Queensland

Parliamentary Debates
[Hansard]

Legislative Assembly

THURSDAY, 16 OCTOBER 1884

QUEENSLAND

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY.

SECOND SESSION OF THE NINTH PARLIAMENT,

APPOINTED TO MEET

AT BRISBANE, ON THE EIGHTH DAY OF JULY, IN THE FORTY-EIGHTH YEAR OF THE REIGN OF HER MAJESTY QUEEN VICTORIA, IN THE YEAR OF OUR LORD 1884.

[VOLUME 2 OF 1884.]

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY.

Thursday, 16 *October*, 1884.

Formal Motion.—Oaths Act Amendment Bill—consideration of Legislative Council's amendment.—Immigration Act of 1882 Amendment Bill—consideration of Legislative Council's amendment.—Crown Lands Bill—committee.—Adjournment.

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

FORMAL MOTION.

The following motion was agreed to :—

By the HON. J. M. MACROSSAN—

That there be laid on the table of the House a Return showing the perpendicular depth from the surface of the deepest mine on each of the following goldfields, namely :—Gympie, Charters Towers, Ravenswood, Hodgkinson, Palmer, and Etheridge.

OATHS ACT AMENDMENT BILL—CONSIDERATION OF LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL'S AMENDMENT.

On the motion of the PREMIER (Hon. S. W. Griffith), the House went into Committee to consider the Legislative Council's amendment in this Bill.

The PREMIER said there was only one amendment in the Bill, and he felt sure it would be accepted by the Committee. The Bill provided that if a person was not capable, through any reason, of taking an oath, it should be the duty of the person authorised to administer the oath to satisfy himself that the taking of an oath would not have a binding effect upon the conscience of the person, and if so satisfied he must declare in what manner the evidence should be taken. The amendment provided that, after the person authorised to administer the oath had satisfied himself that an oath would have no binding effect upon the conscience of the witness, he must also satisfy himself "that he understands that he will be liable to punishment if his evidence is untruthful." He thought that was a very good amendment, and he therefore moved that it be agreed to.

Question put and passed.

The House resumed, and the Bill was ordered to be transmitted to the Legislative Council by message in the usual way.

IMMIGRATION ACT OF 1882 AMENDMENT BILL—CONSIDERATION OF LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL'S AMENDMENT.

On the motion of the PREMIER, the House went into Committee to consider the Legislative Council's amendment in this Bill.

The PREMIER said the only amendment was in section 4, which contained a stipulation that the employer should provide proper accommodation for the labourer and his family. The Legislative Council proposed that that accommodation should be "house" accommodation, which he understood it meant. As there was no objection to the amendment, he moved that it be agreed to.

Question put and passed.

The House resumed, and the Bill was ordered to be transmitted to the Legislative Council by message in the usual way.

CROWN LANDS BILL—COMMITTEE.

On the Order of the Day being read, the House went into Committee to further consider this Bill in detail.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS moved that clause 33 stand part of the Bill.

Mr. JESSOP said that before that was put he wished to call attention to the advisability of a new clause or a proviso being introduced with regard to the prosecution of drovers for trespassing. As clause 32 now read, a man who had trespassed might have gone a long distance before any steps were taken to prosecute him. He had known men summoned after they had gone fifty, sixty, and one hundred miles; and he thought a clause should be introduced providing that action must be taken within a limited period, so that persons need not be put to unnecessary expense and inconvenience. As the clause stood, a month might elapse before the issue of a summons.

Mr. STEVENS said he thought the suggestion of the hon. member was a fair and reasonable one. Although everything should be done to keep travelling stock within proper bounds, still drovers should receive fair play. He had known several instances similar to that mentioned by the hon. member, drovers having been allowed to go a very long distance from the run on which they trespassed, and then brought back several days' journey to answer the charge. He thought a clause might be introduced to meet such cases.

Mr. MOREHEAD said he had known worse things than that. There were many cases within his knowledge where, to save himself the expense of appearing to defend an action and leaving his property in charge of another, a drover had paid £10 or £20—although if the case had been tried the probability was that he would have got off. It paid him better to submit to that blackmail than to have the case tried.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS said it was certainly true that such things did happen, and he had known instances himself. He thought it might be provided against by requiring the information to be laid within a certain time after the trespass complained of. He knew that sometimes there was very great difficulty in getting a magistrate to grant a summons; in some cases a journey of 100 miles had to be made. He thought it would meet the case if it were made necessary to issue the summons within a week. He would therefore ask leave to withdraw his motion with regard to clause 33, for the purpose of introducing a new clause.

Motion, by leave, withdrawn.

On the motion of the MINISTER FOR LANDS, the following clause was inserted after clause 32 :—

Any information for an offence against the provisions of the last preceding section must be laid within seven days from the time when the matter of the information arises.

On clause 33—"Sale of leases by auction"—as follows :—

"If any lease under this part of this Act is forfeited or otherwise determined before the expiration of the term thereof, the Governor in Council may, by proclamation, declare the land which was comprised in such lease to be opened to be leased to the first applicant, for the remainder of the term of fifteen years, subject to the same conditions as were applicable to the former lease.

"Or the land may be dealt with under any other provisions of this Act applicable thereto."

Mr. MOREHEAD asked if the marginal note was not incorrect?

Mr. PALMER said he had intended to call attention to the marginal note, as there was no provision in the body of the clause for the sale of leases by auction. It was well known that under the Act of 1869 all forfeited leases were put up to auction, but in the clause before them it was provided that the first applicant might obtain the lease, and that would leave room for injustice to creep in. Anyone might forfeit his lease by accident, and in such a case the first applicant would probably secure the land for the balance of the term.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS said the marginal note was wrong, as would be seen on reading the clause, which provided that where a lease was forfeited the Governor in Council might "declare the land which was comprised in such lease to be open to be leased to the first applicant." Under the old system of selling the leases by auction, a number of cases had occurred in which the leases were sold without competition, and secured by the original tenant at the upset price. That had been done over a dozen times to his knowledge. But under the clause if a man forfeited his run he had no chance of competing for it again. The objection raised the other night with regard to compensation for improvements would be met by the new paragraphs which it was proposed to add to the clause, and which were now in the hands of hon. members. They were as followed :—

If the land is leased for the remainder of the term, then if there are upon the land any improvements, the new lessee shall pay to the former lessee compensation for such improvements. The amount of such compensation shall be determined by the board after hearing both parties, and shall be recoverable by action in any court of competent jurisdiction.

If the land is otherwise dealt with, then any amount which is afterwards received by the Crown in respect of such improvements shall be paid over to the former lessee.

He moved that that amendment be added at the end of the clause.

Mr. MOREHEAD said he certainly thought that the amendment was a step in the right direction, but it did not go as far as it ought to do. He took exception to the last part of the 1st paragraph in the amendment, which stated that the amount of compensation to be paid by the new lessee should "be recoverable by action in any court of competent jurisdiction." He thought himself that the amount of compensation fixed by the board should be paid by the incoming tenant to the Government, and by them handed over to the outgoing or forfeiting tenant. He did not see why, after the decision of the board had been arrived at, the outgoing tenant, who would probably be in a peculiar position, should be compelled to enforce his right in a court of law. Why not adopt the system in vogue in dealing with lands that had been resumed and thrown open to selection, under which the incoming tenant paid the amount of improvements to the State? The only difference between his proposition and the one contained in the amendment was that his proposal would give the outgoing tenant an absolute certainty that the amount of compensation fixed by the board would be paid by the Government. It would be a *sine quâ non* that the value of improvements, as appraised by the board, should be paid by the incoming tenant to the Government, and then handed by the Government to the outgoing tenant. The incoming tenant, he would point out, would be paid in cash for those improvements at the expiration of his lease, as provided in the 100th clause. He thought it would simplify matters if that part of the amendment to which he had referred were struck out.

The PREMIER said he assumed that the hon. gentleman meant that the improvements should be paid for before the lease was issued.

Mr. MOREHEAD : To the Government ; the issue of the lease rests with them.

The PREMIER said the clause made compensation for improvements a debt due by the incoming tenant to the outgoing tenant ; payable in the same way as any other debt. The provision which stated that it "shall be recoverable by action in any court of law," meant that the debt could be recovered in the same way as any other debt. With regard to the argument that the incoming tenant should be prevented from utilising the land until the money was paid, he would point out that the outgoing tenant might be prepared to accept promissory notes from the incoming tenant. If it were made a debt between the two, the incoming tenant would make the best terms he could. There might be several people willing to take up the run on terms, and the outgoing tenant might be willing to accept terms. It would probably be a benefit to him to do so, also a benefit to the incoming tenant, because in that case he would not be bound to pay a large amount out of pocket immediately on taking possession.

Mr. MOREHEAD said the language of the clause was almost imperative. It stated that "the new lessee shall pay to the former lessee compensation for such improvements," and that such compensation "shall be recoverable by action in any court of competent jurisdiction." If the money were to be paid, as he suggested, by the incoming tenant to the State, the new lessee would, at the termination of his lease, be paid in cash for the value of those improvements by the Government. Considering the positive language used in the former part of the amendment—that the new lessee "shall" pay to the former lessee, and that the amount of such compensation "shall" be determined by the board—the language in the latter part, making the amount a debt recoverable by law, seemed inconsistent.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS said it must be remembered that they were dealing with forfeited leases, and that the amendment was a concession. It provided that a man who had forfeited his lease should get compensation for his improvements from the incoming tenant, and a means of getting it. That seemed quite as far as it was necessary to go in cases of that kind.

The HON. SIR T. MCILWRAITH said the object of the concession made by the Government was to secure that the outgoing tenant of a forfeited run should be protected to the value of his improvements. But that had not been effected by the proposed amendment, because, instead of giving the outgoing tenant the money for his improvements, it simply gave him a right to recover the money by process of law. Why should not the Government go the whole way, instead of bringing forward a half-measure ? As to the Premier's remark, that an outgoing tenant might be inclined to make terms, and take bills instead of cash, it simply meant that an incoming tenant would use the power put into his hands, and try to make better terms than he would otherwise be entitled to ; and that was not what they wanted. As to the objection that it would have the effect of locking up the land by preventing the Government from re-leasing it, he failed to see anything in it, because it could be got over by reducing the rent. But the chief objection to the amendment was that it would lead to lawsuits. It would be far better to make the incoming tenant pay for the improvements before he got possession of the land.

The PREMIER said it was not likely to lead to lawsuits, because there was no possibility of the incoming tenant disputing his liability. The liability was absolute ; there could be no defence to an action ; it was simply a debt which must be paid. The other plan suggested might tend to prevent the outgoing tenant getting paid for his improvements at all. If it was insisted that the lease for the remainder of the term should not be given unless the money was paid down, perhaps nobody would take it, and the outgoing tenant would never get paid for his improvements. As he had before stated, the amendment was in favour of the outgoing tenant, of the incoming tenant, and of the Crown. The money was made a debt, and the parties were left to make the best terms they could between themselves. If the incoming tenant did not pay, the lease might be sold over his head.

