That is the most effective of all capital, and worth more than all the money that can be spent in improving the land. That is admitted by everybody. Why, then, do hon. members opposite stir up jealousy between one class and another? We all want to work for the benefit of the community generally; and, besides, those who take up these large estates, which are so fearfully detrimental to the colony, introduce such a great amount of money and improvements, that I am sure the selector does not object. I would like to know who brings the best stock into the country; fresh blood in the shape of rams and bulls; and other improvements? It is not the small man who does that; yet we know the small man gets the full benefit of it. Who is it that brings expensive implements for agriculture into the colony? Why, it is the large farmer, and not the small settler, because all those things are beyond the means of the small man. There are many implements which the small man would not risk importing without a trial, or until they had previously been tried by somebody who could afford to lose a little by the venture. The small man gets the benefit of these experiments. There is no jealousy amongst us in the country districts; and whatever one man wants the other supplies. There are numbers of experiments, and so forth, which cannot very well be carried out by the small man. He is an excellent man in his place, but why should he be thrust into every part of the colony? He does not want to be. He wants to be mixed up; and I contend that that is the natural order of things—that there should be men of all sorts and sizes, and that they should work together. It would not pay a man of capital, who was dependent upon hired labour, to go and open up the Rosewood Scrub, for instance, and turn it into a Garden of Eden. A man of large means would not dream, possibly, of doing such a thing; but the small man is the man who can do that sort of thing; and, while improving the colony immensely by doing so, improve his own position as well. So that I think the true Liberal is the man who does not go in for any one class in particular; but who will give his sympathies, not to one class because they are small men or large men, but to all classes of the community; and it would be better for the Minister for Lands to do that, instead of always harping on the one string. He has made a great mistake in proposing to do away with homesteads, and I am afraid he has been led away by that report of Mr. Hume; but he has read it in the wrong way. Matters are not represented in that report in the way the Minister for Lands has represented them. I can tell him that I know as a fact that the percentage of dummies is smaller than he imagines; and that the men whom he abuses are possessed of as much of the *mens conscia recti* as he is himself. We do not hold, on this side of the House, that suspicion is enough to condemn a man. We

stick up for our rights as Englishmen, and any charges against a man must be proved before we condemn him; and it is a very extraordinary thing that very few of the cases which have been tried have been proved. At the same time, I do not for one moment say that there is not some foundation for those rumours which reach our ears. I have not the slightest doubt that there have been some cases; but I never knew one myself. I do not know of a single case round my district, and I know a good many of the people there. If I did know of any case I would immediately go to the Commissioner and report it, because it always strikes me that people who are cognisant of such things and do not report them are accessories after the fact; that they are themselves just as culpable and liable to blame as the very men whom they condemn. But really the cases are nothing like so numerous as alleged. I am quite satisfied of that. I know plenty of men in my own district—men who would not attempt dummyism—who have sold their selections because they got on very well and wanted to go into a larger place, finding 160 or 320 acres too small for their operations. And how can you blame them? That is one reason why I find fault with this Bill: it restricts a man, checks his ambition, and keeps him on a small area of land, although he may be equally capable of managing a very large holding. I was very sorry and very much disappointed, indeed, to hear the Minister for Lands make this question so strongly a party question. I did hope that we would discuss the measure with perfect freedom, each member giving his own opinion upon it, as it is clearly one of the most important subjects we have to tackle. I was, therefore, surprised to hear the Minister say that we had no more chance of altering the Bill than of preventing the sun rising to-morrow morning. I hope he will withdraw that intention, if we are to get along with the Bill. It was my intention when I heard that to ask to be excused from attending the House, as I could see no use in discussing the measure if the Government are going to carry it in spite of us. I think I have said all I wish to say upon the question. I shall support the amendment of the hon. member for Mulgrave. There is one thing, however, I do not quite agree with in the amendment, and that is in reference to doing away with declarations. I agree with the Minister for Lands on that point; there is no doubt that it is doing away with an evil, for a declaration is no check at all upon a dishonest man, and an honest man does not require it.

Mr. J. CAMPBELL said: Mr. Speaker,—It seems rather difficult for one to say anything upon this question that has not already been said, but I will, nevertheless, endeavour to say a word or two in reference to it. Let me first state, sir, that I believe in the principle of the Bill, though I think it is capable of considerable amendment. I shall vote for the second reading, but shall exercise my own judgment in moving amendments or supporting any that may be moved in committee. I am sorry that the Minister for Lands could not see his way to have made it a strictly non-alienation Bill. I am strongly in favour of non-alienation. I believe that, if he had made a non-alienation Bill of it, it would only have been the forerunner of another Bill which would have to be brought in in a very short time: I mean a Bill to reclaim the lands that have already been alienated from the State. Possibly hon. members may laugh at my idea in this matter, but I think it is quite possible for such a measure to be introduced, if the non-alienation principle were strictly adhered to. It is true, if the land had to be paid for in cash, it might be difficult for the Treasurer to raise the money by borrowing in the

home market, but I think a system of debentures might be adopted at a low rate of interest, the debentures to be a marketable commodity. The rents raised from the land reclaimed would possibly meet the interest on the debentures. I think we have the older countries of the world to guide us in this respect. We have only to look at Ireland to-day and see the evils existing there, and I do not think there can be any doubt in the mind of any hon. gentleman in this House that the cause is the land laws and the landlordism of the country. While not endorsing the action that the people of that country take to free themselves from the yoke of the tyranny which is crushing them to the ground, one cannot but sympathise with them in their distress. Look again at Scotland; I mean amongst those people called "the crofters." I think they are badly treated by their landlords. Some few evenings ago I had a conversation with the hon. member for Northern Downs, who asked me whether I had read the report of the commission appointed to inquire into the condition of "the crofters," and I told him that I had not. But since then I have had an opportunity of reading the report, and I have formed a very different opinion from that held by the hon. member for Northern Downs. I think a great number of abuses have been brought out by that commission. Slowly but surely the rights which those people have enjoyed, and their fathers before them, have been taken away from them—such as the rights of commonage and other rights which had accrued to them from usage—and now they have to turn their backs upon the homes of their childhood and seek pastures new. Then, again, look at England, and what do we find in that happy land where they sing "Britons never shall be slaves"? We find the same thing applies there. I believe, from what I have heard—I have never been there—that if you travel through the farming districts among the different counties of England you will find at least half the farms in those districts are held by tenants, simply because they cannot comply with the restrictions put upon them by the land laws of the country, and the excessive rents imposed by the landlords; consequently, they emigrate to Canada, America, or Australia. It is only a matter of time, and the same thing will apply to us here. If alienation goes on for the next fifty years as it has during the last fifteen, taking into consideration the immense population which we must have, the best lands of the colony will be in the hands of the large capitalists, and so the same thing that has occurred in the older countries must occur here. America has been, and is still, the receptacle for a very considerable portion of the over-crowded populace of the older countries of the world; but there is no doubt that a time is coming when restrictions will be put upon the immigrants to prevent them flowing there so fast as they do now. They are becoming a great people among themselves; and there is a rising generation, who will naturally restrict them from continuing to offer the inducements which they now offer to immigrants. Consequently, this must be the receptacle for the surplus people of the older countries of the world; and in time we will acquire a very great population. I do not think there is any hon. gentleman in this House who believes there is going to be another Columbus or Captain Cook to rise up and discover another continent; and so we must ultimately become a very great people. I think it is necessary that we should retain the whole of our land, and also reclaim, if we can, that which has already been alienated. There are several matters in connection with the Bill I should like to touch upon lightly. I shall deal first with the 4th part of the Bill,

having reference to the scrub lands of the colony. I look upon that as one of the most important features of the Bill; and if it becomes law these lands will be largely taken up and made productive to the State. I am sure that will be a great benefit—to the pastoral tenant, to the selector, and to the farmer—and at present these lands are a source of annoyance and expense to all three classes. If they are taken up as I expect they will be, there will be no necessity to bring in next year or the year after a Marsupial Bill: for these clauses will operate just as effectively. I wish to say a word or two with reference to the fencing clauses. The time specified in the Bill seems to me to be too short altogether, and I think it would be wise for the hon. the Minister for Lands to take into consideration the propriety of extending it, at least, to five years. It would be a very great hardship for any person to enter on his land—say five, ten, fifteen, or twenty thousand acres—and be compelled to fence it in the time specified. I do not think it would be possible to do so, and comply with the conditions of the Act. If the time were extended it would be a great boon to those who elect to settle under the Act. The clause with reference to impounding seems to me to be rather hard. If the pastoral tenant has the power to impound under it, I do not see why it should not apply to the smaller man. It seems an injustice that one should have all the privilege and the other none; and I cannot endorse it at all. Now I am going to touch upon what seems to me a very delicate matter, upon which divers opinions have been expressed in this House; and I may tell you that I do not intend to commit myself with regard to it, but shall use my discretion in committee. I am speaking of the pre-emptive right. Unless I hear something which will change the opinion I now hold, I shall feel it my duty to vote against this part of the Bill. It seems to me it is a hardship. There are many tenants of the Crown who have exercised their right already, and no objection has been made; there are many more who have purchased from the original lessee, and who purchased believing that it was a right; and now it turns out it is only a privilege. Well, even if it is only a privilege, I think it would be a pity to destroy it, considering that so many have already exercised it, and possibly there are not a great many, after all, to exercise it. To a certain extent it looks to me like repudiation, and I question whether it is wise on the part of the Government to lay themselves open to such a charge. Perhaps it may be explained otherwise to my satisfaction, and then I shall vote for it; but my intention at the present time is to vote against it. I do not know that I am justified in saying any more at present, as I have no doubt the Bill will be fought out in committee, and I take it it will be my place then to say what I have to say on the different clauses. I know there are a great many other gentlemen to speak, and I know the Government is anxious to settle to-night the amendment that Sir Thomas McIlwraith has made, and therefore I shall not occupy the time of the House any longer.

The COLONIAL TREASURER (Hon. J. R. Dickson) said: Mr. Speaker,—I do not intend to address myself to the general features of the Bill, upon which I have already spoken, but as there has been, on both sides of the House, a desire expressed that I should make some remarks concerning the financial bearings of the Bill, I will take advantage of the amendment to do so. The policy of the Government has been distinctly and emphatically declared in connection with the land administration of the colony, and it is to introduce a thorough reformation in that land

administration—it is, in fact, to cease to live on the capital of our real estate, and to obtain a sufficient and constantly increasing revenue in the shape of rental from the lands of the colony. We consider that in the past we have been living upon the capital value of our real estate, and the Bill now before the House is brought in with the distinct and avowed object of reform to which the Government have given prominence on every public occasion: that instead of living on that capital in the future we ought to provide a sufficient and constantly increasing revenue from the rental of our real estate, so that we may provide for the interest of the public debt, which we assert it is necessary, for the construction of public works in the colony, to enlarge. That is the distinct feature of this Bill. We also contend that if, in carrying out this principle in connection with the lands of the colony, we promote settlement and occupation of country, our revenue must necessarily be enlarged. It is no doubt with a State as with an individual. When an individual ceases to live upon his capital, and reforms his mode of life by living upon his income instead, there will be a disturbance of revenue for a time. But it will be seen, I think, from the remarks I shall offer, that this disturbance, while it will be in the first instance of no serious extent, will in the future entirely disappear, and the revenue from our lands will assume the proportion which, as I have already stated, will be sufficiently large, I trust, to provide for the interest on our public debt and our gradually increasing expenditure. In making this reform in the administration of our public lands, I would take the opportunity of saying that the change of policy will not appreciably affect the revenue for the current year, 1884-5, inasmuch as, should the Act come into operation at the beginning of next year, six months must elapse before the Government will have power to deal with any of the pastoral leases comprised within the schedule of the Bill. The only effect that would be felt during the present financial year, should the Bill pass, would be that after January, 1885, there will be no further conditional or homestead selections, and there will be a disallowance of pre-emptive selections and a cessation of auction sales of country lands. These are the only three heads of land revenue which will be prejudicially affected by the passing of the Bill during the present financial year; and, therefore, I deemed it preferable to refer to the effect of the measure during the present year when I make my Financial Statement. As it will not appreciably disturb the land revenue during the present year, the remark of the hon. member for Mulgrave last night, that it was desirable the Estimates should be placed before the House before the second reading of the Bill was disposed of, has no force. I may remark here that if, in the future, the land revenue should be disturbed to any serious extent, it will be a matter for consideration by the Treasurer of the day. We are not bound to obtain a uniform annual revenue from our lands merely for the sake of maintaining our present system of land administration. If the land revenue should be in any way affected by the legislation of this session in connection with this Bill, it will be a matter to be dealt with from time to time. We do not maintain a permanent financial statement. We review our resources every year, and if we find one branch of revenue declining we enlarge another to provide for the deficiency. Beyond a very small decline of revenue, I am prepared to say there will be no cause for alarm whatever during the next year or two, and certainly there will be a very large increase in the end. The hon. member for Townsville, in the course of his remarks a few nights

ago, went to a considerable extent into the financial aspect of the question. It is my intention to briefly refer to some of the figures he made use of, and afterwards to deal with what I consider will be the position of the revenue of the colony as affected by this Bill. I would first remark that the hon. gentleman made up a fanciful statement, based on a return laid on the table of the House, commencing with a statement of the renewed pastoral leases under the Act of 1869, which fall due during the years 1883, 1884, and 1885; and he proceeded to show, under his fanciful distribution, that by the division of those runs one-half of them would be re-leased to the pastoral lessee, and the other half would be taken up at the minimum annual rental of 13d. per acre, or £4 per square mile, by the grazing farmer. The area embraced by the hon. gentleman, in his illustration of this part of the subject, dealt with but the fringe of the whole question of pastoral leases. The leases with which he deals are quite insignificant. They only represent—the hon. gentleman's figures are near enough for me to accept, though not strictly correct—7,424 square miles of country. That is but a fractional part of the immense territorial area which will be dealt with by the Bill when it comes into operation, and which is shown within the pink lines on the map. To have given any force to his argument, the hon. gentleman should have proceeded to show what would be the operation of the Bill on the whole of the land comprised within that schedule, which he has only referred to in one or two lines at the conclusion of his remarks. I do not intend to follow the hon. gentleman in connection with his statement. It is a very ingeniously framed statement, and no doubt, from his point of view, he imagines it to be of sufficient character and importance to justify him in attempting to raise the apprehension of hon. members on this side of the House that the revenue would suffer during the next three years to the extent of £538,000. However, I think I shall be able to dispel this apprehension by adducing arguments upon actual results at the present time. I do not intend, beyond referring to estimates and returns, to marshal any array of figures based upon the Estimates. I shall dwell on what we have seen, and on the various branches of land revenue as they stood during the year just past. The land revenue of the colony may be divided into four distinct branches: pastoral rents, auction sales, pre-emptives, and homestead and conditional selections; these are the four distinct branches with which we have to deal. I shall commence with looking at the present state of the pastoral tenancy of this colony. I do not intend to encumber my remarks with references to the settled districts, inasmuch as the area of land leased therein is only 11,000 square miles—a territory insignificant compared to the enormous territory we have in the unsettled districts. In those districts, as hon. members know, there are held under pastoral occupation at the present time 475,601 square miles, producing a total rental of £216,639. I intend omitting hundreds in my future figures; but I will supply the exact figures to the *Hansard* staff, so that they can be referred to. That large territory is held under pastoral occupation by tenants who are nominally paying 12s. 7d. per square mile, or at the rate of nine-tenths of a farthing per acre per annum. The same pastoral tenants hold also an area of two-fifths of that territory, for which they pay nothing. There is an "unavailable" territory of 131,000 square miles, for which no rental is paid. That area is called "unavailable," although it contains as good land in many parts as in other parts of the pastoral leases; and were it producing its fair quota, even at the low rate paid

