Queensland

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[Hansard]

Legislative Assembly

THURSDAY, 9 OCTOBER 1884

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY.

Thursday, 9 *October*, 1884.

Questions.—Loan Estimates.—Motion for Adjournment.—Health Bill—Consideration of Legislative Council's Amendments.—Skyring's Road Bill.—Motion for Adjournment.—Crown Lands Bill—committee.—Adjournment.

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

QUESTIONS.

Mr. ALAND asked the Colonial Secretary—

1. Has he received a letter from Lord Denbigh requesting the refundment of certain expenses incurred by the Transcontinental Railway Syndicate?
2. Has he replied to such letter?
3. Will he lay on the table of the House copies of the correspondence?

The COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. S. W. Griffith) replied—

1. I have received a letter from Lord Denbigh as chairman of the Australian Transcontinental Railway Syndicate, suggesting that the Government should indemnify them against the expenses incurred by the company in connection with their proposal to construct a railway to the Gulf of Carpentaria.
2. I have replied to the letter, declining to entertain the claim.
3. Copies of the correspondence will be laid on the table as soon as possible.

Mr. NORTON, in the absence of Mr. Chubb, asked the Minister for Works—

1. What progress, if any, has been made during the present year in surveying a line of railway from Bowen to or towards the Bowen River?
2. Will the Minister, during the present session, lay upon the table of this House the plan and book of reference of such railway, or a section thereof, and ask the necessary Parliamentary sanction for the same?

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

1. A preliminary survey has been made from Bowen to the Coalfields, and a party is now engaged surveying a trial line.
2. Until further reports are received from the Chief Engineer, it is difficult to state positively when plans and book of reference can be submitted for approval of Parliament; but if such plans, etc., can be furnished in time, they will be submitted for approval this session.

LOAN ESTIMATES.

The HON. SIR T. MCILWRAITH said: Sir, I understood the Treasurer some fortnight or three weeks ago to intimate to the House that he expected to lay the Loan Estimates on the table of the House within a few days. May I, without notice, ask the Colonial Treasurer when he expects to put the Loan Estimates before the House?

The COLONIAL TREASURER (Hon. J. R. Dickson): In answer to the hon. member for Mulgrave, I may say the Government are giving attention to the formation of the Loan Estimates, and hope, as soon as further progress is made with the Land Bill, to lay them on the table of the House.

The HON. SIR T. MCILWRAITH: If I understood the hon. gentleman rightly, when he promised them about a fortnight ago he said he would lay them on the table in a few days from that time. I forget exactly when he made the promise, but I have been looking out for the Loan Estimates every day.

The COLONIAL TREASURER: I do not wish to retract anything I said. I did say within a few days, or shortly, and I hope they will be laid on the table of the House within a reasonable time.

MOTION FOR ADJOURNMENT.

Mr. NORTON said: Mr. Speaker,—There is a matter to which I think it is desirable the attention of the House should be called; and I beg to move the adjournment of the House in

order to bring it under the notice of the Minister for Works. In the *Courier* of this morning there is a paragraph referring to the carrying of corpses on the railway line. The paragraph reads thus :—

"As an outcome of complaints recently made, a circular memorandum has been issued by the Acting Commissioner for Railways in reference to the conveyance of corpses by rail. Attention is to be paid to the selection and special preparation of vehicles for this purpose. It is considered that a covered goods waggon, thoroughly clean and having a waggon sheet spread neatly on the floor, would answer the purpose; horse-boxes are not considered suitable for this purpose. It is scarcely practicable to have a mortuary-car specially constructed, and the instructions now given will doubtless prevent further complaint on this ground."

I call attention to this matter because I think at the present time, when there is a good deal of disease and infection hanging about, it is highly undesirable that corpses should be carried in waggons used for the carriage of ordinary goods. If this plan is adopted we may have the corpse of some person who died of some contagious or infectious disease carried in a goods waggon one day, and the next day we may have the same waggon used for carrying food or clothing to people in the country. The idea of carrying corpses in waggons which may be afterwards used for carrying goods appears to me unpleasant. It may be considered sentimental on my part to say so, but to my mind there is a certain unpleasantness and nastiness in the idea. The great danger is that of infection from adopting a system of this kind. I notice that in the other colonies they have waggons or vehicles specially constructed for the conveyance of dead bodies to the different cemeteries along the line, and I cannot see why the same could not be done here. However much we may desire to prevent a waggon used for this purpose being used for any other, we may be sure it will be used for some other. We may be quite sure that one special waggon will not be set apart and kept apart for that purpose, unless it is made for that purpose alone. We are told in the paragraph that "horse-boxes are not considered suitable for this purpose." I should not imagine they were. It would not occur to anyone that horse-boxes were made for that purpose. If, as it appears, it is in contemplation by the Railway authorities to adopt this plan, I would suggest to the Minister for Works that the only proper vehicle that should be made for the purpose—and I am sure it can be made very easily, and would be very easy to put up—would be one of the light waggons. It would want covering, of course, and it would then do just as well as the best covered waggon. It could have a top put on for the purpose, and it could be marked, so that it would not be likely to be used for any other purpose. I am quite sure the hon. member will see the force of what I say. By adopting a course of this kind, there would not be the same possibility of dangerous diseases being carried from one place to another.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said : I can assure the hon. member that, whoever caused that paragraph to appear, the department had nothing to do with it. There has been no mention of carrying corpses in a covered goods waggon, nor was it ever entertained. The matter was brought under my notice by a paragraph which appeared some time ago, to the effect that a dead body had been brought down from Toowoomba in one of the horse-boxes, and complaint was made that the box was in a filthy condition. I made inquiries and was told that the statement was entirely untrue, and that the horse-box was swept out clean I talked the matter over with the Acting Commissioner for Railways, and it was found utterly impossible and absurd to carry dead bodies in waggons used for carrying goods. If we construct waggons for the purpose, considering that the summer months are coming on, we should require one at every station along the line. Unless that were done, a waggon really would be useless. I can assure the hon. member that, so far as I am concerned, I will endeavour to see that dead bodies shall not be conveyed in waggons that are used for carrying goods.

Mr. NORTON : I am glad to hear that the paragraph is not correct, though it had the appearance of being so, because it referred to a circular being sent out. When it said so distinctly that a circular had been sent it was only natural to suppose that either the writer had seen it, or had seen someone who had seen it. I accept the assurance of the hon. member, and am glad to hear it. I beg to withdraw the motion.

Motion withdrawn accordingly.

HEALTH BILL—CONSIDERATION OF LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL'S AMENDMENTS.

On the motion of the PREMIER, the Speaker left the chair, and the House resolved itself into a Committee of the Whole to consider the amendments made by the Legislative Council in this Bill.

The PREMIER said that the first amendment made by the Legislative Council was in clause 23. That provided that a local authority might, if it thought fit, provide a map exhibiting a system of sewerage for effectually draining the district. The Legislative Council's amendment provided that the local authority—

"Shall, whenever any sewer is made in its district, provide a map indicating the position of every such sewer."

He had no objection to the principle of the Council's amendment; but the term "sewer" was, by the interpretation clause, applied to other kinds of drains, including open street drains, and drains made by private persons for draining their own land. By the amendment he proposed, the application of the clause would be limited to what was evidently intended—covered drains made by the local authorities. He proposed to insert the word "covered" between the words "any" and "sewer."

The HON. SIR. T. McILWRAITH said he did not understand why they should make the clause apply only to covered sewers; why not to open sewers as well?

The PREMIER said that the word "sewer," unless qualified in some way, would include the drains running down the side of the street. The interpretation was taken from the English Act—

"'Drain'—Means any drain used for the drainage of one building only, or of premises within the same curtilage, and made merely for the purpose of communicating therefrom with a cesspool or other like receptacle for drainage, or with a sewer into which the drainage of two or more buildings or premises occupied by different persons is conveyed;

"'Sewer'—Includes sewers and drains of every description, except drains to which the word 'drain' as above defined applies."

He understood that the object of the amendment was to enable persons to connect the drains from their own premises with the public drains; but as the Council's amendment stood, a divisional board, whenever it made a gutter down the side of a road, would have to put it on the map. He should propose another amendment which would exclude private drains from the operation of the clause.

Mr. KATES said he took the opportunity of correcting a statement which was made in another place, and appeared in the previous day's *Hansard*, in connection with this Bill. Speaking

of the town of Warwick from a sanitary point of view, it was said :—

"The reason why Warwick was so unhealthy was because of the porous nature of the soil, which allowed the filth to percolate into the wells."

And later on—

"And as for Warwick, he was aware that the people had suffered from drinking foul water."

He thought he should be able to prove, from statistics which had been laid on the table of the House, that Warwick was not such an unhealthy place; that, in fact, the death-rate in Warwick was the lowest in the colony. Compared with other municipalities, it was the lowest according to the statistics of 1883. He found that in the municipality of Bowen, with a population of 900, the death-rate——

The HON. SIR T. MCILWRAITH rose to a point of order. They were discussing the Health Bill, and what had they to do with the death-rate in Warwick ?

The CHAIRMAN said that, so far as he had an opportunity of judging, the hon. member was not speaking to the question, which was "that the Legislative Council's amendment be further amended by inserting the word 'covered' after the word 'any.'"

Mr. KATES said that he should reserve his remarks till the House resumed.

Amendment agreed to.

On the motion of the PREMIER, the clause was further amended by inserting the words "by it" after the word "made."

Question—That the amendment, as amended, be agreed to—put and passed.

The PREMIER said that in clause 29 the Legislative Council had struck out the words "the carriage-way of" in subsection 2. The clause, as it originally stood, prohibited the making of cellars under the carriage-way of any street, and the Council's amendment extended the prohibition to the construction of cellars under the footpath. He thought the amendment a good one, and moved that it be agreed to.

The HON. SIR T. MCILWRAITH said that that was rather a sweeping prohibition. How would it apply to places in Queen street, for instance, where they already had cellars under the street ?

Mr. BEATTIE said he was afraid the amendment would not be an advantage, for the reason that in some of the principal towns of America a system had been adopted by which the footpaths were excavated underneath and the cavity used for carrying telegraph and telephone wires, and gas and water pipes, all over the city. The system allowed the authorities to place the whole of the wires and pipes—which were generally overhead or just underneath the ground—in the cavity he spoke of, which was a great convenience. If the amendment was agreed to, that experiment would be prevented here; an experiment which had proved a great public convenience in other large cities. The latest information he had was that in San Francisco all the wires and pipes were now carried underneath the footpaths, with openings here and there so that they might be got at if anything went wrong. If he was assured that the amendment would not prohibit that which he had mentioned, he had no objection to it.

The PREMIER said the amendment would only prevent such an experiment being tried without the consent of the local authorities. He had no doubt the system mentioned would be tried some day, but it was proper that the local authorities should approve of it, and give their consent.

Mr. SCOTT said in the case mentioned by the hon. member for Fortitude Valley the whole of the footpaths were excavated and the cavity used for many purposes. The experiment had proved most useful, and he did not suppose that any local authority would object to anything of that sort being done.

Amendment agreed to.

The PREMIER said the next amendment was in clause 46, in which a printer's error occurred, and which had escaped notice. He moved that the amendment be agreed to.

Question put and passed.

The PREMIER said the next amendment would be found in clause 68, where an attempt had been made to define a common lodging house. Hon. members would not have forgotten that the question had been previously discussed and there was a great difference of opinion as to whether it was desirable to insert a definition in the Bill, and they had eventually come to the conclusion to give it up. The definition inserted by the Council was taken from the municipal laws of the State of Chicago, but some verbal alterations had been made. Nothing required more care than a definition of that sort, and he thought a further verbal amendment would be an improvement; for the omission of a comma in one portion of the definition as printed in the "Votes and Proceedings" rather altered the meaning of the sentence. That was a verbal criticism, but it was the sort of criticism that would be made use of if there was an appeal against a conviction in respect of a common lodging-house. He would propose now that the amendment be agreed to, and he would propose a verbal amendment afterwards.

The HON. SIR T. MCILWRAITH said the amendment would include every boarding-house in town. There were many highly respectable boarding-houses which took in people for two or three days. The amendment was absurd. They had discussed the question before, and why should they accept a definition which had been discarded before ?

The PREMIER : It is not the same definition.

The HON. SIR T. MCILWRAITH said it was the same in spirit, at all events, and would include all respectable boarding-houses, and make them subject to police supervision.

The PREMIER said it was not intended, nor was it desirable, that the definition should apply to all boarding-houses of the better class; and of course it was quite true, as pointed out by the hon. gentleman, that the most respectable lodging-houses took in people for less than a week; but if they limited the definition to houses that took in people for a single night, or part of a night, those that took them in for two nights would escape the provision. He was afraid they would have to give up trying to define a common lodging-house. No doubt the definition in the Chicago regulations was intended to cover houses of ill-fame, giving the municipality authority over them.

Mr. SCOTT said it would be a great mistake to legislate in such a way as to induce persons to break the law, which would be the case if the proposed definition were agreed to. The law could be easily evaded by persons going to a lodging-house, paying for a week's lodgings, staying a night, and getting the balance of the money returned to them.

Mr. MOREHEAD said he did not see the necessity for the words "or are harboured." The definition of a common lodging-house given in the proposed amendment must be admitted to be a most unsatisfactory one.

The PREMIER said that upon further consideration he thought it was of no use trying to define a common lodging-house. The term had a recognised meaning in England in analogous statutes, and it would perhaps be better to leave the clause as it stood. If they found that it would not answer, they might try afterwards to find a fitting definition. In the meantime, he would ask permission to withdraw the motion that the amendment be agreed to, with the view of moving that it be disagreed to; the reason to be assigned being that the proposed definition would include lodging-houses of all classes, to many of which the provisions of the Bill were not applicable.

Motion withdrawn accordingly.

The HON. SIR T. MCILWRAITH said that some definition of a common lodging-house ought certainly to be inserted in the Bill, because it was provided that a person keeping a common lodging-house should be punished if he did, or neglected to do, certain things. If they could not define a common lodging-house, how could it be ascertained that a person kept one, and was punishable for breaches of the Act? A suitable definition ought not to be a matter of difficulty, and he would suggest to the Premier to defer the consideration of the matter till Tuesday; and in the meantime the hon. gentleman's knowledge of English would enable him to solve the question. It seemed absurd to punish a man who kept a common lodging-house without registering it, when they could not put into decent English what a common lodging-house was.

The PREMIER said that, as the matter was one of importance, it would perhaps be better to postpone it for further consideration.

On the motion of the PREMIER, the CHAIRMAN left the chair, reported progress, and obtained leave to sit again on Tuesday next.

SKYRING'S ROAD BILL.

The SPEAKER reported that he had received a message from the Legislative Council, returning the Skyring's Road Bill without amendment.

MOTION FOR ADJOURNMENT.

Mr. KATES said: Mr. Speaker,—I rise to move the adjournment of the House for the purpose of bringing under the notice of hon. members a statement I find printed in yesterday's *Hansard* which, if not corrected, will certainly damage and injure the reputation of Warwick from a sanitary point of view. I read in yesterday's *Hansard*:—

"The reason why Warwick was so unhealthy was because of the porous nature of the soil, which allowed the filth to percolate into the wells. And if the hon. gentleman lived many years—which he hoped he would—he would find that typhoid would be the result of the system he carried out at his present residence. * * * And as for Warwick he was aware that the people had suffered from drinking foul water."

And so on. I have been a resident of Warwick for twenty years, and I can assure you, Mr. Speaker, that this statement is not correct. There may be people in Brisbane inclined to go to the Downs to take a few months' holiday in Warwick, who, if this statement is not contradicted, will certainly hesitate about going there. I have taken some trouble to look at the statistics which were laid on the table of the House the day before yesterday, in connection with the population and death-rate of various municipalities in the colony, and comparing Warwick with six or seven other municipalities I find that Warwick has the advantage of showing the lowest death-rate. I find that in 1883 Bowen had a population of 900, number of deaths 28, or 3·11 per cent.; Dalby, a population of 1,300, number of deaths 31, or 2·38 per cent.; Ipswich, a population of 6,100, number of deaths 143, or 2·34 per cent.; Maryborough, a population of 11,000, number of deaths 300, or 2·72 per cent.; Rockhampton, a population of 9,492, number of deaths 240, or 2·52 per cent.; Toowoomba, a population of 5,400, number of deaths 151, or 2·79 per cent.; Townsville, a population of 7,000, number of deaths 274, or 3·91 per cent. The borough of Gympie, with a population of 8,000, had 131 deaths, or 1·62 per cent.; and Warwick, with a population of 3,600, had 50 deaths, or 1·39 per cent.

The HON. SIR T. MCILWRAITH: How much?

Mr KATES: 1·39 per cent. I cannot understand why Warwick should be mentioned as being the most unhealthy place in the colony.

The HON. SIR T. MCILWRAITH: Who has said so?

Mr. KATES: It was stated in another Chamber. If the hon. gentleman looks at yesterday's *Hansard*——

The HON. SIR T. MCILWRAITH: If you had not mentioned it, no one would have found it out.

Mr. KATES: It is very easy to destroy the reputation of a place, but it is very difficult to recover it.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: What about Allora?

Mr. KATES: The death-rate at Allora has been mixed up with Central Downs, and I could not find it out. I think the hon. the Minister for Works knows well that Allora is one of the healthiest of places. Allora can do without a doctor, and has done so for many years. I considered it my duty, in the absence of the hon. member for Warwick, who is delayed in Sydney, to bring this matter before the notice of hon. members and of the country. There is not the slightest reason for any hon. member in the other Chamber to say that Warwick is an unhealthy place. For that reason I move the adjournment of the House.

Mr. ALAND said: Mr. Speaker,—I somewhat agree with the leader of the Opposition, that had the hon. member for Darling Downs not taken so much notice of this matter it would not have been heard very much about. However, we can quite understand the hon. gentleman being exercised in his mind because a place with which he is intimately acquainted has been maligned in the manner in which Warwick has been done in another place. If I mistake not, one of the hon. members of that House, in speaking of this matter, spoke in very much stronger language than anything which has been made use of by the hon. member for Darling Downs. I have not read the report in *Hansard*, therefore I should not like to give expression to the words which have been attributed to one of the hon. members of that House.

The HON. SIR T. MCILWRAITH: Who was he?

Mr. BEATTIE: Mr. Pettigrew.