The HON. B. B. MORETON said that no time was mentioned in the clause within which the proclamation must issue. If the proclamation was delayed for a long period the improvements on the forfeited run might go to ruin, and the outgoing lessee would get nothing at all for them.

Mr. PALMER said the amendment was contravention of the Act of 1869, which had not been repealed, and which provided that forfeited runs should be put up to auction. That system had worked very well, especially for the Treasury, and it would be to the advantage of the Government to adhere to it.

Amendment put and passed.

Mr. PALMER asked if the Minister for Lands would be civil enough to answer the objection he had raised ?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS replied that the clause under discussion dealt only with forfeited leases under that particular part of the Bill, and, instead of putting up such forfeited leases to auction, it was determined to declare them open to be taken up by the first applicant. Forfeited leases under the Act of 1869, in which the auction system was retained, were dealt with in the next clause of the Bill.

Mr. MOREHEAD said that, to his mind, there would be a great objection to the system of the first applicant getting the land. He took it that a proclamation would appear in the *Government Gazette*, and, therefore, the inhabitants of Brisbane would have a great advantage—unless the telegraph was made use of, and that very quickly—over persons living in any other part of the colony. Supposing, for the sake of argument, that he or anyone had instructions from a man who wished for a piece of country, who said, "Watch the *Gazette*, and so soon as you see a notice that a certain run is forfeited apply for it for me," a person in Brisbane would be almost sure to get it, although there might be a dozen or a hundred other people in the country who were anxious to have it.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS : It has to be proclaimed open for selection.

Mr. MOREHEAD said that the proclamation would, in any case, come first to the knowledge of the people of Brisbane, where the *Gazette* was published, and it was quite clear that that was an undue advantage. It would be better to adopt the auction system under which runs had to be advertised—for, he thought, two months—before they were put up. That gave a chance to everybody.

Mr. NORTON said that for his part he thought that the difficulty might be met by a proclamation stating that the land forfeited might be taken up by the first applicant on certain day, two or three months in advance.

Mr. MOREHEAD said that if the application system were to be adopted they would have to resume the old system of drawing lots,

because if the applications were to be in before 10 o'clock on a certain day, which was to get the preference if half-a-dozen applications were sent in? Which was the first applicant, supposing that they all reached the lands office together, or even supposing that the local commissioner received them? There was nothing in the Bill which showed how it was to be decided. He hoped the Government would see their way to put in a clause to meet the difficulty he had pointed out, which difficulty was certain to arise if the Bill was left as it was without any such clause to meet the case.

The PREMIER: The case of two or a dozen applications, or more than one, at the same time?

Mr. MOREHEAD said he would not press the Government to draft an amendment at once. They could recommit the Bill. The difficulty had been met in two ways in different Land Acts. One was to decide the matter by lot, which he thought was a very bad way, and had led, as they all knew, to a man putting in a lot of dummy applications for the same piece of land under different names. The other mode, which was perhaps better, was to decide it by auction amongst the applicants. Those were the methods which had been adopted before, and some mode would be absolutely necessary, as it would be impossible to decide who was the first applicant.

The PREMIER said that they started upon the assumption that the occupant who forfeited the land did not consider it to be worth anything, so he did not think there would be a great rush to take it up.

Mr. MOREHEAD said the hon. gentleman said that if a run were forfeited it was not likely that there would be many applicants for it. He did not think that was a good reason. They knew there was very often great competition at auction for lands that had been forfeited. He had seen the hon. Min ster for Works going to buy country at auction some years ago, and "running" in a most vicious way for a piece of land. He did not know whether the hon. gentleman did any good with it afterwards. Sales by auction of lands which were not thought to be of any value had often excited a great deal of competition. It could hardly be said that, because a man under certain circumstances was compelled to forfeit land, there would only be one person apply for it.

Mr. KATES said he knew that certain agricultural selections had been forfeited, and no less than forty-five applications had been sent in immediately afterwards. It was necessary that there should be some proviso made in the clause to decide who should have the land, if two or three applications for it were received at the same time. It should be decided by lot.

Mr. MOREHEAD said he did not care how it was decided, so long as there was some way provided.

Mr. JESSOP said he thought sale by auction would be a far better way of deciding it. He could bear out what had been said by the hon. member for Darling Downs. He had seen twenty or thirty applications come in for the same piece of land.

Mr. MOREHEAD said that if the Government were agreeable, as he assumed they were, to recommit the Bill to insert some clause dealing with the matter, it might be settled then.

Clause, as amended, put and passed.

On clause 34, as follows:—

"If the lease of any run held under the Pastoral Leases Act of 1869, situated in any part of the colony in which this Act is in force for the time being, of which the pastoral tenant has not elected to take advantage of the provisions of this Act, is forfeited or vacated, the run may be offered for sale by public auction for the residue of the term of the lease computed from the nearest first day of July. The upset price shall not be less than ten shillings per square mile of the estimated area, and the highest amount bid shall be the annual rent to be paid for the residue of the term.

"Or the land comprised in the run may be dealt with under any other provisions applicable thereto."

Mr. MOREHEAD said perhaps the Minister for Lands would explain why the auction system was adopted in that clause. The hon. gentleman had told them before that he did not believe in that system: that it had led to all sorts of wrongs and injustice being committed; and yet he proposed to perpetuate it. If the Bill was to be looked upon as not containing conflicting elements, he thought the simplest way would be to have the runs falling in under the Act of 1869 valued by the board, and treated in the same way as those under clause 33. The clause, as it stood, was quite out of keeping with the rest of the Bill.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS said if runs held under the Pastoral Leases Act of 1869 were not brought under the Bill they would remain under the Act of 1869, and be dealt with according to that law. The clause provided that if such runs were forfeited they should be offered at auction. It was not intended to disturb those runs.

Mr. MOREHEAD said if the runs under the Act of 1869, held by persons who did not elect to come under the Bill, were forfeited, it would be a golden opportunity for the Government to take possession of them, and deal with them under the Bill. But it was not proposed to do that. It was simply proposed to put them up to auction.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: Or deal with them under any other provisions of the Bill applicable thereto.

Mr. MOREHEAD said the last portion of the clause was what nobody could understand. If it was so intended, what was the use of the previous part of the clause? Why did not the hon. gentleman, if he believed the Bill to be a good one—which no doubt he did—take advantage of the opportunity of runs, previously held under the Act of 1869 by persons who did not elect to come under the Bill, falling in, and immediately grasp those lands and put them under the provisions of the Bill?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: They may be offered at auction.

Mr. MOREHEAD: The hon. gentleman had expressed his opinion strongly against the auction system; and if that system was so bad, why continue it? If the Bill was a good one, there was no necessity for having two modes of dealing with those forfeited runs.

The HON. SIR T. MCILWRAITH said it had been a mystery to him for a long time why the clause had been introduced at all, and the Minister for Lands, that day, had given a very good reason why it should not be included in the Bill—because it kept up the nefarious system by which runs were previously sold. The hon. gentleman had described that system as a very bad one—by which people bought runs at auction, kept them for a year or two, forfeited them, and after a time got them back again. If that was such an iniquitous system, why not abolish it altogether? What reason was there for renewing it? Now it was proposed that in cases in which runs were forfeited and actually came into the possession of the State, instead of putting them to better use than they had been—which was one of the avowed objects of the Bill, and which they could do without interfering with anyone—they were to be dealt with under the old system, which was to be continued. That told distinctly

against the Bill. It practically said, "We must get some squatter to take up this run, and then we will hunt him out of it." What necessity was there for the clause at all? The provision "or the land comprised in the run may be dealt with under any other provisions applicable thereto" meant simply nothing. If the land was forfeited it became Crown land, and might be thrown open to selection at any time. The proposal of the Minister for Lands, that they should sell those runs by auction after the leases actually lapsed to the Government, was creating new difficulties which they would have to pass a law to remedy at some future time. The whole thing was absurd.

The PREMIER said he could reply that the objection was very absurd, although that did not add much to the weight of his argument. The clause was in no way inconsistent with the scheme of the Bill; on the contrary, it was perfectly consistent with it. The scheme of the Bill with respect to land to which it was intended to apply was that runs under the Act of 1869 would either remain as they were or be brought under the operation of the measure at the option of the pastoral tenant. If a run were forfeited without a provision of the kind referred to being inserted in the Bill, it would simply be Crown land, and could only be dealt with by occupation license or selection. It might happen that the most convenient way would be to treat such lands as still under the Act of 1869, and submit the lease to auction. That was the old system, which had been very much abused; but instances might arise where it would be found useful; and the Government proposed to retain that power, so that it might be exercised whenever it was found advisable to do so. He was under the impression that it would be better to deal with those lands in that way than merely by selection or occupation licenses, because by having both modes they might prevent the land from being forfeited to avoid paying rent and then taken up again.

The HON. SIR T. MCILWRAITH: That is a strong argument against the clause.

The PREMIER: It was a strong argument against the present Act; but throughout the Bill it was proposed to deal with runs that remained under the Act of 1869 under the present law. The clause simply re-enacted the provisions of the Act of 1869 that would be repealed otherwise.

Mr. MOREHEAD said he could not follow the hon. gentleman at all. He had said more than once during the debate on the Bill that he hoped very few tenants in the schedule would not come under its provisions; that he believed it would be better for themselves and the country, and that he did not apprehend that many would stand out. And yet, when he got the opportunity—when land was actually thrown into the hands of the Government—he did not propose to utilise it in what he himself considered was the best way for the State, but proposed to allow it to remain under the provisions of the Act of 1869, nearly the whole of which was repealed by the Bill. The hon. gentleman said that those lands must be put up to auction or brought under the occupation clauses, but surely the 34th clause might be so drafted as to place that land in exactly the same position as lands dealt with under clause 33. He thought a clause should be so drafted that those lands should be valued by the board; and the first applicant—or the successful applicant, whichever it might be—should get the land. He thought himself it was introducing a complication into the measure by retaining the auction system for the disposal of the forfeited leases of runs. It would lead to a great deal of trouble, which could very easily be obviated by a modification in the clause. There was no necessity, to his mind, why the one or two alternatives stated by the hon. gentleman were necessarily to be accepted. There seemed to be a third course, which he hoped would be taken.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS said that the hon. member wanted to insist on their going back to the auction system when they were dealing with the 33rd clause; but now, when they wanted to keep it for the purpose of the 34th clause, the hon. member objected. In the one case they were consolidated runs, and in the next case they were separate blocks; and why the hon. gentleman should think they should be used for settlement at once by the Government he did not know. The fact of the matter was that when a run was forfeited it was generally very valueless country. People did not forfeit good country. They forfeited country which they did not consider it worth their while to pay rents for. The only way to deal with such cases was to offer the land at such a rate of rental at auction as was most likely to induce them to take it up. Those lands were valueless for settlement.

Mr. STEVENSON: They are nothing of the sort.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS said the hon. gentleman said they were nothing of the sort, but he happened to know as much about forfeited runs as that hon. gentleman did. If they did forfeit good country, they kept a watchful eye over it and saw that others did not get it at auction except by paying high prices.