for available territory, we should have an additional revenue to our pastoral rentals of £82,987. That large unavailable area has been entirely lost sight of by the hon. gentleman who criticised the Bill. Now as subdivisions of these lands to agricultural holders, grazing farmers, and others will necessarily diminish the area—that is, the area of unavailable territory for which no rent is now received—we must under the Bill before us receive in time revenue for a large area of territory which has hitherto been entirely unproductive. The actual rental we are receiving from the pastoral leases at the present time for the whole area is less than 9s. 1d. per square mile per annum in the unsettled districts, or at the rate of one-sixth of a penny per acre per annum. The rent which the pastoral tenants pay, including the unavailable area over which they have the right of grazing and for which they pay nothing, is thus reduced from 12s. 7d. to 9s. 1d. per square mile per annum. Now I ask any hon. member, does he consider that to be sufficient revenue to obtain from the pastoral lessees? I do not think any hon. member will say it is an adequate return by the pastoral lessees for the enormous expenditure the State has gone into to provide improved means of access, improved means of communication, and in other ways increase the value of the territory he occupies. I say that the pastoral rents have not at all increased—as a matter of fact they have not increased at all—have not kept pace with the gradual increment in the value of real estate throughout the colony, or in proportion to the rentals paid for leases of freehold property; and I contend that we ought to look at the matter and consider whether, without doing him injury, the pastoral tenant should not be called upon to pay a higher rent to the State for the additional facilities which have been provided for him by the general community. I have gone to the very basis of the pastoral rents for this reason: that the hon. gentleman who referred to the pastoral leases falling due in the current three years entirely failed to grasp this position—that the renewal of the pastoral leases which are falling due during 1883, 1884, and 1885, are not those which are producing the minimum to the extent I have mentioned. The leases which are being held under this very minimum rental are leases that do not mature until 1891, unless they come within the operation of the schedule of this Act. This fact the hon. gentleman failed to perceive, or, if he perceived it, he failed to express it to the House. The leases which mature in and after 1891, unless they are previously dealt with by administration, are those the subdivision of which will give the greatest profit to the Treasury. The leases to which he has referred are the renewed leases of the 1869 Act, and average very nearly £1 per square mile. By the re-leasing of the present leases there will not be that increase to the revenue which will certainly accrue upon those leases which are now bringing in only 9s. 1d. per square mile. I shall, of course, have to refer again to the question of pastoral leases—that being the very essence on which the land revenue will be formed—but now I proceed to the other subdivisions of land receipts. The next point raised by the hon. member for Townsville was the cessation of the amounts which were annually received from pre-emptives. As already stated, we know that an array of figures can be marshalled together to show a large revenue from land receipts, or the reverse, when dealing with the future. It is a mere question of estimate—of assertion—upon which one gentleman's representation is almost as good as another's. Our avowed policy is to disallow pre-emptives, and the present year has

given us a very favourable illustration of how this will affect the revenue. I may say that the late Administration encouraged by every possible means in their power the augmentation of the revenue by sales of land by auction, as well as by the sale of land under pre-emptive claims. Our policy is distinctly the reverse on those two points. The revenue received from pre-emptive rights is one on which we can frame no estimate, as it is furnished by the prosperity or the necessity, as the case may be, of the pastoral tenant; and it is, therefore, open to an amount of uncertainty outside of administration that perhaps no other branch of the revenue is so subject to. During the last year we received a sum of slightly over £81,000 for pre-emptives; but owing to the policy of the Government on this matter we have actually withdrawn from the Consolidated Revenue the sum of £76,878, in anticipation of refundments to the pastoral tenants for pre-emptives disallowed. We withdrew that amount from the Consolidated Revenue, and placed it to a suspense account; thereby leaving solely at the credit of this branch of the revenue, for the year's operations, the sum of £4,789. I am quite willing to accept this position and say that we will, for the future, lose in this way £4,789 per annum.

The Hon. J. M. MACROSSAN: Yes, and more.

The COLONIAL TREASURER: We will lose more if we accept all claims unrestrictedly. But that is not the policy of the Government. We have distinctly decided not to allow these claims. I have pointed this out: that the financial operations of the year just closed in this respect show that the revenue of the colony has not been disturbed, and also show that the revenue of the colony has been quite sufficient to meet all expenses without accepting this extraneous source of revenue. A good deal has been said about these pre-emptive selections, and before I turn from this branch of the subject, although I only intended to confine myself to the financial aspect of the Bill, I will just read the clause dealing with the Pastoral Leases Act of 1869. This is the 54th clause, which I have no doubt hon. members on the other side know by heart:—

"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."

I would call the attention of hon. gentlemen to the words in the 2nd line of the clause—"it shall be lawful"—because I have observed that in 1867, two years before this Act was passed, an Act was passed called the Acts Shortening Act, in the 20th clause of which Act it is provided:—

"Where in any enactment passed after the twenty-seventh day of November, one thousand eight hundred and fifty-eight"—

The Pastoral Leases Act was passed in 1869—

"a power is conferred upon any officer or person by the word 'may,' or by words 'it shall be lawful'"—

The words used in the Act of 1869, and to which I call attention—

"or the words 'shall or may be lawful,' applied to the exercise of that power, such word or words shall be taken to import that the power may be exercised or not at discretion; but where the word 'shall' is applied to the exercise of any such power, the construction shall be that the power conferred must be exercised."

I call the attention of hon. gentlemen to these two clauses, though it must be remembered that I do not propose to give them with any judicial authority.

The Hon. Sir T. McILWRAITH: Read the title of the 54th clause.

The COLONIAL TREASURER: That is only a marginal note.

The HON. SIR T. McILWRAITH: It is the title of the clause.

The COLONIAL TREASURER: I have read the 28th section of the Acts Shortening Act. It does not interpret the marginal note of the clause, but it interprets the expressions used in the clause, and I contend there is fair ground here for the consideration of hon. members who have expressed themselves in a state of dubiety as to the meaning of these pre-emptive clauses. I have already shown that in the year's operations with regard to pre-emptive claims or rights only £4,789 has been received, and, as I say, we are quite content to accept that as a fair basis upon which the diminution of our land revenue may be estimated during the next three years. Certainly, if the present Government are in power, I do not think it likely it will be increased, but we accept this as the amount, consequent upon the action of the Government in disallowing pre-emption, which must be considered as lost to the revenue. I come now to the question of the sale of country lands by auction. This is also an item which cannot be at once determined by the Executive, as it is one that can be enlarged or diminished at pleasure by the Government of the day. We know the sympathies of hon. gentlemen opposite were, and no doubt are, in favour of large sales of land to increase the revenue. We know that in 1880-81 the colony witnessed the largest direct accession to the Consolidated Revenue by the sale of country lands that it has ever seen—an accession of revenue to the extent of £195,000.

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN: Not the largest.

The HON. SIR T. McILWRAITH: To make good the deficiency caused by you.

The COLONIAL TREASURER: I shall reply to that. I am glad the hon. member for Mulgrave has interjected that, because I shall show him, before I sit down, how he dealt with that deficiency; how unfairly and disingenuously he has treated that deficiency upon all occasions in his public utterances. I say that during the year 1880-81 the late Government administered the Lands Department in such a manner that the colony witnessed the largest accession of revenue from the sale of country lands which ever directly went into the Consolidated Revenue.

The HON. SIR T. McILWRAITH: You forget the Roma sale.

The COLONIAL TREASURER: I do not. That did not go directly into the Consolidated Revenue.

The HON. SIR T. McILWRAITH: That is a quibble.

The COLONIAL TREASURER: I said that in 1880 occurred the largest sale of land, the receipts of which went into the Consolidated Revenue.

The HON. SIR T. McILWRAITH: The Roma sale was by your Government.

The COLONIAL TREASURER: That was made for a special purpose, and the receipts went to a special fund. I say again that the largest sale of country lands, the receipts of which went into the Consolidated Revenue directly, was made by the late Government in 1880-81 amounting to £195,914. Since that time, sales by auction of country lands have been decreasing; and, under the policy of the present Government, as administered by the Minister for Lands, the auction sales of country land during the year 1883-84 amounted to only £17,981.

The HON. SIR T. McILWRAITH: We left you too big a surplus.

The COLONIAL TREASURER: I will give also the benefit of selections which were made after auction sales, a contingency which will not be so large in future. My estimate is based upon last year's operations. The selections which were made subsequent to the sales of country lands amounted to £9,582. I am allowing that we lose during the future £17,981 for country sales, £4,789 for pre-emptives, and £9,582 for selections. And now I come to what will be our loss on homestead and conditional selections. Of course I contend that the revenue accruing either from pre-emptives or from auction sales—or, indeed, from our homestead and conditional selections—is not revenue in the right meaning of the word. It is capital; it is the capital which we are actually living upon from year to year, and which in course of time must gradually be contracted, and must finally be exhausted. Even now, the homestead and conditional selectors, if they wish to obtain anything like facilities for getting land, have to move out much further afield than selectors during past years. The statement has been made during the course of this debate that it will be a great deal better to sell our land, and that the capital value of such lands will represent a permanent interest to the State of 5 per cent., or 6d. per acre. This is an argument of a misleading character—

The HON. SIR T. McILWRAITH: Nobody said that.

The COLONIAL TREASURER: It has been pointed out, in connection with the pre-emptives, that the State would get 10s. per acre, which would provide a perpetual interest at something like 5 per cent. per annum. I have no doubt that the hon. gentleman is desirous of introducing a joke into this discussion; but that such a statement was made is a fact. It was certainly made, but I know it will be recognised by hon. members on the other side, as well as on this, that such a statement is not worthy of notice.

The HON. SIR T. McILWRAITH: It was a splendid argument, as used.

The COLONIAL TREASURER: When capital ceases to exist I fail to see how revenue can accrue. It has been said that if we sell our capital the State will be furnished for all time with an annual interest of 5 per cent. That is what was said by hon. members in the course of the discussion—that because the pre-emptives were sold at 10s. per acre they would furnish 5 per cent. interest per acre for all time. That was the position sought to be introduced, and I have no doubt—I shall speak plainly—that it was introduced with a view of confusing the consideration of the financial view of this question. I will merely say in passing that no gentleman can attach the slightest importance to such a statement, any more than to the statement made by the hon. member for Northern Downs (Mr. Nelson), who suggested as a final panacea for all land administration that the whole territory of the colony should be sold, and thereby an annual interest would permanently accrue to the State. He did not, however, point out where the buyers were to come from, or where the investors were to be found for this transaction. That was the scheme, I believe, which the hon. member for Mulgrave seemed to express approval of. I place it on a par with the statements which have been made already about the capitalising the value of our pre-emptives. I purpose now to refer to the homestead and conditional selections. At the present time—that is to say, at the 30th June last, to which time this return is made—the balance of rent on homesteads and conditional purchases outstanding,

extending from 1884-5 to 1893-4, will be £1,259,770. It is rather difficult to estimate exactly what amount of this is payable annually. The fixed annual rent list can be easily ascertained; but the rents which are received are frequently not only in excess of this annual rental, and of new selections, but also in excess of the balances which fall due during the year that such estimate is framed. It arises from the fact that several selectors pay future instalments in advance, and, consequently, I am basing my estimate upon what has been received in the past—the estimated receipts from this source of revenue in anticipation of the final payments. Although our rents from homesteads and conditional selections to be received by the 30th June, 1885, were £183,480, our estimate for the year is £220,000—that is, assuming that there are no additional selections applied for after the 1st January, 1885, and also assuming that a certain portion of the future rents will be paid in the same ratio as they have been during the past year. We would, therefore, receive £220,000 during 1884-5. In the year 1885-6 our rent list will be £183,607; our estimate of receipts for that year will be £211,000, or a deficiency of £9,000—that is, of course, assuming there are no new transactions after the 1st January, 1885. In 1886-7 our homestead and conditional selection rent list will be £168,624; the estimated receipts will be, for that year, £182,000, showing a diminution of £29,000 upon the preceding year. In 1887-8 our rent list will be £153,169; our estimated receipts will be £158,000, a reduction on the preceding year of £24,000. I am quite willing to take those three years as a fair average of what the annual loss in this source of revenue will be; £9,000 for 1885-6, £29,000 for 1886-7, and £24,000 for 1887-8. Looking at these four sources of revenue—namely, the homestead and conditional selections, sales by auction of country land for 1883-4, pre-emptives based upon the receipts of 1883-4, and selection after auction; on the same basis I have estimated that the depression in revenue from the absence of these sources will be in 1884-5, £32,352; in 1885-6, £41,352; and in 1886-7, £61,352. I will place the figures before hon. members to give them an opportunity of criticising them. I will not put them upon the table of the House as departmental papers; they are based upon departmental information, and have been framed, as hon. gentlemen are aware, to show the position with regard to those four sources of revenue. We have then to consider what is our position with regard to the immense area of country which is included in the first schedule of the present Land Bill. The hon. member for Townsville pointed out that during the next three years there would be a falling-in of 7,424 square miles of territory, which he divided, allowing one-half to be leased to the pastoral tenant at a minimum of 30s. per square mile, and that the other portion should go to the grazing farmer at a minimum of £4.

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN: I said 20s. would be the minimum in each case; £4 and £1.

The COLONIAL TREASURER: Well, at any rate, I do not say that I need acquiesce in the hon. member taking the minimum upon these leases. Recent experience has shown us that these leases, when sold at auction, produce vastly more than the minimum which the hon. member has chosen to fix. Because a minimum is fixed in the Bill, I say that is no reason why we should adhere to it. It is optional, and the question will be considered well before the rental of these runs will be fixed. The hon. member, for the purposes of his argument, has chosen to take the minimum, but I do not accept the position that the minimum

will necessarily be adopted. As I pointed out before, the hon. gentleman has only dealt with these 7,424 square miles of territory, instead of dealing with the large area which is comprised within the schedule of the Bill, and from which the largest revenue will accrue in the rental of the pastoral lessees, because it is within that area, as I have already stated, that the pastoral lessees are paying under their leases which will mature on and after 1891, an average of 9s. 1d. per square mile on a large extent of territory which will be more valuable and more fully utilised when subdivided. Now, the areas embraced in the schedule, irrespective of the settled districts, and also irrespective of the 19,000,000 acres of land which are open for homestead and conditional selection—

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN: In the settled districts?

The COLONIAL TREASURER: Not all.

Mr. MOREHEAD: Nearly all.

The COLONIAL TREASURER: I say this area of 19,000,000 is not all included in the settled districts. The area which I now particularly mention is embraced in the schedule of the Bill, and is exclusive of almost the whole of the 19,000,000 acres open for selection at the present time. There are 19,000,000 acres of land open for homestead and conditional selection at the present time, and there are also 11,000 square miles of territory held under pastoral lease in the settled districts. The total of these two areas is not included in the area I am now mentioning as appertaining to the available area in the schedule of the Bill. The available area of the unsettled districts within the schedule is said to amount to about 160,000 square miles.

The HON. SIR T. McILWRAITH: I must confess I do not understand you.

The COLONIAL TREASURER: I am excluding from my consideration the 19,000,000 acres which are said to be open for homestead and conditional selection, and I am also excluding the 11,000 square miles of territory in the settled districts in the colony. I am excluding both of these from the 160,000 square miles, which, I say, remain as the area of leases in the unsettled districts included in the schedule of the Bill within the pink lines. We have got, therefore, 160,000 square miles in the unsettled districts which may be operated upon under this Bill. Now, it is not too much to imagine that 160,000 square miles of country will be released from pastoral tenancy, and they will be re-leased at £1 more per annum than at the present time.

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN: Within what period?

Mr. MOREHEAD: What is the average rent now paid?

The COLONIAL TREASURER: The average rent now paid in the unsettled districts is 12s. 7d. per square mile for available land.

Mr. MOREHEAD: Within the schedule?

The COLONIAL TREASURER: Within the unsettled districts all over the colony.

The HON. SIR T. McILWRAITH: Then the 160,000 square miles that you refer to are—

The COLONIAL TREASURER: That is part of the land held under pastoral occupation at 12s. 7d. per square mile of available territory. If it is of use to hon. members, I can give the pastoral rent list which has been published in the *Gazette*, and hon. gentlemen can extract for themselves the average; but, I say, here are 160,000 square miles of country, which are now held under pastoral lease at an average of 12s. 7d.

per square mile for available territory, and 9s. 1d. per square mile for country partly available and unavailable.

Mr. MOREHEAD: Is that inside the schedule?

The COLONIAL TREASURER: Some of these runs are inside the schedule.

Mr. MOREHEAD: That is not the answer.

The COLONIAL TREASURER: My argument is this: that the pastoral runs of the colony produce at the present time, in the unsettled districts, an average of 12s. 7d. per square mile for available country, or 9s. 1d. for country partly available; and that these rentals, as they will be operated on by this Bill, will produce an average increase of £1 per annum per square mile, and that augmented rental will be only 3d. per acre per annum for the land held under pastoral occupation. That is the position I advance. Well, sir, we see from this that we will receive £100,000 per annum from increased pastoral rents. Now, I estimate that there will be a very large, unprecedentedly large, extent of grazing settlement throughout the colony. I am sure hon. members on the other side know full well that there are hundreds and thousands of people waiting to avail themselves of this Land Bill to obtain farms and settle in the colony. Facilities are here offered—

Mr. MOREHEAD: For dummying.