Mr. ALAND: As a resident of the Darling Downs, I myself feel some interest in this matter, and I think that the libel which has been sought to be cast upon the fair city on the Downs ought to be refuted. We have ever regarded the top of the mountains where we live as the most pleasant part of the colony to reside in. It has been our wish and effort in times gone by and at the present time to induce people from the city of Brisbane, who live amongst smells and things of a miserable nature, to pay us a visit on the Downs now and again, and I am quite sure that after reading the account which has been published in *Hansard* they will come

to the conclusion that those Downs certainly cannot be as healthy as what we wish to make them out to be. I think, if the people living on the Downs—in fact, sir, you have only to look at the faces of the people—the women and children more particularly—were contrasted with those who live down here on the sea-coast——

The HON. SIR T. MCILWRAITH : Oh, oh !

Mr. ALAND : Well, perhaps I ought not to say that, Mr. Speaker. But of course I do not refer to mere personal beauty. I say this: that there is a degree of healthiness in the appearance of the women and children who live above the Range which is not possessed by the women and children who live, at all events, about the city of Brisbane. We meet with pale faces here, and we meet with rosy, ruddy cheeks on the Downs. I am very glad that the hon. member has taken notice of this matter, although I still think if it had gone unchallenged nothing would have come of it.

The SPEAKER : I must remind the House that this debate is quite irregular. The 88th Standing Order provides that—

"No member shall allude to any debate in the other House of Parliament."

Question put and negatived.

CROWN LANDS BILL—COMMITTEE.

On the Order of the Day being read, the Speaker left the chair, and the House went into Committee for the further consideration of this Bill.

On clause 24—"Consequences of surrender"—

The MINISTER FOR LANDS (Hon. C. B. Dutton) said he proposed to introduce some amendments into the clause to follow subsection 1, providing for cases in which runs were held under the Railway Reserves Act and the Western Railway Act, portions of which had been resumed ; and other cases in which there had been parts of runs open for selection but which had not been alienated, so that they might still be dealt with as portions of the run. The amendments were as followed :—

2. Land which has been resumed from a run under the provisions of the fifty-fifth section of the Pastoral Leases Act of 1869, but has not been alienated or selected for sale, shall be deemed to be a portion of the run for the purpose of the division thereof.

3. In the case of runs within the Railway Reserves created by the Western Railway Act and the Railway Reserves Act, the whole or any part of which has, since the passing of these Acts respectively, been resumed from lease under the provisions of the fifty-fifth section of the Pastoral Leases Act of 1869, so much of the resumed lands as has not been reserved, selected, or alienated shall be deemed to be a portion of the run for the purpose of the division thereof.

Those two amendments would meet the cases which were referred to last night in the matter of resumption under the Railway Reserves Act, and resumption in other parts of the colony for the purposes of selection.

The HON. SIR T. MCILWRAITH said that yesterday the Minister for Lands, when speaking—he admitted, in a passion—made some personal allusions to himself. He intended to reply to those allusions at the time, but, as two or three speakers had interposed before he had time to do so, he allowed the matter to go. He had an additional reason for so doing, and that was that last night he determined to confine himself as much as possible to one object, and that was the furtherance of the business of the Government in their Land Bill, and with the exception of trying to assist in the progress of that measure he did not speak at all, just to see what the effect of the hon. gentleman's statement would be upon the Committee. He did not think they progressed very much, even with all the assistance he could give by his silence. He had not the slightest intention of allowing any personal attack made upon him by the Minister for Lands to pass. He had by him the report of the statements made by the Minister for Lands, which he characterised as a scandalous libel, of which the hon. gentleman ought to be ashamed :—

"Look at the way in which the Land Act had been administered for the last eight or ten years ! The hon. member for Townsville had said that he did not believe in the aggregation of big estates, or in the land being alienated before there was any possibility of competition or any possibility of keeping it. Yet that had been done.

"The Hon. Sir T. MCILWRAITH : Where ?

"The MINISTER FOR LANDS : On the very land held by the hon. member for Mulgrave ; that was on the Burdekin—40,000 acres, at 5s. an acre.

"The Hon. Sir T. MCILWRAITH : On the Burdekin ?

"The MINISTER FOR LANDS : Yes ; on the Burdekin.

"The Hon. Sir T. MCILWRAITH : By whom ?

"The MINISTER FOR LANDS : Sugar lands were obtained at 5s. an acre, which were worth a good deal more now."

If there was any meaning at all in all that, it meant that he had got from the Government 40,000 acres of sugar land on the Burdekin. It was a scandalous and untrue statement ; it was monstrously untrue. He did not own 40,000 acres of sugar land, or 40,000 acres of land at all, on the Burdekin. He never did own it there or in any other part of the colony. There was not the slightest ground for the statement except the abominable cries that were got up at electioneering times, and which found every shelter in the busy brain of the Minister for Lands, who was always glad to find anything which he thought might go against his opponents. There was not the slightest truth in the statement ; and, so far from that, he would go a little further and explain the paragraph which attributed to the late Ministry the throwing open of those lands for selection. All the sugar lands of the Burkekin were thrown open at 5s. an acre, not by the late Government, but by the Government of which the present Premier was the Attorney-General, and which was led by the Hon. John Douglas. They lay open for selection for many years, and were afterwards taken up by different parties ; so that the late Government had nothing to do with their being thrown open at all. The late Government were not responsible, and it was only a long time afterwards that people commenced to call them sugar lands at all. As a matter of fact they lay open to the public for years before they were taken up. The Minister for Lands came in and blamed him with having been one of those who had aggregated large estates. He did not own any such thing as a large estate in the colony. The whole thing was a scandalous and false statement. The Minister for Lands said the late Government had let all the land go at 5s. per acre when it was worth more as sugar land. Whether the hon. gentleman knew the truth of the matter or not, he did not know, but before making a statement of that sort in the Committee he should, at all events, have used all the information he could get in the Government offices, and not go and hear all the scandalous tittle-tattle which he ought to know was so often levelled at public men. He gave the statement the hon. member had made a most unqualified denial. It was the only opportunity he had of denying it in the colony. He had seen the statement in some papers before, but the hon. member should have made full inquiries before he came forward and repeated it in that Committee.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS said he did not speak of any quantity of land with which the hon. gentleman was personally connected ; but he was represented by repute as well as in

the records of the office to be connected with the purchase of that land. It might not be his entirely. He simply said the hon. gentleman was connected with the purchase of that land. The hon. gentleman said he did not throw those lands open; but when they knew the value of those lands, why did not the hon. gentleman's Government exercise their rights and withdraw them or limit the quantity to be taken up? At the time the hon. gentleman, or the firm with which he was connected, took up that land, they knew very well the value of the land, and they made use of it then. He did not say the hon. gentleman threw that land open, but simply that he acquired the land at that price.

The HON. SIR T. McILWRAITH said the statement that was being made by the hon. gentleman that the firm with which he (Hon. Sir T. McIlwraith) was connected acquired that land at that price—40,000 acres of the Burdekin lands at 5s. an acre—was a scandalous falsehood. He repeated the statement was a scandalous falsehood—he did not care who made it; and the hon. gentleman had no right to utter it in that Committee.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS said he had stated the hon. gentleman was connected with a firm that had acquired 40,000 acres in that district.

The HON. SIR T. McILWRAITH said that was not the statement made. The statement made was that they had acquired 40,000 acres of sugar lands in that district, at 5s. an acre; and he characterised that statement as an unqualified falsehood, whoever made it.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS said he was very glad to hear that they were not all sugar lands.

The HON. SIR T. McILWRAITH: I am not protecting myself under the phrase "sugar lands."

The MINISTER FOR LANDS said no doubt the hon. gentleman had got as much as he could. One thing he knew also, and that was that the surveys of those lands even were not carried out according to the usual method of surveying selections. They were allowed to extend along the banks of the river very much further than they should have been allowed to extend; in many instances the lands which the hon. gentleman had selected on the Burdekin were surveyed so as to secure the river frontages. That he knew for a fact, and he asserted it from his own knowledge. As to the amount paid for the lands, the hon. member tried to take a point in that matter. He thought there were some 400 or 500 acres in one block for which an additional 5s. per acre had to be paid. It was not all sold for 5s., but the greater portion of it was sold for that amount; and to say it was not, because a very small portion was sold at 10s., was only a quibble.

The HON. SIR T. McILWRAITH said the hon. member was wandering amongst scandal that he tried to get up in the Lands Office, and tried to bring out in that Committee. The hon. member was not speaking from anything he knew, but was hinting at untruths, and what he ought to know were untruths. When the hon. gentleman connected him (Hon. Sir T. McIlwraith) with a firm that had made selections in that district, he made an untrue statement. The hon. member had not the slightest warranty for making such a statement as that. He (Hon. Sir T. McIlwraith) was not a member of a firm that had selections in that district at all. He held his own station there, and was perfectly entitled to do so, and he was perfectly entitled to select on it. He would like to know where the hon. gentleman had the slightest warranty for making the statement he had made. If the hon. gentleman intended to make that statement, he had uttered a deliberate falsehood in that Committee. If he meant to make such an assertion, the hon. gentleman uttered a deliberate falsehood. The hon. member ought to take better means of getting information before making such statements as that, especially when he presumed to come there to alter their land laws, to complain of the way in which those laws had been administered, and to charge those who had been in office before him with maladministration. The hon. member had brought that forward as the case in which the greatest maladministration had taken place. If there was any maladministration in that case it was due to the Government of which the present Premier was Attorney-General, as it was that Government who threw open the whole of the Burdekin lands. The hon. member said that if his (Hon. Sir T. McIlwraith's) Government knew the value of those lands, they should have raised the price. So they should, and that was what his Government did do. They raised the price from 5s. to £1 per acre. Where was the scandal in that? Yet that was what the scandal was raised about, and was actually uttered by the Minister for Lands or some of the Ministers in trying to secure votes. They said that he had secured all he wanted at 5s. an acre and then raised the price to £1 for everybody else. That was just the kind of scandal men in public positions might expect; but they had certainly a right to expect something very different from a Minister of the Crown, especially a Minister in charge of a Bill such as that before them. They had a right to expect also that, when speaking of the character of public men, the hon. member should be prepared to substantiate the statements he made.

The PREMIER said that it would have been more convenient, if the hon. member had a complaint to make concerning anything said by the Minister for Lands, that he should have made the correction at once. It would certainly have been more convenient for the carrying out of the object which the hon. gentleman professed to have in view—that was, the passage of the Bill through the House. He had listened to the hon. gentleman carefully, and he asked himself what it was the hon. gentleman contradicted after all. The hon. member said he had not 40,000 acres on the Burdekin. Well, of course, they knew he had not 40,000 acres, but the Minister for Lands said that the hon. gentleman, and the firm with which he was connected, held 40,000 acres. The hon. member took a point that neither he himself nor the firm had that amount. He (the Premier) thought this would not be denied—that the hon. member and the firm with which he was connected had between them—individually, he supposed, though that was no business of theirs—an area of land not far from 40,000 acres, on the Burdekin. The hon. member did not deny either, he thought, that that land was taken up by selection at 5s. an acre.

The HON. SIR T. McILWRAITH: I hope the hon. member is not assuming that I do not deny what he says. Because, if he wants a denial as he goes on, I deny both statements.

The PREMIER said the records of the House would show that the hon. member had 5,000 acres, and other persons connected with the firm with which the hon. member was also connected had about equal areas on the Burdekin River. That land was nearly all taken up at 5s. an acre, though a little more was paid for some. It was true that that land was thrown open by the Douglas Government. That was perfectly true,

but it was also true that it was selected by the hon. gentleman and others; and, as he had said himself, after they had selected their land at 5s. an acre he raised the price to £1. Whether that occurred five months or only two months after, he did not know, but the fact that the price of the land was raised by the hon. member's Government to £1 an acre, after he had secured land there at 5s. an acre, was freely commented upon at the time. Nobody disputed that it was a proper thing to raise the price of that land from 5s., but the fact remained that the Government of which the hon. member was the head did not raise the price until he had himself, and others, got 5,000 acres apiece. Those were the facts, and he (the Premier) did not want to draw any inference from them. They were commented upon at the time. He did not want to express an opinion upon them—he let the people do that for themselves—and he did not intend to express an opinion on them now.

The HON. SIR T. MCILWRAITH said the hon. member was too cautious to make statements of that sort. The Minister for Lands, with his vile temper and his ideas of insinuation, always came out with matters affecting the personal honour of members of the Opposition. In referring to those lands he was perfectly wrong in trying to insinuate what he did in regard to members of the firm. They took up only what they were entitled to do, and they would be fools if they did not; but the amount did not approach the magnificent figures given by the Minister for Lands. The hon. gentleman had spoken about the late Government having allowed the whole of the lands on the Burdekin to be taken up at 5s. an acre. Why, it was very difficult to get men to take up the land at 5s. an acre at that time, and as a matter of fact it lay doing nothing for about five years, being left alone even by the station-owners themselves. Then with regard to the 5s. an acre; the Premier found out that they rose the price, and that gave an opportunity for bringing forward the charge of having done that not against themselves, but that, having served themselves, they raised it against others. That was the charge that was brought against the late Government. Well, they had forced out of the Minister for Lands what a good deal of the maladministration of the land had been. The hon. gentleman had been some time in office, and they had now an opportunity of hearing what he had found out. They had heard his ideas about Cullin-la-ringo. That was a very small matter. But the hon. gentleman had quite forgotten that it was his colleagues who were the authors of almost all the great estates in the colony, and most undoubtedly of all those which had interrupted in any way the progress of settlement. They had only to look at the Maranoa district to see how the land was not only sold at auction, but how the pre-emptives were granted in those railway reserves. The late Government had no voice in the matter, because it was compulsory on them that they should be granted. The late Government never made great estates, and the hon. gentleman was driven into crevices and corners to find all the little scandals he could against them to show that they did a great deal towards creating them. As to that, his (Hon. Sir T. McIlwraith's) views on the subject had always been the same. He had always been in favour of the settlement of the people, and he had shown that in every Bill he had brought in. He challenged the hon. member to search the records, and see whether he had not always given his vote for the settlement of the people on the lands. Why, the hon. gentleman was simply making a fool of himself, and showing what a little man he was; otherwise he would not make charges or statements against any man in the Committee until he was able to prove them. He would not try to take away the character of any man unless he actually had some proof to go on. The hon. member had been allowed to work his hobby in a way that he (Hon. Sir T. McIlwraith) never saw any man allowed to do before. He came forward at the general election as an advocate of the leasing system. He had abandoned that; and why it should have received such countenance in the House, he (Hon. Sir T. McIlwraith) did not know, except owing to the extraordinary way in which it was taken up by the Premier. It reminded him of a story told by Douglas Jerrold, about a man in the city of Bagdad who had a withered leg, and who used to sit in the market place holding the leg up and calling out, "This is the finest leg in creation." Nobody believed him; but at last, after he had sat day after day, and month after month, a man high in office—a grand magistrate, or the premier of that place—thought that as the man had been crying out for months, "This is the finest leg in creation," there must be something in what he said. He therefore took the man into his house, and after a while he really thought the leg was the finest in creation; and then other people got to believe it, and public opinion was divided about the leg. The result was that it led to a revolution. And so the hon. gentleman's hobby was something like that leg. But although it was believed in by the Minister for Lands, it was not believed in by the public outside. The hon. gentleman, since he had been in office, had done everything he could to blacken the character of his opponents and make people outside believe that he was a good judge and understood all that had been done in the Lands Office.

The PREMIER said the hon. gentleman's desire to facilitate business was surprising.

The HON. SIR T. MCILWRAITH: I am not in a hurry about the Land Bill to-day.

Mr. MOREHEAD: Men's characters are at stake.

The PREMIER: The hon. gentleman said he was not in a hurry about the Land Bill. He was, at all events, trying to irritate the Minister for Lands as much as possible.

Mr. NORTON: Irritate him?

The PREMIER: Yes; irritate him. The leader of the Opposition talked about his connection with the Burdekin land. The more he stirred up that story, the worse it would be. Did not the hon. member know that the deeds of that land were issued the day before he left office? Did he not know that they were rushed through in a manner unparalleled before? The returns laid on the table of the House showed it; they were rushed through for some extraordinary reason; probably because if they had not been so dealt with—if they had been left a day—they would have had to be dealt by the succeeding Government. In two instances the deeds were issued before the three years were up within which they could not be applied for. There were three years after which only proof could be given of the fulfilment of the conditions; but within that time the deeds were actually issued to the purchasers. That all appeared in the papers laid on the table of the House. He did not want to say anything more about it than was necessary. They were quite content to allow the thing to drop; but when the hon. member referred to the Burdekin land it was necessary to reply to him. In one or two instances the land was conveyed to someone else immediately afterwards. All that, as he had said, appeared

in the papers laid on the table of the House; and he thought the less said about the matter the better.

The HON. SIR T. McILWRAITH said he had to thank the hon. gentleman, and thank him not very sincerely, for the compliment he had paid him; but if the hon. gentleman thought he was doing him the slightest kindness in keeping anything back he was very much mistaken. He challenged the hon. gentleman to do his worst. The hon. gentleman had tried to do his worst ever since they had been political antagonists, and he was not going to ask mercy from the hon. gentleman now. The hon. gentleman said that some of the leases for the Burdekin selectors were hurried through. He (Hon. Sir T. McIlwraith) was not astonished at that, if the selectors thought they were going to have to deal with such men as the present Minister for Lands. The matter to which the Premier referred was one with which he (Hon. Sir T. McIlwraith) had not the slightest connection, and never had had any connection in his life. The hon. gentleman was put right in his position now, he hoped.

Mr. SCOTT said there was one observation made by the Minister for Lands which struck him as somewhat strange. He talked about land taken up on the Burdekin River by the leader of the Opposition. Now he (Mr. Scott) happened to know something about the Burdekin, and he could tell the Committee that the only selections taken up on the frontage to that river were held some years unforfeited. All the different selections which were taken up many years subsequent to them were not taken up on the Burdekin frontage at all. As to the land taken up by the leader of the Opposition, he might say that it was the only river frontage that was left. He did not take up river frontage specially or particularly. Therefore, if there was any point to be worked, it was one that could be worked either way.