The HON. SIR T. MCILWRAITH: You have had experience in that, too.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS said he thought the better way of dealing with those runs was to offer them at rents that were likely to induce people to take them up; and he maintained it was the best way to get at their value, as there was no practical value now.

Mr. STEVENSON said that the hon. the Minister for Lands had tried to make them believe that it was only comparatively valueless country that was ever forfeited. He understood that was what the hon. gentleman said, but he had known times when the whole of the blocks on a run, with the exception of the head-station—good, bad, and indifferent—had been forfeited. He had known circumstances arise where the lessee could not keep all the country—even the head-station block. In 1868 or 1869 he himself forfeited every block on a station he was managing, with the exception of one, and there was no better country in the colony than that country. Of course, as the hon. gentleman said, he kept a watchful eye over it. In the case of one block which he applied for, after the lapse of some time, to be put up again at auction, he had to pay as much as £5 a square mile for it, through a mistake of the hon. gentleman now sitting alongside him — Mr. Archer — who opposed him. But when the hon. gentleman found out the mistake—that it was a forfeited block—he got it at 12s. a square mile. It would never have paid him to have kept it at £5 a square mile, and so he came to an arrangement with the hon. gentleman's brother by which he got it at 12s. a square mile, the upset price. It was not a case where the country was valueless. It was a case where they were in such a position that they could not afford to pay the rent for the country. The same thing might happen again, and the country supposed to be valueless country—what the hon. gentleman called comparatively valueless country—might be forfeited. He thought that the suggestion made by the hon. member for Balonne was worthy of consideration.

Mr. JESSOP said there was a large number of runs outside the schedule the leases of which had expired, but for which no provision was made in the Bill as to what would be done with them. Perhaps the hon. the Minister for Lands would tell them how he intended to deal with those runs.

The PREMIER said that the runs were all inside the schedule under clause 23.

Mr. JESSOP: There is no provision mentioned.

Question put and passed.

Clauses 35 and 36 passed as printed.

Mr. KATES said he was going to propose that a new clause be inserted after clause 36. He did not think he should have any great difficulty in explaining the desirability of his amendment to the Bill. Its advantages were manifold, and he was sure they would commend themselves to the favourable consideration of the Committee. The chief object of his amendment was to prevent what had been termed in that Committee "peacocking"; to prevent intending selectors from picking the eyes out of runs; to prevent their selecting the choice pieces; and to compel them to take up the land as surveyed—good, bad, or indifferent. By the introduction of his amendment into the Bill reserves would be left for main lines of roads, for townships, for water, and for road-making material; and divisional boards would be relieved in a great measure from being compelled to resume, and to open roads at considerable expense, which very often caused a deal of heart-burning and dissatisfaction and unpleasantness between the ratepayers and the board. The board would be relieved in a great measure from deciding boundary disputes, for selectors would not be compelled to apply to the members of the board to decide matters in connection with overlapping, etc. The new clause would also do away with a great many of the objections raised by hon. members opposite in connection with compensation for improvements, because intending selectors would at once know what they had to pay for improvements. It had been said by the hon. member for Normanby that a selector might avoid payment for a woolshed by selecting in such a way as to cut out that particular improvement. If the amendment were not introduced, a selector might make a starting point, five or six chains from a fence, on the resumed portion of a run, and avoid payment for the fencing; and not only that, but have the use of the strip of land between his boundary and the fence. As he said before, the advantages to be derived from passing the new clause were various and manifold. The question had been raised at various meetings in different parts of the country, and at nearly all those meetings it was unanimously held that the introduction of such an amendment was desirable. It might be raised as an objection that they could not get enough surveyors for the work; but he thought that objection could be overcome by bringing surveyors from other places. It might also be objected that the amendment would retard settlement; but it was not at all likely to have that effect. Other hon. gentlemen would no doubt be able to point out additional advantages to be derived from the amendment. He therefore moved the following new clause:—

Before any land is proclaimed open to selection under this part of the Act, main lines of road and all necessary reserves for public purposes shall be surveyed and marked on the ground; the remainder of the area shall be subdivided into suitable portions for selection, and if some portions are suitable for agricultural farms and others for grazing farms, the proclamation declaring such land open to selection shall specify which portions shall be open to selection as agricultural farms, and which as grazing farms.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS said he should not like to take the responsibility of saying that the Survey Department could keep pace with the demand for agricultural areas, though they might in regard to grazing areas. If the thing could be done he thought the clause would be a most desirable one; but to say that selection should not take place until the Survey Department was so perfectly organised as to meet every possible demand might have the effect of retarding the selection of agricultural areas. In the case of grazing areas, survey might precede settlement, and ought to precede settlement; but in the case of agricultural farms the amendment would have the effect of shutting up lands for selection until they were surveyed. The hon. gentleman might attain his object more readily by moving an amendment to the effect that no land should be thrown open to selection until it had been surveyed. If such an amendment were carried, it would necessarily provide for roads and things of that kind.

Mr. KATES said that one object of the motion was that main roads should be reserved to be utilised hereafter for railway purposes—either for main lines or for branch lines. What the Minister for Lands said in reference to grazing areas he (Mr. Kates) thought just as necessary in respect to agricultural areas, because they knew from experience that a great deal of land had been rendered useless through selecting before survey. If there had been survey before selection in connection with agricultural areas hitherto, they would have had a great deal of land utilised which was at present not occupied at all. The selectors would have had to take good, bad, and indifferent as it came, instead of picking out the very best portions.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS said he admitted what the hon. member said throughout; but it simply resolved itself into the question whether the surveying could be made to keep pace with the demand for settlement. He thought it would be doubtful whether it could be in all instances in the agricultural areas, but he believed it could be done in the grazing areas, which were larger, and were more easily surveyed. There were very many reasons why the object of the amendment could be carried out with greater facility in regard to grazing areas than the agricultural areas. It was simply a question as to whether it was desirable to restrict settlement in the event of the Survey Department not being able to keep pace with the demand; and he would not accept the responsibility of keeping the department equal to the demand. It ought to be left to the Government to determine whether they could carry out the work, and whether the land should be thrown open before survey or not.

Mr. SALKELD said he presumed that in any case the land would have to be surveyed some time or other. If it were not surveyed before selection, it would have to be surveyed afterwards; and in his opinion it would be better to have it surveyed before. It was only a question of making up the arrears of work in the Survey Department. The work was behind already, and he knew of numbers of people who could not get their land surveyed. He believed in having all land surveyed before being proclaimed open to selection, and he thought they would be justified in going to considerable expense in providing an extra staff of surveyors to keep pace with the work. If the question as to whether land should be surveyed before being proclaimed open to selection came to a division he should vote for it. In regard to main roads, anyone who had seen the difficulties that had arisen in the past, and the expense and trouble which had occurred, could

have no doubt as to whether he should support the amendment. If, when lands were thrown open to selection, the permanent water and main roads were surveyed, both the Government and private individuals would be saved a considerable amount of expense. He hoped the Government would see their way to adopt the new clause, and even if an additional expense had to be incurred in procuring surveyors it would be an advisable and proper thing to incur it.

Mr. GRIMES said he was in favour of the clause becoming part of the Bill, and he was very glad to find that the objection of the Minister for Lands had been narrowed down to the difficulty of obtaining surveyors. He did not think there would be any difficulty in that respect; at all events he knew that very few selectors would care to go upon their selections before they were surveyed. He knew of many instances in which selectors had been obliged to forfeit their payments through going upon land before it had been surveyed, because when the land was surveyed prior applicants had crushed them out from the land they had selected; and for that reason he thought it was not at all likely now that they would get agriculturists to settle down on the land before it was surveyed. In reference to main roads, it was important that they should have them laid out at the very first, so that no difficulties might arise to disturb the selector when he had well settled down.

Mr. GROOM said the clause introduced quite a new feature in the land legislation of the colony. He was decidedly in favour of the principle of survey before selection, and he did not think the objection that there were not sufficient surveyors to carry out the work would hold good at all. Anyone who had been a regular attendant at the land courts, as he had been, would have noticed many cases in which six or seven individuals entered into competition, each aiming for the same selection. The result had been that they had had to go to auction, one bidding against the other, and giving prices which were entirely beyond the value of the land they desired to select. He knew of a remarkable illustration of that state of things which occurred about two months ago, or perhaps less, when some land was declared open for selection at Allora. One hundred and twelve persons applied for selections, and only about forty-eight were successful. He was informed by a gentleman who was there, that there were fifty whose applications were *bonâ fide*, but between sixty and seventy were simply dummies, and each received an honorarium of £5, and in one case as much as £20, to withdraw their applications, in order to allow the *bonâ fide* persons to get possession of the land. There were, however, four or five selectors who would not submit to that species of blackmailing, and who went to auction; and land that was put up at £1 15s. an acre realised £3, £4, and in one case as much as £5 an acre. At the recent land court at Toowoomba there was a case of blackmailing of a similar kind. The land was put up at 6d. an acre; two persons bid against each other, and they ran it up to 9s. per acre per annum. The individual who was successful had to pay £70 for the first year's rent, but what was the result? As soon as he realised what he had done he sent in an application to the Minister for Lands to be relieved of his bargain, saying that he had misunderstood what he was about, and that he believed he was paying 9s. an acre for the whole term of the lease, and not per annum. It was quite possible that that individual might be correct in what he said, and that he had bought the land under a misapprehension; but if they could prevent selectors from taking part in those demoralising scenes in the auction-rooms it would be a step in the right direction. If the amendment would effect that object it would be a very desirable one. There was another point to which he wished to draw the attention of the Committee in connection with that matter. They were to have under the Bill large agricultural farms of 960 acres, and also homestead areas of which the limit would be 160 acres.

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN: No; 320 acres, I hope.