The COLONIAL TREASURER: Facilities are here offered for settlement and occupation which have never previously been granted, and which will assist towards the immediate and unprecedented enlargement and extension of settlement throughout the country. I say it is no unreasonable thing to imagine that there will be 600 grazing farms, of 10,000 acres each, taken up in the first year of the operation of this Bill. There will be, I estimate, an average of 600 holdings, more or less, which will absorb, I fully believe, 6,000,000 acres of land. Those 6,000,000 acres, at 2d. an acre will produce £50,000; and even at the minimum rental of 1½d. will produce £37,500. Therefore, we will have, under the administration of this Bill, £100,000 from the subdivision of the runs and increased pastoral rental, and £50,000 from the occupation of 6,000,000 acres as grazing farms, annually. That is entirely independent of the occupation which must go on under agricultural settlement, and which I will, to make my argument clearer, take out of the 19,000,000 acres, which at the present time are open for homestead and conditional selection in this colony. I am quite willing to take the hon. member for Townsville's figures with regard to the amount of these homestead and conditional selections; and I say that agricultural settlement will keep pace with settlement under the old Acts dealing with homestead and conditional selection—that the agricultural farms will be enlarged—and that 650,000 acres of these 19,000,000 acres will be annually absorbed for agricultural settlement. That produces, in his own figures—though I might fairly enlarge on them, seeing the manner in which settlement is continually expanding—that produces £8,000 per annum, in addition to the amounts I have already named; so that we have a revenue of £158,000, or nearly £160,000 produced above our present pastoral rents under the operation of this Bill, against which we lose, as I have pointed out, in 1884-5, an estimate of £32,352; in 1885-6, of £41,352; and in 1886-7, of £61,352. Of course, I am quite prepared to hear hon. gentlemen on the other side say that these figures are illusory—

HONOURABLE MEMBERS on the Opposition Benches: Hear, hear!

The COLONIAL TREASURER: But it is an estimate upon which I claim as much credit for sincerity as the hon. member for Townsville did in delivering his statement. But my estimate is based on the probability, and what I know to be the intention of the administration by the Minister for Lands of this most beneficial Bill. And, under this Bill, undoubtedly, an immense—an unprecedented—extent of settlement will be encouraged. But I will go further—I shall boldly take the bull by the horns—and I will say that even if we were to suffer a loss of revenue during the next three years—which I frankly admit I do not at all anticipate, for I believe there will be a large increase—but even if we were to suffer an actual loss of revenue, I say that never was there a time when the Government would be more justified in filling up such a deficiency by Treasury bills to enable the revenue to recover than at the present.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS on the Opposition Benches: Oh, oh!

The COLONIAL TREASURER: I mention this, not with a view in any way of expressing the opinion that such a course will be necessary.

Mr. MOREHEAD: Why did you mention it, then?

The COLONIAL TREASURER: The Government are justified in looking boldly in the face any deficiency in the land revenue that may ensue on the passing of a Bill of this kind. The present Government are not adopting this course as the most convenient and beneficial to themselves. It would be far more convenient, perhaps, for the Government, during their career, whether long or short, to walk in the steps of their predecessors, and accumulate a large amount of revenue by land sales, utterly regardless of the future welfare of the colony. Instead of that, we are laying the foundations of the future greatness of the colony, and we are bringing forward this Bill as a main foundation of that greatness. A prudent man, instead of dipping into his capital year by year, will use his capital to produce and enlarge his income; and what is good for the individual is good for the State. Most assuredly the Treasurer of the future will fully feel the beneficial effects of this Bill in framing his annual statements, and in finding a large amount of revenue constantly growing and accruing to the Treasury. Why, the best speech that has been made in connection with this Bill came from the hon. member for Rockhampton (Mr. Ferguson), last night.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

The COLONIAL TREASURER: Although I do not want to make an estimate, fully and immediately accepting the position on the statement made by the hon. member with regard to the immediate increase of revenue to the Treasury, still I have not the slightest apprehension in saying that in due time such an effect will ensue.

Mr. MOREHEAD: In due time!

The COLONIAL TREASURER: That will undoubtedly be the effect of the Bill; but it can never be the effect so long as we allow the eyes of the country to be picked out—it can never be the effect so long as we are willing to allow the fee-simple of the choicest portions of our territory to be gradually acquired. Until we conserve those lands as a source of permanent revenue—until we go in that direction, I say that the merits of a measure like this will never be fully appreciated. I know that hon. gentlemen opposite are averse to the scheme, and I will tell you why, Mr. Speaker: It subverts the very foundation of the policy they have continually wished to thrust upon the country—a policy founded on

the idea that we cannot obtain from the land a permanent revenue to provide for the interest on the public loans.

Mr. MOREHEAD: The Railway Reserves Bill!

The COLONIAL TREASURER: The hon. member for Mulgrave still insists upon it that he would discountenance borrowing; that our revenue is so uncertain that it could not or would not continuously provide for the interest upon those loans which must be accumulated; and that the only way to construct railways would be by the intervention of private capitalists, or by selling our lands to syndicates. The present Bill strikes more directly than any legislation ever introduced at the basis of that scheme, because we are providing for a permanently accumulating revenue in the shape of the rental derived from the lands of the State; and that rental cannot be more legitimately or more justifiably employed than in providing for the increased interest on the loans which, for the prosecution of public works, I hope the country will continue to augment. I started my remarks by saying that our intention is to encourage settlement and occupation, and that revenue must necessarily follow, and that is the vital principle of this measure; and I think I have shown, without going into the general principles of the Bill, to which I referred on a previous occasion, that so far as its financial operation is concerned it will fulfil the expectations of the Government. I think I have shown that, with the large amount of territory which must be opened up for closer settlement comprised in the schedule to the Bill, and with an increase in pastoral rents, an increase in the revenue will accrue to the extent of at least £100,000 per annum in a very short time; and that the increased rental will be of an extent which cannot be deemed at all oppressive to the pastoral tenants, inasmuch as, with the added rents, the average annual payments received by the Treasury will be well under 3d. per acre per annum. And I think no hon. member of the House will be bold enough to assert that the pastoral tenant will be unable to pay that increased rental. We have heard it asserted in this House recently that pastoral pursuits are in a very depressed condition, but I think if we observe the transactions which have taken place in pastoral tenures of late—pastoral tenures in Queensland—we shall see that there is no indication, no sign whatever, of any want of confidence in the prosperity of that pursuit—that transactions which have taken place within a very recent period, and which are even now taking place, do not tend at all to show that there is any great decrease of confidence in the prosperity or permanency of that pursuit. At any rate, sir, no one, I am sure, will contend that the rental I have indicated, which will average less than 3d. per acre per annum, can be at all deemed an oppressive one; and that small increase of itself will, as I said before, augment the sum paid into the coffers of the State to the extent of at least £100,000 per annum. Then we have to consider that we will gradually secure a revenue from the area at present held under pastoral occupation—which at present pays no rent whatever—amounting to 131,000 square miles, that must gradually be withdrawn and form the basis of closer settlement both under pastoral lease and under grazing farms. If at the present time it only paid the small rental paid for the rest of our pastoral lands, it would produce an annual revenue of nearly £90,000; so that we cannot overlook the fact that this 131,000 square miles of territory will of itself form a very large factor of the land revenue of the colony. I have estimated at a very moderate computation the occupation

of our territory under grazing farms. I believe that with the facilities given by this Bill a very much larger increase of grazing farming territory will take place than I have indicated, and I am certain that there will also be a much larger area of land under agricultural tenure. I have taken as the basis of my calculation with regard to the agricultural farms the amount taken up last year under homestead and conditional selections; but when we bear in mind that instead of paying annual instalments of the fee-simple, as is the case under these tenures, only 3d. per acre will be charged for agricultural holdings, we are quite justified in believing that a very much larger area will be taken up than even the 650,000 acres which I have assumed. It is a fair and reliable conclusion that at least £158,000 per annum will be received almost immediately, in addition to the revenue from our pastoral lands, and this must necessarily increase with the gradual extending of the occupation of our grazing farms and agricultural areas. And against this amount of £158,000 per annum is to be set off only the absence from our land revenue of small amounts derived from pre-emptives, auction sales of country lands, the decrease in conditional selections, and the stoppage of selections after auction; amounting during the first three years to an average of about £40,000. An increase to the revenue will therefore accrue; and not only that, but the revenue will be a legitimate annually increasing revenue derived from rental of our real estate, and not, as has been the case during late years, spasmodic increases of revenue obtained by the total alienation of our real estate. The Bill, therefore, is consistent with the policy of the Government, which is to increase the annual revenue, so that we may provide an enlarged fund to meet the financial obligations of the colony in the future. Before closing my remarks, I wish to advert to one matter mentioned by hon. members on the other side of the House as an imputation against us. It will be the last time I shall take notice of it. An accusation is constantly made about the manner in which the Government, of which I had the honour to be a member in the year 1879, retired from office; and the condition in which the revenue of the colony was at that time. It has been alleged that this arose from the maladministration of the then Government, and it has been alleged that what occurred then will be repeated under present circumstances, and that the Government, when forced to retire, will leave a formidable debit balance. It must be wearisome to hon. members to refer to these matters again, and I am sorry I should have occasion to do so, because I wish to let all old matters be forgotten—we have plenty to deal with in the present and future. It is a fact that in January, 1879, when the Ministry retired from office, there was a very serious depression throughout the colony; and on the 30th June of that year there was a deficit in the Consolidated Revenue of £170,000 odd. But that debtor balance had a contingency attached to it which hon. gentlemen on the other side were not slow to avail themselves of. There was £130,000 available as a railway reserve fund, which they transferred, and so reduced the debit balance to £40,000; so that the financial deficit, which they are so fond of representing to the country as having been caused by maladministration of the previous Government, instead of being £170,000 odd to the bad, was virtually, even six months after that Government retired from office, not more than £40,000. But there is another reason why I think it is disingenuous to charge that Government with this debtor balance. We know that between the time when that succeeding Administration came into office and the end of

the financial year a very large source of revenue presented itself to that Administration, which, had they dealt with it with the same prudence and wisdom that ordinary individuals would display in conducting their business, would have been attended with vastly different results. I refer to the sale of the settled districts pastoral leases. We know that on the 17th April, 1879—a memorable date, which I think is a black-letter day in the financial record of this colony—not a red-letter day, certainly—a larger area of country was sold simultaneously in the colony to the lessees of runs in the settled districts than was ever offered before or since, at one time. On that day the whole of the leases of the settled districts, representing an area of 12,430 square miles, or nearly 8,000,000 acres—nearly one-half of the land which is now open for homestead and conditional selection throughout the colony—these 8,000,000 acres were offered at auction for sale on one day—at the same hour. Can any hon. gentleman allege that this mode of administration of this particular head of land revenue was conducted in such a manner as to obtain either the fairest competition or the largest revenue to the State? I say most distinctly that it could not be attended with such results. It was intended to enable the holders of those runs to obtain the renewal of their leases without having any reasonable competition to guard against.

The HON. SIR T. McILWRAITH: It was the best means to get competition.

The COLONIAL TREASURER: That is a diametrically opposite view of the case. If there was a desire to obtain the largest amount of competition it would only have been fair to allow applicants for those leases who were disappointed at one land sale an opportunity of attending another land sale, where they might have been able to secure what they wanted. Had those sales been otherwise conducted by the late Government, the deficiency of £40,000 at the end of that financial year would have been, to say the least, very largely reduced. Hon. gentlemen forget, further, that, in addition to the £120,000 of cash which was actually in the Treasury, and which they subsequently transferred to revenue, they had also a colourable pretext, of which they were not slow to avail themselves, to obtain £250,000 more on account of sales of land in the railway reserves, the proceeds of which had been previously expended. What was the result of this transfer of the two sums? And what was the result of their own administration during eighteen months after assuming office? Why, notwithstanding all this, on the 30th July, 1881, eighteen months after they came into office, there was still a deficiency of revenue shown, of £239,000. I do not bring this up as an accusation against the late Government. What I say is that there was a wave of depression over the colony at that time for which no Government was responsible, and that it is unworthy of hon. members to get up a claptrap argument of this sort simply for the sake of hurling abuse at their opponents and lowering them in the eyes of gentlemen in the community who will not investigate these matters for themselves. We know that representations made in this Chamber are often received by the outside public as authoritative; indeed the public generally have not the same means of access to authoritative sources that hon. members have. My object in dwelling on this subject is to show that the late Liberal Government do not deserve the opprobrium that has been attempted to be cast upon them by hon. gentlemen on the other side, in connection with the unfortunate position in which the colony

was in 1879, and from which it did not recover through any ability of administration of the last Government, but simply through the irrepressible progress of the colony, which is bound to advance, whatever side may be in power. I am glad to believe that no party in power can ever repress the expansion and extension of this great country. As that wave of depression, which lasted till 1881 or 1882, cannot be charged to the maladministration of the Government which held office till 1879, neither can the present prosperous condition of the colony be attributed solely to the administration of the late Government. The hon. member for Mulgrave does not, perhaps, gather the full force of my remarks. They have reference to speeches made at the commencement of the session, and unless he has read *Hansard* carefully since his return from England he may not be aware of the circumstances. I take this opportunity of refuting those statements, and to add that I do not intend again, no matter if they are repeated, to enter into any explanation upon them. The question before us is—will the present Bill conduce to the settlement of the country? and I believe—and I have not heard it disputed—that it will have this effect. There are a few gentlemen—I think the hon. member for Northern Downs, Mr. Nelson, is one—engaged in pastoral pursuits, who seem imbued with the opinion that a sort of Monroe doctrine should obtain over this colony so far as pastoral pursuits are concerned; that no outsider should be allowed to enter into that great vocation; that all existing pastoral interests should be preserved and conserved.

Mr. MOREHEAD: That is not the Monroe doctrine.

The COLONIAL TREASURER: It is a modified form of it. That hon. gentleman condemned the Bill for what he termed its communistic and socialistic tendencies, on the ground, I take it, that the Bill afforded too great facilities for other members of the community to enter into pastoral pursuits.

Mr. NELSON: Not sufficient.

The COLONIAL TREASURER: Then I misunderstood the hon. gentleman, and it shows that there is a diversity of opinion on the other side. When the hon. gentleman spoke about its communistic and socialistic character, I understood him to mean that it would afford too great facilities for competition to the detriment of existing pastoral interests.

Mr. NELSON: I never said anything of the sort.

The COLONIAL TREASURER: Apart from that, we come to the question—will this Bill encourage closer settlement in the country? And I think that all the arguments that have been made use of tend to show that that at any rate is the general opinion; and in that light alone we can confine our observations on the Bill, whatever may be the financial results from its mere rental revenue. If we can increase the occupation of the country—if we can locate two families where one family was located before—I would ask hon. members to consider the immense increase to our revenue that would accrue under this Bill. At the present time every man, woman, and child in the colony is a contributor to the revenue to the extent of £9 12s. per annum; and to Customs, public works and services, to the extent of £6 15s. per annum. If, therefore, we can increase the population by settling people on the lands of the colony in such a manner that they will prosper in their pursuits—and I am sure that this Bill offers every facility for such prosperous occupation—there will be an immense benefit to the revenue, indirectly, through increased consumption of dutiable articles, which

will largely increase our resources and relieve even the most despondent member of the House from any apprehension that the revenue will suffer through the operation of this Bill. I did not intend at the outset of my remarks to take up so much time in the discussion of this matter; but there is no doubt that the financial aspect of the Bill will afford scope for many consecutive debates, if regarded from different standpoints. I have endeavoured, as I have said, to frame my views on what I conceive will be realised in the immediate future; and although they may not find acceptance with hon. gentlemen on the other side of the House, I trust they will commend themselves to the large majority of members in this Chamber. The principle of the Bill, as I stated at starting, is to induce the settlement and occupation of the land, and in that view of the case it will be an immediate success and a much greater success in the future. It will tend to the prosperity of the colony, and thereby to the prosperity of the individuals—and I have no doubt they will be legion—who will take advantage of the Bill when it comes into operation.