Mr. MOREHEAD said the hon. the Premier was trying now to drag a red herring across the trail, but they would hold the Minister for Lands down to the statement he made last night. He said that the hon. leader of the Opposition had obtained—he insinuated, improperly—40,000 acres at 5s. an acre. He had been told that was absolutely false, but he had not the manhood to admit that he had made a mistake. The Premier had asked why exception was not taken to the statement last night. The leader of the Opposition had given one reason, which was that two or three speakers intervened before he had an opportunity of alluding to the matter while it was hot in the memory of hon. members. He (Mr. Morehead) could give another reason, and that was that he suggested to the leader of the Opposition that they should wait till they saw it in print—till they saw actually recorded what they knew the hon. member had said—and not give the hon. member an opportunity of revising his speech before it got into *Hansard*. The statement made by the Minister for Lands was made deliberately, and when shown to be untrue should have been withdrawn and apologised for. It was evident on the face of it that the statement was not true, as anyone could see by looking at the record on the table of the House. The hon. the Minister for Works had inveighed on the previous night against hon. members on the other side for the attacks they made on the hon. Minister for Lands; but were the reputations of men to be stabbed under the cloak of privilege by hon. members opposite, and were they to remain dumb? Were they to have their characters aspersed and maligned, and suffer abuse from the Minister for Lands night after night and say nothing? The hon. member had only himself to blame if he had been roughly handled in the Committee; and until he learnt to deal with questions such as the one before them on broad principles, instead of trying to blacken the reputation of those opposite him, he would get as good as he gave. The hon. the Minister for Works was in error when he charged hon. members on the Opposition side with being the first to throw stones and indulge in personalities. The member of the House who was primarily to blame was the Minister for Lands himself and nobody else; and it was clearly proved that he had made statements the previous night which had been properly described as maliciously untrue.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS said that he did not think it was in order to characterise a statement made by any hon. member as maliciously untrue. He was not very sensitive—in fact, as a rule, he was perfectly indifferent to charges of this kind; but unless he objected to it, people would suppose that he accepted it as true. He certainly objected to anybody using such terms towards him. It was not fair at all. He had said that the hon. gentleman or those connected with him——

The HON. SIR T. McILWRAITH: Why not tell the truth?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: I cannot distinguish between you and your partner.

The HON. SIR T. McILWRAITH: I say that if this statement is made with reference to my partner it is maliciously untrue.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: At all events, your reputed partners. Their names appear on the list of those who have taken up land. How am I to distinguish between those and others?

The HON. SIR T. McILWRAITH: You old scandalmonger!

The MINISTER FOR LANDS said the hon. member for Balonne had accused him of commencing personalities. His memory told him that it was the hon. member who first attacked him. He could assert emphatically that he had never been the first to commence, and the man who said to the contrary said what was not true. He did not pretend to possess any disposition to avoid attack; and if any man chose to trail his coat he was not going out of his way to avoid treading on it, no matter who or what the man might be. What he had objected to was not the hon. member's honesty, but to his policy in dealing with the land—not only in that particular instance on the Burdekin, but in numbers of other cases. It might accord with the hon. gentleman's idea of what was the proper policy—to hand over hundreds of thousands of acres to a few men under cover of the pre-emption clause of the Pastoral Leases Act of 1869 and the exchange clause of the Act of 1876. He could show what had been done under those two clauses and the auction clause.

The HON. SIR T. McILWRAITH: That is what we want you to do.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS said enormous areas of land had been alienated under the auction clause. Look at the lands round Springsure and Clermont—whose hands they had got into! How did they get into those hands—how was it effected? Let the hon. member for Balonne tell them. When called upon to explain, the hon. member had stood upon his dignity; he had not the ordinary pluck of a man to say how and why it was done—to clear his name from the imputation which was clearly levelled at him. Whatever he thought of the hon. member before, he thought less of him after that. However, he was not going to prolong the discussion.

The HON. SIR T. McILWRAITH said the hon. member had very little reason to expect consideration in the language used towards

him if they were to judge by the language he constantly indulged in with regard to hon. members opposite him, and the violent insinuations he was constantly making, such as the one with which he had sat down. If he had been a member of the House at the time the charge was made against Mr. Morehead, he would have seen that it was one of the most dastardly attacks ever made against a man's private character. After the attack had been made, it was ingeniously attempted to force evidence out of that hon. member's own mouth to prove the assertions against him. The hon. gentleman was a great deal too sensible to be led into the trap. He did not stand on his dignity, but he said, "If you have any charge to make against me, why in the name of common sense make it before you are in a position to prove it?" When he declined to open his lips, the whole thing fell to the ground. The hon. gentleman was perfectly innocent of anything wrong, either from a business point of view or as an honourable man, in the transaction referred to by the Minister for Lands. It was a perfect waste of time to throw out insinuations which must inevitably lead to long debates; and it was a cowardly thing to refer back to a thing of that sort, where a charge had been made against an hon. member and had distinctly failed to be proved, as was acknowledged by everybody. The hon. Minister for Lands was constantly harping on the same thing—that the present Opposition while in power had so administered the land laws and so legislated as to favour the aggregation of large estates. That statement was untrue. He had put the matter to a distinct issue before in a previous part of the debate. He had challenged the hon. gentleman to put on the table of the House a map showing the big estates acquired under the late Government, and under the previous Government. If the hon. gentleman did that he would see that, so far from the late Government having been blamable for having done so much towards the aggregation of great estates, the great mischief had been done by the previous Government. Comparatively speaking, if his party had done anything to aggregate large estates, they were guilty of very little as compared with the other side. Take the Roma auction sales as an instance; let them be marked out on a map, say, in blue; and let the lands sold by the opposite side be marked in another colour, and then see who aggregated the largest estates. He dared the hon. gentleman now, if he desired to prove what he said, to adopt that suggestion. The maps could be prepared in a week by putting on two extra men in the Lands Office, and he thought the country would be satisfied with his statement when they saw those maps. The hon. gentleman knew quite well he was talking "bunkum." He could not prove what he had said, and if he could he had the means of doing so. It would cost him nothing, and the proof might be forthcoming by Tuesday next. He (Hon. Sir T. McIlwraith) had not the least manner of doubt how the Liberal side of the House would come out of the test.

The PREMIER said he did not at present see the drift of the hon. member. He supposed he had some object in view, but it did not appear to be a matter of very great interest to the Committee whether the Douglas Government held certain views or not. He himself held views then which he held to be entirely erroneous now, and he was not at all ashamed that he should have changed his mind. He was rather proud of it. Did the hon. gentleman want the country to believe that he never sold large quantities of land? Was it not part of the hon. gentleman's policy to alienate millions of acres? It was no use telling the Committee that that was not his policy, because he could not make hon. members believe the statement. He (the Premier) should be very glad indeed to hear that the hon. gentleman had changed his policy, but he failed to understand what the present discussion had to do with the question before the Committee, nor did he see what was the good of going back to the time of the Douglas Government, which died six years ago. He failed to see the drift of the hon. gentleman.

The HON. SIR T. MCILWRAITH: Why do you not restrain your Minister for Lands?

The PREMIER said the hon. gentleman referred to the Peak Downs lands; but that subject was disposed of two years ago. He could not help saying, however, that the hon. member's memory was very inaccurate, because if he looked back he would find that the motion for the appointment of the Select Committee was not made by himself, but by him (the Premier). But those recriminations were *à propos* of nothing before the Committee, nor could they serve any useful purpose.

The HON. SIR T. MCILWRAITH said the hon. gentleman was just "hedging" again. No doubt when the committee on the Cullin-la-ringo lands was granted last year it was on the motion of the hon. gentleman; but he knew perfectly well that it was because he (Hon. Sir T. McIlwraith) pointed out that it was the only course to propose, and it was intimated that he would not oppose it. If he had wanted to have prevented the appointment he could have done so, because he had a better majority then than the hon. gentleman had now, and a majority of much more intelligent men than the hon. gentleman had behind him. The appointment of the committee was directly the act of the late Ministry, and it was done for the purpose of giving the hon. member an opportunity of bringing charges which he failed to substantiate.

Mr. MOREHEAD said he quite agreed with the Premier, because he thought it very wrong that such recriminating speeches should be made; but who was to blame for them, and why did the Minister for Lands make such statements as those he had made? The abuse had come directly from the Minister for Lands, and it had come from him even before he was a member of the House; when he was on his electioneering tour he called the late Government thieves, and he characterised the Transcontinental scheme as a scheme proposed by scoundrels. The hon. gentleman was the author of that infamous yellow pamphlet, or if he was not the author he was one of those who took care that it was distributed throughout the whole colony. If that pamphlet had simply contained arguments, he for one would not have objected to it; but when it sunk into the grossest personalities—when it aspersed the character and reputation of men who differed from the authors in their political views—then those who were maligned had a right to feel aggrieved. He said again that all the abuse had originated with the Minister for Lands, and there was no language too strong for him to apply to his political opponents.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS (Hon. W. Miles) said the hon. member for Balonne had made a remark about drawing a red herring across the track, but the hon. member had done it himself very effectively. The whole history of the squabble was that the Minister for Lands had seceded from the squatting party.

Mr. MOREHEAD: So have you.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The hon. the Minister for Lands wanted to settle people on the land.

Mr. MOREHEAD: There is a red herring, if you like!

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said hon. members might laugh, but such was the case. He looked upon the squatting party as the latter-day saints. He was perfectly satisfied that every member on his side of the Committee was in sympathy with the Minister for Lands. There was no language, apparently, bad or violent enough for the hon. gentleman; he was this and that, and a Tory, and everything else, and all that because he had seceded from the squatting party. He (the Minister for Works) had been obliged to submit to all that kind of abuse in years gone past, and he had told the Minister for Lands that he must submit to it. He would never be forgiven for taking charge of a measure whose object was to settle people on the lands. That was the offence of the hon. gentleman, and if in reply he had used strong language he deserved much consideration. He did not think it wise to use violent language, and he never did it himself, but he would advise hon. gentlemen to be more moderate. He was bound to admit, however, that they were not all alike—there were some honourable exceptions amongst them. But the hon. member for Balonne and several others had been night after night unwarrantably attacking the Minister for Lands ever since he took his seat on that side of the House.

The HON. SIR T. MCILWRAITH said it was a good thing that the Minister for Works should draw a distinction between squatters and squatters. The hon. gentleman was himself one of the squatters who sat on the so-called Liberal side; so was the Minister for Lands and the hon. member for Wide Bay (Mr. Mellor). A squatter was all right so long as he sat on the Government side; they generally rewarded him for sitting with them, and the reward given to the hon. member for Leichhardt (Mr. Dutton) was the position of Minister for Lands—and a pretty mess he had made of it. That hon. member had brought in a Bill which he did not understand at the beginning, and which he understood far less now. But the country was commencing to understand something about it——

The PREMIER: Hear, hear! And they understand the opposition to it, too.

The HON. SIR T. MCILWRAITH: And when they became fully alive to the provisions of it they would send the Minister for Lands to the right-about, and his master, too. He did not know that the Minister for Works was particularly interested in settling people on the land; he had certainly not done very much in that line so far. Indeed, not so very long ago that hon. gentleman was a squatter of the squatters.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Not nearly so much as you.

The HON. SIR T. MCILWRAITH said he knew that hon. member well in the old days, and there was not a right a squatter could make under any Act that he did not claim, and insist upon getting, in spite of the Government. Talk about the aggregation of big estates! Why, there had been an aggregation of big estates on the Downs that had made a rich man of the hon. member. As far as the Bill was concerned, instead of settling people on the land, its first tendency would be to prevent it; and that was why the Opposition had always opposed it. But he was not going to raise a discussion on that point now, although invited to do so by the Minister for Works, who evidently intended to obstruct the Bill, so as to get the Premier out of his difficulty. The Premier was frightened lest six months after the passing of the Act the squatters should give up their leases, and he would have to cut up the land and sell it to the public; and he was praying that the Lord would send something to prevent anything of that sort happening. The Minister for Lands would be more muddled than any previous Minister for Lands had been when he commenced to cut up and throw open those lands for selection. Lease would come in on the top of lease, and in six months there would be such a state of confusion in the Lands Office as had never been witnessed there before—and that was saying a great deal. Although he had been charged with obstructing the progress of the Bill, he would inform both the Premier and the Minister for Lands that they would have to keep much more civil tongues in their heads if they intended to prevent similar discussions taking place. If they thought he was going to sit silent under any untrue charges made against him they were mistaken; and if they thought he was going to be responsible for the waste of time they were also mistaken. The responsibility for that lay mainly with the Minister for Lands, and if the Premier could not compel his colleague to keep a civil tongue in his head he would have to take the consequences. That hon. member might have pluck enough to say that he was not afraid to tread on the tail of any man's coat; but if he did, there were plenty of men on the Opposition side who were perfectly willing to take up the challenge.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said it was impossible to tell what the leader of the Opposition meant. In one breath he told the Committee that the Bill would not settle people on the land, and in the next, that within six months the Minister for Lands would be overwhelmed with selections upon selections. He did not think the hon. gentleman himself knew what he meant; but no doubt he had not yet got over the defeat of his nonsensical amendments, and so he took every opportunity of quarrelling with the Minister for Lands for the purpose of retarding the progress of the Bill.

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN said the Premier had very properly deprecated discussion on any issue not before the Committee, and if that advice was attended to by some hon. members on the other side he would not have so much reason to complain. But the hon. gentleman must recollect that when a charge was made and repeated continually—a charge which had contributed very materially towards placing him in his present position—some notice should be taken of it, and a challenge of proof insisted upon. With respect to one charge, he (Hon. J. M. Macrossan) was a member of a Ministry which had been repeatedly charged, both during the last general election and since, and especially by the Minister for Lands, with being guilty of aggregating large estates to a greater extent than was ever the case before. That he denied. He himself had always been opposed, as far as possible, to the aggregation of large estates; and they all knew how the large estates which were aggregated under the late Ministry were got together, and it might be looked upon as a sort of condonation. The only large estates that he knew of that were aggregated under the late Ministry were aggregated because there was a financial necessity. But no such necessity existed for the aggregation of estates under the previous Ministry; it was with them a matter of settled, deliberate policy. It was easy to see who had been the greatest offenders in that direction. When the Premier was in opposition he was continually making charges similar to those now being made by the Minister for Lands. The hon. gentleman also at that time threatened that the pigeon-holes of the different departments would have to be cleared out and exposed to the

people. He intended to take care before the end of the session that those pigeon-holes were cleaned out; and he took that opportunity to ask the hon. gentleman to clean them out, for he had been long enough in office to discover the villanies of the late Ministry. He thought it was the hon. gentleman's duty, if he had any regard for his honour or reputation, in view of the charges he had made, and which he allowed his followers to make, against the late Ministry, to have those pigeon-holes cleaned out, and their contents placed before the public. The leader of the Opposition wanted no mercy, and neither did any member of the late Government. No member of the late Government was afraid to have his most secret actions laid bare. He knew that he for one was not afraid; and he was quite sure all his former colleagues were of the same opinion as himself. So it would be much better and would probably be the means of stopping that kind of debate in the future, if the hon. gentleman would simply just do that.

The PREMIER: How shall I do it?

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN said in the first place the hon. gentleman should lay on the table a return showing the aggregation of large estates. In the second place, let him clean out those pigeon-holes—expose all the secret workings, all the secret policy, all the secret wrong-doings of the late Ministry. There were many ways of doing it. The hon. gentleman knew every one of them; and he also knew which was the most convenient. He challenged the hon. gentleman—as he had been challenged that afternoon—to prove anything against the late Ministry which had been detrimental to them as honourable men. He challenged him or any member on the Government side to do so. As regarded the present Bill, there was no necessity for it. The present Act had its defects, but he believed it had worked very well, and the defects could have been very well overcome without another Land Bill. The hon. gentleman had confessed that he made a mistake in 1876 in regard to railway reserves—under the Western Railway Act, he presumed he meant. It was very good when a man knew that he had made a mistake to confess it, but he (Hon. J. M. Macrossan) expected, if he remained a member of the House—or whether he did or not—he expected if the hon. gentleman remained a member for a less period than had elapsed since 1876, he would make the same confession in regard to the Bill now before the Committee as he had made that afternoon in regard to the measure he was instrumental in passing in 1876.

Mr. MELLOR said he really thought the manner in which matters were brought up in the Committee was very much to be deprecated. He was very much astonished, and he thought every new member would be astonished, to find that so much of the bitter feelings that had arisen in the past should be revived there. He thought the legislation of the country would be conducted very much better if they would look a little to the future and not so much to the past. He had been taunted that evening about making some remarks the previous night with reference to the Land Bill, but he did not know why that should be done. He had drawn attention to what he thought might be an injustice to settlement in the districts where the proposed railways were going to be made. He would like it to be known that if he made any remarks on the Land Bill they would be in the tendency to promote settlement on the land. He wanted to see the Land Bill such a Bill that it would settle the people on the lands of the colony; and, in making the remarks he did on the previous night that the runs in the settled districts where the railways were going to be constructed should not be leased for a further term of ten years, he did so because he thought it would be an injustice, and would not cause settlement. He did not think there was any wrong in calling attention to that matter. But it had been very frequently repeated from the Opposition side of the Committee that hon. members supporting the Government had not discussed the matter of settlement up to then. He thought it would be admitted that most of the discussion which had taken place was upon the squatting interest of the colony. The real settlement of the coast districts — of the agricultural districts — had not come under consideration. He thought that every night—night after night—the discussion had alluded to the squatting interests in the colony. When that part of the Bill which referred to agricultural holdings came on for discussion, he thought the hon. gentlemen behind the Government—who knew more about the subject—would take a fair part in the debates. He certainly deprecated the conduct of the Opposition, and of the manner in which they carried on the debates in Committee.