Mr. GROOM said: At least he understood the clause in the Bill, dealing with that subject, in that way. Whether the area was to be 160 acres or 320 acres, there were several points to which they would have to direct their attention. Speaking for himself, he had always been in favour of 320-acre areas. He happened to know that some of the very best selectors in the colony were men with 320 and 640 acre selections, and if they could induce more general settlement of that nature they would accomplish a great object indeed. But unless there were areas set apart already surveyed, how were the immigrants who were coming out here to know where to go? It was a matter of great importance that there should be a plan in the different land offices at Toowoomba, Warwick, Rockhampton, and other larger centres, showing the surveyed areas, and thus letting intending selectors know where they could take up land; instead of putting them in the position of being compelled to wander out into the bush and hunt for the land themselves. That was the difficulty they had been labouring under all along, and very often it came to this, as hon. members would know: Supposing, for instance, that he (Mr. Groom) applied for a 640-acre conditional selection, and some individual who happened to know the land, and had had his eye upon it, applied for a homestead area of 160 acres. Well, that man opposed him, and, unless he (Mr. Groom) submitted to his terms, the whole of the selection which he desired to become possessed of was entirely ruined by the particular way in which his opponent wished his homestead to be surveyed. That had been done in a great many instances, and he thought it highly desirable that they should put it beyond the power of such men to levy blackmail. He thought it desirable that there should be areas surveyed and set apart, so that a man might know where he could take up land. There were areas of land, as hon. members must know, on the banks of creeks and rivers, where, if a man got 60 acres, he had sufficient to make a living out of. There were other places where a man required 320 acres; but he considered 60 acres in certain localities that he knew of, where, of course, the land was exceptionally good, was sufficient for any man. He knew of one gentleman — a successful selector in Drayton and Toowoomba — whom the hon. member for Rockhampton had heard inform His Excellency the Governor that he made £400 or £500 a year out of a selection, the area of which was 60 acres. He knew of other localities where the land was equally good, and where 60 acres would be quite sufficient for a man to make a good living out of. The area of the land surveyed and opened for selection should be estimated entirely by the quality of the land and its position with regard to a market. That was a matter which should be taken into consideration, because the nearness to railway or water communication made a great difference in the value of land. If it were thoroughly understood that the establishment of survey before selection was to be part of the land policy of the colony, he believed it would do an immense amount of good, and more particularly if the surveyed areas were set apart so that any

immigrants intending to settle on the land might know where to select, and should not be obliged to go—as they had to do now—into the bush, almost blindfold, and without knowing where they could select. The Government should say at once whether they were prepared to accept the amendment of the hon. member for Darling Downs. If the only objection to the adoption of the principle of survey before selection was the want of surveyors, it was an objection that could be easily got over. He was sure the House would at once consent to the expenditure that would be necessitated by the employment of more surveyors to carry out that principle. It would be an immense advantage to have the areas open for selection in different parts of the colony thoroughly defined, so that intending selectors might know where to go and what land to select.

The PREMIER said that there was no doubt that the advantages of survey before selection were very great. No one could doubt that; the only matter that could raise any doubt was whether selection should be stopped until the surveys were made. That was a matter deserving serious consideration. In the early days of the colony areas were pointed out for people to select, but somehow or other they were always found to be unfit for selection. The principal objection to survey before selection as an unbending and rigid rule, which was found in New South Wales and other colonies, and which led to its abolition, was this: that it put into the hands of the department, or some subordinate officer of the department who could not be got at, the power of stopping selection altogether. That must not be lost sight of. He knew the advantages of survey before selection were enormous, but so were the powers which it put into the hands of subordinate officers to prevent selection altogether. He would give illustrations of it. Supposing they adopted survey before selection as a rigid rule now: in the first place, selection upon all lands at present open to selection would be stopped until they found surveyors to cut them up into proper areas. Selection would be absolutely stopped for some months at any rate. There would be absolutely no selection during that time. That would be a serious thing, no doubt, and it might be desirable, if they proposed to adopt the principle at all, to allow some time at least to elapse so that lands already open to selection might not be withdrawn from selection for so long a time. He would point out another difficulty which might arise. Suppose there were certain persons who might not want their runs interfered with by selections, what would be easier than that in the most—he would say—untraceable manner possible it would be found that somehow or other the surveyors never happened to go there, but appeared to be always urgently required elsewhere.

Mr. DONALDSON: Where is your board?

The PREMIER said the board would not be the administrative head of the surveyors. That would be a matter for the Minister to attend to. Those things had happened in New South Wales and had a great deal to do with the cry of free selection; they had run to the other extreme, and did a great deal of harm. In this colony they took a middle course, and allowed free selection before survey only in certain specified areas. There were very great objections also to that, and they had been pointed out that afternoon; a great deal of country was wasted, and many persons could not get the land they desired to select. They were between those two difficulties. He thought it was desirable, before the Committee came to a conclusion upon the matter—to make what would be a radical change, for it would be a radical change in their present system—to weigh well the advantages and disadvantages of each system. They saw what the advantages of the present system were. They saw also the disadvantage of the proposed system—and he believed it was almost its only disadvantage—that it would be in the power of subordinate officers, notwithstanding the greatest desire on the part of the Minister to have the land selected, by not having the subdivisions and surveys ready in certain places, to stop selection for a considerable time. That disadvantage should be carefully weighed before they made up their minds to insist, as an absolute rule, that all land should be surveyed before selection. For his own part he should be glad to see that principle adopted, if the disadvantage he had pointed out was not too serious a one. He was not so satisfied about the advisability of insisting that all main roads and reserves should be marked. The hon. member's clause went rather too much into detail. The important point, however, was that land was to be surveyed and divided into suitable blocks for selection. That was really all the hon. member cared for, as he understood him; and the exact phraseology was perhaps not of so much consequence, for if it was not right now it could be put right afterwards.

Mr. HORWITZ said he would support the amendment of the hon. member for Darling Downs. They had had experience of all that hon. member had said already on the Darling Downs. At present they were going to deal with a new scheme altogether for the management of the lands of the colony, and he thought the time had now arrived to deal with the question raised by the hon. member for Darling Downs. For instance, they had cases of men having settled on farms and homesteads, and the Government made railways and roads through them and cut them up and destroyed them. The time had arrived when the Government should take into consideration the advisability of reserving two or three chains along highway roads for the making of railways, so that they might not afterwards have to interfere with the land. In the district he had the honour to represent many farmers had suffered in that way; and though no doubt they were paid for the land which the country had taken away from them for the making of branch lines of railway, still much of the land was destroyed, and some farms were spoilt altogether. The hon. member for Darling Downs, by his amendment, intended that, in the survey of land for selection, highway roads should be reserved, so that an intending selector might know exactly the piece of land he was going to select. He knew of cases in which parties had taken up land, and after living on it for twelve months a surveyor came and shifted them completely away from that locality. The surveyor only carried out his instructions, but the parties afterwards refused to take the land allotted to them, because it was useless to them. On different occasions parties had taken up 160 acres of land, and after living upon it for two years the Government came and made a road right through the middle of it, and thus destroyed it completely. It was the object of the amendment of the hon. member for Darling Downs to prevent that in the future. With regard to the remark of the Minister for Lands, that he did not think he would be able to carry out the principle because he would not be able to get surveyors, he could tell the hon. gentleman that there were any amount of surveyors to be got. If they could not get a sufficient number of them in this colony they could get them from New South Wales or Victoria. There would be no trouble in getting them; an

abundance could be got within a fortnight if they were required. He hoped the Minister for Lands would be able to see his way clear to accept the amendment, which was a very useful one.

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN said he was glad to see the principle of survey before selection so well debated on the other side of the Committee. He did not think the objections raised by the Premier and the Minister for Lands were insuperable. As regarded surveyors, he admitted at once that there was a deficiency in Queensland—at least there was two years ago, but at that time surveyors were well employed all over the colonies. That was not the case now. He did not know whether the statement made by the hon. member for Warwick—that plenty of surveyors could be got in Victoria and New South Wales—was correct; but he was perfectly certain that if the Minister for Lands would advertise in New Zealand he would get them, because there was a want of employment for surveyors there. That, therefore, would meet the difficulty of the want of surveyors. Another objection raised by the Premier was that if they adopted the system—an entirely new one—it would stop selection for a certain period, probably three months. He (Hon. J. M. Macrossan) thought if it stopped selection for even four months that would not be such a calamity in comparison to the value of the new system. The principle was so valuable that if it were adopted he believed the country would be well satisfied to allow selection to be stopped for a while—that was, if it was necessary. He did not think selection would be stopped, though it might be retarded. The hon. gentleman had referred to the experience of other colonies which had led them to adopt free selection before survey. He (Hon. J. M. Macrossan) did not think that the experience of New South Wales in the matter of selection was very great prior to selection before survey being adopted; but the most successful agricultural country in the world—the United States of America—had survey before selection. There an immigrant did exactly what the hon. member for Toowoomba said immigrants should be able to do in Queensland. He went to the lands office and asked the land agent for a map of the district. The agent pointed out to him the different selections which were unapplied for. The man placed his finger on a spot and said, "Has that been applied for?" If the answer was "No," he said he would have that, and it became his property; there was no more trouble about it. He had heard of men going into the bush in Queensland, as described by the hon. member for Toowoomba, to look for land, and being unable to find it. At the same time he had seen letters in the newspapers complaining that people had been induced to come out to settle in the country, and that when they came they could not find land to settle on. That would be the case under the system proposed in the Bill. He thought it was quite possible to adopt a system under which the surveys would be carried out more rapidly than under the present system. Selection was going on everywhere under that system; consequently surveys could not be carried out as fast as they would be under a regular system. In the United States surveyors divided the land into townships of thirty-six square miles; that was, a square of six miles on each side. Those townships were divided into square-mile blocks, and each square-mile block into quarter-sections—that was, 160 acres. The thing was done rapidly; and every man could take up 160 or 640 acres, all he had to do being to go to the Lands Office and point out what he wanted. He (Hon. J. M. Macrossan) thought the Government could not do better than accept the proposal of the hon. member for Darling Downs, and quite forget the fact that settlement might be retarded for three or four months. He admitted that it would be retarded, but not to the extent that the Premier thought, as surveyors could be sent to do the work immediately. There was a large staff of surveyors in the country, and there were railways running in almost every direction near to land that should be surveyed for settlement. He thought surveyors might be sent there at once, and then the difficulty which the immigrant had of finding good land would be entirely obviated. If the land were surveyed into sections or blocks people could pick out the spot they wanted. There would then be no such thing as that demoralising practice which had been alluded to, and by which *bonâ fide* selectors had had to pay three or four times more than they ought to pay.

Mr. MACFARLANE said he thought the advantages of survey before selection must be very apparent to anyone who had taken the land question into consideration. The great drawback to settlement in the colony in the past had been the want of the very thing that should be introduced into that Bill. The question had been before the House on many occasions. He himself had to complain some years ago of the want of maps in the various land offices. Had there been maps immigrants would have been able to go to an office and see where land was open for selection. It appeared to him that the Government, in drawing up the Bill, had really intended that there should be survey before selection. He said that from the manner in which they had drawn up the 38th clause, which said:—

"When any land is so proclaimed open for selection, maps shall be prepared and exhibited to the public at the land office of the district and at the Department of Public Lands in Brisbane showing the land so open, its distance from railway or water carriage, the price per acre, the maximum area that may be selected by any one person in the district, the quality and capabilities of the land so far as they can be stated, and such other information as may be prescribed."

It was evident from that that the framers of the Bill intended that there should be survey before selection. He believed there would be a great deal less confusion if they were to have the farms in the agricultural areas properly surveyed, so that anyone, as had been well observed by the hon. member for Townsville, could go to the lands office, and by looking at a map put a finger on the land he required. He did not think the department need be much afraid about the want of surveyors. He was positive if they advertised for a hundred they could get them; they could get a good many in Queensland; in fact he knew that some had applied to the department for work. The want of surveyors, therefore, would not stand in the way of the adoption of the amendment. It would be an improvement on the present system to adopt survey before selection, and it would be a great deal better for all parties. He believed the country would be divided in a way more suitable for agriculturists and graziers, and the system would be very much better than the old plan of taking up a bit here and a bit there, as in the past.