Mr. NORTON said: Mr. Speaker,—The Colonial Treasurer, when he got up, led us to understand, I think, that in the course of his remarks he would not only criticise the figures which were put before the House by the hon. member for Townsville the other night, but would also tell us the financial effect the Bill would have in the event of its becoming law. I understood that his chief object was to show what the financial effect of the Bill would be; the criticisms of the hon. member for Townsville were of secondary importance compared to that. Before the Colonial Treasurer sat down he mentioned the position in which the colony is in at the present time, and also referred to the deficit which existed when the last Government on that side of the House left office. He explained that there was a wave of depression passing over the world at the time, and that that caused the deficit. I can quite understand that the hon. gentleman wishes to forget the matter. But it is curious that this wave of depression has always set in during the time that hon. members on that side of the House occupied the Treasury benches, and has always been succeeded by a large deficit by the time they have had to go out; and that, notwithstanding the gross mismanagement of hon. members on this side of the House, prosperity has always set in when they took office, and has always been followed by their leaving a large surplus when they went out of office. The Government from that side have always left a large deficit; and from this side always a large surplus. Now it is an extraordinary thing that, notwithstanding the great ability possibly of hon. members who now sit on the Government benches, Providence should have been so much against them, and that there should be a wave of depression when they are in power; while, notwithstanding the mismanagement of this side of the House, Providence has always been in their favour. Because it must be Providence that helped to make the surplus if it was not the ability of the Government. But that is too "thin" altogether, and I do not think the Colonial Treasurer thought for one moment that anyone would swallow the pill in the way he put it. The hon. member must know quite well that the state of affairs which existed before, when a Government on that side came into office, has already commenced now, and that in a short time there will be a large deficiency in the Treasury, as there was when they went out of office. Another matter that the hon. gentleman referred to was the sale of runs in the settled districts in 1879. I have often heard the late Government blamed for

putting up those runs in one day, or in one hour, as the hon. member said just now; but if they had failed to put them at all—if they had allowed the lessees to go on occupying them without paying rent—what would the hon. member's criticisms have been then? If it was a bad thing to put all those runs up for sale in one day, how much worse would it have been to go on allowing the lessees to occupy them without paying anything? The hon. member would have said, if such a thing had been done, that it was the most incompetent Ministry that ever occupied the Treasury benches. Now it is quite true that these runs were all put up in one day; but the leases had expired before the late Government came into office. Months before the late Government took office, those leases ought to have been put up to auction. I say that for months every one of those runs had been occupied without the lessees paying any rent whatever. That was a pretty condition of things! The Colonial Treasurer was a member of the Government which allowed such a state of things; so, also, was the present Premier, and Mr. Garrick. I think Mr. Garrick occupied a seat in the Lands Office at the time. The then Minister for Lands, instead of taking action and arranging that the leases should be sold in some better way than they were sold afterwards by the late Government—the Treasurer thinks they were sold badly—did not sell them at all. Now which is worse? Does the hon. member not think that the action of his own Government, in allowing those runs to be occupied without any rent being paid, was worse than the action of the late Government in putting them up for sale in one day? It is a common thing when you have been in the wrong to make an attack on the other side; and that is what the hon. member has been doing. A more mistaken attack he could not have made, because it gives this side an opportunity of showing what is the position occupied by hon. members now sitting on the Treasury benches. With regard to the hon. member's explanation of the financial results of the Bill, I think nobody can miss seeing how utterly he has failed to meet the arguments of the hon. member for Townsville. He has not only failed in that, but also failed to show the effect the Bill will have if it becomes law. His arguments were based on an entirely false conclusion. He has taken the hon. member's estimate with regard to the runs in the settled districts but within the schedule, and has stated the rents received. To get that he has taken the average rents of the leases in the unsettled districts, and has shown that if there is such an increase it will be so much per square mile on that average. I say if the hon. member wished to be fair and show the actual position of affairs, instead of taking the average of the rents paid in the unsettled districts, he should have taken the rents on the particular runs inside that schedule, and those runs alone; and then we would know what rents were actually being received, and what will be the difference between that amount and the amount which would be brought in under the Bill, if it become law. The hon. member in his calculations has gone on the supposition that every run included in the schedule would be brought under the Bill at once, if it became law. What guarantee have we that anything of the kind will happen? We have been told in this House that it will be perfectly optional for the lessees to come under the Bill or hold their runs under their present leases. What is the inducement for them to come under this Bill? I say that if this Bill becomes law not one in twenty of the lessees in the schedule outside the settled districts will come under it, and for a

very good reason. Because they know that the Parliament which can repeal the present Act, and take away rights held under the present Act, will be equally ready to repeal this Bill when it becomes law. I say the moment this Bill becomes law the lessees inside the schedule would begin, and the lessees outside would back them up, to agitate and work their level best to get the Government out of power, and get in another Government who would be more inclined to give them consideration; and in a very few years this Bill would go to glory. This is what would happen, and the lessees would not come under it at all. I may say that in getting up I had no intention of replying to the hon. Colonial Treasurer, but as that hon. gentleman has entered into a discussion with the hon. member for Townsville I thought it very desirable—and I hope the hon. member will agree with me—that the hon. member for Townsville, who has taken a great deal of trouble in connection with this particular branch of the subject, should have an opportunity of replying at once to the statements made by the hon. Treasurer. The hon. member for Townsville has already spoken; and my object in rising is to move the adjournment of the debate, to give the member for Townsville an opportunity of replying at once to the speech of the hon. Treasurer, in order that his reply may go out in the same *Hansard* as the speech of the hon. Treasurer. I, therefore, beg to move the adjournment of the debate.

Question put.

Mr. ANNEAR said: Mr. Speaker,—This is my first attempt to address this House, and I feel sure that that courtesy which has been extended to other young members will, on this occasion, be extended to me. I have listened with great attention to the speeches delivered in this House by the different members who have spoken in this debate, and from the fair manner in which the debate has been conducted I have learnt a great deal I did not know before. I wish to say that I consider this Land Bill to be one of the best measures ever introduced in the Australian colonies. I believe that it will be the means of settling people upon the lands of this colony. It means that the settlement of the people will be our wealth, and not the aggregation of large estates, which we have seen occur during the last ten or fifteen years. I maintain that the extension of our railways and the settlement of people on the land will do for this colony what railways have done for the colony of New South Wales. If you look at the returns for last year you will find that after the interest on the money has been paid, and the expenses on the whole of the lines in New South Wales, £72,000 have been paid into the Consolidated Revenue. I hope and believe the time is not far distant when we will see such a state of affairs in this colony. The hon. member for Northern Downs, in his speech this evening, said that if Scotchmen were referred to as the Germans had been referred to lately in this House they would soon know the reason why. As a reader of politics in this colony, and of the speeches delivered in this House from time to time, I am confident that no unkind word has been said on this side of the House towards Germans or Scandinavians who have settled in Queensland. If anything of that kind has occurred it has come from the side of the House on which the hon. gentleman sits himself. I look upon the Germans as a very desirable people to settle here, and I believe they have done a great deal to build up this country and make it what it is at the present day. The hon. member for Burke, the other day, took us to the United States of America, and, referring to the land laws of that country, stated

that there people could get land for nothing. I maintain, however, that our land laws are, and—especially if the Bill passes—will be quite as liberal as any land laws in America. If people go to the United States they have to pay their passage there, and when they land at Castle Garden, if they wish to go to the far West, they have to pay their fares in the railway trains. As opposed to that, what are we doing? We are bringing people out to this colony and paying their passage money at an average rate of from £14 to £16 per head; and under these circumstances, if this Bill becomes law, we will have a far more liberal land law than the land laws of America. The Germans have also been referred to in this connection; but I may state that after a German has resided in this colony for six months he can be naturalised; whereas in the United States he will have to be a citizen for five years before he can claim the right of citizenship. The hon. member for Burke also said he considered the pastoral tenants of the Crown were paying far too much for their lands in this colony; but, almost in the same breath, he said he knew plenty of young men who had taken up land and sold it again—made large fortunes, I assume—and left Queensland. That is not, I maintain, settlement upon the lands of the colony. We do not want people to sell out, but we want them to stop here and participate in the good things which this Bill is offering to them. The hon. member for Townsville the other night, in his speech, said that there would be a great falling off in the revenue if this Bill became law; and he quoted figures to show that his statement was correct. We all know that figures can be so arranged as to prove anything you like.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS of the Opposition: Hear, hear!

Mr. ANNEAR: I think, upon that occasion, the hon. member for Townsville must have eclipsed himself almost when he tried to prove what he did. I have looked at a few figures, and I find at present the rent paid by the pastoral lessees in the unsettled districts is a little over 4d. per acre. Under the new Bill, it is proposed that they shall pay about 1½d. per acre, which is six times the amount of the rent paid at the present time. To rational men—and I hope I am one—that distinctly shows that there will be a large increase in the revenue—six times the amount at present received—if this Bill—and I am sure it will—becomes law. What have we been doing in this colony up to the present time? The lands we have been selling under the Acts of 1868 and 1876, and the moneys we have derived from selections under those Acts, are really purchase moneys, and not rents at all. What we have been doing is something like what we have seen in the case of a great many people, such as dukes and lords, who own large estates in the old country. They, through, perhaps, their own faults, have got embarrassed, and their estates have been parcelled out, and have been sold to pay their debts, from time to time, until nothing remains. That is the position we shall be in if we continue to go in the way we have been under the two Acts I have named, those of 1868 and 1876. Under the new Bill there will be a perpetual revenue for all time which will be the means of conferring a great benefit to future financiers who may follow the gentlemen who at present occupy the Treasury benches. That in my opinion is the main feature of the Bill. That perpetual rent, as I have shown, is six times the amount we are receiving at present. No such attempt has ever been made in the colonies

of Australia to bring forward a measure of this kind. I am sure it is the most sensible and most easily understood of any measures that I have ever read, emanating from either Victoria, New South Wales, or South Australia. The leader of the Opposition the other night stated that when the Bill came out of committee it would be their Bill. I do not think that. The whole of the valid objections raised against the measure have emanated from this side of the House. What objections have come from the other side have been first raised here, and I feel confident that when the Bill comes out of committee none of its vital principles will be affected at all; the only alterations will be in small matters which have been referred to by hon. members on this side. I would like to say a few words on the pre-emptive right. We all know—at least anyone who knows anything about the Land Acts of Queensland, should know—something about that. I know something about it after having resided in the colony for twenty-two years. When those rights were introduced they were to secure the improvements to the lessee. It was never intended that by pre-emptive rights they were to be allowed to pick the eyes out of the country. The eyes of the country have been picked out; that was never the intention. But I say that, if a bargain has been made by the State, the State must strictly adhere to that bargain, whether it be a good one or a bad one. The State should be an example to the colony, and should not be the first to break a bargain it has made. I find that, under this Bill, land purchased at 5s. per acre at 10 per cent. gives 6d. per acre per annum as interest on the capital outlay. This I consider one of the great features of the Bill. It will be the means of enabling any person who wishes to settle on the land to take up that land and to stock it without in any way affecting his capital, as it would be if he had to purchase that land right out, as has been done in many cases for years past. I do not wish to detain the House long. I am a stranger, I dare say, to a great many here; but my name is not strange to the people of this colony. I hope, Mr. Speaker, that while I occupy a seat in this House my conduct will be such that not only the gentlemen with whom I am identified on this side of the House, but those on the other side, will approve of what I do. I hope, while here, to take a common-sense view of practical politics. I have been on public works ever since I came into the colony, and I know something about them. I also know something about the timber industry, and a great deal about the sugar industry, which I consider has been very badly used by both sides of the House and had anything but fair treatment. I hope that the knowledge I have may be brought to bear, and will in some way benefit some measures that may be introduced affecting the interests I have named. Before I sit down, I should like to refer to a few clauses in the Bill. The first is the 11th clause, which deals with the appointment of a land board. I think this is one of the best features of the Bill. It takes away from the Minister that power which has been possessed since the colony has been a colony, and will be the means of stopping those transactions we have heard so much about, which have occurred at different times. I quite agree with the hon. member for Rockhampton, that the board should consist of three persons instead of two, and I feel quite sure that those boards will work well, and will be the means of stopping a great many of the disputes which have arisen. The next clause I shall refer to is the 47th. A great deal has been said from the other side that this Bill abolishes freeholds. I maintain that it does not. If it becomes law it will be the means of thousands of people possessing

freeholds. Land will be taken up at 3d. per acre, and in ten years, if the tenant likes to purchase, he can do so, at not less than £1 per acre. That clause will be the means of settling on the land what will be the wealth of the colony—people. The next clause is the 52nd. Hon. members opposite have said that if the Bill becomes law it will cause a great deal of money to be paid for the improvements to the incoming tenant. Under this clause I see that the incoming tenant has to pay for the improvements, and it will be no cost to the State. The next clause I wish to refer to is clause 69, which bears on the scrub lands of the colony. The scrub lands of the colony, in my opinion, have been dealt with in anything but a proper manner. If you go to Bundaberg, or many places where I have been, you will see large estates that have been taken up by one or two persons, who made immense fortunes. They sell out at a large price, and the incoming tenant works the estates. If it is possible to lease these scrub lands in blocks of 100 acres to each farmer, that will be ten times more for the benefit of the colony than almost giving those lands away, as has been done up to the present time. I am sure that many large sugar-planters of the colony, who have large plantations, have not spent one farthing. From the day they got their lands they leased them to those much-abused Germans, who have taken the ands, felled the scrubs, and handed it over a beautiful estate. If the Bill passes we shall see that where there is one farmer at present settled there is room for 500 to settle. The time allowed for fencing I consider too short indeed, and many of my constituents have written to me asking that it should be extended to four years. I think it would be an advantage to extend the time from two years to four years. Clause 110 is very severe: I cannot see why, though a man is the lessee of land, he should not have power to restrict any person from coming on his land to fell the timber. I think that, although a man is only the lessee, he should be the owner of what he has paid for, and what he considers to be his own. I hope that the Minister for Lands, before the Bill comes out of committee, will see his way clearly to amend this provision. I may say I do not think I shall ever be a great authority on the land laws of the colony—they are not my *forte* at all—but I shall endeavour, when the Bill is in committee, to vote in such a way as to make it a benefit to the people who may come to reside amongst us. I will not delay the House any longer, but I shall vote for the second reading of the Bill, knowing as I do that it is one of the greatest measures ever introduced to the consideration of Parliament.

Mr. STEVENS said: Mr. Speaker,—I do not intend to criticise the speech which has just been made by the hon. member for Maryborough, but I would point out that he has made two very glaring mistakes, in which he differs very much from the Colonial Treasurer. He says the rent of the squatters under this Bill will be 1½d. per acre; but the hon. the Colonial Treasurer stated it would be about ¾d. He also must be in error when he refers to the scrub lands. He evidently referred to the coast scrub lands—the rich scrubs where most of our sugar is now produced; but the reference in the Bill is not to them but to scrubs in the interior. The hon. member for Rockhampton, in speaking last night, compared Queensland to Victoria. Well, sir, I do not consider that the cases are at all parallel. He said that there are many thousands of acres of land along our coast very much more fit for agriculture than the lands of Victoria. Now, if the lands along this coast are suitable for all kinds of agriculture, how is it that we

should be importing so much flour to this colony as we are doing at the present time from the neighbouring southern colonies? The same remark applies with equal force to potatoes and other produce. We are paying now from £6 to £8 a ton for potatoes in Queensland, whereas they may be bought in many parts of Victoria for 30s. a ton. If the land along this coast is as suitable for agriculture as it is in the south, how do you account for that difference? The same with vegetables. I have often seen vegetables grown in Victoria hawked about the streets in Brisbane, and cauliflowers sold at 9d. and 1s. apiece. One reason why the land down there is of more value to the farmer is that there is a larger population, and consequently a much larger demand. The hon. member referred to tenants, who paid a very high rent to the holders of the land, making large sums of money out of it; but they could not have done so if they had themselves to bring the land under cultivation. I know of land in Victoria which has cost £30 an acre to clear; and I can point to some estates, with which I am acquainted, which have at the present time a heavier mortgage upon them than would buy any farm I have ever known in Queensland, at so much per acre. The Riverina district was also referred to by the hon. member for Oxley, to show that the squatters could pay a much higher rent than they do pay. Well the climate of Riverina may not be very different to that of Queensland, but carriage there is very much cheaper than it is here. A line of railway could be run from one end to the other of New South Wales, but a similar length of line in Queensland in many parts would not reach the really good land. Another thing is that the rates of carriage in New South Wales are much lower than they are here. One of the provisions of the Bill is that persons shall be allowed to select areas of 20,000 acres for grazing purposes; and I believe that is a point which will commend itself to the people, and is very much needed. The demand for grazing land for persons who are possessed of a small capital is a subject which I know has occupied the public mind for some time past; and there is no doubt that this part of the Bill will induce a great number of people to invest their money in that way if that provision is made known in the old country. That is one of the best parts of the Bill and one of its best recommendations. I think that half of the runs is too much to resume at once. It will take some little time for this Bill, if it becomes an Act, to come into operation and get into working order. If a small portion of the runs were resumed and thrown open it would be taken up, and that would have the effect of settling people on the land, provided people saw their way to entering into this business; but if a large area is thrown open the best portions will be picked out, and the rest of the country will remain idle and not be taken up at all. The great advantage of throwing open small portions is that people would be more centralised; and, consequently, we could do with less railway communication than if a large number of people were scattered over a large extent of country. It would have that effect, and of course, the railway lines being shorter, the carriage would be less. The better plan, I think, would be, instead of resuming half, to resume one-third or a fourth, and then at the end of a fixed time, say three, five, or ten years, to resume a further portion. It would have the advantage I have stated, and the lessee of the run would also be able to make a better use of his land than if such a large portion were taken from him. It would be impossible and useless for the lessee to try and make any improvements on his run, for the selec-