Mr. NORTON said he thought the hon. member (Mr. Mellor) could hardly understand the subject that had led up to the discussion. The hon. gentleman, he thought, if an insinuation had been made against his personal character, would not be disposed to sit still and say nothing about it. That was what he thought to be the origin of that very unpleasant discussion which had taken place that afternoon. Whether the Minister for Lands had intended to make an insinuation against the personal character of the leader of the Opposition or not, he was not disposed to say. He thought that the hon. gentleman sometimes did not realise the full force of the words he made use of. He had thought so once or twice, and he thought the hon. gentleman sometimes made statements that he did not fully weigh before he made them. The hon. gentleman got a little put out—they all did sometimes—and when he got into that state he was apt to say words which gave offence to others. The Premier had expressed his surprise that the leader of the Opposition did not contradict the statements at the time they were made, but he (Mr. Norton) had since been informed that the leader of the Opposition had not heard all that was said by the Minister for Lands. But when the hon. gentleman saw it in print, he saw that it was necessary, in defence of his personal character, that he should take up the matter, and that was what led to the recrimination and the unpleasant debate. It was a matter for regret that such things should take place, but they had occurred to his knowledge for the last five or six years, and would continue to go on, he supposed. He was quite sure, if the hon. member for Wide Bay (Mr. Mellor) realised the full importance to the character of some hon. members on the Opposition side of the statements that were made the previous night, he would hardly be disposed to blame them for their action. He did not think hon. members on the Opposition side had intended the discussion to go on so far, but when those things were once commenced it was impossible to see where they would end. It was simply like striking a match: they knew where the striking commenced, but they did not know where the fire was going to be put out. He was quite sure, if the hon. member (Mr. Mellor) had gone fully into the matter—if he were placed in the same position, and if he realised the position in which they were placed—he was quite sure he would not have blamed the Opposition for the action they had taken. With regard to what had fallen from the hon. member

about the squatting question, he thought it must be admitted by all hon. members who had watched the progress of the Bill that as a matter of necessity debates or continued discussions in connection with that question must necessarily arise. It was proposed to take from a large number of Crown lessees the right which they now had or which they fancied they had. For his part he did not hesitate to say that he thought they were entitled to the land they held. He was not speaking of land in the settled districts—in which he himself was personally interested — but he was speaking of land in which he had no more interest than the hon. member for Wide Bay had. He said that with regard to those lands the Bill proposed to take from the holders the rights—the legal rights—that they now possessed. It was designed to abolish a contract which now existed, or to force the holders themselves to acquiesce in its being cancelled. Under the circumstances, everyone who had studied the position of the question was bound to express his opinion in regard thereto. He mentioned the matter because he really thought that the hon. gentleman who had lately spoken, without intending to do so, had cast the blame upon the Opposition side of the Committee, which was not fair. He had a great deal to say about those men; he was not more interested than the hon. member himself, but he simply spoke upon the question of those leases which the squatters in the outside districts held as matters which had been decided by law, and which depended entirely upon the law under which they were held. The Bill would have the effect of creating a breach of the agreements under which squatters held those runs in the unsettled districts, and holding that view he felt bound to express an opinion upon it. He was sure the hon. member would not blame him for that. For his own part, he should be very glad if the Bill got on quicker; but he did not think it was desirable that it should get on too fast. It was desirable that a great deal of discussion should take place in order that the outside public, who had no other means of ascertaining what the operations of the Bill really would be, might have an opportunity of reading the opinions expressed in that Committee, and therefore form an opinion of their own about it. He would point out that a great many people outside the Committee, who, of course, were interested in the question, had no means of seeing the Bill or forming their own judgment in connection with it until they saw and read the discussion that took place. On that ground he thought it was important that every matter of any serious consequence should receive the fullest discussion which they were able to give it. If the Bill was to be passed let it be passed by all means, and let those who opposed it express their own opinions and reasons, and let the majority be entitled to the full honour—if they were entitled to honour—or the full blame, if there was any. He hoped he had expressed himself clearly.

Question—That new subsection 2 stand part of the Bill—put and passed.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS moved the second new subsection he had read to follow the subsection just passed.

Mr. MOREHEAD said he only rose to correct an error that the Minister for Lands made when speaking of that addition to the clause. He had said that the tenancy was a yearly one under the Western Railway Act. There was no such thing as a yearly tenancy. He would ask the Minister for Lands a question that should have been asked when the other subsection that had just been carried was under discussion. In a case when a run was divided, where the land was open for selection, and had not been selected, and was thrown, as it would be by the clause, into the area of the run, would that portion to be devoted to the public be that upon which the land had already been given up to settlement? That was to say, would the portion near a township be the portion that would be taken by the Government? He assumed that would be the case.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS said there was very little doubt that that would be the course taken. It would necessarily be so.

Question—That new subsection 3 stand part of the Bill—put and passed.

Mr. PALMER said the clause was almost a Land Bill in itself, and it was hard to get at any particular part of it. What he wanted to get at was the duties of the commissioners in respect to the divisions of runs. He found by subsection 3—

> "For the purposes of making such division, the commissioner, or some other fit and proper person appointed by the Governor in Council on the recommendation of the board, shall be required to inspect the run and report as to the best mode of making a fair division thereof."

That looked very well upon paper, but he supposed the Minister for Lands understood what an immense amount of work it would entail. It would take a whole regiment of commissioners to inspect every run. That was a case he would point out in which the assistance of a local board such as had been proposed would have been very convenient. If there was to be no assistance given to the commissioner, he did not think h would ever be able to carry out the duties entrusted to him. It would take years of time before the provisions could be carried out and the resumptions notified. With reference to the average quality and capabilities of different parts of a run, he saw that a general average was to be struck between the inferior and better parts of the run. Was that matter of the division of runs all in the hands of the commissioner or in the hands of the board? He saw it was not to be a division of mileage, but a percentage was to be allowed according to the quality and capabilities of different parts of the run. He supposed the Minister for Lands understood the principle upon which the division of the runs was to be arranged.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS said the division of the runs was not left entirely in the hands of the commissioner. He had to make his report, and upon his report the board would have to decide whether the division he proposed should be carried out. It was easy for a man to see, if he understood his work — and he supposed no commissioner would be appointed who did not understand the work on going on to a run —how it should be divided. As to the time it would take to divide the runs, it might take a number of men to do the work; and the number of men in that work would have to be increased according to the proportion of settlement. If one man could not do the work, two men would have to be appointed; and if two could not get through the work, they would have to appoint more. In the case of runs in which the quality and capabilities of different parts of them were unequal, allowance was to be made in the area, and that would be a matter for the commissioner to report upon, and he would have to say in what proportions the division should be made. He had to deal with second-class and first-class country on a run so as to make the divisions proportionate in value. He could not himself see any difficulty in the way of carrying out th clause.

Mr. SCOTT said it appeared to him that, by that clause, the whole thing would be in the hands of the commissioner, and he did not see what the board would have to do with it in any shape or form. They sat in Brisbane and received the report from the commissioner; they got his information and none other. The matter was therefore completely left in the hands of the commissioner, who was nominated by the Government; so that it would be seen that after all it was in the hands of the Government, and not in the hands of the board at all; and the board were being stuck up in that case for the Minister to get behind. He appointed the commissioners; the commissioners made reports, and the board acted upon them. That was what they had been told by the Minister for Lands just now; and it could be seen that the matter was to be left after all in the hands of the Minister for Lands, under cover of a board that was thoroughly irresponsible.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS said the hon. gentleman was wrong. The commissioner made his report and sent it to the Minister, and he referred it to the board. The board had to decide whether the division proposed by the commissioner was a fair one, and upon such information as he supplied to them.

Mr. MOREHEAD said the objection he had to make to that particular clause he would reserve till a later hour. He might say he did not hold with the opinion expressed by the hon. member for Leichhardt, as it appeared to him that the board had a great deal too much power given to them under that clause. He would like to know from the Minister for Lands, what was the principle upon which the subdivision was to be made, as laid down in the second portion of the 24th clause? The hon. member must be aware that a number of lessees under subsection (*a*) had not been in possession for more than three or four years, and that should be borne in mind—and it was a very important point, more especially as that Bill had been brought in under the assumption that the Crown tenants of the colony were not paying a sufficient amount of rent for their land. As a matter of fact, those runs which had been held for twenty years were really paying a very much larger rent, and had been doing so ever since the Act of 1869 was passed—a very much heavier rent than the runs included in subsections (*b*) and (*c*). That should have been taken into consideration by the Government when preparing the measure. Those who held land under the Act of 1863 and came under the Act of 1869—and they comprised the bulk of the runs included under subsection (*a*)—were paying a rental of from 25s. to 30s. per square mile; whereas those who held under subsection (*b*) were paying less than half that sum. The bulk of those who held under subsection (*b*) were not paying more than 10s. per square mile. Therefore, the men who held under subsection (*a*), although they might have occupied their runs for twenty years, had as a rule contributed at the rate of three to one—so far as the rent was concerned—as compared with those who came under subsections (*b*) and (*c*). Further than that, those holdings were in very few instances in the hands of the original occupants of the country. He thought some consideration should have been given to those who came under subsection (*a*), and that if only one-third of their runs were taken from them, or even one-fourth, it would not be doing more than a fair thing, and would really be only equalising matters for them as compared with those who held under sections (*b*) and (*c*). He thought the Minister for Lands did not give a full and fair consideration to the position occupied by those men, even though they might have occupied their runs to the full extent of twenty years. They had contributed very much more to the revenue than those who held under (*b*) and (*c*), and that should be taken into consideration in the division of those runs. There was a great deal to be said in favour of those pastoral lessees who had been persistent for a period of twenty years. There were very few of them; they were the original pioneers, and they opened up the country for others, who therefore had the benefit of their energy. Those men also had paid during that period of twenty years a very much increased rent since 1869. He thought those matters should be taken into consideration in framing a clause of that sort, because, as it stood, those who came under subsections (*a*), (*b*), and (*c*) were on equal terms, except those who had reaped the benefit that accrued from the operations on the land in twenty years, or in other cases in ten or eleven years. They were not in any way on an equal footing, and he thought that if they were equalised, and one-fourth taken in each case, it would be a fair way of dealing with the question. He would point out further that, should it be considered necessary to resume more land from those who came under subsection (*a*), the provision was contained in the Bill. Most certainly it was provided in the clauses of the Bill, that if land were required for public purposes it could be taken.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS said the hon. member was wrong in that respect. Once the division was made and part of the run resumed, the lessee got a fifteen years' lease for the remainder that could not be interfered with during the term of fifteen years. At all events that was the view the Government took of the matter. If they gave a lessee an absolute lease for fifteen years he could not be interfered with by anybody. He did not agree with the hon. gentleman that men who had held their leases for twenty years should be in a better position than those who had held theirs for only four or five years, or any period less than twenty years. It might be said that, in the case of some leases which had run for a period of twenty years, the present holders had obtained them only three or four years ago by purchase from the original lessees. But he presumed the value of a lease would be determined by the number of years it had to run, and if anyone chose to give more for it than it was really worth, that was a question for him, and not for the State. He thought the proportion laid down in the Bill was a fair one.

Mr. MOREHEAD said the argument of the hon. member was scarcely a fair one with regard to those men who, within the last two or three years, had bought leases which had had a currency of twenty years. They not only bought a lease terminating in 1890, under the 1869 Act, but also the right of renewal for fourteen years given by the 55th clause. When the hon. gentleman told them that they had no right to take those men into consideration, he begged to differ from the hon. gentleman. It was a question which affected the State, and the faith of the State. Those men bought under an existing law. Had it been foreshadowed, or indicated, or believed, or supposed that there was a possibility of any such alteration or repudiation of existing laws as was contained in the clause before them, those leases would not have been sold in the way they were. Those individuals had bought on the good faith of the State, and that good faith seemed now to be simply worthless paper. When the hon. gentleman told them that the lessees who came under the Bill would have an indefeasible lease of one-half, two-thirds, or three-fourths of their run, did he not conceive the possibility—although conceiving

possibilities seemed to be a difficult task for the hon. gentleman—of the next Parliament reversing those leases? He (Mr. Morehead) could see it in the very near future. Those indefeasible leases, as they were called, would be struck off the Statute-book. When the people wanted the land they would have it, and the Act of 1869 provided that they should have any portion that was thought necessary. If it were thought necessary to alter the laws with regard to selection, after the land had been resumed under the 55th clause of the Act of 1869, it was perfectly easy for the Government to have brought in a measure effecting that, and it would no doubt have received the assent of a large proportion of members on both sides of the House. The hon. gentleman had not made any attempt to answer the objection he had raised as to the injustice dealt out to lessees under subsection (*a*) — that for years past, since 1869, they had paid a rental largely in excess of the rents paid by those who held under subsections (*b*) and (*c*.) Those who had held persistently under subsection (*a*) were really the cause of the development of the western country, and some consideration was therefore due to them. The " indefeasible lease" was simply a farce. Whenever the land was wanted for the people, the people would have it, no matter how much the hon. Minister for Lands—in a Tory way, he thought—tried to fence in the squatters with indefeasible leases. No wise squatter would be caught with that bait, however tempting it might appear on the first blush. He did not think any pastoral lessee in the country wanted any such indefeasible tenure. The fatal objection, according to his view, to offering such a thing to the pastoral tenant was its impossibility. There was no such thing in the world as an indefeasible lease, except freehold. The right of entry upon these leased lands was a right inherent in Parliament, and, no matter how much fenced round the tenants were by indefeasible leases, the lands would be entered into whenever it was for the benefit of the State that they should be. The Government were holding out to the squatter Dead Sea apples — very pretty to the sight, but crumbling to ashes when touched. He was perfectly certain the majority of squatters in the country did not want indefeasible leases; they were perfectly satisfied to hold their land for grazing purposes under the 1869 tenure, so long as they were not wanted by the public, and no longer. He said, without fear of contradiction—and he thought he spoke with some little knowledge of the subject—that there had been no outcry in the colony for any interference with the Act of 1869. As had been stated over and over again in that House, wherever land held by squatters in the unsettled districts had been wanted for the people it had been obtained. There had not been a single instance where any attempt at obstruction had been put in the way by pastoral tenants in such cases. The land could be resumed at any time under the 55th clause of the Act of 1869, and all the Government required to have done—even if there had been a demand for land—was to have put that clause into operation, and brought in a subsidiary Land Bill dealing with the land so resumed. That was all that was required to be done. One contention set forth by the Government was that the squatters did not pay sufficient rent. That might or might not be true; but, at any rate, those who would come under subsection (*a*) of the Bill had paid rent very much in excess—more than double that paid by those who came under subsections (*b*) and (*c*). The proposed indefeasible leases were nothing more than a glittering bait that would probably have the effect of trapping some unsuspecting squatter. They would not hold water for one moment. When the people wanted the land, the land they would get; and therefore he said that if it was deemed necessary by that Committee that a certain portion of country should be thrown open to be dealt with under the provisions of the Bill, one-fourth of the runs under subsections (*a*), (*b*), and (*c*) would be quite sufficient to take. If the people wanted more, there were two ways of doing it. One was by—what would probably happen—breaking the indefeasible leases to take the balance of the runs, and the other was by extending the schedule of the Bill. He thought the Minister for Lands would see that his contention was a just and equitable one. Admitting the principle of the Bill—which, of course, he objected to—he held that the course he had suggested was the most equitable that could be adopted.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS said his view of the value of an indefeasible lease was slightly different from that held by the hon. gentleman. The hon. member said the only indefeasible lease was a freehold, but even a freehold was liable to the same method of resumption as indefeasible leases under the Bill. When the land was wanted for public purposes it would be resumed and set aside for special requirements, and the lessee would get his share of the run for a certain specified time. He believed there had never been a Parliament that had sat in that House, or was ever likely to sit in it, that would set that at nought as a matter unworthy of thought.

Mr. MACDONALD-PATERSON: Nonsense!

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: He could not believe it for one moment, unless it might be the hon. gentleman himself. He might desire to deal with it in that way.

Mr. MOREHEAD: What about the pre-emptive right?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS said the pre-emptive right had never stood in that position. The Bill gave a specified quantity of land for a definite time, and it could not be interfered with unless required for some special purpose outside the ordinary requirements of the resumptions of the runs in the first instance. As to the fairness of the amount of resumption, that was simply a question as to the quantity that would be actually required for settlement; and, at any rate, there was provision made that the lessee should retain the grazing right over the land until it was needed. In reality it would be only taken from him in portions, and therefore only the same power was asked as was exercised under the Act of 1869. The pastoral tenant would, under the Bill, remain in possession of the resumed portion of his run until it was actually required, and he would get an assured tenure for the other portion for a definite time. The hon. gentlemen had said that he did not believe that any squatters desired to have indefeasible leases, but preferred to remain under the Act of 1869, and he (the Minister for Lands) had no doubt that if the wants of the people were attended to in the future as they had been in the past, they would be willing to do so, because they would remain in possession of the country and could not be interfered with except by an increase of rent. But the Bill was something different altogether. It proposed to give the people an opportunity of settling upon the lands in such quantities as to make it a paying occupation, and at the same time to secure the squatters in possession of the remainder of their runs for a certain fixed period.

Mr. GOVETT said the question as to the portion to be resumed from any run was one of very great importance; because anyone who understood anything about carrying on a station would know that as soon as land was resumed from a run it became of very little use to the original holder—the squatter—because he could not go on making his improvements. His improvements on that portion must all cease, and would cease whenever it was resumed; and on that ground alone he thought the hon. member for Burke had asked a question of very great importance—as to the time that would be taken by the commissioner to divide a run. The squatter would not know what half of the run he would be able to retain: he would have no say in the matter at all as to which portion of the run he would be able to hold; so that it was a most necessary thing that he should know, as soon as possible after his run was brought under the Act, what portion he was to retain. He might have his woolshed or his house taken away from him, and, in that case, he would have to go to work to make further improvements. He thought the hon. the Minister for Lands would agree with him that no one would go on making improvements on the resumed part of his run, which was practically of very little use to him.

Mr. MOREHEAD said the Minister for Lands had fenced, or rather did not reply to, his question as to the relative position, so far as rent was concerned, of the holders of runs under subsections (*a*), (*b*), and (*c*). He had pointed out, over and over again, that those who were now under subsection (*a*) had, since 1869, paid more than twice the rent of those who held under subsections (*b*) and (*c*); and he maintained that that was an element which should be considered by the Government, and that some reason should be given by the Minister for Lands why it had not been taken into consideration, as it evidently had not been, in calculating the portions of land taken from the holders under those subsections. He certainly thought that those who held under subsection (*a*) were entitled to very great consideration for the reason he had given; and the hon. member himself had had to admit that there was a right of resumption of even indefeasible leases under the Bill, for public purposes. The hon. gentleman used the word "freehold," but he (Mr. Morehead) maintained it would apply to indefeasible leases if the land was required for public purposes.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: And freeholds too.

Mr. MOREHEAD said he was talking about indefeasible leases—there, was that right?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: Yes.