Mr. MELLOR said he was inclined to favour the principle of survey before selection, if properly carried out. In the early days of the colony they had had some experience of the system, which was not altogether favourable. A nice map, beautifully got up, was exhibited in the office; and when an immigrant went to look at the land shown on the map as open for selection, most of it would not keep a bandicoot. Now they had learnt more of the value of the land in different parts of the

country, and he hoped, if the system were adopted again, it would not be the inferior lands which would be surveyed, as that would not induce settlement. As far as the amendment referred to the marking out of the main roads, it would be of great assistance throughout the agricultural areas, and save the local bodies the great expense they were put to in proclaiming roads and obtaining resumptions. He knew many instances where settlement had taken place, and where the selectors, having no road to their homes, had to appeal to the divisional boards to open roads.

Mr. ISAMBERT said he thought the difficulties in the way of adopting the principle of survey before selection were not so great as the Minister for Lands and the Premier pictured them. If ever the proverb "More hurry, less speed" was applicable, it was in the present instance. He did not believe there would be so much difficulty in getting the work of surveying done. If the staff of surveyors at present employed were given specified districts to survey, instead of having to go about and look for places to survey, they would get through twice the work. The system might retard settlement a little for a few months, but eventually it would greatly facilitate settlement. The necessity for the laying out of roads was patent to everyone. In densely settled districts like Rosewood, where the people had selected here a bit and there a bit, it was a very difficult matter for the surveyor to lay out roads. It seemed to him that the advantages attaching to the system laid down in the proposed new clause were so great that the difficulties were trifling in comparison. He should have much pleasure in supporting the clause, though it might be necessary to amend it a little and make it more elastic.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS said that the Bill as it stood would give the Government the option of withholding land from selection till after survey, or allowing it to be selected before survey. Their reason for proposing to retain the power of throwing open land before survey was that the organisation of the Survey Department might not be so perfect as to enable them to keep pace with the demand for land; and that might result in expense and delay. For his own part, he thoroughly believed in not opening up any land until it was surveyed, but still he would like the power in certain cases to open an agricultural area without survey, if they were unable to keep pace with the requirements. However, he was quite content to be tied down to the principle of no selection before survey. His only reason for proposing anything else was his fear lest the department should not be organised in such an effective manner as to keep pace with the demand.

Mr. PALMER said he was very glad to see so many hon. members supporting the principle, because he advocated it on the second reading, and then quoted from a work on America to show that in the United States the surveys were always kept ahead of the demand. Judging from the manner in which surveys were carried out in the pastoral districts—perhaps thousands of miles in twelve months—he did not think there could be any difficulty with the Survey Department. The Government had only to infuse a little vigour into the department and they would have the work done. With regard to what the Premier had said as to the introduction of the principle making selection subordinate to the Survey Department—if any difficulty arose from that cause, it would be sufficient proof that the whole department wanted organising. If the operation of the Act were postponed for a certain time, in the interval surveys could be made sufficient to meet all demands. He did not think the application of the principle would retard settlement in any way.

The PREMIER said the principle of survey before selection seemed to be accepted by the Committee. He had thought it wise to call attention to the difficulties connected with the matter in order that it might not pass without the fullest consideration, but for himself he was prepared, if the Committee saw their way to adopt the principle, to accept it. It would, of course, require a considerable amount of expenditure and extra labour on the part of the department, but he sincerely hoped that no Government would ever allow the insufficient supply of surveyors to prevent settlement. The amendment, as at present framed, would require a good deal of alteration, and he had been endeavouring to draft an altered clause during the discussion. He would suggest to the hon. member who had moved the amendment to accept the altered proposition which he had prepared, as it would fit in more conveniently with the rest of the Bill. He would read the new clause which he suggested should be substituted for the amendment. It was as followed :—

Before any land is proclaimed open to selection, it shall be surveyed under the direction of the Surveyor-General, and divided into lots of convenient area for selection, with proper roads and reserves for public purposes, and such lots shall be marked on the ground by posts not less than three feet in height, at the corners of the lots.

The latter part of the amendment would then be omitted, as what it contained was provided for in a different way in the Bill. It would be extremely inconvenient if the hon. gentleman insisted upon carrying the part referring to the proclamation of the lands open to selection, as that was otherwise provided for in the Bill. He would ask the hon. gentleman to accept the altered phraseology which he (the Premier) had suggested. It would carry out all the hon. gentleman desired.

Mr. JORDAN said he hoped the hon. member for Darling Downs would accept the substituted amendment, which met the case very fully, and which was perhaps less open to objections which might lie against the clause in its present form. He (Mr. Jordan) attached very great importance to that matter. If they were to promote settlement and make it successful on a large scale, they should do it systematically. He was very desirous that that should be carried out.

Mr. KATES said if the amendment suggested by the Premier included agricultural areas——

The PREMIER: All selection will come under it.

Mr. KATES said that under those circumstances, with the permission of the Committee, he would withdraw his amendment in favour of the proposal made by the Premier, as they both amounted to the same thing.

Amendment withdrawn accordingly.

The PREMIER moved that the following new clause follow clause 6 :—

Before any land is proclaimed open to selection, it shall be surveyed under the direction of the Surveyor-General, and divided into lots of convenient area for selection, with proper roads and reserves for public purposes, and such lots shall be marked on the ground by posts not less than three feet in height, at the corners of the lots.

New clause put and passed.

On clause 37, as follows :—

"The proclamation declaring the land open to selection shall appoint a day (not being less than four weeks after the date of the proclamation) on and after which the land will be open. And on and after the day so notified the land shall be open to selection accordingly.

"The proclamation shall also specify whether the land is in an agricultural area or not, and shall declare the maximum area of land which may be selected by any one person in the district.

"Such maximum area shall not—

1. In the case of land in an agricultural area, exceed nine hundred and sixty acres, or except as next hereinafter provided, be less than three hundred and twenty acres;
2. In the case of other land, exceed twenty thousand acres or, except as next hereinafter provided, be less than five thousand acres.

"If the land has been already surveyed, the proclamation may direct that it shall be applied for in blocks as surveyed, and not otherwise; and every such direction shall be observed whether the area of such surveyed blocks be less than the minimum area hereinbefore prescribed or not.

"The proclamation shall also specify the annual rent per acre to be paid for the land:

"Such rent shall be not less than three pence per acre in the case of land in an agricultural area, and not less than three halfpence per acre in other cases.

"In the case of land in an agricultural area, the proclamation shall further specify the price (not being less than twenty shillings per acre) at which the lessee may purchase the land in fee-simple, as hereinafter provided.

"The proclamation may also state the value of any improvements upon any land by the proclamation declared open to selection."

The MINISTER FOR LANDS said there were a number of verbal amendments to be moved in the clause, the first being to omit the words "except as next hereinafter provided" in subsection 3.

The HON. SIR T. McILWRAITH said he understood that the Minister for Lands intended to make some amendment providing for farms partly agricultural and partly pastoral. That had been one of the most successful systems of settlement that had been adopted in New South Wales.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS said there was no doubt that nearly all the farms in an agricultural area would be both agricultural and pastoral. For instance, if a man took up the maximum of 960 acres, probably not more than 200 acres would be agricultural land, and the rest would only be used for grazing purposes. But it would be within an agricultural area, and would have to be treated as an agricultural farm.

The HON. SIR T. McILWRAITH said that was just the difficulty. There would be a large amount of land in every agricultural area unfit for agriculture; why should not that land be reserved for grazing purposes, so that men could have mixed farms? The scheme was wrong in principle, for it assumed that all the land within certain boundaries was agricultural, and all the land beyond them pastoral. It did not make allowance for a farm of 200 acres of agricultural land and 1,200 acres, or even 5,000 acres, of pastoral land; and those cases would be very frequently met with. The clause assumed that all the agricultural land was together.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS said there was only one way of meeting that difficulty, and that was to specify the land in a block. But that would be a complicated and very undesirable way of dealing with it. Areas could be set aside in localities where it was well known, or could easily be ascertained, that there was a fair amount of agricultural land; but there would always be a quantity unfit for agriculture, and it would be for the surveyor, if he had any judgment, to apportion a fair share of each. There was no part of the country, that he knew of, where a man could take up 960 acres which would be entirely agricultural land; still, the whole of it would be in an agricultural area. In other districts there would be no difficulty, for they would be grazing districts, pure and simple, in which agriculture was not at present contemplated.

Mr. JESSOP asked by what means a man could select a grazing farm in an agricultural area? It was certain that a very large portion of the land included in an agricultural area would be fit only for pastoral purposes, but there was no provision by which that land could be utilised as grazing farms. He did not think a large area could be found anywhere that was wholly agricultural.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS said the agricultural areas would consist of a large number of small areas, and the best efforts would be made to define which should be grazing areas and which agricultural areas. If a man took up a farm, only a portion of which was suitable for agriculture, there was nothing to prevent him from using the remainder for pastoral purposes.

Mr. JESSOP said they had not been given the slightest idea of what was to be the size of grazing areas; whether they were to be 5,000 acres or 20,000 acres. They could not go west of the Range and find an area of 20,000 acres that did not contain a lot of inferior land, which might be useful for grazing purposes, but not at all adapted for agricultural purposes. The clause might be so worded that, after a certain period, land not taken up for agricultural purposes might be applied to grazing; so that the selector might combine grazing and agriculture.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS said that when the whole of the available land in an agricultural area was exhausted, and the portion left was not fit for agriculture, it would be proclaimed open as a grazing area; but they could not fix any definite time in the Bill when that should be done. It was a matter that must be left to those who had to administer the Bill to deal with.

Mr. MOREHEAD said the hon. the Minister for Lands did not appear to quite grasp the arguments of the hon. the leader of the Opposition and of the hon. member for Dalby. In the Bill they had simply two classes of settlers provided for—agriculturists and small squatters, or pastoralists; and, as had been pointed out by those hon. members, there was no provision made for a middle class who would combine agriculture and grazing. Only the two extremes were provided for.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS said that even in land that was proclaimed open as a grazing area there might be portions that could be utilised for certain forms of agriculture; and there was nothing in the Bill to prevent a man who took up a grazing farm from utilising any portion of it for agriculture.

Mr. MOREHEAD: 960 acres?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: In an agricultural area he could not take up more than 960 acres, but in a grazing area he might find many portions suitable for agriculture, and the balance could be used for grazing. After the whole of an agricultural area had been exhausted by the selection of all the portions that were suitable for agriculture, the portion left that would be simply available for grazing would be thrown open as a grazing area. There was no difficulty whatever.

Mr. JESSOP said that was what he wanted to arrive at—to know if the Bill would provide for that. There was no such provision in it at the present time. He wanted to see provision made for agriculture and grazing combined; and if no other hon. member moved an amendment to provide for that, he should do so. As the clause stood, they might have a large area proclaimed as agricultural; one-half of it might be fit for agriculture and be taken up as such, and the other half might

remain unsold for years, unless some provision was made to deal with such cases; and why not provide for it now when framing the Bill?