tors would be scattered about, and the whole of the half resumed would be utterly useless. I consider that that would be a very great loss to the country and to the individual. When we consider what the squatter is called upon to give up in the way of pre-emptive right, and the losing of a large portion of his run, and having to pay an increased rent for the remainder of his term of occupancy, a longer term of indefeasible lease should be given him than that mentioned in the Bill. Ten years should be increased to fifteen, and fifteen to twenty. That would only be a fair thing. There is one clause in the Bill, the 42nd, which, although not of vital importance, is still one that I think worth while saying something about—the overstocking clause. This clause, if carried out, would only have the effect of harassing the lessee of the run. I do not consider it would have a good effect in any way. Any man who knows how to stock his run fairly usually reserves a portion of it for a bad season or something of that sort, and it may happen that some of the best water is on the portion resumed. The stockowner naturally depastures his flocks first on that part of the country which is usually dried up first, and he expects to fall back on the better watered portion during dry seasons. Suppose a squatter has done this, and when a dry season comes, he moves his stock to the reserved portion, and then receives notice that he is overstocking it: the result would be ruin. That clause may therefore very well be dispensed with. I think, also, that all this land should be surveyed before it is selected. If that is not done, the best portion of the land will be picked out and the other land will never be touched; other land will then have to be thrown open, and more will have to be resumed, and the same thing will go on, over and over again. But if it is properly surveyed a much better use will be made of it, and people will be more likely to take up the whole of the land. We regard to the land court, I think one of the most unsatisfactory things in connection with it is that the court may be held in Brisbane or elsewhere. That “elsewhere” will probably resolve itself into Brisbane perpetually, and it will be a very hard thing for persons connected with cases in distant parts of the colony to have to travel to Brisbane to obtain a hearing in cases of appeal. I consider the colony should be divided into districts, and that the land courts should be held in those districts at certain times—at any rate stated places should be laid down where the court should be held. I think, sir, that those who are treated the worst by the Bill are the agricultural selectors. These are the people we should first of all try to secure. We should give them every inducement to come to the colony and settle on the land. The farmer should certainly occupy the first place, and it evidently has been the wish of legislatures in the past to put farmers in a good position. At the present time the farmer can select a small portion of land, and pay 6d. per acre a year rent, and after making certain improvements he can claim the land as a freehold. Under this Bill the farmer has to pay 3d. an acre, and after a short time he has to pay 15 per cent. at least additional, and at the end of that time he has to pay £1 per acre for his land. I know, by conversations I have had with farmers in the district I represent, that this part of the Bill is looked on with great disfavour. I have not heard a single word in its favour, and as I am the representative of a thoroughly farming district I must claim that the farmers receive proper consideration at the hands of the Government. I think also, sir, to induce the farmers still further to select, that any money expended in improvements which he may put on his land should

go, at any rate, towards paying part, if not the whole, of the purchase money. I am not at all in favour of the non-alienation of Crown lands; nor do I believe in the aggregation of large estates—in the acquisition of large landed areas. I am averse to them. But I think we should do everything we can to induce people to obtain small freehold areas. I do not think, however, that 900 acres should be the limit, for I do not consider that such an area would make a large farm. But if a 900-acre farm is large enough, 320 acres is too large an amount of land as a minimum for a farmer to take up. He should be allowed to take up just as much land as he can see his way to pay for and improve. If he is confined to a large area it will be the means of debarring hundreds, if not thousands, from settling on the land. With regard to fencing, I do not think three years, which is the actual time laid down in the Bill, a bit too long. The probability is that in case of the smaller areas the farmer will find no difficulty in fencing, and I think any man who is prepared to take up and work 900 acres will also be in a position to fence his land. The sooner he fences it the sooner he can make use of his land; and if he means to farm the land he will have it fenced within the three years. Clause 57, which deals with the holders of willed land, is rather too stringent. At the time the holder becomes possessed of the land by will, there may be a temporary depression in the colony, during which the land may not be of so much value as a short time previously or short time after the period of depression. Therefore I think the time should be extended to two years, by which time the country may recover from any depression that may exist. As I have said before, the chief recommendation of the Bill is the throwing open of a certain amount of land to grazing selectors. To my knowledge there is a large number of people in Queensland at the present time waiting for the opportunity which will be afforded by this portion of the Bill. Some time ago I was present at a public meeting where I spoke very strongly, as I have done now, in favour of such a scheme. If the clauses dealing with the agricultural selector are altered, I think they will do good. If we have one part of the Bill as it is, and the other part considerably modified, I do not think it will be a bad Bill. I had almost forgotten one point, and that is the pre-emptive right. I shall not go deeply into that, because it has been argued fully on both sides. I consider, however, that the arguments in favour of that right have not been disproved in the least, while the arguments against it have been more of a quibbling kind than anything else. If the squatter has no right to his pre-emptive, how is it that no previous Government has interfered? They have allowed the squatter to go on year after year; they have allowed people to come to the colony and buy runs with the distinct understanding that they had the right to pre-empt; and at this particular juncture they come down on the squatters. If those hon. members who have spoken against the right were thoroughly true to their opinions, they would have tried to abolish that right long ago. At any rate, if it really was not a right in years gone by, it certainly has now become a right by usage.

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN said: Mr. Speaker,—The Colonial Treasurer has spoken this afternoon on what we must suppose to be the financial portion of the Bill, but it must be patent to everyone that, previous to my speaking this day week on the Bill, neither the hon. member nor any of his colleagues had considered the financial operation of the Bill at all. It was something new to them; it struck them

as a new idea—one which the hon. the Colonial Treasurer no doubt thought should have impressed him before, and immediately he began to ferret among the records of his own office to find out what might be the financial bearing of the Bill. And what is the result of his speech to-night on the question? I must confess that I have been disappointed, and I think that most hon. members in this House must have been disappointed, as far as concerned the information which he laid before us. What was the amount of information he gave to the House? He gave us absolutely nothing new except the statement that the total amount of rent which will be received within the next ten years from the 30th of June last is estimated at £1,250,000. That is the only new thing the hon. gentleman told the House to-night. The rest of his statement with regard to the increase of revenue under the Bill is purely problematical. The figures I gave the other evening he has not attempted to controvert, although I stated I could not vouch for their accuracy. I have since obtained the official figures, and I shall now give them to the House. I intend to speak solely on the financial aspect of the Bill; I do not intend to wander into any side issues and becloud the matter as the hon. gentleman has done. He should have confined himself simply to the financial aspect of the question, and hon. members would then have had a much better chance of understanding what he did say. However, I shall confine myself to that entirely, and I shall show, as far as actual facts are concerned, that the hon. the Colonial Treasurer is entirely mistaken in the statement he has made. He began by telling us that he would take the revenue of the last year, derived from the sale of pre-emptions, from conditional purchases, and from the sale of Crown lands. I ask hon. members if that is a fair way of showing the probable working of the Bill. The hon. gentleman takes the returns of a year, during the greater portion of which the law had been administered by his own Government, with the intention of carrying out the policy contained in this Bill. During that time auction sales were stopped to a very large extent, and pre-emptive purchases were refused almost entirely—£74,000 or £76,000 worth of pre-emptive purchases were refused—and he takes that year as a basis to go upon in making his financial statement to the House. Is it not a fact patent to every hon. member of this House that if the hon. gentleman had not had the surplus to go upon which was left by the last Government he could not have reduced the auction sales, without at the same time making the expenditure larger than the revenue? Simply because he had a surplus, and because the Government intended to bring in this Bill, the items to which I have referred were reduced; and then the hon. gentleman takes those items as the basis of his calculations. I shall act much more fairly than that; I shall take a series of years, and the average of those years, both ahead of us and behind us. Hon. gentlemen will then be able to say whether the estimate I put before them is not a fairer estimate than the Colonial Treasurer has laid before the House. I shall take the pre-emptive purchases for the last five years; the auction sales for the last five years—I will not deal with auction sales of town lands, as these are retained in the Bill—and I shall also take the selection purchases for the last five years. The return I have now is, I suppose, accurate, as I obtained it from the Under Secretary for the Treasury. In 1879—that is, the year ending the 30th June, 1880—the pre-emptive purchases amounted to £19,963; in 1881, £7,880; in 1882, £43,941; in 1883, £29,824; and in 1884, £4,768. Mark the reduction, Mr.

Speaker, between the last year and any previous year! Selection purchases during the same period were—for 1880, £2,905; for 1881, £12,957; for 1882, £19,666; for 1883, £46,525; and for 1884, £9,582. The two sets of pre-emptive and selection purchases combined for the period of five years ending last June amounted, therefore, to £199,957, or within a fraction of £200,000. Now, let us see what is the amount derived from auction sales of country lands for the same period. In 1879—that is, the year ending the 30th of June, 1880—the auction sales were £64,047; in 1881, £149,786; in 1882, £56,103; in 1883, £72,628; and in 1884, £17,981; making a total for the five years of £360,547. Now, it may be observed that the auction sales in one year are much larger than the auction sales of the average of all the other years. But the small amount of auction sales last year fully compensates for the large amount in 1881. In that particular year a large amount of auction sales had to take place to fill up a deficiency in the revenue. Last year a small amount of auction sales took place in order to carry out the policy of the present Government. Therefore I think, taking the two years, the one fairly compensates the other. The total amount received from auction sales, pre-emptive purchases, and conditional purchases for the period mentioned was £560,000, or an average of £112,000 for the five years. The hon. the Colonial Treasurer may remember that in my statement, this night week, I put the average at £12,000 less, the amount given in my speech last Wednesday being £100,000. I therefore rather understated it, through not being able to obtain official information. We will lose that large amount of revenue from those sources alone. It must be absolutely lost, as the Bill provides that there must be no more pre-emptive purchases, no more selection by purchase, and no more auction sales. Now let us see what will be the loss from the rents of homesteads. And I may say here that I have the same complaint to make now as I made years ago in this House, when in opposition before, that in getting returns from the different departments I cannot get two returns to agree upon the same point. The hon. the Colonial Treasurer contradicts the returns I have received from the Lands Office, and he contradicts the returns from his own office.

Mr. NORTON: That is how they make out a deficit.

The Hon. J. M. MACROSSAN: That is how they make their surplus. I have a return of the annual rents from conditionals and homesteads for the five years I have just spoken of. The total for each year is given, but the total must be analysed, as there are three items in each return. There is what they call "new transactions"; that is, new selections taken up during the year as a conditional or homestead area. Then there are the balances paid up, as many selectors wish to pay up the whole balance after they get their certificates. Apart from that is the annual rent proper, which is put down year by year. The new transactions made in 1880 were £14,948; in 1881, £19,619; in 1882, £49,153; in 1883, £46,020; and in 1884, £35,910; showing a gradual increase right throughout. The same with the balances paid up—£28,000 in 1880, £36,000 in 1881, £48,000 in 1882, £31,000 in 1883, £40,000 in 1884. Then comes the annual rent, which shows the same gradual increase year after year—£128,000 in 1880, £139,000 in 1881, £137,000 in 1882, £164,000 in 1883, £169,000 in 1884. Then comes the total: the total last year—to avoid repetition of totals—was £246,599. That is the total amount received for annual rents, new transactions, and balances paid up. There is one item of this which will

drop out entirely—the new transactions. They will cease on the 1st January next. Well, in 1884, that was £35,000; in 1883, £46,000; in 1882, £49,000; a very high average for those three years. But there is another item also, which cannot be ascertained until the return I moved for this afternoon is laid before the House. I do not intend to use the figures supplied by the Lands Office, as they do not agree with these, nor do they agree with the hon. the Colonial Treasurer's figures. I will take another way of arriving at the loss of rent for the next five years, taking the ten years as a starting point. The hon. the Colonial Treasurer tells us that £1,259,000 will be paid into the Treasury as rent in ten years' time, from the 30th June last. Now the total amount for rents and new transactions and balances last year was £246,000. Multiply that by 10, without allowing for any increase whatever, though, as you see, there is a gradual increase—an increase of 35 or 36 per cent.—in the land revenue during the period of five years I have spoken of. Leaving a probable similar increase entirely out of the question, and taking the £246,000 as the standing revenue we would receive if this Bill were not coming into operation; multiply it by 10, and that will give the amount received during the ten years. Subtract the total amount given by the hon. the Colonial Treasurer to-night, as rents to be paid, and it leaves a balance of £1,250,000 which we should lose within the ten years. That is the easiest way I can arrive at it. That amount will be lost by the operation of the Bill upon the rents of conditional and homestead selections. If I take the average of that it is about £120,000 a year for ten years. Some years of course it will be greater, and some years less; but I will take the average at £120,000 for the ten years—that is £600,000 in the five years from the 30th June last. Add that to the £560,000 which I have already shown will be lost, and during the next five years the loss will be £1,160,000. Now I ask any member of this House if the hon. the Colonial Treasurer has made the slightest rational attempt to show where the revenue is to come from to make up this loss. He has anticipated a deficit by announcing that it will not be dishonourable to issue Treasury bills—deprecating beforehand the indignation of the country at his intention to bring in a measure that would naturally bring such tremendous losses to the country. The hon. member told us this Bill was more to promote settlement than to bring in revenue. That is a new phase of it. Before it was introduced, we were told by the Minister for Works and his colleagues that it was a measure to initiate a grand system of public works; but where is it to be initiated from if we are to undergo a loss in the next five years of £1,160,000? We cannot initiate great public works upon Treasury bills. We must have something more specific than that to begin with. But, worse than that, we will not be able to meet the interest on our present debt for the works already constructed. I shall say a few words about what the hon. member said as to the probable influx of revenue. He took my figures—650,000 acres—as the probable amount of land which would be taken up under the agricultural clauses of this Bill, which I willingly made him a present of this night week. I must say that in that case also I overstated the average selection of the past five years, but it is only a matter of a few hundred pounds, and therefore is not of importance. The average selections for the last five years was under 590,000 acres a year, so that when I gave him 600,000 acres it was more than the average. Then he takes the land within the schedule, and he tells us that there are 160,000

square miles within it, independent of the settled districts, and independent also of 19,000,000 acres now open for selection. I am afraid that the great bulk of that 19,000,000 acres is of very small value as far as selection is concerned; it has been so often picked over. What the land may be in the settled districts at present held by the pastoral tenants I shall not attempt to say. Taking the schedule, the hon. member tells us it will not be a very great stretch of imagination to suppose that 100,000 square miles of that 600,000 will be let at the advanced rate of £1 per square mile—giving himself at once, by that imaginary process, £100,000 a year. He did not tell the House how long it would take to bring that portion of the Bill which deals with pastoral leases into operation. The hon. gentleman must remember that, by the terms of the Bill, six months must elapse before any lessee comes under the operation of the Bill. Then there is a certain process to be gone through; the lands have to be inspected; they have to be divided very carefully before they can be resumed; and then after this is done it will take certainly a much longer period than the hon. gentleman seems to have given himself—six months. I am inclined to think it will take more likely two years. Then the hon. gentleman immediately says we will have £1 per square mile for 100,000 square miles of that country. At the very outset, how does he make 100,000 to be one-half of 160,000? I think he made a slight mistake there; I believe the half of 160,000 is 80,000. At the same time he did not tell us how much of the land in that schedule is unavailable; he does not take that into account, and that will still further reduce his area of 80,000 square miles. At the same time he takes upon himself to declare what will be the increase of rent on this area of land, forgetting that the Bill takes entirely out of his power, and out of the power of the Ministry, to determine what the rent shall be. It fixes the minimum rent at £1 per square mile—not £1 additional on the present rent, but £1 altogether per square mile. He forgot also to tell us what was the average rent of the runs within the schedule. He took the average rent of the runs in the unsettled districts, forgetting that a great portion of the outside country is let at a little over 5s. per square mile. He ought to have been able to tell the House what was the average rental within the schedule, for he must know that the runs to which I referred the other evening, and which will fall in gradually between this and 1890, are let at the high average of £1 1s. per square mile. Therefore, if he takes the average increase within the schedule at £1 per square mile, the real rental we shall be receiving, taking into account the present rental, will be nearly £2 per square mile. He is not justified in saying that the board, over which he will have no control, will fix the average rental at £1 per acre beyond the minimum. He has not shown us where the increase of rent is to come in. The amount to be paid to the Treasury under the agricultural clauses is a mere bagatelle—some £7,300 or £7,400. Then the hon. gentleman says it is not a very great stretch to imagine 600 pastoral lessees of the small grazier type, on 10,000-acre blocks. I think it is a very great stretch of imagination. I should be very happy to see such a very good conclusion to the land settlement of the colony arrived at, but I am extremely afraid that we shall see nothing of the kind. Those hundreds of men who are longing to come to Queensland to take up grazing areas exist only in the imagination of a great many people. There will be a slight increase, no doubt, but nothing like the increase which the hon. gentleman speaks of. I remember hearing the hon. member for Blackall,

when he was contesting Rockhampton, fifteen or sixteen years ago, before the Act of 1868 became law, telling the people there about the scions of nobility and of the gentry who were to come from England to take up the land. He had the same ideas then which the Colonial Treasurer has now, but he was mistaken. I have no doubt there are a few worked-out farmers in South Australia, and a very few in Victoria, who will come here; but the small grazing areas to be taken up will be taken up by the present lessees. There will not be any increase of actual settlement, and they will be taken up in such a way that there will be no real increase to the revenue. They will be able to “peacock” their runs, as the squatters in New South Wales have “peacocked” their runs already. This increase of revenue is purely problematical, and a great deal of it is mythical, while the actual loss is a certainty. Nor has the Treasurer shown us how this loss is to be made up. It is not sufficient for him to say that the Treasurer will only deal with the revenue from time to time, and from year to year. It is the duty of a statesman bringing in a Bill of this kind to show its operation for more than one year, for it will affect the colony, for good or evil, for many years. The hon. gentleman is content to tell us that the revenue will be a consideration for the Treasurer of the day. I am afraid it will be a very serious consideration for the Treasurer who is his successor four or five years hence.