Mr. MOREHEAD said that was what he had said in the first instance. He knew perfectly well that there was provision for the resumption of indefeasible leases even under the Bill. The hon. gentleman had said that he did not share his opinion as to the value of indefeasible leases, and no doubt he was perfectly correct on that point. He (Mr. Morehead) held that any Parliament had power to undo what a previous Parliament had done. It had been done over and over again; it was done by that Bill, inasmuch as it repealed the existing pre-emptive right. The hon. gentleman said it was not a right, but he (Mr. Morehead) maintained that it was. If it was not a right, why did the hon. gentleman take the trouble to introduce a clause in the Bill to repeal it; and why did he introduce a Bill last session for the same purpose? However, as far as he had gone, he had repealed that right, except under certain limitations, those limitations admitting the existence of a right which the hon. gentleman and the Premier had on more than one occasion denied the existence of. He had stated, and would continue to state while he had a seat in the House, that the talk about an indefeasible lease was simply an attempt to cheat the pastoral tenant, because there could not possibly be any such thing.

The HON. B. B. MORETON said he quite agreed with the hon. member for Balonne that there could be no such thing as an indefeasible lease. The Bill distinctly stated that the whole or any part of a holding could be resumed with six months' notice, the same as under the present Act. If they looked back at the meaning of "holding" in the interpretation clause they found it meant "the land held by any lessee." If they looked at what "lessee" meant they found he was "the holder of a lease under the provisions of the Act"; and they read further that "pastoral tenant" meant "the holder of a lease or license under any of the Acts hereby repealed." It was very evident, therefore, that no lease was an indefeasible lease under the Bill.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS said the hon. member for Balonne tried to draw a distinction between freehold and leasehold property and the way it could be dealt with by resumption. There was no practical difference between them. Freehold might be resumed and compensation had to be paid, and if leasehold were resumed full compensation for the land and improvements was paid; so that it was in exactly the same position as freehold. The Bill recognised the claims of a leaseholder to compensation for resumption just as much as that of the freeholder. The hon. gentleman objected also to the method of arranging the quantity to be resumed. The basis upon which the holders were compensated was according to the length of time the lands had been held, and he thought that was the fairest way. He thought the length of time a man had held his run should determine the quantity to be resumed. He could not conceive any fairer way than that. Certainly, the hon. member had suggested another intricate method, but they might just as well take into consideration the amount of profit a man had extracted out of a run, in determining the quantity to be resumed. The only way the holder could be got at was the number of years he had had the use of his run; and the fact of his paying a higher rent after having held his run for a long time was the result of the Act under which he held

Mr. MOREHEAD said the hon. gentleman knew perfectly well that he was in error in what he stated, and he would lead the Committee to believe that the rents were determined on the basis of a sliding scale. To a certain extent that statement was correct, in so far as those who had taken up land under the Act of 1869 were concerned; but, as he had pointed out, those who held land under the Act of 1863 were fixed at a rental based on the rent paid by the tenant on the 30th September, 1869. That rent was paid by the holders who had got their runs for the second term. There were two periods. The twenty years' holders were those who came in the second period, and their rents were fixed at a very high rate. They were fixed at something like 20s., or more, when they came under the Act of 1869. Now, those who took up country under the Act of 1869 took it up at 3s. a square mile, but the highest rent they could pay for the first period of seven years was 5s. a square mile and then came a sliding scale by which the rent was increased. He said that those men who came in then, and who had held for twenty

years, were those whose rents were fixed at a very high rate on the 30th September, 1869; and from that date until now they had paid three or four times the rent of those who would come under subsections (*b*) and (*c*). Putting everything together—the high rent those men had paid and the development of the country which they had brought about—having gone into the wilderness, and having been as it were the creators of the territory—their cases should be taken into consideration. What he had mentioned not only went a long way but wholly equalised the position of the twenty years' holders with the position of those who held under the shorter tenure and who would not have gone out into the country had it not been for those whose runs were included under subsection (*a*). He was putting on one side altogether those whom the Minister for Lands seemed to disregard, and always had disregarded; those were the men who had come in afterwards, and had bought runs where the tenure was of twenty years' duration. Supposing all were equal; supposing (*a*), (*b*), and (*c*) were held by men under each of those provisions; he then said that even on that ground those under subsection (*a*) were entitled to equal consideration, if not more, than those who were under subsections (*b*) and (*c*). Therefore, he thought his suggestion should meet with the approval of the Government.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS said he did not at all recognise or admit the justice of the hon. gentleman's contention in that matter. He maintained this: that if a man had been in possession of a run for a long period he ought to be in a position to surrender a larger proportion than a man who had held his run only for a period of, say, five years. Some men in the older settled districts had held all their runs for twenty years. As a matter of fact, in a great many districts, the present occupiers had held their runs for twenty-five years, but in many instances nearly half of the runs had not been held for more than twelve years. Some of those men had originally only taken up sufficient to secure their position; had taken up water frontages; and while some had held their runs for twenty-five years, a full half of some parts of the runs had not been held for more than twelve years. So that the argument of the hon. gentleman in that respect did not altogether hold if they came to the practical outcome of the question. If a man had held his run for a long period he should surrender a larger portion than a man holding for a shorter period. That was an incontestably just view to take, and he could not conceive the possibility of viewing it in any other way. The hon. gentleman wanted to put all pastoral lessees on the same footing, so that a man who had only held his lease five or seven years should surrender the same proportion of his run as a man who had held his lease for twenty or thirty years; and he could not see the justice of that.

Mr. NORTON said he would ask why the distinction should be any longer retained between the settled and the unsettled districts? There was no object in keeping it up now as far as he could see. The same division was to be made on all the runs in the settled districts. In his own district there were runs which had been taken up within the past twelve months, and it seemed unfair to treat them in the same way as runs which had been held for a number of years. If the hon. gentleman would refer to the records in the Lands Office he would find that what he had stated was perfectly correct. Not only so, but along the northern coast the country was left vacant for years, because people could not be found to take it up at £2 per square mile. A great deal of that land had been taken up within the last year or two, but other portions were left until people were allowed to take it up at £1 per square mile. He should like to hear from the Minister for Lands the object there was in keeping up any longer the distinction between the settled and the unsettled districts.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS said the hon. member had given one or two isolated instances——

Mr. NORTON: There are plenty of them.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS said that there were not. He knew the settled districts very well, and the land that had not been taken up there till within the last year or two could not be of very much value; otherwise it would have been taken up years ago. As to the distinction between the settled and the unsettled districts, he would remind the hon. member that the settled districts had for many years been open for selection, and a great deal of settlement had taken place there. There had been large resumptions for that purpose. But the leaseholders in the settled districts had the advantage of being near to railways and markets, which gave their runs an additional value. Besides, more settlement would probably take place in the future in the settled districts than in the unsettled districts. If the Government were likely to dispose of the resumed portions in the unsettled districts as quickly, he should be disposed to extend to them a lease of not more than ten years, as in the settled districts; but he did not think that was likely to be the case.

Mr. NORTON said the question as regarded settled districts was not one as to the value of the runs, but as to the time which they had been occupied; and his question with reference to the settled and the unsettled districts was not so much with respect to length of tenure, as to the principle of subdivision. In the central and southern portions of the colony one-half the runs would be resumed, and was there any reason why runs in other parts of the colony, which had been occupied quite as long, and from which the lessees had derived just as great benefits, should be treated more leniently both in the matter of subdivision and tenure, especially when the latter country would probably be taken up quite as rapidly when thrown open for selection? If the question was to be based upon length of occupation, all runs which had been held for the same length of time ought to be treated alike, both as to subdivision and term of lease to be given.

The HON. SIR T. MCILWRAITH said that hon. members who remembered the position of the squatters when the 1869 Act was passed would see that there was a good deal of room for the contention of his hon. friend. That Act settled matters up to that time between the Government and the squatters, and put all the pastoral lessees of the colony on the same footing. In deciding now the amount of land to be taken away from the different pastoral lessees, the Committee ought simply to consider the length of time those leases had been held under the Act of 1869. Matters were deliberately squared up to that time, and the tenure of runs was so fixed as to put all squatters in the colony on the same footing. The hon. gentleman—as stated by the hon. member for Balonne—in fixing the amount to be resumed, had not taken that matter into consideration. If the hon. gentleman would look at the last paragraph of clause 23, he would see that it was there provided that—

> "For the purposes of this section, the lease of any run the term whereof has expired by effluxion of time since the thirty-first day of December, one thousand eight hundred and eighty-two, shall be deemed to be a subsisting lease until the expiration of the period of six months hereinbefore mentioned."

The leases referred to there must have run at least twenty-nine years before the 31st December, 1882, or thirty-one years up to the present time. Then it was quite possible that they might have been held under the Orders in Council. He spoke of them as taken up under the Act of 1863, or some previous Act, but there were some runs held under the Orders in Council, by which some had been held for a longer time—for thirty-one years. The clause proposed to put those who held runs for twenty years exactly in the same category as those men. From the very position of matters, those men must have held their runs for thirty-one years at the present time. If the hon. gentleman had laid down as a distinct principle the length of time those leases had been held, he was most glaringly departing from it in putting those men who had held their runs for thirty-one years in the same category as those who had only held their runs for twenty years. It must be plain, to those who remembered the legislation in 1869, that there was a clear squaring up of all accounts between the pastoral lessee and the Government. They were all put on the same footing under the Act of 1869, and why should they not recognise that position now? If the Government regarded the amount of time that they held their lease in deciding how much should be taken from them—and determined by the time of the lease they had held under the Act of 1869—he thought that would be only fair. He maintained that the principle was right that they should decide by the amount of time they had held their leases.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS said he did not know whether he could add anything to what he had said before on that question. The hon. gentleman had just repeated the argument of the hon. member for Balonne. He must remind the hon. gentleman how the runs which he said were held for thirty years were taken up under Orders in Council. A very large number of them were taken up under the Act of 1863. Numbers of them were held in outside places for seven or eight years—in some cases for nine or ten years, under the Orders-in-Council—before they came under that Act of 1863. The lessees held them by paying their rent; and he knew of one instance where he had to go for fifty or eighty miles beyond one of those runs before he could get anything like fresh country; and that runholder did not occupy his run until he (the Minister for Lands) occupied country nearly 100 miles away from him. Numbers of cases of that kind were to be found all over the country. He did not see why those runs should receive any special consideration. All the runs which had been occupied about twenty years were in pretty much the same position as those that had been thirty years, except on the coast, where they proposed to deal with them in a different way. There they had had superior advantages, and therefore they had got a shorter term of lease. There might be some runs also on the Downs and in the Burnett district—about 250, as the hon. member for Balonne said the other night. In the majority of instances the runs were in very poor districts indeed, and he thought they ought to be dealt with under the scrub leases of the Bill. He did not see that the distinction was so great as to justify or require any such alteration or re-arrangement in the time or quantity, as the hon. the leader of the Opposition had suggested.

The HON. SIR T. MCILWRAITH said it had been a principle in all legislation applicable to pastoral lessees, that they should do everything they possibly could to induce the pastoral lessees to occupy and stock their runs. It had been considered a merit if they did it, and it had been considered almost a crime, especially in the eyes of the hon. member, if they did not stock their runs. But here the hon. gentleman came forward and said that certain lessees had held runs and that there was an excuse for them in not occupying those runs. Instead of punishing the lessees for that non-occupation, the hon. gentleman actually claimed it as a merit for them, and said they ought to be considered, because they had not got advantages, and had paid their rents and had not stocked their runs. That was a kind of monopoly they had been waging war against all along. The hon. gentleman wanted to protect those men, and give them an advantage over other lessees.

The PREMIER said that in those days the lessees were under no obligation to stock their runs. He thought that the attempts of his colleague, the Minister for Lands, to enforce the stocking of runs had not met with that sympathy from the Opposition that they ought to have received; so that their indignation seemed to be expended in vain. In a matter of that sort they must draw the line in some way. It might be an improvement to draw the line in another way than that proposed. But the best they could do in legislation was to draw the line somewhere that would be, on the whole, just. That was the nearest they could do in framing the law. Some other scheme might do equal justice. The scheme proposed was that if people had enjoyed their runs for twenty years they must give up one-half, and if they had enjoyed them for a less period one-third, and so on.

The HON. SIR T. MCILWRAITH said that the hon. member, the Premier, was quite right in saying that in those days it was not obligatory on the pastoral lessee to stock his runs. The very fact of his not doing so was not justified by saying that the law did not compel him to stock his run. The lessee did what monopolists always did: he monopolised land to the public detriment without stocking it. If it was an evil not to stock a run now, it was equally an evil at that time. Although the law did not say it was an evil, there was no question that it was. The hon. gentleman had evaded the argument he had used. He had not heard the hon. member for Balonne use that argument; but what he did say was that there was a squaring of accounts between the pastoral lessee and the Crown in 1869. Men were allowed to come under that Act or to go outside it. All men were put on an equality at that time. He thought that in dealing with squatters their position ought to be considered as under that Act. A lease ought to date from the commencement of the Act of 1869. Thus they would deal equally with all men, because they had left them equal with each other in 1869, and from that time their lease should date. Let them establish a principle that they should take half of a man's run which he had enjoyed for fifteen years; then, for every year he had enjoyed over that time, take so much less. It could be framed into the clause in a very little time, and would be applicable. He had not heard that argument answered at all, and he would like to hear it answered. It was not against the principles of the Bill; it was simply to get something like equity. That was going on the same principle that had been established by the Minister for Lands—namely, to take away from lands in proportion to the time they had been held under lease. That established the amount of land that should be resumed from men who had held longest under the Act of 1869, and showed that it would be reduced in certain proportion every year. They had a simple state of things to deal with, and it would make it much more simple and equitable than by the clause under consideration.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS said he understood the leader of the Opposition to argue that in the year 1869 arrangements were made by which squatters who held land under the Act of 1863, as well as those who took up country afterwards, could come under the Act of 1869, and that everything in the way of a new arrangement ought to start from that year. But he did not think so. He thought that the men who took up land under the Act of 1863 ought to be dealt with in the same way as those who occupied land under the Act of 1869. He was not quite sure that he understood the hon. gentleman; but it seemed that he wanted everything to start from the year 1869, as if all the men who occupied country held it under the Act passed in that year; whereas there were plenty who held runs under the Act of 1863, and some who held runs taken up even before that time. The arrangement for the appointment of runs in the Bill, according to the time they had been held, was quite as fair as that proposed by the hon gentleman.

Mr. MOREHEAD said he did not think the Minister for Lands grasped the contention of the leader of the Opposition, who had dealt with every part of the matter except the element of rent. The lessees who came under the Act of 1869 were taxed at the rental paid on the 30th September of that year, and from that time they had to pay on a largely increased scale. That was a matter which should be duly considered in such a Bill as that before the Committee; and he thought that a fair solution of the matter would be to accept the proposition he had made—to resume only one-quarter of the run instead of one-half. The leader of the Opposition in the statement he made dealt broadly and fairly with the question, when he said that in the year 1869 every runholder had the opportunity of coming under the Act passed in that year, that a large majority of them did so, and that those who did not were not much to be pitied, because by the 40th clause of that Act they could get a renewal of their lease for fourteen years. So that the latter stood practically in the same position as those who put themselves under the Act of 1869. He held that the increased rent paid by those who took up land under the Act of 1863, and afterwards came under the Act of 1869, should be taken into consideration; and with that exception he agreed entirely with the statement of the leader of the Opposition, who gave a succinct and proper description of what took place when the Act of 1869 was passed.

Mr. PALMER said that although the Minister for Lands might be immovable when assailed by the arguments put forward against the division of runs proposed by the clause, he thought the Premier was more amenable to any appeals which might be made for common justice and fairness. According to subsection (*a*), those who had held leases for twenty years would lose half their runs; and, as had been shown by the hon. member for Balonne, those were the very men who had borne the burden and heat of the day—who had been instrumental in settling the colony and making it available for those who came years afterwards. The hon. gentleman had shown also that those lessees who had occupied their runs for twenty years were paying rent in excess of that paid by those who took up land afterwards, by 15 or 20 per cent.; and he agreed with the hon. member that in those cases only a quarter of the runs should be resumed. That would meet the requirements of settlement for years to come. When more land was wanted for settlement it would be time enough to resume it from the older occupiers. But, in any case, it was unjust to resume half of a run because it had been held for twenty years, while in the case of a run taken up yesterday only a quarter would be resumed. Many runs were composed of blocks held under leases varying in length—having five, ten, fifteen, and twenty years respectively to run, for instance; and, that being the case, they could not fairly be divided according to a common basis. Many of those who held runs under the Act of 1863 came under the Act of 1869, but in the latter year there was much distress all over the country, and it was well known that many of the runs in the western districts went begging at that time. The consequence was that many occupiers kept only the blocks on which their head-stations were, forfeiting the rest; so that when they came under the Act of 1869 they did so only with respect to one block. The marginal note to the clause was "Consequences of surrender," and one of the consequences would be the division of the runs. One matter which was full of consequence to the owners was whether a straight line drawn through their runs would meet every purpose. Anything else would be quite a secondary matter. It would be a matter of very great importance to the owner of a station if his head-station, on which he had employed the best years of his life, were left in the resumed part, and it would be a very great injustice. It was not a matter of the mere value of the head-station, but the years that he had spent in building it up; and it was generally on the best portion of his run. He had centred his energies on that one place, and the compensation that would be given would be the smallest matter connected with it. If a division were made the head-station should be on the part that was retained by the owner. There was no provision made in the clause, although it was a very long one, whereby the lessee should have a choice in the matter—whether he was to retain the parts upon which his head-station and improvements stood, or whether they were to be taken out of his hands. The pre-emption clause came in then; many of those gentlemen had taken up those lands because they thought that compensation would be given. He trusted the Premier would use his influence with the Minister for Lands, who, he must say, generally rubbed against hon. members of the Opposition by the manner in which he referred to any argument against him. He said, "I have said so and that is sufficient;" he was immovable, and gave no reasons. The hon. gentleman should listen to a little reason when it was put to him. Between the hon. member for Balonne and the Minister for Lands the squatters seemed to be "between the devil and the deep sea," and must take their chance one way or the other, or else go to the floor.