The PREMIER said the scheme of the Bill was to divide the lands generally into two classes—one good enough for agriculture, and the other not. If the land was good enough for agriculture it would be proclaimed as an agricultural area, and, if not, as a grazing area. The area allowed to be selected would of course vary according to the quality of the land. In the case of very poor land the maximum area would be allowed to be taken up; while in the case of land not good enough for agriculture, but still very good in other respects, a minimum would be fixed. There was nothing whatever to prevent the holder of a grazing farm from cultivating the whole of it, or as much as he liked. Of course, where the land was mixed—some good along the creeks, and others bad at the back—it would be made a grazing area. Such lands could not be made an agricultural area; but where there was a sufficient area of good land it would be made an agricultural area. The Bill in that respect was as flexible as possible.

Mr. NELSON said hon. members appeared to forget that they had already passed a new clause to follow clause 36, because if that were carried out it would do away with clause 37 almost entirely. For instance, that clause said, in the 4th subsection, "if the land has been already surveyed"; but they had determined that it must be surveyed. It appeared to him that all that was necessary to provide in the clause was that the proclamation should direct that certain land should be open for selection, either for purposes of agriculture or for grazing. All the land would have to be surveyed before it was proclaimed, and all they had to do was to proclaim whether it was intended as an agricultural area or as a grazing area.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS said that, supposing the lands were surveyed in 160-acre blocks, and the proclamation provided that a selector might take up 320 acres, there was nothing to prevent him from taking up two surveyed blocks; and if the area was afterwards withdrawn he might take up 960 or 2,560 acres—as many blocks as would make up the maximum area allowed. He thought that would meet the difficulty.

The HON. SIR T. McILWRAITH said the hon. Minister for Lands had not attempted to meet the difficulty that had been propounded first—that was to provide for a mixed class of agriculturists and pastoralists. Provision was made in clause 68 for the acquisition of freehold land by agriculturists; and why should they not go further, and provide for the acquisition of freehold land by pastoralists? The Government might, of course, divide the land into pastoral and agricultural leases, but it was quite certain that men who had been pastoralists would desire to acquire certain portions of their holdings as freeholds; and if they were contented to take it up as agricultural land, for which they were prepared to pay, why should they not be allowed to do so? That he believed was a want which would be felt, and which could easily be provided for in clause 68. The Minister for Lands had not addressed himself to that part of the argument at all.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS said the proposition of the hon. member would be distinctly opposed to the principle of the Bill.

The HON. SIR T. McILWRAITH: In what way?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS said that the right of acquiring freehold was confined to certain areas and a certain maximum.

The HON. SIR T. McILWRAITH: Why should it be?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS said that people should not be allowed to acquire freehold in large holdings. If they gave a man a large holding for grazing purposes, he should not be allowed to acquire a freehold of it. The next generation might require to deal with that land, and they did not want to debar them from dealing with it. They gave the people the utilisation of the land now, which could be done only by leasing large tracts of land; but there might come a time when it could be done in another way. They should not fix those who came after them by hard-and-fast legislation now, from utilising those lands in a way they might think it right to take.

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN said that the Minister for Lands had told them that it was contemplated in the Bill to grant freehold in agricultural areas, but he thought the hon. gentleman had forgotten that he was granting freehold in other areas outside agricultural areas—areas that could not be cultivated at all—he referred to town and suburban lands. It was of far more importance, he believed, to the country to keep the valuable town and suburban lots in their own hands, for many reasons which he could point out, but which perhaps at present there was no need to point out, than it was to keep the freehold of grazing land. He should like to know why the hon. gentleman had not applied the reason he had mentioned to those lands. An agriculturist had a great many difficulties to contend with, and no doubt was entitled to get the freehold if he wished to acquire it. But why should a town speculator—a man who was a mere speculator, in fact, in town lots or suburban lots—be allowed to take it up and to hold it unutilised—not even fenced—until the people who were working around him, and building, created a tremendous value for the land which he had taken up, but of which value the State got no share whatever? The State ought to get a share of the increased value of that land, and would the hon. gentleman tell them why they should not get a share of the increased value of those suburban and town lands? Because, if a sufficient reason were given, he should have no objection to the passing of the clause; but if he did not get a satisfactory reason he should have very serious objections to its passing.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS said he would admit that he had not much practical experience about that. A wise man would only attempt what he could possibly accomplish, and he should go the whole way to deal with the question if he thought it possible to be accomplished. The only reason why it was not done, so far as he was concerned, was because he did not think it was possible to accomplish that object.

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN: Why?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS said they must have a commencement when they made a new departure, and he thought it was more possible to accomplish it in the way proposed than by any other. That the other would follow might be assumed as certain, but that it was not possible now was one reason why he had not attempted it.

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN said he rather doubted the impossibility which the hon. the Minister for Lands conceived. He could not see the impossibility of applying the same principle to town and suburban lots. They must have a commencement, no doubt; but if the Minister for Lands and his colleagues meant to

do anything of that kind, every day's delay added to the difficulty—because there was more land of the kind being taken up than had been the case hitherto. It was only that day that he had sent in an application from a constituent of his up north, who wished to acquire the freehold of the land on which he had built his house on a surveyed township. The land had not been sold yet; but, if such a principle as he advocated was laid down, that gentleman would never have requested him to ask the Minister for Lands to have that land put up for sale, but would have been satisfied with the same rule that was applied to everyone else to have his land leased. The hon. member must recollect that the freehold of grazing land had not been acquired hitherto, except in the case of pre-emptives, and then, he believed, generally speaking, that the pre-emptives were, to a certain extent, more or less agricultural lands; so that really, although the hon. gentleman might pride himself on introducing a new principle, it was clearly shown that he had not even touched the principle which he pretended to introduce. He maintained that the Minister for Lands ought to begin at the very point where he said it was impossible to begin, and ought to begin with the town lots if he began at all. The hon. gentleman knew as well as he did that every man of ability who had written on that subject had regretted the sale of town lots as being a far greater evil than the sale of any country lands. The hon. gentleman must know that the author of the theory he had taken up, and other gentlemen who had preceded him in that line, looked upon the aggregation of estates on which towns were built, and in which the people were cramped for room, as a far greater evil than the aggregation of estates in the country—bad as that was. They need not go to the large towns of the old country—they need not go outside Brisbane to see the evils that had arisen, and were arising daily in this city, through the diabolical system of cutting up land into 16-perch allotments. The hon. gentleman had only to say that he would sell no more town lands in order to stop that sale of land. Who could compel him to sell the land? But the hon. gentleman had gone further; he was even going to sell suburban lands in 80-acre lots; and by-and-by the lucky purchaser of 80-acre lots in Townsville, or some other towns that were rising rapidly, would become a millionaire—would be able to build a township on it. They had heard of land going in Townsville at £50 and £100 a foot, which ten years ago could have been bought for less than £1 a foot. It surely ought to make the Minister for Lands seriously consider the matter before he got up and said it was impossible to prevent it. It was possible for the hon. gentleman to crush agriculturists by putting as many impediments in the way of acquiring freehold as possible. He thought the Minister for Lands was not serious. He did not believe the hon. gentleman's colleagues or their supporters put so much pressure on him as to make him believe it was impossible not to refrain from selling town lands. Had it been reported to the hon. gentleman by the town lands speculators in Brisbane that it was impossible? He was quite certain it could not be his colleagues who said it was impossible, and he did not believe it was his supporters inside the House, but he believed it was the speculators — the land-sharks outside the House, who made their fortunes by dealing in these 16-perch allotments — who made him believe—who frightened him into believing that it was impossible to begin there; that he must begin 50 or 100 miles outside the town. The hon. gentleman ought to be ashamed of saying it was impossible to begin now.

Mr. JORDAN said the Minister for Lands had been ridiculed for attempting to introduce the Georgian system into the legislation of the colony; but now he was found fault with because he did not carry out that system to the extreme. He (Mr. Jordan) believed in the system, but he could not believe that if the Minister for Lands had brought in a Bill containing the leasing principle only it would have been carried during the present session. And he did not think the hon. member for Townsville believed it would have been carried either. The Minister for Lands did not see his way to accept the suggestion of the hon. member for Mulgrave, that persons taking up 20,000 acres should be allowed to purchase a portion, because that would violate the principle laid down in the Bill—that the leasing principle only should apply to all pastoral lands. He differed from the hon. member for Mulgrave when he said that the Bill did not provide for tillage in connection with grazing. That was one of the great objects of the Bill; and they knew what had been accomplished by free selectors in New South Wales by combining tillage with grazing. The results there had been highly satisfactory, and they hoped to see the same system carried out in Queensland. They could not suppose that in a great number of instances an area of 20,000 acres would not contain a certain proportion which could be profitably tilled, so that agriculture could easily be combined with grazing in those cases. Again, persons who were disposed to keep a few cattle might take up 960 acres; and they could not suppose that all the 960 acres would be specially suited for tillage, but that a portion would be suited only for grazing stock; so that tillage could be combined with grazing in that case also.

Mr. FERGUSON said it was refreshing to hear members on both sides of the Committee supporting the leasing principle, and it was especially pleasing to him to see the hon. member for Townsville turn round. He believed that if the Minister for Lands had stuck to the leasing principle pure and simple it would have gone through. If the present Parliament would not have adopted the system, he believed the day was not far distant when it would be adopted by the Parliament of Queensland. He was sorry the Minister for Lands had yielded, to a certain extent, in connection with the homestead clauses. That was a great mistake, as was shown by the experience of New South Wales. In that colony at one time there were 170,000 selections taken up by as many selectors under Sir John Robertson's Land Act, and nearly all in small areas; but at the present time there were not more than 18,000. What had become of the remaining 152,000 selections? They had been absorbed by large landed proprietors, thus proving clearly that no matter how land was alienated—if the whole of Queensland were alienated to-morrow in areas of 300 acres—it would in time get into the hands of comparatively a few individuals owning large estates.

Mr. MOREHEAD said he had listened carefully to the last speaker, who was certainly a thorough man, and fully prepared to carry out the principle he held—that the land should be held by the State for the benefit of each individual member of the State. But they could not have a better test case, so to speak, in connection with that principle than that of a certain gold mountain called Mount Morgan, which was owned by a small number of people, but which had been valued at sums varying from £9,000,000 to £200,000,000 of money. In a paper the other day he saw £27,000,000 set down as a moderate estimate. He thought the Government ought to consider whether it would not be advis-

able in the interests of the State to resume that land—giving compensation, of course—to resume that mountain of gold, because it really was not owing to any special knowledge of those who held it at the present time that it had become so valuable. It was really the property of the State. And he proposed in the way of compensation to pay to those who held that land the same money they paid for it, together with interest at 6 per cent., from the time they took up the land—he would even give them 7 per cent. When the State had that £27,000,000—that unearned increment—why should they borrow money at home when they had that £27,000,000 in the colony? Why not resume the land? It would be quite as just to do so as to resume the lands of the squatters, because when it was leased it was of the same value as the lands of the squatters when they were leased; and he was sure that such a measure would be passed by an overwhelming majority of both Chambers. He hoped the Government would take the matter into their consideration. He did not wish to deprive the people who had shares in the property of anything they had paid in; he would make them a liberal allowance for what they had invested, together with interest. But that unearned increment was the property of the State; it had not been created by any special knowledge on the part of the individual holding the property; and he was sure the hon. member for Rockhampton would be one of the first to assist the Government, should they make such a proposition as he (Mr. Morehead) had suggested. The hon. member was so imbued with the Georgian principle, and the justice and propriety of the views expressed by Mr. Henry George, that he would, no doubt, assist the Government in passing such a measure; and when the matter was brought prominently before the country—when they found that the State would enjoy such an immense unearned increment as was contained in that mountain of gold—the people would approve of the measure. He trusted the Government would take the subject into their consideration. The taxpayer would be relieved, and the country would be able to prosecute public works for the next ten years, if Mount Morgan was half as valuable as it was represented to be. Perhaps the hon. member for Rockhampton would himself introduce such a measure as he had suggested.