The PREMIER: Mr. Speaker,—I only intend to say a few words with reference to the observations that have just fallen from the hon. member for Townsville. The hon. gentleman takes a very pessimistic view of the matter. One would think, to hear him, that any efforts that may be made to settle people on the lands of this country must necessarily be unsuccessful. I should be very sorry to take that view. We, on this side of the House, approach the question not only in the hope, but with a firm belief, that these efforts will be successful. That is the point of view from which we regard it. Let this be borne in mind in considering the financial aspect of the question—that what we propose is a radical change in the system of administration. We believe we have been guilty of very grave errors for many years in the administration of the land. We have been using the capital, the purchase money of land, as ordinary revenue, and we believe that is utterly wrong. Look at the neighbouring colony of New South Wales, where for many years their average income from sales of land was more than a million! They also have discovered that the system was wrong, and they have changed their course; they do not intend to carry it on any longer. It may throw their finances into confusion—perhaps it will. It was predicted many years ago in New South Wales that their finances would very soon get into confusion if they continued that wasteful and extravagant system. We wish this colony to stop that wasteful and extravagant course before it is too late. In commenting upon the financial effect of a measure of this kind, it must always be borne in mind that we have hitherto been making up our annual revenue to a great extent from a source from which we had no right to draw. If, therefore, the whole of that revenue were swept away, and no other revenue from the land were substituted for it, there would be no cause for complaint on that score. We have been guilty of a gross error, and we propose to retrace our steps. What argument is it to say that in correcting that error we do not substitute for it another of the same kind?—for that is what the argument amounts to. They say, “You have up to the present time been deriving an average income of £100,000 a year

from sales of Crown lands, out-and-out; therefore, in any change you propose, you must provide an equal amount out of Crown lands." I do not see it. If we have been taking £100,000 a year from a source from which we ought not to have drawn, the remedy is—do not draw from that source any longer; and it will be the duty of the Treasurer to provide that £100,000, if it is wanted, from some other source. That is all. There is certainly no necessity to derive it from Crown lands. That is speaking entirely from an abstract point of view. It might be said that the increase of settlement in the colony would be amply sufficient to provide the £100,000; and it would not take a very large addition to our population to produce that increase. So much for the abstract question. The hon. gentleman's argument is in another part based on a wrong foundation. He takes, as the basis of his argument, the fact that £112,000 per annum;—I do not dispute his figures; I have gone over them, and they appear to be tolerably correct;—has been the average during the last five years from sales of Crown lands, or on account of pre-emptives—from the two means together. He referred to a period of bad administration—specially bad administration—for the purpose of getting an average of what has been derived from Crown lands. It is a singular argument when dealing with a proposal to depart entirely from a system of bad administration and to substitute an entirely different system, to assume that the existing bad system is the proper and nominal basis of argument. I think that to make a fair comparison we ought to take what would be the average which would be produced from these sources under an ordinarily bad administration, not to take the period of a special and extraordinarily bad administration, and get an average from that. Surely the period of an average administration would be better than the average of a bad administration. To refer to an error made in the administration of this colony nine years ago as an argument against a measure under which it is proposed to deal with the lands on an entirely different system, is an argument with which I find it difficult to grapple. The particular mode of administration in 1875 was as bad as bad could be; and we propose diametrically opposite treatment. If we are going to argue in that way we must get a fair starting point; and for that we ought to take a period of average administration conducted on sound principles. The argument that £112,000 will be lost proves nothing at all, except that we shall no longer derive that revenue from selling land out-and-out, and that it will have to be made up.

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN: How?

The PREMIER: By whatever means are best; by taxation perhaps, which would be far better than selling the land. That is the conclusion arrived at in New South Wales and Victoria; and it is the conclusion that all the other colonies will arrive at before long. I would, if necessary for the purpose of getting rid of a bad system for a good one, recommend additional taxation, but I am perfectly certain it will not be necessary. The resources of the colony are sufficiently elastic to provide additional revenue, without having recourse to extra taxation. The hon. gentleman spoke of the revenue from conditional purchases and homestead selections, and he said that the average revenue from those sources may be set down at £250,000. There are so many sources for so many different statistics, that we can hardly tell which is right.

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN: I took last year.

The PREMIER: I will take his figures—namely £246,000. He says we shall lose that at the rate of £120,000 a year. At the present time we start with about £250,000 as the annual revenue. That will exhaust itself in ten years. The precise rate at which it will be exhausted we cannot tell. I think it will be found to exhaust itself pretty evenly over the ten years; so that you must divide it by 10, not by 2. The whole of the £250,000 then will not be exhausted before ten years.

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN: We are only to receive £1,259,000 in ten years?

The PREMIER: The whole amount will be gradually diminished to nothing in ten years; in the course of ten years we shall have lost the whole of that revenue. To say that we shall lose it at the rate of £120,000 a year, which would exhaust it all in two years, is absurd. The hon. gentleman surely can follow that. If we get £250,000 a year, and we lose at the rate of £120,000 a year, in two years the whole amount would be gone.

The HON. SIR T. McILWRAITH: That is very absurd.

The PREMIER: It is very absurd. But it is clear that it will not exhaust itself in that time, because the rents for the selections are payable over a period of ten years. If the revenue is £250,000 a year, and it diminishes at the rate of £25,000 a year, it will take ten years to exhaust it.

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN: But there must be £2,460,000 altogether.

The PREMIER: It does not follow that it will fall off precisely at that rate every year; but it will diminish every year. The hon. member undoubtedly does not seem to follow me. Let me explain again. The annual revenue from conditional purchases and homesteads is £250,000; we are going to stop that source now; therefore, although we get £250,000 now, we shall not have so much next year. How much less then shall we get? I think it will take ten years before the whole amount falls off. If we take one-tenth as the amount that will fall off in the first year, we shall not be far out. We should then, in the second year, receive £250,000, less that. That is a simple arithmetical calculation, and agrees approximately with the actual results which I have obtained from the Minister for Lands. The actual results can easily be arrived at in the next year. It does not require statistics to prove what is apparent from the ordinary principles of arithmetic. Instead of a diminution of £120,000 a year, it will be £25,000 a year.

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN: What about new transactions?

The PREMIER: There will be no new transactions. The hon. gentleman does not seem to be able to grasp the whole thing at once. Shall I repeat it all again? If we have an income of £250,000 a year, and it diminishes at the rate of £25,000 a year, it will take ten years to work it out.

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN: If the hon. gentleman will allow me, I will explain. The only correct estimate of the amount of rents which we shall lose year by year will be given when the return I moved for is laid on the table. I have a return from the Lands Office which shows that the rent which will be received at the end of next year will be only £173,000. That is different from the return the hon. gentleman has. I have one from the Treasury, which is different from this; both are different from what the Treasurer has, and

what the Treasurer has said is different from what the Premier has stated. My argument is this: My way of arriving at the loss of revenue is by taking last year's revenue as the basis of that for the next ten years. Multiply that by 10 and it gives about two and a-half millions sterling; the amount would be £2,460,000 in the ten years. But the Colonial Treasurer says that the rents we shall receive in the ten years will be only £1,259,000. The difference between that and £2,465,000 is the actual loss which will take place during the ten years. I have divided that over ten years, year by year, and given the average £126,000. That is plain enough.

The PREMIER: I quite understand the hon. gentleman.

The Hon. J. M. MACROSSAN: It seems not.

The PREMIER: The hon. Treasurer said what was the total amount which will actually be received during the ten years—the total amount payable on existing selections. But the hon. gentleman has taken the total amount that would be received if the present law were in operation during those ten years. That makes a great difference; it is just twice the amount.

The Hon. J. M. MACROSSAN: That shows the loss.

The PREMIER: Of course it shows the loss. I have shown that during the first year there would be £25,000 less than if the present law continued in operation. That is £25,000; in the next year there would be £25,000 less again; in the next year £25,000 less again. That I am perfectly aware of. I am also aware that the first year will show a loss from sales, which I accept at £112,000. But we believe we shall recoup these diminished receipts in another way. The experiment which the Government are going to try will recoup that loss—that temporary inconvenience to the Treasury. What will be the loss, from the point of view that it is a loss, I have shown, but I insist that it would be practically immaterial if there is a loss in this way. Taking figures again—in the runs comprised in the scheduled area there are about 160,000 square miles of country under lease. My hon. colleague, the Treasurer, divided them in this way: He thought about 60,000 square miles would be resumed and about 100,000 square miles would be leased. The hon. gentleman seemed to think that was wrong and that it ought to be divided by 2; but he forgets that the length of tenure of those runs varies, and according to the best information that can be got, the division the Treasurer has given is a tolerably correct one. This is leaving out of consideration altogether the runs in the settled districts. There would, therefore, be about 100,000 square miles of runs in the settled districts to be leased, that is to say, under the new leases—the indefeasible leases. Of course, in estimating the result of a measure the persons who bring it in assume that it will work. If it will not work, of course all our calculations are wrong. But if it will work, there will be that area of land leased. Now, in estimating the increase in the rent of that land at £1 per square mile, I do not think an extravagant estimate is made at all. It is probably, if anything, under the mark. It must be borne in mind that although the land in that area varies enormously in quality, yet this land is most accessible to the markets. This land contains perhaps the very best of the pastoral lands of the colony at all accessible, and if there is to be any probable increase to look for at all it is to be looked for here. If the result of giving a better tenure for these lands is to be that we are not to get an increase of rent to the extent of three-eighths

of a penny per acre for them it will be a very poor result. I think my hon. friend, the Colonial Treasurer, has put it at a very low figure indeed. This will give us £100,000 additional rent. My hon. colleague estimated also that 6,000,000 acres would be taken up as grazing farms in the first year, and I do not think he made a very wild estimate. He put it at an average of 2d. per acre, being the minimum fixed by the Bill. But hon. members say he will be losing the rent of the 60,000 square miles resumed. I say, no such thing. Those 60,000 square miles are to be left to the present owners under grazing rights at the present rates, and I certainly think they will keep them. We shall of course lose the rents of so much of the resumed lands as are selected; but I think the increased rent, beyond the minimum of 1½d., which we shall receive from the selected lands, may be fairly set off against them. My hon. friend has estimated that 10,000 square miles will be taken up in the first year for grazing farms, which would bring in £40,000 at the minimum of 1½d. an acre. I do not think he is very far out in that. We estimate, therefore, that, as the results of the first year's operation of the Bill, we shall get a new revenue of £150,000. Suppose the bringing into operation of the Act is delayed for six months, we shall not permanently lose anything by that delay—the receipt of the income will be put off for that period—but it will not permanently influence the finances of the colony in any way. So far, I have dealt with the first year, but I shall be very much disappointed indeed if the selections taken up, and other areas brought under the operation of the Bill, from time to time, do not give more than £50,000 a year as an annual increase; I trust it will be a great deal more than that when the Bill gets fully into operation. So that this amount of loss from the sale of country lands will be more than made up, I hope, from the increased rents of pastoral leases; and what we may expect as a loss from the gradually decreasing rents of conditional purchases will be more than met by the continually increasing rents from selections. I said this before, and it may be said as well in five minutes as in half-an-hour. We lose income from one source while we are getting a very much larger income from another; and, moreover, we have the land. I will take the hon. gentleman's figures again—£250,000 a year as the present standing income from conditional purchases. At the end of ten years—

The Hon. J. M. MACROSSAN: It would be more in ten years.

The PREMIER: I believe that in four years, while we shall have a loss of £100,000 from that source, we shall be getting more than £200,000 in rents of selections. That, I take it, will be a very profitable state of affairs. Besides that, we shall be getting an increased income from the number of people we shall have settled upon the land, and from the increased traffic on the railways. The hon. gentleman has looked at the matter from one point of view, but I have looked at it from a broader point of view. The financial operation of the Bill is as clear to me as possible. I am not so sanguine as they are in New South Wales, where they expect to get £2,000,000 as the first year's results from the working of their new Land Bill. I look forward to an increased income from pastoral rents of £100,000, and £50,000 from selection rents, for the first year, and I shall be perfectly well satisfied if we get that. For my own part, I should be perfectly content to inaugurate a change of this kind, even at the expense of losing £150,000 in the first year, knowing that we shall recoup that loss, and very much more than that, before many years are over our heads.

THE HON. SIR T. MCILWRAITH: Mr. Speaker,—The hon. gentleman has said very clearly what he considers are the principles of this Bill—that it is a wholesale departure from the action of the colony since its foundation—that it initiates a new principle—which I do not believe is carried out in the Bill. The principle is laid down by him that, for the future, there shall be no increase of revenue from land sales; but we are to derive it from rents; there is to be no alienation. Now that is not the principle of the Bill—no matter how the hon. member may state it. He cannot avoid the fact that the principle of non-alienation is not made to apply to town lands and suburban lands, where there is most reason to expect that they will benefit by, and be increased in value from, population. In all those places alienation is to take place. He says that is the principle for this large tract within the red lines—that alienation is to cease there for the future, and that pastoral lessees are to take their place. My hon. friend's argument was quite misapprehended, or rather tried to be mis-stated, by the hon. Premier. His argument was as plain as possible, and he had a perfect right to use the premises he did. He says that, taking the nominal amount paid by selectors as the amount that was paid last year—in round numbers, £250,000—that means £2,500,000 in the course of ten years. That, of course, by the operation of the Bill, we must necessarily lose, because the Act under which selection takes place is hereby repealed. Then he takes the admission of the Treasurer that there will be an increase of £1,250,000 from the operations of the Bill; he deducts one from the other, and says that, on the whole, he is going to lose £1,250,000. That is the argument used by the hon. member, and a very sound argument it is. The hon. Premier tried to confuse the hon. member for Townsville by going into calculations that were never urged by the hon. member at all. The hon. Premier anticipates very great results from the Bill in regard to the increase of rents. He must be very sanguine if he thinks he can get, in the shape of annual rents, what all the inducements of liberal land laws have been unable to force out of the selectors during the time that selection has been the rule in this colony. We have been using every inducement for men to come to the country; we have been offering them terms—that is, giving them the land on annual rents to terminate in the course of ten years—not much more than is actually proposed to be given in this Bill—being a perpetual and continual rent. Yet the hon. gentleman is sanguine enough to suppose that under these changed conditions we will have people flocking to the country and taking up land in greater numbers than they were before. I submit that that is far too sanguine a view to take; and, so far from that being the case, when it is understood that alienation is stopped in the country districts, and that the only means by which they can get on to the land is by becoming tenants, the same as they have been in the old country, the stream of immigrants that come here with the idea of being proprietors of the land will be entirely stopped. No doubt the hon. gentleman's colleague, the Minister for Lands, anticipates that a great number of young stockmen will take up the land. There will be an immense number of young stockmen who will take up land. The eyes of the country will be picked out by these young stockmen and by the squatters. It is lost sight of entirely that that portion of this Bill will be of the greatest importance during the first year. As soon as it is all thrown open there will be a rush of nearly all the people of the colony, whether they intend to be pastoral lessees or not—as was indi-

cated by the hon. member for Fassifern—thinking that it is going to be a good thing; and all the best pastoral leases will be taken up at once, and leave nothing but rubbish within that immense tract of country, a year after the Bill has been passed. The immediate effect of that will be that runs will be taken up. I believe that the best lands of the colony will be lost at once to that class of men—men who do not wish to work their selections—who wish to make money simply by becoming pastoral lessees; and who will get rid of them in some way—by selling them to the pastoral lessee who is in existence at the present time. A great part of that land will be treated in that way in spite of the restrictions in the Act. The pastoral lessee, by some means, will get it all himself. Then will come what is inevitable: there will be a pressure brought to bear upon the Government for a reduction of rents. Then we will have a Bill repealing them. That will be the result? There will be less immigration into the colony, so that there will be another reason why those rents will fall away, and it will be a reason why we should actually repeal the Act. But in what way could we repeal it if we pass it? We propose to give thirty years' or fifty years' leases for the portion of land within the red line. The mischief will be done. The very best land will have gone for thirty or fifty years, a year after this Act comes into operation; and what have we left to offer? Putting aside the leasing principle, as it does inevitably, we have only to offer the refuse of the land—land that was not worth while being taken up in the pastoral leases. That will be the result. All these matters will be discussed in committee; I only wish in rising now to draw the attention of the House to what the Premier says is the real principle of the Bill. That is the leasing principle; and I hope that that will be thoroughly discussed in committee. I believe the result will be to get back to the old way of alienation, for this reason—that it has the greatest inducements for people to come to this land; and I believe that ninety out of every hundred of the electors, if they are appealed to, will be willing to go back to the old system of alienation.