The PREMIER said it had been pointed out that the Government had endeavoured to draw a line which would be the most convenient for the working of the scheme contained in the Bill, without attempting to do minute and exact justice in every case. If he had followed the debate correctly, there appeared to be two alternative schemes which had been suggested, one by the leader of the Opposition, and the other by the hon. member for Balonne. If he understood the hon. member for Mulgrave aright, he proposed that the area to be resumed should vary in proportion to the length of time the lessee had had his run. If they took half as the maximum amount, and twenty years as the period to justify the resumption of that half—then if a run had been held for less than that time the proportion would be a quantity varying in the same proportion. To put it in another way, one-fortieth part of the run would be resumed for every year the run had been held, up to twenty. The other scheme, proposed by the hon. member

for Balonne, was that all runs should be treated alike. They should be divided into two, and then divided into two again, and one-fourth should be taken. But one-fourth would not be enough. They could not afford to give up three-fourths for fifteen years. If there was a provision to take another fourth, at a fixed period, it would be more reasonable. That would probably come to about the same thing as the Bill proposed now. The board could not afford to give leases indefeasible—in the common acceptation of the term—for three-fourths of the runs for fifteen years. Those were the two schemes which had been suggested in opposition to the one contained in the Bill, which was admitted to be an arbitrary scheme. The question was, which arbitrary scheme would do most justice to the tenants and give most satisfaction? That was the question to be considered by the Committee.

Mr. DONALDSON said he recognised the position in which the Government were placed as this: that they were anxious to have a certain quantity of land which they thought would be sufficient to meet the requirements of settlement for the next term of years. Recognising that necessity, he thought it was a great pity that they had not certain information before them to show how much land would be available for selection, so that they could compare that with the settlement which had taken place since the foundation of the colony. Then they might have a fair idea of what amount would be required in future. Certainly it was anticipated by the Government—and, no doubt, by a great number of other hon. members, himself included—that larger settlement would take place under the Bill than had taken place under the previous Acts. It was only natural to suppose that that would be the case, because there was not only a larger population, but, if the Bill became as popular as the Government claimed it would be, it would have the effect of inducing settlement from the other colonies. Therefore, he recognised that they were desirous of obtaining a sufficient quantity of land to be able to satisfy the demand. He thought that a much less quantity than that proposed would be sufficient; because, first of all, the line on the map was not a hard-and-fast one. If the demands for land were as great as was anticipated, the board could extend that line and go further afield. There was a large portion to the southward and westward of the colony, that was not at present coming within the scheme. He therefore thought it would be a harsh measure that one-half of any run should be taken from the lessee at the present time. It should be done more gradually. His idea was, as he said on the second reading of the Bill, that one-fourth should be taken now and another fourth within five years, and a security of tenure be given for the remaining half for fifteen years. One-fourth would be quite sufficient for all requirements for the present, and the other could be taken within a reasonable time. If more land were required, the board could extend the line of the present schedule. He could quite sympathise with the Government in wishing to have sufficient land to satisfy the claims of people who wished to get it. They had also to consider the case of the pastoral lessees, some of whom would suffer very severely. In a time like the present a man would have to sacrifice half his stock. He trusted that some modification of the scheme would be adopted. Another thing they should remember was that they had not only to provide for the people in the colony now, or who would come here immediately, but that they had to legislate a little for the future. They had a growing population in the colony who were not of a sufficient age now to take advantage of the Act, and it was only fair that they should keep something in hand for them. They should not think only of people who came from other countries, but should think of their local-bred stock also. There was another matter to which he wished to allude, in subsections (*f*) and (*g*). He found those subsections read as follows:—

"The average quality and capabilities of the resumed part are to be, as far as practicable, the same as the average quality and capability of the whole run.

"In cases where the quality and capabilities of different parts of a run are unequal, an allowance may be made in area; and the proportion to be included in the resumed part may be increased or diminished accordingly, so as to make the relative values of the resumed part and the remainder of the run bear the relative proportions hereinbefore prescribed."

He thought those very fair provisions indeed; but as the pastoral lessee would not have the power to retain any portion of land that he might wish, that matter would rest with the Minister, the board, or the commissioner. He did not know which of the three the responsibility would rest upon; but, as it would rest with some of them, and not with the lessee, he thought it was only fair that a small addition should be made to the clause to the effect that the home-station and woolshed should not be included in the resumed part of the run. He thought that that was particularly necessary, after the arguments they had heard to show that the improvements would be paid for according to their value to an incoming tenant; and that that would be very unfair to the pastoral lessee. He was not going to follow all through the arguments of the hon. member for Balonne, with regard to the old and new lessees. It seemed like a handicap horse-race, and the hon. member argued that because certain men started some time before with heavier rentals they should now receive extra consideration. That was a matter of opinion, and he was not going to argue against the hon. member. The Minister for Lands, in drawing up the Bill, had attempted to arrive at what was a fair calculation in making the subdivision of the runs, but he thought the hon. gentleman went a little too far in proposing to take as much as one-half of the runs at the present time. He would suggest—and he trusted the concession would be made—that a fourth should be resumed now, and a fourth in five years, and for the remaining portion security of tenure should be given. He thought if that plan were adopted there would be sufficient land resumed for all the requirements of settlement at the present time. As he had already pointed out, if under that plan the runs within the schedule did not afford sufficient land the schedule could be extended. While speaking upon the subject he wished to say that he was not arguing from selfish motives in that matter. If the runs in which he was interested were within the schedule he would prefer himself that one-half of them should be taken, because it would be of advantage to him on account of the quality of those runs. There were others, however, who were not in that position. He made those few remarks to show that it was not from selfish motives that he desired to alter the clause.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS said he had not the slightest doubt that, if one-fourth was resumed now, that would be ample for the next five years. The hon. member was right in saying that it would not put the lessee in a better position to take one-fourth of his run now and one-fourth in five years, because, as he had pointed out, for the half which was not to be resumed he would have to pay a higher rental. He had no objection to that alteration, as he was quite satisfied they would have quite enough; they would have as much as they could possibly require for all purposes of settlement within the next five years, if they took one

fourth now and the other fourth within five years from the time of the resumption. If he had any doubt that that would not be ample for the requirements of settlement he would object to it. As it was he did not object to the alteration at all. It would be an advantage to the State in another respect, inasmuch as the State would receive more rental under the Bill.

The HON. SIR T. MCILWRAITH asked if he was to understand that the Government had accepted the proposition to take one-fourth of the run now and one-fourth in five years—that was to say, only half of the half to be resumed now, and the balance in five years?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: Yes.

The HON. SIR T. MCILWRAITH said he thought that was a matter worthy of a great deal of discussion, and it had not been discussed yet, so far as he could see, unless by the hon. gentleman who made the proposition. He did not think the hon. the Minister for Lands could have considered his own Bill or the arguments which were used by the Government against some amendments brought forward by the hon. member for Gregory. He thought the proposition of the hon. member for Warrego was settled by the arguments used by the Premier in answer to the amendments brought forward by the hon. member for Gregory, with regard to the improvements that would have to be paid for when the half was resumed. He understood that it was admitted by the Government, though it was not in the Bill, that the pastoral lessees were to be compensated for all the improvements they put on their holdings. If the Minister for Lands or the Government accepted the proposition of the hon. member for Warrego, were they going to put in additional clauses to prevent improvements being clapped on at such a rate within the five years as to prevent any profitable second resumption?

The PREMIER: It would be necessary to do so.

The HON. SIR T. MCILWRAITH said that it would be necessary to do so, and he thought the proposition absurd. It was just the sort of thing to induce the pastoral lessee to prevent resumption when the time came for his land to be resumed, by putting up improvements which would make it scarcely worth while for the Government to resume the land. Whatever was to be resumed, he held, should be resumed at once.

Mr. MOREHEAD: Hear, hear! Let us understand what we are going to do.

The HON. SIR T. MCILWRAITH said he would like very much to hear the clause discussed, as it seemed to him at first blush a most objectionable clause. If a lessee was to be paid for all his improvements on the portion of his run resumed, and they took a quarter now, and another quarter five years hence, the Government would have to pay for so many improvements that it would not be worth their while to resume it. In fact, it was the very argument used by the Premier against the proposition of the hon. member for Gregory. At all events the proposition had not as yet been sufficiently discussed, and he would like to hear it further discussed.

Mr. HIGSON said he thought the objection the hon. member for Mulgrave had put before the House could be got over very easily—that was to say, by surveying the runs now and dividing them into halves now. They could then set apart the quarter which was to be resumed now, and the quarter which was to be resumed after five years. He thought that would overcome all the difficulties as to the improvements.

Mr. MOREHEAD said he thought they should have perfect definiteness with regard to the clause. He believed the proposition he made—that one-fourth should be taken from the leases, except those under subsection (*c*)—would fully meet the case. If a lease were given for fifty years, whenever the land was wanted it could be obtained from those who chose to come under the provisions of the Bill. He agreed with the hon. member for Mulgrave that the modification proposed by the hon. member for Warrego was in no way an improvement; it would neither be good for the pastoral tenant nor for the State. The proposition to give a lease for fifty years, and to resume one-fourth at the end of five years, was fraught with danger. He could conceive the possibility of a pastoral tenant putting improvements on the one-fourth to be resumed, and enforcing the State to pay for them when it was thrown open to the public. He maintained that it was very much better to take one-fourth absolutely from the runs included in the schedule, and throw that open to the public, leaving the future to look after itself to a certain extent whenever resumptions were necessary under the 98th clause. He hoped the Government would see their way to accept that proposal. He should like to hear from the Minister for Lands, assuming that proposal were carried, how much land within the red line would be thrown open to the public.

The HON. SIR T. MCILWRAITH said he recognised the desirability, that had been pointed out by the Premier, of fixing a basis that would be equitable to all lessees. He had no doubt the Government had done their best to study the interests of them all. He thought the Minister for Lands misunderstood his argument when he inferred that he (Hon. Sir T. McIlwraith) wished to deprive lessees under the Pastoral Leases Act of 1869 who had fourteen years' leases, from coming under the present Bill; he did not wish to disturb them at all. Recognising the difficulty of dealing with the pastoral leases under clause 29, there was another point that the Government might consider, by which they might come to an understanding on the present clause. He thought they ought to discuss what was really wanted for purposes of settlement; and if they arrived at a settlement on that point the clause could be easily disposed of. Considering the extension of population in the colony, the facilities they were making to increase it, the large amount of land that was included within the red line, the powers the Government had for extending that land wherever additional settlement was required, and the advantage of encouraging settlement in one block—he thought the Minister for Lands must see that he had provided too much in the Bill. There was a great danger of doing that because the land to be resumed was to be given in fifty years' leases; and as it was a danger, they ought to try what an experiment would do. In making his proposal, it was with a view of limiting the evils of the Bill as much as possible. He was quite sure that under the Bill the greater part of the resumptions would be under subsection (*a*); that would be a long way the largest portion of the land at present inside the red line. Of course, if they had taken the whole colony it would not have been. The leases for the most part had existed twenty years; that was since the lands were taken up. Then the next period was ten years and less than twenty, and of those lands one-third was to be included; and in subsection (*c*), where the period was less than ten years, the amount was one-fourth. The Minister for Lands had pointed out that there was a very small class under that subsection. In addition to that, the very fact that these leases were

taken up last showed that it was bad land and not likely to be taken up for lease under the Bill; they might therefore exclude subsection (*c*) as not worthy of consideration, and compromise the matter by making subsections (*a*) and (*b*) the same, taking one-fourth from the whole of those lands. He thought that would be a great deal more equitable than the proposal in the Bill; it would provide quite as much land as the hon. gentleman required, and it would give quite enough for all settlement that would take place before the expiration of the leases that were put down there for fifty years.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS said he thought the first proposal made by the hon. gentleman was better than the last one, because the latter would altogether limit the effect of the Act. The one would be very much the same as in the Bill, the only difference being that it would have been a more equitable subdivision and arrangement of runs. The proposal in the Bill certainly divided the runs into three lots. The proposal formulated by the Premier showed that a fair quantity would be taken up on each run, and the result would be the same as that proposed in the Bill. He was, therefore, not inclined to accept the proposal of the leader of the Opposition. The hon. member for Balonne asked what amount of land there would be available for resumption if a fourth were taken? The amount in the unsettled districts would be 40,000 square miles, and in the settled districts 2,600 square miles; that was a fourth of the total area within the schedule. One-fourth in the settled districts would certainly not be sufficient; the half at least would have to be dealt with there. Then the hon. gentleman asked whether the Government could give an estimate of the probable amount of settlement that would go on under the Bill. He (the Minister for Lands) thought that any attempt to approximate to that would be a very vague one indeed—so vague that it would be hardly worth while entering upon the calculation. The object was to get enough land for probable requirements. The land would not be thrown out of use by being resumed; the lessees would still have the use of it, and it would be available for settlement when required.

Mr. MOREHEAD: The lessee will not improve it.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: He would very likely improve it enough to make it useful. For instance, country that was unwatered, the lessee would probably provide with water. He could not conceive of anyone neglecting to use his land in that way; and water was an improvement that could be used by the occupant who would come afterwards.

Mr. STEVENS said he would ask the Minister for Lands whether he preferred the scheme proposed by the leader of the Opposition of amalgamating subsections (*a*) and (*b*), to the proposition made by the hon. member for Warrego to resume a fourth of the run now, and then another fourth five years hence?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS said he preferred the proposition of the leader of the Opposition, providing for a gradual scale for leases from five years and upwards.

Mr. STEVENS said the leader of the Opposition made a proposal for amalgamating the leases in subsections (*a*) and (*b*). That was the scheme he referred to, and he wished to know whether the Minister for Lands preferred that to the proposition of the hon. member for Warrego that a fourth of the run should be taken at first and another fourth in five years' time.

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN said the scheme which the Minister for Lands stated he was willing to adopt was rather too complicated. It would be rather difficult to work. They had, therefore, better take a certain quantity, say a third or a fourth, and make that absolute. He thought the hon. gentleman had made a mistake as to the quantity of land that would be available, taking one-fourth of the area within the schedule There were 160,000,000 acres within the schedule. That was stated in that House by the Minister for Lands himself, and it had been commented upon in the public Press as 160,000,000 acres. The fourth of that was 40,000,000 acres, and that was the quantity that would be available for settlement—not 42,600 square miles. Of course, if a third were taken the area would be greater.

The PREMIER said it was difficult to get the exact area of course, because some country was unavailable; but, according to the information he had, the area under lease in the unsettled districts was 160,000 square miles. A fourth of that was 40,000 square miles, a half 80,000 square miles, and a third 53,000. That estimate was only approximate. The proposition first made by the leader of the Opposition to take from one-half of a run downwards according to the tenure, had, as he (the Premier) had pointed out before, the apparent advantage of being very fair; but he doubted very much whether it would be so fair after all. The proposition of the hon. member for Warrego would have the effect of providing more land for settlement than the proposition in the Government Bill; that was to say, more land for settlement in the course of five years, though it would not provide so much at first. The objection had been raised that a tenant might put valuable improvements on his run with the view of preventing a five years' lease from being resumed; but that could be met by deciding that he should not be entitled to compensation for any improvements put on the land without the consent of the board. Probably there would be no objection to that; it would be a very fair proposition to make. Hon. members appeared to be divided in their opinions as to the best plan to adopt in the matter, and had suggested three modes which would probably come to the same thing in the long run. It was entirely a question of what would be the most convenient in administration, and what would be the fairest to the pastoral tenant. It was essentially a matter upon which the Government ought to be assisted, and the Committee also assisted and guided, by an expression of opinion from hon. members conversant with the subject.

The HON. SIR T. MCILWRAITH said he had admitted, with the Premier, that there were many difficulties to contend with in dealing with the question; and he had tried to get the matter put on a fresh basis by asking what amount of land would be required for settlement. There appeared to be some difference of opinion as to the area that would be available within the schedule. Taking the figures of the Minister for Lands he found that, supposing under subsections (*a*) and (*b*) one-third of the runs was taken, they would have 36,000,000 acres available for settlement. That was supposing there were 40,000 square miles in the unsettled districts, and 2,000 square miles in the settled districts; 42,000 square miles altogether. It was useless considering (*c*), because it was necessarily bad, and not likely to be required for selection; so that they practically had only to consider (*a*) and (*b*). If they were put in the same schedule, and one-third taken from both, he thought both sides of the Committee would agree that it was a fair compromise. That plan would make very little less land available than before.

Mr. JORDAN said that, unless there was likely to be a very great demand, which he did not anticipate to the extent the Minister for

Lands did now, it would not be desirable to resume too much land, because the resumed portion of the runs, until actually occupied, would remain at the old rents, whereas the portion let for fifteen years would be at increased rents. The proposition of the hon. leader of the Opposition commended itself to his judgment—that one-third should be taken of (*b*) and (*a*), and one-fourth of (*c*). He would not leave (*c*) out altogether. He thought that would meet the idea of the hon. gentleman, who, perhaps, understood the question better than he did; and it would provide quite sufficient land for all probable requirements for the next fifteen years, besides possessing the advantage of securing an increased rent for the portions leased.

The HON. B. B. MORETON said he thought the compromise ought to be taken into consideration by the Government, as it was one which a great number of members on both sides of the Committee would agree to.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS said the question was whether there would be sufficient land to meet all requirements for fifteen years. The Government did not wish to interfere with the leases of the pastoral tenants in case more land was required for settlement. They wished to give them an assured position. Small settlement, such as was contemplated by the Bill, could not be spread at once all over the area comprised in the schedule; it would have to be concentrated in many places; and if more land was required for settlement within the fifteen years than the Bill provided, they would be shut out. If one-third was not enough, where was more to be got?

Mr. MOREHEAD: Under the 98th clause, or by extending the schedule.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: Well, it is quite possible that the country outside the schedule, away towards our South Australian border, might be able by that time to support small settlement.

Mr. MOREHEAD: Hear, hear! The country is not likely to go back, I hope.

Mr. STEVENSON said that, according to the exposition given by the Minister for Lands a few nights ago, the Government had power at any time to extend the schedule.

Mr. MOREHEAD said he would point out to the Minister for Lands that it would make very little difference if the lands comprised in subsection (*c*) were omitted, and one-third taken of (*a*) and (*b*) combined. He thought the hon. gentleman would not find more than a million or two acres in the whole thing, and that would be all the difference between his plan and that of the leader of the Opposition.

The HON. SIR T. MCILWRAITH said that the hon. Minister for Lands would see that there would be 36,000,000 acres immediately available, and there was power of extending that at any time to 190,000,000. That appeared to be enough to provide for settlement for the next fifteen years.

The PREMIER said that, according to the figures he had before him, the effect of altering subsection (*a*) by taking only one-third instead of one-half would be to give up 6,000,000 acres.

The HON. SIR T. MCILWRAITH said there would be 36,000,000 acres inside the red line, and there was power of extension so as to include the block on the New South Wales border—there were 12,000,000 acres there—and then it could be extended towards the western boundary.