The PREMIER said he would suggest that they get back to the clause under discussion. There was time enough to discuss a clause near the end of the Bill when they came to it.

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN said he made a mistake in introducing the subject as he had done, but he did so because the Minister for Lands made the assertion, in answer to a question asked by the hon. member for Mulgrave, that the sale of land within grazing areas was contrary to the principles of the Bill. He (Hon. J. M. Macrossan) denied that it was. However, he would debate that subject further on when they came to the clause dealing with it. The sale of land was mentioned in the Bill, but whether it was applicable to grazing or agricultural areas was another thing. It was merely a question of expediency.

Mr. FERGUSON said when he spoke he addressed himself to the clause before the Committee. He did not refer to anything else, but he must say that the arguments of the hon. member for Balonne were the best he could use in favour of the leasing system, because he advocated that no further land should be alienated. At the present moment Mount Morgan was alienated from the Crown, and that was a very strong reason why such a mistake should not be repeated.

Mr. MOREHEAD said, the hon. member having got Mount Morgan—and he had since been informed that he was one of the proprietors—he could understand that he did not wish anyone else to get it. He was speaking seriously when he said that he hoped the Government would take some steps to resume that mountain. The Premier told them the other night that there was nothing to prevent the resumption of freehold, and he hoped a commencement would be made by resuming Mount Morgan, and giving compensation to the amount expended by the present proprietors. What money had been expended he thought should be recouped to the owners by the State; but that Mount Morgan should be vested in the State for the benefit of every individual member of the community he had not the least doubt.

Mr. STEVENSON said he did not agree with the hon. member. The shareholders should be obliged to disgorge what they had taken out of the mountain.

Mr. MOREHEAD: They have settled it on their wives.

Mr. FERGUSON said that all through the session the Opposition had abused the Government for repudiating their bargains. Repudiation had been the cry ever since the session began, and now hon. members of the Opposition were themselves advocating it.

Mr. JESSOP said now that the Mount Morgan discussion appeared to be over, and before the clause passed, he would like some explanation from the Government as to how it would work.

The PREMIER: What is the difficulty?

Mr. JESSOP said he could not understand why a man should not be allowed to take up less than 320 acres. Why should a maximum and minimum both be fixed?

The PREMIER said some confusion had arisen because the clause was divided in printing; one portion being on one page, and another on the other side. If the hon. member would read the two paragraphs together he would have no difficulty in understanding them. One part of the clause said—

"The proclamation shall declare the maximum area of land which may be selected by any one person in the district."

That was the maximum. Then the other part said—

"Such maximum shall not exceed nine hundred and sixty acres, or, except as next hereinafter prescribed, be less than three hundred and twenty acres."

It varied between the two, and the selector might take up any area under the maximum that he chose. He must take it up according to the way in which it was surveyed; but if there were blocks surveyed of 5 acres in extent he might take them up.

The HON. SIR T. MCILWRAITH said what the hon. member wanted to know was why a maximum and minimum should be declared at all. If a maximum was provided surely that was sufficient. He did not see any reason for providing both a maximum and a minimum.

Mr. NELSON said he thought the clause, considering that the land would be surveyed, required a great deal of amendment. He did not see why they should have areas fixed at all. They would only lead to unnecessary complications. For instance, the 2nd subsection read:—

"The proclamation shall specify whether the land is an agricultural area or not."

That was quite sufficient, because it was a very difficult thing to find a large extent of country, especially on the coast lands, where an area could be proclaimed that was large enough for an agricultural area. Why the two things should be mixed up he could not make out. According to the clause, land would have to be

declared as being either wholly agricultural or wholly grazing. He did not see any necessity for that.

Mr. JESSOP said the object of the Bill was to create close settlement, but he maintained that it would do nothing of the kind. He could not see why, if a man wanted to select, he should be obliged to take up 320 acres or none at all. He would allow him to take up any smaller quantity.

The PREMIER said the point was this: If no minimum maximum was fixed, the Government might fix the maximum at 80 acres, which perhaps might not be a desirable thing. That was the object of fixing the minimum maximum, but whether it was a good object was another thing altogether. He had no very strong feeling upon the subject.

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN said that, as they had passed a clause that afternoon providing that the land should be selected in surveyed blocks, the Government ought certainly to make up their minds as to the size of the smallest blocks. The smaller the blocks were the longer it would take to survey them, and the greater the retardation of settlement. As pointed out during the discussion upon the new clause proposed by the hon. member for Darling Downs, the land could be surveyed in square-mile blocks; and straight lines cutting through them and dividing them into four sections would give blocks of 160 acres; and if they were divided again into eighths, they would have blocks of 80 acres, which he thought should be the smallest blocks. If the Government made up their minds as to the size of the smallest blocks, it would greatly assist the clear understanding of the clause. He did not think it would be convenient to survey blocks smaller than 80 acres. There was not a great deal of land in the colony upon which a man could make a good living out of 80 acres. He must admit, of course, that there were some favoured spots, like the Rosewood Scrub, where a living could be made out of a smaller acreage than that, but he thought it would be found that in most cases 80-acre blocks would be found quite small enough.

The PREMIER said the object of the clause was to prevent one man getting more than a certain amount of land in one district. He might take up land in two or three blocks if he liked. Supposing the land was surveyed in 80-acre blocks a man might take up three or four of them.

Mr. JESSOP: Could he take up one block?

The PREMIER said he could; he could take up one, two, three, or four blocks, and the area he could take up in all would depend upon the quality of the land. In some cases 320 acres would be enough, and in other cases 960 acres would not be too much to allow a man to take up. The object was, on the one hand to prevent a monopoly on the part of the selector, and on the other hand to prevent the Government from restricting the land to too small areas.

Mr. MOREHEAD said that what was, he believed, understood by the clause was, that while it was not compulsory on a man to take up 320 acres, he could do so if he chose, or he could take up less than that area if he chose. He might take up 320 acres under the most unfavourable circumstances under the Bill if he chose; and he could take up less if it pleased him.

Mr. JESSOP said that as he now understood by the clause that a man could take up 320 acres if he chose, and that if he thought it better he could take up a lesser area, he was satisfied. He only desired to have that explained.

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN said he would like to ask the Government if they had made up their minds thoroughly that the maximum area to be taken up should be 960 acres—that that was the largest block of land that one man could take up under that Bill, as an agricultural area? Was there no chance of their allowing a man to take up 1,280 acres—the area mentioned in the Act of 1876, and which he considered a more convenient block? There could be no question of monopoly in this colony, with the hundreds of millions of acres they had got, in allowing a man to take up 1,280 acres. He would like the Minister for Lands to answer his question.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS said he believed the question was whether 960 acres was to be the maximum.

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN: Have the Government quite made up their minds not to increase that area?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: They cannot increase it if it is carried in this Bill.

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN: An amendment may be proposed before the Bill is passed.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS said that 960 acres was the maximum area which any man could take up.

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN: That is if this Bill becomes law as it stands.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: Yes; if this Bill becomes law.

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN said he believed that a 1,280-acre block would be more suitable than the 960-acre block proposed, and, therefore, he would move that the words "nine hundred and sixty" in the 3rd subsection be omitted, with a view of inserting the words "one thousand two hundred and eighty." That would decide it.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS said, with the permission of the Committee, he would withdraw his amendment, to enable the amendment of the hon. member for Townsville to be put.

Amendment, by leave, withdrawn.

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN said, in moving his amendment, and in advocacy of it, he would like to point out what the Minister for Lands himself said not very long ago. That hon. gentleman had said distinctly that it was quite possible there would not be more than 150 acres of good agricultural land in a block of 960 acres, and the rest would be grazing land. Another hon. member had said that there would not be more than 200 acres of good agricultural land in such a block; and the hon. member for Dalby maintained that it would be impossible to get a 960-acre block of good agricultural land. He thought himself it would be very difficult in many parts of the colony to get more than 200 or 300 acres of good agricultural land; and if they restricted the selector to 960 acres the balance would not be enough to enable him to make a good living out of it by grazing. They had much better, therefore, increase the area. At the same time it would not be necessary to have agricultural areas containing all good land in blocks of that size, because another part of the subsection provided that there might be another maximum of 320 acres. So that, where there was excellent agricultural land, the blocks might be restricted to 320 acres, and where there were blocks of agricultural land mixed with what might be called good grazing land, they might be raised to 1,280 acres. He thought the hon. member for South Brisbane had pointed out the success which had attended tillage combined with pasturage

in New South Wales; but he (Hon. J. M. Macrossan) did not know of any part of New South Wales where selectors had been successful in combining tillage with pasturage on such small areas as was proposed by the Bill. The hon. member probably forgot that in New South Wales the selector was allowed a large grazing area.

Mr. MOREHEAD: Three to one.

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN said that in New South Wales a selector taking up a 640-acre selection got three times that amount of grazing land—that was to say, he had four times 640 acres, and he was, therefore, successful. It must be remembered also that, although they boasted a great deal about their land in this colony, it was not capable of carrying the same number of stock per acre as the land in New South Wales; and, remembering that, they should not restrict the area to a smaller size than it was in New South Wales—that was if they expected to combine agriculture with grazing profitably. For those reasons he thought blocks of 1,280 acres would be better than the area proposed in the Bill. As a matter of fact, he thought that even such blocks as those were too small; but as that was the area mentioned in the Act of 1876, he had moved it in preference to the area mentioned in the Bill. He knew a district in New South Wales which was wholly selected; there was not a single squatter in it. It was a district in which he lived sometimes when he went to that colony. The selectors there had been successful, but not on small areas. They grew 50, 60, and 100 acres of wheat, and not only they, but their sons and daughters, and other relations, had selections, so that between them they had 3,000 or 4,000 acres. The balance left over that used for wheat-growing they used for grazing purposes. That land in average seasons—in a season like the present—carried one sheep to the acre; in good seasons it would carry more. Now, there was no such land as that in Queensland. The Minister for Lands might laugh; but he (Hon. J. M. Macrossan) said there was not. There was not a whole district in Queensland with land that would carry a sheep to the acre. There might be certain favoured spots here and there on a run, but not a whole district. He maintained that 1,280 acres was quite little enough for any man to take up, and he should certainly divide the Committee upon it. They ought to give a sufficient quantity of land to enable a man to combine agriculture and grazing.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS said that the hon. gentleman had stated—he did not know whether it was his own opinion or whether he thought it might probably be the case—that in 960 acres about 150 acres of agricultural land might be got. He (the Minister for Lands) thought that if a man had 150 acres of agricultural land out of such a block he had quite as much as he was likely to work. There were very few men who would work more, unless perhaps it was a company who held a large quantity for sugar-cane. However, the Committee were not dealing with those men, but with ordinary agriculturists. He did not know whether the hon. gentleman maintained that 150 acres was too small or too large; but he held that it was quite enough, and the balance was a fair allowance for use as grazing land. The hon. gentleman had referred to New South Wales, and talked about grazing land there. He (the Minister for Lands) had a pretty good knowledge of New South Wales, and also of Queensland, and he maintained that there was as good grazing land in Queensland as there was in New South Wales.