MR. KELLETT said: Mr. Speaker,—I take this opportunity of calling attention to some misstatements that were made by the hon. leader of the Opposition in referring to the speech I made on the second reading of this Bill. In the first place he said that I promised to support the Bill intact. I never used that word or anything tantamount to it. I said I believed in the principles of the Bill; and to show that I did not believe in supporting it intact, I mentioned several clauses that required considerable amendment. He also made me state that I did not believe in the board. I said the very contrary—that I did believe in the board, but thought, possibly, that the number of its members might advisedly be extended. I firmly believe in the board as one of the best principles there could be. A third matter, in which he made me state what was diametrically opposite to what I really did say, was, that I did not approve of survey before selection, when I pointed out, from my own knowledge in the outside districts, that unless these surveys were made before selection the very thing would take place that the hon. member has just referred to—the eyes would be picked out of the colony. I stated distinctly that I did believe in survey taking place before selection. I do not know for what reason the hon. leader of the Opposition should make such statements, or try to make out such things. Perhaps he takes it in this light—that nearly every man who reads *Hansard* would read his first speech after he arrived from home, thinking that he might have brought new and larger

ideas; and it was likely that, after reading so long a speech, they would not read that of the hon. member for Stanley. The result would be that many people would read his speech who would not read mine, and would believe his statements to be correct. It is unfair that I should be misstated in that way; for what reason I cannot say. Along with that, he said that I gave the "old Ipswich" support; and he mentioned Messrs. Cribb and Foote in connection with the hon. member for Bundamba. That hon. gentleman has no more to do with Cribb and Foote than I have; and, as a rule, the firm of Cribb and Foote and he have been diametrically opposed in politics. He has no business connections with them at all—none whatever. As for Ipswich support and Ipswich influence, it is a very good support, and it will be a very good support now, and a straight-forward support. I would mention one remark which fell from the hon. member for Northern Downs. He said that he thought the best thing the Minister for Lands could do would be to withdraw this pre-emptive clause. Well, I do not know whether he understood what he was saying, but if he did he made a very foolish remark, because if that clause is withdrawn the whole Bill must be withdrawn. The Bill would be a farce, because not only will the land within the red line come under the operation of the Bill, but in the future the land outside of it also; and if those men were allowed to pre-empt, and take up 2,500 acres in every 25 square miles of country, they would, in the course of time, get into their possession 28,000,000 acres of land. Consequently, if that pre-emptive clause is taken away the Bill is not worth a piece of waste-paper, and it is simply foolishness for any man to advocate its withdrawal. The Minister for Lands cannot go on one side or the other of it. There are many other clauses which can be altered and amended—probably judiciously—and the Minister for Lands will see that it is advisable to amend some of them; but he cannot go an inch on one side or the other of that clause. Some hon. gentlemen on this side have stated their opinions adversely to this clause, but they are men who have not seen the outside country; and, if by any chance this clause is thrown out, then the Government will have to go to the country. They can do nothing else. If they cannot carry that particular part of the Bill as it stands, it will be a question for the constituencies to say whether they believe in the principle of the clause or not. That is the way I look at it. Hon. members on the other side chuckled and cooed like doves when they heard some hon. gentleman on this side making certain remarks on that part of the Bill: they saw the force of what was said and they were pleased; but I say the whole fate of the Bill depends upon that principle of abolishing pre-emption, and if by any chance that is not passed the Ministry must of necessity go to the country and ask them to consider the matter.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS (Hon. C. B. Dutton) said: Mr. Speaker,—Before the discussion closes, I should like to say something with reference to what has been said to-night. There is one thing that rather amused me: the form the discussion has taken, and the amount of personal interest hon. members opposite have evinced in my opinions. They have tried to trace the growth and origin of those opinions, but for what purpose I do not know. It seems to have excited a great deal more interest than the Bill we have been discussing, because reference has been made to my personal affairs, and hon. members opposite have expressed the opinion that I am a renegade. What do they know of my opinions, past and present, until I came to express them in public? My opinions expressed within the last few years are the

opinions I have always held since I have been in Queensland. The hon. member for Blackall took occasion to reprove me in a fatherly sort of way for the irritation I had shown, and for my want of courtesy to hon. members. I must say that perhaps I am not of the most amiable temper when I am attacked savagely; and if a man, no matter who or what he is, smites me on the one cheek, he need not imagine for one moment that I am going to turn to him the other; but certainly I will smite him in return. Because I am said to be a tyro in politics, am I to submit to be bullied by hon. gentlemen on the other side? The leader of the Opposition reproved me in a mild form and referred to this measure as one ingeniously contrived to harass and annoy a class with whom I had not much sympathy. If I could be guilty of any intention of harassing or annoying, not only a class with whom I have been associated, but any class in the colony, I should be unfit to occupy a seat in this House, and almost unfit to walk about at liberty. None but an unmitigated scoundrel would be guilty of such conduct, and for the hon. member to reprove me in the manner he has done is certainly amusing. If the hon. member for Blackall wishes to set me an example, let me tell him that no language I have heard used in this House has been so violent as that used by himself. I have been challenged by the acting leader of the Opposition to show some reason why there was any necessity for this change in our land laws, and that hon. member was followed up by the hon. member for Mackay, and the hon. member for Townsville, and last of all by the hon. the leader of the Opposition. Now, I think I can show good reasons. I did not attempt to go into them on the second reading, but there is a very good reason why there should be a radical change in our land laws, and I need not go very far to prove that. I will call hon. gentlemen's attention to the condition of Queensland in those parts of which I have a personal knowledge. There are a good many parts of the country of which I have personal knowledge, and I have been able to glean a great amount of knowledge of those parts I have not seen, since I have been in the Lands Office. Take the southern portion of the colony, and look at all those rich river valleys of East and West Moreton. What do you find? You find in all those rich river valleys large estates, which have been accumulated under the Acts of 1868 and 1876. Wherever there is a rich piece of land, available either for agricultural or grazing occupation, that has been secured either by the old lessee or by those who succeeded him; and in those districts you find nothing more than a fringe of small occupants, either conditional or homestead, round about the large freehold proprietors, who have very great difficulties to fight against on the sides or tops of ranges or other out-of-the-way places. It is the same on the Darling Downs, where we find it even in a worse degree. There the temptation for securing land was greater, because the land that is useful and rich is comparatively limited in extent in the river valleys, but when you get on to the Downs you have an unbroken extent of really rich pastoral and agricultural land. Before going on any further, I would remark that, in reference to Mr. Hume's report, I was misunderstood in some parts of it, but not in all. Mr. Hume points out that those men who secured homesteads and conditional selections in agricultural lands, where they had really good land, did not sell to the pastoralist, because it would not pay him to graze on the land. Therefore they had been left alone. He pointed that out, but he said as soon as you get into purely grazing country there at once the selections were being gradually absorbed by

the large holders. That is patent to the observation of any man—I do not care who or what he is; and the same process is going on. Why on some parts of the Downs there is less evidence of habitation than when first I came there, twenty-seven years ago. Then a shepherd's hut could now and then be seen there, but now one might go over parts of the Downs and never see such a thing. I do not think the same condition of things has advanced so far in the central districts, between here and Rockhampton—in the Burnett district. There is not the same temptation there, but to a certain extent it has gone on in the same way. At Rockhampton you see the same thing beginning again. There are large freehold properties on the richest portions of the coast from Mackay to Rockhampton, and away north to Broad-sound, 20,000, 30,000, and 40,000 acres in extent. This land, in many instances, has been obtained at 5s. an acre; it absorbs nearly the whole of the richest grazing land, and it is asserted that a great deal of it is fine agricultural land, on which sugar can be grown—though whether that is so or not I cannot say. As grazing land, however, it will readily command £2 an acre, though it has been asserted over and over again that the increasing value of the pastoral lands of the colony is not worth consideration. Then, at Broad-sound, there is the same condition of things. St. Lawrence is shut in by one big freehold property, owned by one man—a property consisting of 30,000 or 40,000 acres. Then you get into the Bowen district, where you have the same condition of things again—enormous tracts of country taken up at 5s. an acre, and held—for what purpose? For nothing else but increasing the value—not to be made use of, except to keep cattle. Those are said to be rich sugar lands; but there does not seem the slightest probability of the present owners making use of them for that purpose; they are simply held in order that people who require the land hereafter must pay £5 or £10 an acre to the present holders. In all the districts of the North, beyond Bowen, the land is taken up under the Acts of 1868 and 1876, and the greater part under the latter Act. In the districts of St. Lawrence, Mackay, Bowen, Townsville, Ingham, Cardwell, Cairns, Port Douglas, and Cooktown, there have been 1,616,669 acres taken up under those Acts; and it must be remembered that the greater portion consists of rich agricultural land, a very great portion of which is, I believe, rich scrub land. Of this immense extent of land, a great deal of which has been held six or seven years, only 35,000 acres have been put under cultivation. 35,000 acres out of 1,616,000 acres! Can that be said to be a success in agriculture? If we can say that the Acts of 1868 and 1876 have been successful as regards agricultural settlement, we know nothing of what ought to be the successful operation of a Land Act. This vast amount of land is held, not by men who intend to use it—their only intention is to hold it till men who wish to use it will pay them five or ten times as much as it cost the present holders. The genuine cultivators of the land are being handicapped by a system under which men take up land with the object of securing to themselves the increasing value without working the land. That is the real mischief and the real danger of the Land Acts now in existence. They secure neither the use nor the occupation of the land. Large areas are taken up in many instances, and after eighteen or twenty months, when the holders have got their deeds, the fencing has been taken up to do duty on other selections. You can see lines of posts in the central districts out of which men have dragged the wire for the purpose of fencing other selections, and carrying out the conditions

enforced by the Act. If that is occupation of a desirable or valuable kind, I know nothing whatever of what is good for the country; for in my opinion nothing could be more contrary to the best interests of the country in regard to its lands. It has been said, and that by the hon. member for Townsville, that 19,000,000 or 20,000,000 acres of land, open for selection and occupation, should the Bill become law, represent very little in value. I admit that it does not represent much in value, because it is cut off from all the means of communication to which it ought to be open—the harbours, rivers, and railways of the country. There is this mass of unoccupied land that the real occupier will have to pass before he can make use of his land. And that is the evil so frequently remarked by observers in the United States, where large companies and syndicates hold enormous tracts of unused land, over which the immigrants have to travel before they can get to the places where they wish to locate themselves. The same thing obtains here. People have to pass over this tract of unused land before they can get to land which they can occupy. Several references have been made during the course of this discussion to the principles of Henry George, and it has been assumed, or rather, it has been stated openly, that I am a disciple of Henry George. I do not know whether to laugh or to feel annoyed at such a statement; but to me it is more amusing than anything else, because the opinions he advocates were put forward many years before anything was ever heard of Henry George. The only thing he has done is to popularise those principles and opinions. He has put them into such a shape that they at once become comprehensible to the ordinary run of people. That is all he has done, with one single exception—he has exposed the fallacy of the doctrine of Malthus, which had been accepted by political economists up to his day, but which he has disposed of completely. The hon. member for Rockhampton showed the other night that it is to Mill we are indebted for any practical direction on the principle of leasing.

THE HON. J. M. MACROSSAN: Certainly not.

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS: He was the first man who brought the matter thoroughly home to me; and the writings of Herbert Spencer have had a still greater effect in that direction. But if you go back to the earliest times you will find the principle recognised. If you go back 2,000 years you will find that it was recognised then. I would like to say something in reference to pre-emptives. I have never exercised the right or privilege—I have not the slightest objection to call it either “right” or “privilege”—I have never looked on the pre-emptive right as one that I should exercise except under certain conditions. I considered that, when I had made improvements and made application for my pre-emptive, it rested with the Governor in Council to decide whether the improvements I had on the run were of such a kind as to entitle me to make use of this privilege to obtain land at 10s. an acre. The very words of the clause say, “To secure permanent improvements it shall be lawful for the Governor in Council to do so and so.” I say that the first thing they should do would be to ascertain whether those were improvements that would justify them in making such a concession; and I do not know of any squatter, until within the last four or five years, who regarded it in any other way. On nearly the whole of the land taken up in the central districts considerable improvements were made in the old times. It is only within the last four or five years that it

has dawned upon squatters that the Government would recognise their claim to take up 2,560 acres in every twenty-five square miles occupied. Even that does not satisfy them—they prefer, in some instances, to secure consolidated blocks. And the Government, in some cases, have made exchanges to still further meet their wishes in the way of securing, intact, consolidated estates instead of separate blocks. In many instances the purpose that they had was perfectly apparent; and there is one case that I will specially allude to, since the papers in connection with it have been laid on the table of this House—and that is Wealwandangie. I know the place very well. There are many blocks of country there of a character not good enough for any man to take up 12,560 acres, but there is one block on Urana, which contains 12,560 acres of as good land as any in Queensland. The pre-emptions on that run were all concentrated on this one block of fine country. There the purpose was perfectly apparent. The thing has been worked in the same way on other runs. The same thing has gone on on Amelia Downs and Orion Downs. There they have acquired their pre-emptives, as well as their purchases, on the choicest portions of the runs. And after they had exhausted their pre-emptive purchases they asked the Government to come in and assist them by offering at auction the good lands, in 640-acre blocks, at 10s. per acre; and to my knowledge, in one case, before the deeds were issued, the land was sold in Melbourne at £1 per acre. The explanation given by the acting leader of the Opposition for disposing of them at that figure was that the land was valueless in consequence of marsupials. Applications were made for the sale of land at Peak Downs in the same way, and the lessees offered 15s. per acre, but the applications were not granted. Why, I do not know. In many other cases similar applications were granted. The only point of importance in the speech we have just listened to from the leader of the Opposition was that grazing areas on the resumed portions of runs would be taken up by stockmen and overseers and other men of that kind, who have obtained some practical knowledge of the country, and that those men would be made use of by the pastoral tenant to dummy the lands. At least that is what I understood him to say; and that dummying would be perfectly easy under this Bill. Any man who has any knowledge of the working of a grazing area or farm can estimate the risk there would be in getting a dummy to work it for him. If a man could get his land even at the end of thirty years I could understand the argument; but this is a never-ending risk. A man who would undertake a risk of that kind must be a lunatic. I cannot conceive the possibility of a man placing himself in such a position; he has got to keep his man sweet continuously. The dummy has him entirely at his mercy so long as he continues his dummy. At present, a man has only to keep his dummy sweet until he got his deeds, and then he is in a position to snap his fingers at the dummy and the State. There is no possibility of anything of that kind under this Bill. The Government have got him in their power, and on proof have every chance to dispossess him of his holding. Neither the bad repute nor the social stigma connected with dummying will deter men from it, because there are now men who say they see no harm in dummying—in inducing a man to swear a false declaration. You can hardly understand a man with such a perverted sense as that; but let such people feel that they have got a risk they can never get rid of, and I think that will scare them if no sense of honesty will scare them. A great deal has been said in reference to the