Mr. PALMER said that as far as he was concerned he was disinterested in the matter, as he was far removed from the schedule; but he would point out that the extension of the schedule down to the New South Wales border would give an immense area of country to be operated upon; and he thought the simpler they made the resumptions the better. He believed that if they treated all the runs alike, and extended the schedule to the border, they would give ample room for all the settlement that was likely to take place during the next fifteen years.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS said the whole question resolved itself into what quantity of land would be required for settlement; and he did not know anybody who would attempt to give a fair estimate of that. The object of the Government was to secure enough land for all possible requirements, as long as they did not throw it out of use altogether. Under the Bill, the land resumed would not be thrown out of use, because it would be utilised in the same way as at present until required for other purposes. He could not consent to reduce the area to one-third, and lose, as the hon. the Premier had pointed out, 6,000,000 acres of land in the schedule. If no use was to be made of the land resumed, of course the matter would be one for serious consideration; but as it would be used in the same way that it was now, and by the same men, he did not see any good reason for consenting to the proposal of the hon. gentleman.

Mr. MOREHEAD said the whole matter in dispute between the Ministry and hon. members of the Opposition, in regard to the proposition of the hon. member for Mulgrave, appeared to have resolved itself into a question of 6,000,000 acres. As had been pointed out, if the loss of that area was likely to have the effect of checking settlement, it could easily be remedied by extending the schedule at the present time, so as to give 6,000,000 acres more for settlement. In that case he assumed that there would be no objection on the part of the Minister for Lands or the Premier. The Premier had stated that he did not think they should give up 6,000,000 acres, but he had not proved that he would be giving up anything at all. He (Mr. Morehead) doubted very much that he would give up 2,000,000 acres. Probably the hon. gentleman had arrived at his conclusion by having before him a table showing the area in acres held for more than twenty and for more than ten years. Other hon. members had not got that information; but he (Mr. Morehead), speaking with some knowledge on the subject, was of opinion that the hon. gentleman had exaggerated the loss in the amount of land that would be thrown open if the proposition of the hon. the leader of the Opposition were accepted. He thought, with the hon. member for Burnett, that that proposition was one that might very fairly be accepted by the Ministry. It bore out the principle of the Bill, and if it did decrease the area that would be thrown open to the public, that area might be almost indefinitely increased by altering the boundaries of the schedule.

Mr. ALAND said it appeared to be one of those matters upon which one of "the silent majority" might offer a remark.

Mr. MOREHEAD: How a "silent majority" can speak, I do not know.

Mr. ALAND: When a "silent majority" had anything to say——

Mr. MOREHEAD: They cease to be silent.

Mr. ALAND: They would say it. However, he rose for the purpose of expressing his opinion upon the subject, and he thought there was a great deal in the contention of the Opposition. The chief force of the argument of the Minister for Lands he took to be that he was not aware how much land would really be

required for settlement under the Bill. He (Mr. Aland) could not see that the 6,000,000 acres referred to could really make very much difference. The matter was one that lay in the hands of the Minister for Lands, because if he found that he was 6,000,000 acres short all he required to do was to extend the schedule. He (Mr. Aland) was therefore disposed to think that the hon. gentleman should yield upon a point of that kind.

The PREMIER said it must be remembered, when talking of land being locked up, that the proposition of the hon. the leader of the Opposition was that the oldest runs in the country, which, of course, were those nearest to settlement——

Mr. MOREHEAD: Many of them are not near settlement.

The PREMIER: The greater part of them were near settlement, and were those which would most likely be wanted for the people before many years; and to lock up two-thirds of that land absolutely for fifteen years was a very serious proposition. It was a proposition to lock up land with a vengeance. The Government wished to give as good a tenure as they could to the pastoral lessees, and at the same time they wanted sufficient land for settlement. He believed the proposition in the Bill was the fairest that could be made, but certainly the proposition made by the hon. member for Warrego was much fairer than that made by the leader of the Opposition, which, as he had pointed out, amounted to locking up two-thirds of the land for fifteen years.

Mr. STEVENSON said he would remind the hon. gentleman that he had already said that they had enough land within the schedule for purposes of settlement to last for fifteen years; and as they had been told by the Minister for Lands that the Government could extend the schedule at any time they liked, whenever they found more land was required for settlement, he did not see what objection there could be to one-third being taken, instead of one-half. Surely they could get enough land by going beyond the schedule to satisfy the requirements of settlement!

Mr. DONALDSON said the matter in dispute had been argued for some time, and the difficulty appeared to be to arrive at a conclusion as to which of the propositions that had been made was the fairest. He had advocated that one-fourth of the runs should be taken at once, and that after five years the other fourth should be taken. He should therefore introduce an amendment to that effect. He proposed that after the words "in other cases," in part 2 of the clause, the words "one-half also is to be included, provided," be inserted.

The PREMIER: Leaving us to fill in the proviso?

Mr. DONALDSON: Yes.

Question—That the words proposed to be inserted be so inserted—put.

Mr. MOREHEAD said he would point out—assuming that the amendment would not be proceeded with—taking into consideration the favour with which the proposal of the leader of the Opposition had been received—he would point out to the Premier that he was in error in stating that those squatters who had occupied runs for twenty years outside were not to be affected, in so far as half of their runs would be taken. He would point out to the Premier, and the Minister for Lands, and the Minister for Works, that the cause of settlement in the Western districts was this—that all the main watercourses were settled upon. Wherever there was water on the Thompson or Barcoo, or branch rivers, the frontages were taken up, and were held even up to the present time; but the best country was the country back from the frontage, and that was taken up long afterwards, and was nearer settlement than those, frontages were at the present time on the Lower Barcoo and elsewhere. The country lying between the Barcoo and Thompson was nearer to railway communication, and was taken up more recently than the country on the rivers. Those portions were much more favourable for settlement for grazing and agricultural farms than the earliest country taken up. Therefore the hon. gentleman was in error in saying that those, possibly, who were actually inside, so far as settlement was concerned, should be treated in a more favourable way than those outside. The proposal of the leader of the Opposition was to equalise things and say that a third should be taken from both the holders inside and outside—both of them being included in subsections (*a*) and (*b*). There should be no serious objection raised to that; and the Premier, had he known the circumstances under which the country was taken up, could raise no objection. As far as the amendment was concerned, he (Mr. Morehead) objected to it on behalf, not only of the pastoral lessees, but of those who wanted to settle on the country. If a lease for five years were to be given for the half of the half, which was the proposal of the member for Warrego, the result would be that improvements would be put up by the wealthy leaseholder in order that if the country was resumed a large amount would be paid for compensation by the incoming tenant. What the actual resumption would be the squatter would not know. It would not benefit him; for in that case he took it that the Government under the Bill would say, "No; we will let this land stand as it is. That portion can fall in if it likes, but that country will be useless, because it will be so crammed with the improvements that no small man can touch it; but we will go on to a portion where there are very few improvements, and we will pay compensation for the lease and for the improvements." The squatter who adopted that system, he was afraid, would be "hoist with his own petard." If the Bill was to become law, let them have something definite. Do not let them give to one man a five years' lease and to another a fifteen years' lease. Let them say they would take one-third of the runs; and he thought that was a large amount to take. He would have preferred one-fourth; but as it was the general wish he would be contented that one-third should be taken, and that subsection (*c*) should stand as it was. He thought that was the proper way of dealing with the question. He was certain the squatters wanted something definite, and they should by all means give them something definite.

The PREMIER said the hon. member for Warrego had moved the amendment that one-half should be taken, adding the word "provided" and leaving the proviso to be inserted. As he understood the hon. member's argument it was this, and he had heard the same scheme proposed long before to-night—in fact, every possible scheme for the division of runs had been proposed and discussed outside—that after the division of the run by the commissioner and board the resumed half would be divided into two again. The tenant would be told which piece was to be taken now, and which in five years' time. While the matter was being discussed he had endeavoured to formulate the provisions which would have to be inserted to give effect to the scheme. All that was required to be provided was, that the resumed part was to be divided into two equal parts, and that the board,

when they were confirming the division, should decide which half was to be immediately available for settlement, and which would be required in five years time. The point that the tenant might endeavour to embarrass the Government by piling up improvements was a serious one, but he would suggest, as he had done before, that the improvements should not to be made without the consent of the board. There was a provision of that kind already in the Bill with respect to another matter. Of course it could not be permissible to allow the tenant to pile up improvements on a five years' lease, in order to prevent the Government resuming the land. In comparing the proposed scheme with that contained in the Bill, it would have the advantage that it gave enough land at once for immediate settlement. By the scheme of the Bill the country would get rather more than one-third of the whole land. Under the amendment they would get one-fourth at once, and in five years another fourth. It was not likely that the whole of the first fourth would be taken up in five years, but if it was there would be more at the end of five years. So that on the whole the scheme would be more advantageous to the State than the scheme in the Bill. At the end of the five years there would be more land available for settlement than under the scheme proposed in the Bill. The proposition was therefore in favour of settlement, while that of the leader of the Opposition was as distinctly against it. Such being the case, the amendment appeared to be a beneficial one. As to the argument that the schedule could always be extended, of course it could; but it was not desirable to scatter settlement unnecessarily. The land most accessible—most easily available—ought to be first settled upon, and leaseholders nearest the coast and largest towns ought to be the first to give way. The Government had determined to support the amendment of the hon. member for Warrego, with the intention, if it was carried, of introducing other amendments into the clause to give effect to it—such as—the division to be made at once, the tenant to know which half he was to get for fifteen years and which fourth for five years, and not to prevent the Crown getting it at the end of five years by making excessive improvements upon it.

The HON. SIR T. MCILWRAITH said the hon. member for Warrego must surely have made a mistake in placing his amendment in that particular part of the clause. If put and carried, it would preclude him from moving his amendment, and he intended to test the opinion of the Committee by moving that in the last line of paragraph (*a*) "one-half" be omitted, with the view of inserting "one-third."

The PREMIER said that, as a matter of convenience, it was necessary that the hon. member for Warrego's amendment should be moved at the commencement of paragraph (*a*), because it made the area to be resumed entirely independent of any period that had elapsed, and would supersede the whole of paragraphs (*a*), (*b*), (*c*), and (*d*), which, if the amendment was carried, would have to be omitted. If not carried, the clause would remain as it stood, and could be dealt with in any other way the Committee might think fit. It was desirable to so put amendments, that if one was moved and negatived another might be moved afterwards.

The HON. SIR T. MCILWRAITH said he did not wish to have his own amendment blocked. The Premier had succeeded in explaining the amendment of the hon. member for Warrego in a way which that hon. member himself did not do, and it must have been the result of some private arrangement made between that hon. member and the Premier. The proposition was absurd. The Government proposed to take one-third, and the hon. member for Warrego proposed to make it one-half, although that hon. member never said so in his speech. It seemed very like a trick to place that amendment in front of paragraph (*a*) instead of at the end of it, and again at the end of paragraph (*b*). If the amendment of the hon. member for Warrego was as explained by the Premier—although the hon. member did not explain it in that way—it would have his most determined opposition.

Mr. MOREHEAD said that if three persons had been concerned in the amendment he should have called it a conspiracy; but, there being only two, it could hardly be called by that name. It was a motion of surprise. The Minister for Lands had stated over and over again that he would not depart from the sliding scale under any circumstances. The Premier had said the same thing; and now he told the Committee that, if the amendment were carried, paragraphs (*a*), (*b*), (*c*), and (*d*), would be swept from off the face of the Bill. One would hardly suppose that that decision could have been arrived at without collusion with the hon. member for Warrego. There must have been some consultation with that hon. member outside the House before that sudden change was brought about; and he could not but describe it as "an unholy alliance." Hon. members on the other side might laugh, but that was how he should describe it. They had been led to believe earlier in the evening that the compromise proposed by the leader of the Opposition would be accepted by the Government, but since then a change had come over the spirit of their dream, and the Committee were now asked to put the country into a worse position than if the Government had stuck to their own Bill. Let them also consider the proposition made by the leader of the Opposition, and they would come to the conclusion that the better proposal of the two was that made by the leader of the Opposition. He certainly would do all he could and all he knew to prevent the amendment being passed. He considered it was not only unjust to the State, but it was unwise on the part of the squatter, in trying to push such a proposal as had been made by the hon. member for Warrego; and in the interests of the State, and in the interest of the pastoral interest—which he held to be one of the largest interests in the State—he should certainly do all he could to prevent the amendment—which, by the way, he had heard very little of, except those words that had just been read—being passed by the Committee. He would like to know from the member for Warrego what his scheme was. They had not had it fully explained, and he supposed the hon. gentleman was father, or reputed father—if the hon. gentleman preferred that—of the amendment. "Putative father," perhaps, would be a better term. He thought they should have a full explanation from him as to the purport of the amendment, and as to what its effect would be, perhaps, on the acreage that would be open to the public after the five years had passed. He hoped the hon. member would take steps to prevent the one-fourth, which was to be resumed after five years, being so crowded with improvements as to prevent an individual coming in. He himself saw through and through the amendment. Its intention was simply, not to benefit the State, but to benefit the individual by allowing him to crowd such improvements on the unresumed one-fourth, during five years, as would prevent its being thrown open to the public.

Mr. MIDGLEY said he had listened very carefully to all that had been said on both those

points. He really thought the very best thing the Government could do was to stick to the clause as it was originally in the Bill.

Mr. MOREHEAD: I would rather see that than the amendment.

Mr. MIDGLEY said the land that would be required for the purposes of settlement would be the land in the settled districts—the land that was nearest the railways, and those railways that were contemplated to be constructed. It would not require a great many grazing farms to take up all the land, which would be resumed in a very few years. He thought the best plan would be for the Government just to stick to the Bill as it was in that respect.

Mr. FERGUSON said he was quite of the same opinion as the last speaker. He could not see what grounds the Government had at all for departing from the Bill so far as the division of runs was concerned. If the land was not required for settlement the squatters had the land as it stood now, and if the land was required for settlement the Government had the privilege then of using it for settlement. It was his opinion, if the Bill was to be a success at all, that the country would require at least one-half of the land to be at their disposal. They could not force settlement in one corner of the country. They must have scope for people to settle it. The people must have a choice, and they would be refusing them that small choice if they should reduce the area open for settlement. He was very much surprised at the Minister for Lands yielding in any way so far as that point was concerned. He would not yield to either the member for Warrego or the leader of the Opposition, if he were the Government.

Mr. FOOTE said his opinion was that the Government should stick to the Bill on the lines they had laid down. He saw a disposition on the part of the Government to make a compromise with the Opposition in regard to something which he thought would not be an improvement in the Bill, and at the same time would not benefit the State. Of course, if the hon. member for Warrego pressed the amendment, he would vote for it. He did not see anything wrong in it, but at the same time he confessed that, if the Government would stick to their Bill, it would be better and would save considerable time. A great deal of time had been taken up in the discussion, not uselessly, because it was a matter worthy of contention and required to be well considered. There were a great many interests involved on both sides. At the same time, when he took into consideration that, by the lands being resumed in the way laid down by the Bill, those which were not wanted were still in the hands of the grazier, he thought no real harm could be done. Therefore he advised the Minister for Lands to stick to his Bill.

Mr. JORDAN said he wished to know whether the Government intended to support the amendment of the hon. member for Warrego. He would very much rather have the Bill as it was. If he had his choice of accepting the amendment proposed by the hon. member for Warrego, and of that proposed by the leader of the Opposition, he would certainly choose the latter. He would like to know whether the Government intended to support the amendment of the hon. member for Warrego, or whether they would agree to what had now been suggested—that they should adhere to the Bill as it was.

The HON. SIR T. MCILWRAITH said he had watched the debate very carefully. He had not had the slightest doubt the hon. members on the other side would carry the compromise he had suggested. Several of those hon. members had already said it was a reasonable compromise. They not only spoke of it in the way of a compromise, but they went beyond that and said it would be more prudent to elect to take a small quantity. After that the hon. the Premier—by what he could not call anything else than a trick—chose to take advantage of the inexperience of the hon. member for Warrego, and had the impertinence to propose an amendment that would put the country and things generally into a worse position. The proposition put before the Committee now was a ridiculous one, and it was all done through the very clever trick played by the Premier on the innocence of the hon. member for Warrego.

The PREMIER said he gave the hon. member for Warrego credit for knowing what he was about quite well. The leader of the Opposition thought he was going to get hon. members to agree to a proposition to block settlement; and thought that by using specious arguments he would obtain that effect. He (the Premier) confessed he was rather surprised when the hon. member for Warrego proposed an amendment which was so liberal; because, as he had pointed out, it was more liberal in the interests of settlement than that proposed by the Government, and, therefore, how could they refuse to agree to an amendment of that kind? They wanted to keep as much land as they could for the people. If a pastoral tenant thought the amendment was a fair one, he (the Premier) thought they could not be so foolish as to decline to accept it. They were prepared to take the Bill as it stood, but if there was to be any alteration it must be in the direction indicated by the hon. member for Warrego, and not in the direction indicated by the hon. member for Mulgrave.

Mr. MOREHEAD said that, not ten minutes before, the hon. the Premier had told them that the Government had decided to accept the amendment of the hon. member for Warrego, but now the hon. gentleman told them he intended to accept the Bill as it stood. With regard to the proposal made by the hon. member for Mulgrave, he said it was better than the proposal contained in the (*a*), (*b*), (*c*), and (*d*) subsections of this clause. It was more just in every way that one-third should be taken, and two-thirds left in the conditions contained in this Bill, than that one-third and one-half should be taken from the pastoral lessees. It had been shown over and over again that those who would come under subsection (*a*) had special claims on the State, which more than counterbalanced the proposal that they should be put under the clause; and the Premier knew it himself. He did not think, however, that the hon. member knew the Act of 1863 until that night. As he had pointed out before, those who would come under subsection (*a*) had been paying for years more heavily for their runs than those who held their runs under the Act of 1869; and it was only fair that those who had held runs over twenty years should have the small act of justice he had suggested shown to them. If hon. members would take the trouble to read the Act of 1863 they would see that those men had paid for years four times the rent paid by those who came after them, but who were more leniently treated by the Bill; and that the bulk of their runs were further out than those runs that had been taken up later, but which were probably of more value so far as water and grazing farms were concerned. The proposition of the leader of the Opposition was a very fair one, especially when the amount in dispute was infinitesimal as compared with the amount stated by the Premier—6,000,000 acres. That, however, was a matter which they were not able to calculate, because they had not the figures before them which the

Premier evidently had. There could be no possibility of any lack of land for settlement if the proposition of the leader of the Opposition were carried out, which he still hoped might be the case, seeing that it had the support of the hon. member for Toowoomba (Mr. Aland) and the hon. member for Burnett.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS said he did not know whether the hon. member for Warrego knew the effect of his amendment or not; but he was quite willing to accept it, as it would give better terms to the State than the clause as it stood. If the hon. gentleman really did not understand its effect, he had better withdraw the amendment.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said he understood that the object of the amendment was to divide the runs into two, and then subdivide the halves again, the Government resuming a quarter at once and another quarter in five years' time. If that was the object of the hon. member it was a very good one, because one-fourth of each run would give sufficient land for settlement at present, and the Government would at the same time have the benefit of the full rents of the remaining three-fourths. If the half were taken it was possible that a large portion of the resumed half would not be occupied, and the State would receive no rent for that which was not occupied. He was always glad to accept anything beneficial to the State, and he considered the amendment of the hon. member for Warrego an excellent one.