agricultural areas, and the great hardships the men in those areas would have to endure. I do not know anything more absurd than those arguments. A man with no capital—or, at all events, with a very small capital—can enter upon the land at once, and, instead of paying for it, as they have to do now, will only have to pay a very small rent, and be able to apply the whole or the bulk of his capital to the profitable working of the land. I am perfectly satisfied that the class of men who become homestead selectors have no desire to be singled out from the rest of their fellow citizens as men to whom a sort of charity should be given. All they would ask is a fair field and no favour, and to have the same opportunities of entering upon the land as others. I have a very considerable knowledge of homestead selectors—they do our work on the stations, they shepherd for us, and drive our bullocks—and I know they are not the men to say that the State should help them along by giving them a dole in the form of charity. I look upon them as a good class of men. I am willing to concede a point on the homestead question. That does not, however, interfere with the principles of the Bill. If it did, I should say “No; our object is to get settlement here, and to restrict the occupation of land in large quantities.” I suspect that those hon. gentlemen on this side of the House—who, perhaps from not understanding the question, or from what I might almost designate a super-sensitive conscience, object to the repeal of the 54th section of the Pastoral Leases Act—can hardly have comprehended what the mischiefs are which may arise from the operation of that clause. I am sorry they do not do so. If all the pastoral lessees in the unsettled districts of the colony are enabled to secure the pre-emptive right on their holdings, they can take up land to the extent of 29,000,000 acres. It may be said that it is absurd to say that this land will be taken, but I think it is only a question of a few years before it would be taken up. The squatters in New South Wales have never lost an opportunity of taking up any land they could get, and they will never lose an opportunity in Queensland. I do not think the clause would be largely availed of for a few years. As long as men feel that they are not likely to be encroached upon by *bona fide* settlement, they will not put money into land which they can occupy on easy terms. But the time may come when it will be done, if this clause is not repealed, and then we shall certainly see large estates created. Within the last month, I have had applications for 140,000 acres of pre-emptive; and on one station there is an application extending over 100,000 acres dotted all over the run. Once they have secured their holdings in that way, it is only a question of a new Government coming in with different views, and the intermediate land will be made available to them. They know perfectly well these scattered selections are no good to them if any practical settlement comes between, and they leave it to the chance of another Government coming in and allowing them to select the remainder of the run. That is what is being carried on in New South Wales, and will certainly be carried on here if we do not put a stop to it. If we were not giving them ample compensation for the denial of the right of protecting their improvements, it would, I confess, be a gross injustice; but we are giving them compensation for their improvements and it was only to protect these improvements that the clauses were introduced. I do not think that there are many genuine squatters who regarded it in any other light. The tendency to secure enormous tracts by pre-emptive right was brought up from Melbourne. There were very few men in Queensland ever thought of availing themselves of it. I have

a homestead in the Leichhardt, which I have held for twenty-six or twenty-seven years—perhaps as good a homestead as any in that district, and as extensively improved as any in the district—and I have never attempted to exercise my pre-emptive right; it was utterly opposed to my principles. I always considered that I had the grass rights; and they were mine until the country wanted it for other purposes, or for the same purpose under different conditions. I have never exercised the right there, or at Tambo. I only speak of these private matters because it was said by the hon. member for Balonne that I had taken up runs, had never improved them, and sold them to other men. Those statements are utterly untrue. At the time my firm sold Tambo it was as well improved a station as there was on the Barcoo, though a small one. The hon. member for Townsville, the other night, referred to the utter impossibility of our being able to get people from the old country to settle on the land here. He said that Irishmen, at all events, had such an inherent dislike to anything in the form of leasing, that no Irishman could ever be induced to come away from his own country to become the holder of leased land in Queensland. I can well understand the horror an Irishman would have for a landlord, or anything that has the name of a landlord; but if he could be brought to understand that here he would have the State for a landlord and not an individual, he is not so obtuse as not to distinguish the difference—that the one would drive him to get the utmost he could out of him, while he would know perfectly well that the State could never exact the full rent value, but only such increasing value as a general consensus of opinion should determine as equal to State requirements. Then again it has been stated that these men, once they become powerful enough, can refuse to recognise the State's claim for rent. Why do not the present Crown tenants refuse to pay rent? Why do not people who use railways refuse to pay freight or fares? If you have a large body of men as leaseholders, and another body in a different position altogether, then I can quite understand their refusing to continue under a condition of things that does not place them on an equal footing with their fellow-citizens; but if all are placed on the same footing I cannot conceive the possibility of men refusing to pay what they know is absolutely necessary for the well-being and existence of the State. It would produce an absolute state of chaos, and men are not such fools as to take action which would lead to such results as that. I think too well of the general common sense of people to imagine such a possibility. The hon. member for Blackall too, in referring to the probabilities of grazing farms being occupied in small areas down to 5,000 acres, said he could not wish his bitterest enemy any worse misfortune than to take up a grazing farm of 5,000 acres.

Mr. ARCHER: I never said anything of the kind. I said unless he had a certain sum at his command he should not do it. I mentioned £3,000.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: I think anything like £3,000 would be a very extravagant sum for a man to set about a work of that kind with. Of course if he goes at it as an ordinary swell, who will not dirty his hands or touch a maul, he would require £3,000.

Mr. ARCHER: That has been my way all my life.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: When I came here I could have gone to work and fenced 5,000 acres with the help of a man in two years.

Mr. NELSON: You are an exception.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: Wire fencing is not so difficult. I can show you figures at all events with regard to a 20,000-acre holding, with such results as would secure the occupation of that land by all men who had any knowledge whatever of sheep-farming. Every acre can be made available. If we can offer greater inducements to men of that class to come here and settle than they can obtain in New South Wales or Victoria, we will get them. I have been often twitted in the course of the debate with not having referred to the probable financial results of this change in our land laws. I have not done so, because I do not pretend to know much about finance; and finance on this question has been something I did not care to think about at all. As long as we keep straight in view what will produce the settlement of a prosperous class of people in this country, I am certain that financial success will follow; and I maintain that the opportunities we give here, not only for grazing, but also for agricultural occupation, will secure an immense accession of people from the other colonies, especially of men who understand grazing in small areas. As to the probable monetary results of the Bill for a few years, I do not think even men whose specialty is finance need hold them up with fear as needing consideration. I feel certain, if we get occupation here, successful finance will result.

Mr. ARCHER said Mr. Speaker,—I shall not detain the House many minutes. I only rise to call attention to the way in which the Minister for Lands has now spoken of the pre-emptive rights. He says he is surprised to hear that so many people on both sides have what he calls such super-sensitive consciences as to object to the abolition of that right. What means does he take to convince them that they are in the wrong? He simply says that if those rights are claimed throughout the length and breadth of the colony it will result in the alienation of 29,000,000 acres of land. I take his figures as correct, for he has access to the best sources of knowledge, and he would not state figures here which he was not quite sure were correct. But is that the way to overcome super-sensitive consciences—telling them what the effect will be? It is not the effect we are talking about, but the injustice of repealing the clause. It is impossible to affect a tender conscience by telling a man that if his conscience impels him to do a certain thing it will result in what some other person thinks a great evil. The question is whether a right which has been granted, acted upon, and become the basis of many business transactions ought to be repealed and repudiated. It is repudiation we are speaking of. I will inform the Minister for Lands that there is not a single mortgage made by squatters in the western country, on which money is advanced, in which the pre-emptive rights are not mortgaged to the persons who advance the money. The hon. gentleman really cannot understand the question when he thinks that by holding up a bogie of 29,000,000 acres of land he can frighten hon. members into repudiating a bargain and depriving the leaseholders of what has been granted them by this House. Although I differ from the hon. gentleman very much in his views on the Land question, I did not think he would have used such an argument in support of them. I have only one other word to say. In my remarks last night I quoted very extensively from the speech of the Minister for Lands, but I had previously taken the trouble to consult the *Hansard* report, so that I might not misquote him. The hon. gentleman has altogether misquoted me, which he need not have done had he only consulted the *Hansard* put into his hands to-day. He seems to have misquoted me for the

purpose of making a point. As usual, he takes no trouble to acquire the necessary information on the subject on which he speaks. He speaks in ignorance, as he did about the homestead selectors and the Land Acts under which we have lately lived. His promises of increased revenue and increased settlement under this Bill will, I fear, have the same result that most of his promises will probably have.

MR. WHITE said: Mr. Speaker, —The language used with regard to the repeal of this section of the Pastoral Leases Act brings forcibly to my mind the language used in the old country when the Irish Land Bill was before the House of Lords. Terms were applied to it, such as “repudiation,” “appropriation,” “spoliation,” “plunder,” “robbery,” and “confiscation,” and it was stated that the Bill would become a precedent for England if it was allowed to pass. In reply to that, Lord Sherbrooke, formerly Robert Lowe, bluntly stated that if the same circumstances arose in England the same remedy would be applied. We are asked now, not to do something new, but to repeal something old. The existing Act has been admitted, even by hon. members on the other side, to be an evil, and when an evil exists it becomes the bounden duty of the Government to remove it. This Government, being imbued with such a strong sense of justice and fairness, I have no doubt they will render an equivalent to any Crown tenants that are aggrieved or injured by the Bill. It is very evident that this evil must cease to exist in Queensland. With regard to the land board, I believe it will be a considerable reform. The Minister for Works has stated that the Minister for Lands should not be trusted. I believe no Ministry ought to be trusted—except the present Ministry. I once selected a farm in Queensland. It was advertised to be open on a certain day, and I prepared myself to have that farm whatever it might cost. I went to the Lands Office and put in my application. It happened to be on a squattage owned by a Minister of the Crown. That Minister was at the Lands Office, and it was a considerable time before a decision was arrived at. The Minister mixed among the people to know their opinions; and ultimately it was announced that the land would be withdrawn for the present. After a time;—I do not know how long; it might be a month or so;—the same land was advertised again for selection. I was away in the country at the time, and could not get back; but my wife attended the Lands Office armed with a plan with a particular farm marked on it. She was shown into the office and was given a chair. A good deal of consultation went on, and by-and-by out came the same Minister again. He had a good look at her, and something to say to her, and ultimately it was announced to her that the land was withdrawn a second time. I believe it was put up again, and again withdrawn, and that ultimately it went into the hands of that particular Minister.

AN HONOURABLE MEMBER: Name!

MR. WHITE: That Minister came down to this House and expressed his wonder that the working man was so eager for land. I decline to tell the gentleman's name. In my ignorance at the time, I wrote to a newspaper about it, and I mentioned the name; but the editor himself kept the name out and inserted the letter, informing me that I would be liable to an action for libel. I think, if there had been a land board, that Minister would not have ventured to stand against the working man for the farm; so that I certainly believe in a board. Hon. members of the Opposition have been trying to make considerable capital out of the omission of the homestead clauses. Now, in my

reading of the Bill, I can see that there is evidence that the Government have contemplated an equivalent for those clauses. In the 37th clause it is stated that—

“Such maximum shall not, in the case of land in an agricultural area, exceed 99½ acres, or, except as next hereinafter provided, be less than 320 acres.”

There is no minimum, therefore it must mean two maximums. Two maximums of agricultural land, of the best class of land to be found, of a small area. The maximum of 320 acres is too large—if it is 160 acres or 80 acres it is plenty—if they get the best land. It is not a question of 2s. 6d. or 20s. an acre, but of good or bad land. The working man asks no favour, he seeks no privilege; but he wants wise legislation and honest administration. If the colony has ever been blessed with good legislation, it has certainly been cursed with corrupt administration. Go out in any direction 150 miles, and you will see land that is capable of close settlement in the hands of squatters; while the land that is offered to the working man he cannot make a living off; 160 acres is not enough of such land. The temptation to get more is demoralising; it is a temptation to him to become demoralised as much as the squatters have been demoralised by it. The hon. member for Townsville accused the Minister for Lands with saying that a man could not live on 160 acres of this land; and he was quite right. Anyone who has any practical experience knows that it is impossible for a working man to get good land for settlement in Southern Queensland, as far as I am aware. The hon. member for Townsville need not refer to America to convince us that a man can live on less than 160 acres; the hon. member for Oxley has said that a man could live on 40 acres. We know that the hon. member for Oxley can be relied on; what he says in respect to land is something very near the truth. About two years ago, a young man paid his passage out from England, and he has just bought 20 acres of land for £300. It is fifty miles from Brisbane, and ten miles from the railway; and he has no chance of adding to his area, because the selections adjoining him are only 50 acres; and adjoining him on the other side there are thousands of acres lying open for selection, and they have been open for years. He has paid £300 for this 20 acres of land that a man cannot live upon.

THE HON. SIR T. McILLWRAITH: Why did he not select?

MR. WHITE: Because he could not have lived on the land, if he had selected 1,000 acres of it. It would not be worth the 20 acres he got. That is the way the working man has been used. The other side have held out 160 acres to him, making a certain section of the people believe that they are the poor man's friends, who, instead of giving him 80 acres, would give him 160 acres; but they took good care to give all the good land to the squatter, and left the poor man the land he could not live upon. As to compensation for improvements—the hon. member for Townsville made the best speech against the Bill, and that hon. gentleman goes dead against allowing Crown tenants compensation for improvements. In support of this assertion he referred us to New South Wales. I am very much astonished that that hon. gentleman should refer us to New South Wales, because I am aware that he has been practically acquainted with New South Wales for many years, and he must know all the wrongs and retaliations that have been perpetrated there, and that are going on there at the present time. I may say that two or three weeks ago I met with a gentleman from New South Wales. He had been listening to the speeches in this House, and he told me that

he was very much surprised to find members, particularly the members on the Government side of the House, speak with such coolness, and evidently with an entire want of personal feeling or bitterness amongst them. He did not say that there was bitterness on the other side of the House, but he mentioned the Government side particularly. He referred to New South Wales, and said they had got a number of stump orators there; and he said it was personal feeling, animosity, and bitterness on both sides of the House there that kept them frittering away their time until 3 o'clock in the morning. I am surprised, therefore, that the hon. member for Townsville should refer us to New South Wales to take a pattern by. I will refer him to England on the question of compensation for improvements. The aristocracy of England have withheld compensation for improvements from their tenants, and the evil consequences of this became so apparent that the present Government had to take the matter in hand; and they said to the landed gentry, "It is an evil thing, this refusal to give compensation for improvements; it is working the ruin of the country, and your tenants must in future be allowed compensation for improvements." They accordingly passed the Agricultural Holdings Act. If the hon. gentleman is sincere, as well as other hon. gentlemen, that tenants should not be allowed compensation for their improvements, and if those gentlemen are not the tools of a class, they are not practically conversant with the occupancy of land. That is what I am convinced of.

Mr. ARCHER: They believe in compensation for improvements.

The PREMIER: It has been denounced on your side of the House.

Mr. WHITE: The leader of the Opposition, the hon. member for Balonne, and also the hon. member for Townsville, have accused the Minister for Lands of being a disciple of Henry George. I am myself considerably interested in that accusation; because I am a believer, and have been all my life, in the leasing system. Yet I have never seen Henry George's book, though, a few weeks ago, I received from a friend in England a paper containing a lecture of Henry George's. Hon. members opposite seem to be very much interested in the doctrines of that popular agitator. Why should I be an advocate of the leasing system? I know what the working man feels concerning the ownership of land. He looks over his 80 acres or 40 acres with considerable pride; he falls in love with the land if it is good land. Its very imperfections are beauty-spots to him. When he looks over its boundaries, he congratulates himself that he owns all the space upwards, and his neighbour is not able to shut him out from the light of the sun. He thinks the eyes of the universe are on his possession. The land monopolist is actuated by feelings of a more sordid character, and, after all, that feeling is more imaginary than real. It is intensified, if not created, by their education under the landed gentry, where the sacred rights of property are ringing in their ears from their infancy, and they are taught that that sacred right refers only to land. Who can, therefore, wonder that a man should have certain imaginative ideas about freeholds? I have nothing more to say at present.

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

On the motion of the PREMIER, the resumption of the debate was made an Order of the Day for to-morrow.

MESSAGES FROM THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

The SPEAKER announced that he had received messages from the Legislative Council returning the following Bills:—

A Bill to amend the Native Birds Act of 1877, with amendments.

On the motion of Mr. ARCHER, the consideration of the Council's amendments was made an Order of the Day for to-morrow.

A Bill to amend and consolidate the laws relating to the Registration of Patents, Designs, and Trade Marks, with amendments.

On the motion of the PREMIER, the consideration of the Council's amendments was made an Order of the Day for to-morrow.

A Bill to provide for the Issue of Deeds of Grant in the names of Deceased Persons.

A Bill to amend the laws relating to the Insane.

ADJOURNMENT.

The PREMIER, in moving the adjournment of the House, stated that the private business on the paper for to-morrow was of a light character, and there would be ample time to conclude the debate on the second reading of the Land Bill, in accordance with what he understood to be the desire of members on both sides of the House.

The House adjourned at twenty-six minutes to 11 o'clock.