The HON. SIR T. McILWRAITH asked what form the remainder of the clause would take if the amendment of the hon. member for Warrego were inserted? It would be absurd to agree to the amendment without knowing what was to follow.

The PREMIER said that he stated in an earlier part of the evening that he had written down what he conceived would follow.

Mr. MOREHEAD: Are the Government going to accept the amendment?

The PREMIER said the Government would be very glad to accept the amendment if the Committee would give it them, because it would be more liberal to the State than the clause as it stood. He would not profess to say that what he had written out was verbally accurate. The amendment of the hon. member for Warrego was—"One-half also is to be included, provided;" one that should follow, "that such half shall be further divided into two equal portions." If that were carried, he proposed to insert the following subsection at the end of the clause—

"In cases where the resumed part has, under the provisions hereinbefore contained, been divided into two portions, the order shall specify which portion shall be immediately available to be selected or otherwise disposed of under the provisions of this Act, and which portion shall be included in a lease for five years as hereinafter provided."

That would apply to all runs, so that subdivisions (*a*), (*b*), (*c*), and (*d*) would come out. In subsection 3 the word "divisions" would have to be substituted for "division"; and there would be one or two verbal amendments in subsection 4. Then there would have to be a new clause to follow clause 25—

"In cases where the resumed part of the run has, under the provisions hereinbefore contained, been divided into two portions, the pastoral tenant shall also be entitled to receive a lease from the Crown for the portion of the resumed part which is specified in the order of the board confirming the division as to be so included.

"Such lease shall be subject to the same conditions and stipulations as in the last preceding section mentioned, as far as the same are respectively applicable thereto."

Those were the amendments necessary to make the scheme complete, and he hoped no hon. member would vote for the amendment under a misapprehension.

Mr. STEVENSON said he could not understand the position they were in at all. It seemed from what the Premier had said that there had been a pre-arrangement. An arrangement had been made to strike out all those clauses; and after all those arrangements between the Government and the hon. member for Warrego, the Minister for Lands had the impertinence to tell the hon. member for Warrego that he did not understand his own amendment. It placed the hon. member for Warrego in a nice position. He wished to know whether the Government were going to accept his amendment or not.

The PREMIER said that when the amend ment was proposed he sat down at the table, as he usually did, and endeavoured to see how it would work out, so that when the question was asked he would be in a position to answer it. He did not know until he did so, how it would work out consistently with the rest of the Bill. Hon. members knew that that was his usual practice.

The HON. SIR T. McILWRAITH said the hon. Premier spoke as if the only object of the Government was to get as much land as they possibly could from the pastoral tenants. If that were the case why did not they make a Bill that would take away three-fourths? The hon. gentleman did not frame those clauses without some consideration. The thing was preposterous. It was a contemptible trick, and taking advantage of a member on the Opposition side of the Committee.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS said he did not see what justification the hon. gentleman had for calling it a contemptible trick. It was a proposition made on his own responsibility by a member on the opposite side. He at once got up and accepted the amendment, yet the hon. gentleman said it was a contemptible trick. By whom? He talked about hon. gentlemen on the Government side being offensive; he never heard anything equal to that. The hon. gentleman could not listen to any such remarks from the Government side. To whom did he allude; was it to him?

The HON. SIR T. McILWRAITH: Put on the cap if it fits you.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS said he accepted the amendment proposed by one of the hon. gentleman's own supporters, without having had any talk to him at all in connection with it; it was openly accepted.

Mr. MOREHEAD: It was through a caucus outside.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS said he had never spoken to the hon. gentleman outside at all about that particular portion of the Bill. The hon. member for Normanby said he had charged the hon. member for Warrego with not understanding his own amendment. He did not do so. The hon. gentleman was very apt to make misstatements; but he should make them more skilfully, or leave them to the hon. member for Balonne to do so.

Mr. MOREHEAD said he rose to a point of order. The hon. Minister for Lands had accused him of being in the habit of making misstatements, and he insisted upon the words being withdrawn. He did say so——

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: No.

Mr. MOREHEAD said the hon. gentleman had said that the hon. member for Normanby

had better leave the making of misstatements to the hon. member for Balonne. He insisted upon the words being withdrawn.

Mr. FOOTE: Chair! Chair!

Mr. MOREHEAD said the hon. member for Bundanba could howl as much as he liked out of his flabby stomach. The hon. Minister for Lands was not justified in making use of that language and he would appeal to the Chairman to know whether he was. The words were unparliamentary, and should be withdrawn.

The PREMIER: What are the words?

Mr. MOREHEAD said he had mentioned the words, and he wanted a ruling upon the point of order. The Chairman knew as well as he did that the words were as he had said.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS said he certainly did not mean to say that the hon. member for Balonne had made misstatements. He said that the hon. member for Normanby had made some, whether from misapprehension or not he could not say. What he said was that if the hon. member for Warrego did not understand his amendment, or the results of it, he had better say so.

Mr. MOREHEAD said that was not the question. The hon. member said that such misstatements had better be left to the hon. member for Balonne. It had nothing to do with the hon. member for Warrego. He only hoped that, if not this session, then in a future session, they would get a Chairman who could get up and give a ruling.

The CHAIRMAN: I did not hear what the hon. member said.

Mr. MOREHEAD: Then I shall not have any more to say.

Mr. STEVENSON said the Minister for Lands distinctly twitted the hon. member for Warrego with not understanding the amendment he had proposed, or what its effects would be. Then he denied he had said so, and then again he admitted that he had said so. The hon. gentleman did not know what he was talking about.

The HON. SIR T. McILWRAITH said the hon. Minister for Lands had said that the hon. member for Warrego did not understand his amendment or what its effect would be.

Mr. MACDONALD-PATERSON said that what he understood the Minister for Lands to say was that if the hon. member for Warrego did not understand the effect of his amendment he could withdraw it.

Mr. MIDGLEY said he again expressed the hope that the Government would keep to the Bill. He supposed that in drawing it up they had taken into consideration what land they would be likely to want, and had also considered in some respects the revenue they were likely to derive from the system. He was sure that hon. gentlemen would be put into a difficult position if the Bill were not kept in its original form; and it would be a mistake to alter it. There had been no collusion, and the Government would be in danger of making a mistake, and dividing their side of the Committee unnecessarily, if they accepted the amendment.

Mr. DONALDSON said that he had been taxed, in proposing his amendment, with being a trickster, and also with being a fool. The amendment had been characterised as trickery, which he denied *in toto*. As for understanding the amendment, he thoroughly understood it, and he noticed that the hon. Premier, while he was speaking, formulated certain amendments to give effect to it, and the hon. gentleman had subsequently shown them to him. Since the Land Bill was introduced, he had tried to introduce two or three amendments, and all of them had utterly failed. He was sorry to see the way in which amendments were received; it did not matter who proposed them, they were being continually opposed. He had certainly been attacked that night from a quarter from which he did not expect any opposition. But as he did not wish to divide the harmony that existed on his side or on the opposite side of the Committee, he would, with the permission of the Committee, withdraw his amendment.

The HON. SIR T. McILWRAITH said the hon. member who had just sat down was quite wrong in saying that he (Hon. Sir T. McIlwraith) attributed trickery to him, because he never, for a moment, said anything of the kind. He had charged the Premier with trickery, and he only charged the hon. member for Warrego with innocence, and he hoped he would get over that.

Mr. FOOTE said he was surprised at the way in which the hon. member for Warrego had been sat upon and accused of trickery by his own side of the Committee. The hon. member for Warrego, he felt sure, was respected by members on both sides of the Committee. For his own part he was sorry that the hon. member had withdrawn his amendment, as he should have liked to have voted for the amendment after the way the hon. member had been treated. That was his disposition; when he saw the manner in which the hon. gentleman had been sat upon by his own side, he should have voted for his amendment whatever would be the result of it. He thought, from the way in which the hon. member had put his amendment, notwithstanding the banter he had been subjected to by his own side, it should be supported by the Government side of the Committee. He could not agree with the hon. member for Fassifern that every Bill should be carried through the House upon a strict line. There were times when it was both necessary and wise to give way; when fresh light might be thrown upon a Bill, and it was sometimes discovered that the proposal of the Opposition was even better than that of the Government. How many times had that not been the case when the Premier was leader of the Opposition? The hon. gentleman put the last Government's Bills into form for them. Every member in the House knew that their Bills had been licked into shape for them and made workable by that gentleman, and they would not have been workable had it not been for that gentleman's perseverance in amending them. Hon. members had certainly acted with but scant courtesy to the hon. member for Warrego, and had accused him of trickery without any reason.

Mr. NORTON said he was sure the Committee were highly edified by the principles which the hon. member who had just sat down had given expression to. If a member on the Opposition side proposed an amendment, and was not treated with courtesy by his own party, the hon. member did not care a straw what the result of the amendment would be—he would vote for it. The hon. member's constituents had reason to congratulate themselves upon the possession of a very worthy representative. The hon. member for Warrego was mistaken if he supposed for one moment that the leader of the Opposition attributed to him any trickery, or suspicion of trickery. What he understood the leader of the Opposition to say was that he accused the Premier of trickery. There was no mistake about that. The hon. gentleman accused the Premier of trickery in taking advantage of the innocence and inexperience of the hon. member for Warrego. That was where the trickery came in; and the hon. member for

Warrego need not think for one moment that anyone on the Opposition side of the Committee had accused him of having any part in the trickery.

Mr. DONALDSON said he flattered himself that he had sufficient backbone not to be led by either one side of the Committee or the other. The hon. the Premier would not be able to "get a loan" of him—as the common term was—if he attempted to do so. Up to the present time, however, he had not attempted to do so; and, on the contrary, he had to thank that hon. gentleman for the assistance he had given him that night. What he advocated was that the runs should be divided into halves; that one quarter was to be resumed at once, and the other quarter after a term of five years, while, for the balance of the land, security of tenure was to be given. He proposed that as his amendment, because it embodied his ideas of what he thought best for the settlers, and best for the country. That was his only reason for proposing the amendment, and it was not because it was suggested to him by the Premier or anybody else.

The PREMIER said he had listened with contempt to the accusations made against him of trickery. Hon. members, he supposed, would yet learn that accusations of that kind would only bring discredit upon those who used them. There was not a living soul in that Committee who believed that anything of the kind had taken place. The first he had heard of the proposition was when something of the kind had been suggested to him some weeks ago; and he did not know that the hon. member for Warrego was going to propose it until that day. It was not in any way suggested by him. When the hon. member for Warrego had got up in the Committee that afternoon and advocated it, he (the Premier) did as he always had done, and as he always should do, and sat down at once to see how it would work out, and formulated as far as possible the clauses or amendments necessary to give effect to it. He did that simply with the desire to assist the hon. member. If there was any trickery in that he supposed it must be according to the new dictionary of hon. members opposite. He called that honourable and straightforward dealing, and a proper way to conduct the business of that Committee. When an hon. member on the other side of the Committee asked assistance or information he endeavoured to assist him in every way in his power; and if hon. members opposite called that trickery he would always be guilty of such trickery as that. Hon. members might just as well say he was in collusion with the hon. the leader of the Opposition, because, when he proposed a different scheme for the division of the runs, he sat down and worked that out, and subsequently showed hon. members how it would work.

Mr. NORTON said he hoped the hon. gentleman did not mean to say that he (Mr. Norton) had accused him of trickery; because he had no intention of doing anything of the sort.

The PREMIER: You did it in the plainest language.

Mr. NORTON said the hon. member was quite mistaken, and if he would listen he would show that he was mistaken. He (Mr. Norton) was not in the Chamber at the time the proposal was made—in fact, he had been out of the Chamber nearly the whole of the evening—but he had heard the statement made by the leader of the Opposition, in which he accused the Premier of trickery in taking advantage of the inexperience of the hon. member for Warrego. He had merely repeated what he understood the leader of the Opposition to say, and he did not profess to know anything at all about it himself, as he had heard nothing about it until about ten minutes before. He hoped the hon. gentleman would not attribute such statements to him, as he certainly should not feel inclined to make them under any circumstances, and especially without hearing the whole of the case.

Amendment withdrawn.

Mr. NORTON said there was another matter which he would like to refer to. The 4th subsection, paragraph (*e*), provided that "the whole resumed part is to be in one block." That block might be taken in such a way as to destroy the value of the whole run. There should be some provision to prevent the block being taken from the middle of a run, and thus destroying the value of the remainder of the run. By taking a block out of the middle it would leave a ring which could only be worked at very much greater expense.

The PREMIER said that surely they could not conceive of the commissioners being such fools as to allow that; their object would not be to allow the run to be destroyed altogether.

Mr. NORTON said that most unfair divisions might be made. He knew that very inequitable divisions of runs were made; and under a Bill of that kind divisions might be carried out in such a way as to do a great deal of harm.

Mr. PALMER said the Premier had stated that they could not conceive of the commissioner resuming a run in such a manner; but he could conceive of commissioners doing any absurd thing in the division of runs. He had not yet got an answer from the Minister for Lands to the question he asked him some time ago about the resumed part, including the head-station.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS said he could see something in the objection of the hon. gentleman; and he would have no objection to insert a clause to the effect that head-stations should not be included in the resumed part of the run.

The HON. SIR T. MCILWRAITH said the Minister for Lands had promised before that he would bring in amended clauses with regard to compensation for improvements that were resumed. That would be a great deal better than providing that the head-stations should not be included. He did not think the commissioners should be hampered at all. The case would be completely met by giving an amount for improvements; at all events, the amount of damage that was done would be taken into consideration by the commissioners. He thought it was much more important to have a clause providing for the improvements on the resumed portion than that there should be a hard-and-fast line to the effect that the head-station should not be included. As a matter of economy to the Government, the commissioners would consider whether it would be desirable to resume the head-station or not. In most cases they would not do so.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS said he should fancy there were very few cases indeed in which it would be necessary to divide a run otherwise than by leaving out the head-station. If it were provided that, wherever practicable, divisions should be made so to leave the head-station on the last half of the run, he thought that would be quite sufficient.

The PREMIER said that in his copy of the Bill he some time ago framed an amendment to the effect that "wherever practicable the head-station was not to be included in the resumed part." That was only to be a direction to the commissioners. No sensible commissioner would take the head-station except under special circumstances, but it was impossible to lay down a hard-and-fast rule.

Mr. NORTON said he did not very much fear any clause with regard to head-stations. If a head-station was resumed the lessee would have to be paid for it. With regard to the difficulty he had spoken of a few minutes before, he thought the lessee might be called upon to subdivide the run unless the board decided which portion should be resumed. Subsection 3 provided for the subdivision of runs, and enacted that the commissioner, or some other person appointed by the Governor in Council, was to report upon the best mode of making the subdivision, and then, the subdivision being made, the board had to choose which portion they would resume. He thought it would work fairer for all parties—it certainly would for the Government—to allow the lessee to make the subdivision, because if he were called upon to do that, not knowing which portion would be taken from him, he would be very careful to make the division as fair as he could. Under the clause as it stood the whole matter rested with one party to the transaction. The commissioner, or whoever was appointed for the purpose, made the subdivision, and it might be done in such a way that the lessee would be a very great sufferer. He would therefore suggest that the subdivision should be left to the lessee. Would the Government allow that?

The PREMIER said that would be all very well if the run were to be divided into two equal parts, but it would scarcely do under the provisions of that Bill. There were many things to be taken into consideration.

Mr. NORTON said the lessee was not likely to divide his run into two such parts that one would be more valuable than the other, because, if he did so, he might lose the most valuable part; he would make a fair division.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS said that question had been very carefully considered, and the Government came to the conclusion that the better plan was the one proposed in the Bill. If the board were to decide which half should be resumed the division might as well be made by the commissioner.

Mr. NORTON said the lessee would be able to divide his run better than the commissioner, and the commissioner could then judge by riding over it which was the best half to resume, but he might not have sufficient knowledge to make a division.

The HON. SIR T. MCILWRAITH said by clause 19 the commissioners were to be appointed by the Governor in Council on the recommendation of the board, and by subsection 3 of clause 24, if "any other fit and proper person" was appointed to take the place of the commissioner, he also was to be appointed by the Governor in Council on the recommendation of the board. What was the object of making those two provisions?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS said when the commissioner did not undertake the duties some other fit and proper person would be appointed.

Mr. MOREHEAD said it would be consistent with clause 19, if the words "on the recommendation of the board" were struck out. On clause 19, hon. members would remember there was a difference of opinion between the Premier and the Minister for Lands, the Premier interpreting that clause to mean that the commissioner should be appointed by the board. Now by a sidewind they were introducing the very principle to which the Premier objected. He (Mr. Morehead) thought the words were unnecessary and should be omitted.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS said if the hon. gentleman would move their omission he would make no objection.

Mr. MOREHEAD said he would move that the words "on the recommendation of the board" be omitted.

Amendment put and passed.

Question—That the clause as amended stand part of the Bill—put and passed.

On the motion of the MINISTER FOR LANDS, the CHAIRMAN left the chair, reported progress, and obtained leave to sit again to-morrow.

ADJOURNMENT.

The PREMIER moved that the House do now adjourn.

Mr. MOREHEAD: What business will you take to-morrow?

The PREMIER: Private business.

The HON. SIR T. MCILWRAITH: It would be convenient to hon. members if the Premier would state what business will be taken next Tuesday.

The PREMIER: The Land Bill will be the business of the day, but we shall probably deal with the amendments of the Legislative Council in a few Bills first.

Mr. MOREHEAD: When will you allow us to go on with the Defence Bill?

The PREMIER: When we can get to it.

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