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN: It will not carry as many sheep.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS said it would. There were portions of Queensland that would carry as much stock as the best portions of New South Wales. There was no land in Queensland that would carry as much stock to the acre as that on the Hunter River, but that had been done by ringbarking. When he lived on the Hunter River, which was his native place, there was no ringbarking. Yet he believed that except as to one portion at the head of the Hunter River there was as good country about Clermont and Springsure. The timbered country in New South Wales that had been ringbarked was, no doubt, good; but the same could be said of the timbered country in any portion of Queensland as soon as it was ringbarked. Let them look at the position of selectors in New South Wales. Two-thirds of the agricultural population of the colony were in the position of tenant farmers, in spite of all the land taken up under free selection. They had a grazing right over three acres to one; and how long did that last them? Only until they were able to secure the deeds of the land, and then they handed it over to a neighbouring large freeholder. That was the way in which the system had been worked. There were no doubt a few isolated instances in which men had maintained their freeholds, but that had been the practical result of it. The principle of the Bill—and one that the Government intended to adhere to—was that 960 acres should be the maximum quantity that a man could make a freehold. If hon. members wanted to get more than that, they would have to get another Bill to do it. He was quite satisfied that that was quite sufficient for any man to work profitably. The hon. member talked about 1,280 acres. Why did he not make the area 2,560 acres at once, if he wanted men to get large-sized properties to hand over to somebody else as soon as they became freeholds? Unless the hon. gentleman could show that 960 acres was not enough to make a prosperous well-to-do farmer, and could bring forward something that would help him to maintain his argument, that argument would go for nothing. There were many places in which 320 acres in a rich agricultural district would be quite sufficient for any man to deal with; and it would be so arranged that in such districts that quantity would be proclaimed as the area to be taken up; but in other districts 960 acres would be the extent, and if there were 150 acres of agricultural land in that a man would have quite sufficient.

Mr. MOREHEAD said that the hon. gentleman, in replying to the hon. member for Townsville, had stated that there was no country in New South Wales that would carry more stock than country in Queensland. He (Mr. Morehead) was as well acquainted with the two colonies as the Minister for Lands, and he said that that statement was not true. The hon. gentleman also said there was country in Queensland that would compare favourably with any in New South Wales, except at the Hunter River; and that was at Clermont and Springsure. Now at Clermont there were larger areas open for selection than near any township in the colony; in fact, there was double or treble the quantity. There were also large areas thrown open about Springsure.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: Scrubby mountains.

Mr. MOREHEAD said they were not; a large portion of the land was good country. Could the hon. gentleman point to one instance where a man, either at Clermont or Springsure, made a living out of 960 acres? The hon.

gentleman had quoted instances, and, as he had appealed to Cæsar, to Cæsar he (Mr. Morehead) would take him.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: It is a grazing district.

Mr. MOREHEAD: The hon. gentleman compared it with the land mentioned by the hon. member for Townsville.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: For grazing.

Mr. MOREHEAD said the hon. gentleman compared it with the illustration brought forward by the hon. member for Townsville, where 100 acres were laid down in wheat, and in some cases 3,000 or 4,000 acres occupied by stock. The hon. gentleman knew perfectly well that there was no country about Clermont that would grow wheat. The hon. gentleman was in a hole, and the only way he could see of getting out of it was to say he knew more about the two colonies than the hon. member for Townsville did. He (Mr. Morehead) had no doubt that the hon. member for Townsville knew more about all the colonies of Australia than the hon. Minister for Lands. With reference to that particular subsection, while intending to vote for the amendment of the hon. member for Townsville, he thought it would be well for the Government to fix a minimum unless they wanted the country to be "peacocked." Unless they did that there was nothing to prevent any individual selecting his 20,000 acres over a dozen different holdings in the country. He might take up 640 acres here, 100 there, and 100 there, and have to be bought out in each case by the pastoral tenant. It was simply introducing the blackmail system of free selection that had been the curse of New South Wales. He hoped the Minister for Lands would take steps to prevent such a state of things in this colony.

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN said he had been in both the Clermont district and the Hunter district. He had neither been a stockman nor a shepherd, but he had used his eyes, and he did not believe that country in Queensland could carry as many stock to the acre as New South Wales. By way of illustration, he would mention that over twelve months ago he travelled in the train from Sydney to Albury in company with a gentleman who owned stations both in New South Wales and on the Darling Downs. His companion pointed out to him a freehold portion of a run belonging to him, containing 70,000 acres, and assured him that the whole year round those 70,000 acres carried 90,000 sheep. Could the hon. gentleman point out such a place in Queensland? Certainly the country was ringbarked, and that, no doubt, increased its carrying capacity. That run was 150 miles from the district he had spoken of before, where grazing and agriculture were combined, and where the selectors had large areas for grazing; much larger than the 960 acres proposed by the hon. gentleman, or the 1,280 acres he (Hon. J. M. Macrossan) proposed. The selectors in that district were certainly successful, but they were successful because they had large areas, and not because they were confined to small ones.

Mr. JORDAN said he was of opinion that agricultural farming was not likely to be successful in the hands of capitalists, but it was likely to be successful in the hands of working men. The farmers who had small holdings were as a rule successful, whilst those who had ambition enough to purchase a large domain frequently ruined themselves. That was the rule in one district with which he was acquainted, and he believed it was the rule generally in connection with tillage throughout the colony. In Australia, where labour was very costly, the man who could do his work with his own hands and with the assistance of his family was the man who would succeed as an agriculturist. He believed a great number of farmers failed through having too much land; and the almost universal success of the Germans was due to their being content with small farms and working them thoroughly. He did not think the proposal of the hon. member for Townsville would effect the object of benefiting the farming class, who would generally succeed better on smaller farms. They had to fence their holdings within three years; and if they took up two square miles instead of one square mile, or half a square mile, or some smaller area, many of them would ruin themselves over the fencing. A mile and a-half for a person intending to engage in agriculture was abundant. The Bill provided every facility for those who wished to go in for pastoral pursuits on a small scale. They could take up 5,000 acres, and on those larger areas could continue tilling and grazing. He thought the hon. member for Townsville was mistaken in saying that those settlers who had been successful in raising stock and feeding them in winter were those who had large areas. If his memory served him aright, they were persons with small areas—a square mile, he thought—and yet they were successful in devoting a small portion of their holding to tillage for the purpose of keeping their stock in winter. He should look the matter up, and give hon. members the result of his searches on another occasion.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS; Oh, don't!

Mr. JORDAN: I am sure the information will be very interesting and very instructive.

Mr. BLACK said he had heard some very extraordinary arguments from the hon. Minister for Lands and the junior member for South Brisbane (Mr. Jordan). Their views on agriculture showed that they knew very little about it. The hon. Minister for Lands had given them to understand that, out of 960 acres, 150 acres were quite sufficient for an ordinary person to devote his attention to at agriculture. The hon. member for South Brisbane had told them that the small farmers were those who were more generally successful throughout the colony. He entirely differed from them, especially from the hon. member for South Brisbane; and, although he was quite prepared to admit that about Brisbane, about Toowoomba, and possibly about Maryborough, where there was a reasonable market for small farmers, small areas of land were sufficient to enable them to get a living, and that small farmers deserved encouragement, yet he maintained that, in other parts of the colony—the North, for instance—where agriculture was carried on under different conditions, and where agriculturists had to compete with the markets of the world in tropical productions, small areas would not enable men to get a living. He believed that it was intended that in the maximum area of 960 acres a certain proportion was to be set apart as grazing land if the country was not of a quality good enough to allow of it being classed as agricultural land; that, as the Minister for Lands had said, there might be, say, 150 acres of agricultural land and 810 acres of pastoral land. He understood that the pastoral land would be paid for at a lower price.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS on the Opposition Benches: No.

Mr. BLACK said he could hardly believe that it was intended that, where 800 acres out of 960 was only equal to pastoral land, a rental of 3d. per acre a year was to be charged for the whole. It would be a most unreasonable proceeding. He could understand giving a selector an opportunity of making a living if he had only to pay the same rate for the pastoral land on his

selection as those who took up larger areas were charged—namely, 1½d. per acre. It seemed monstrous that a man should have to pay the full price for agricultural land, when a considerable proportion of his selection could only be classed as pastoral or grazing land. He would like to have some explanation on that point from the Minister for Lands.

Question put.

Mr. BLACK said he would ask the Minister for Lands whether it was intended to charge 3d. per acre rent in cases where a large quantity of the land held by the selector was grazing, and not agricultural, land?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS said the price for land in an agricultural area was 3d. per acre per annum.

Mr. BLACK said he begged again to ask the Minister for Lands the question whether—assuming that a selector took up 960 acres in an agricultural area, of which 160 acres were agricultural land and 800 acres were pastoral land—he would have to pay the maximum rental of 3d. per acre for the grazing land?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS said the selector would have to pay 3d. per acre for all the land he held in an agricultural area.

Mr. KATES said a man need not select the land unless he chose. If he found that it did not suit him—that there was too much grazing land in the block—he could select another piece with more agricultural land in it.

Mr. BLACK said a piece of land might be surveyed as a 960-acre block, and a selector might be anxious to take up that particular block if he could get it on reasonable terms from the Government. He might be quite prepared to pay 3d. per acre for the agricultural land, but certainly not for the pastoral. In clause 35 it was provided that—

"The Governor in Council, on the recommendation of the board, may by proclamation define and set apart any country lands as agricultural areas."

He heard that survey before selection was intended, and as the Minister for Lands or the board were to decide what would be agricultural areas, he could not see why a selector should be required to pay more than a grazing price for grazing land.

Mr. MACFARLANE said they could look at the matter from another point of view. If a man was not satisfied with 960 acres in an agricultural area because the block contained too much grazing land, and he could not cultivate the whole of it, he might take up 5,000 acres in a grazing area and only have to pay 1½d. per acre. He might, however, have 1,000 acres of agricultural land in that selection, and why should he not pay 3d. an acre for that? If a person holding pastoral land in an agricultural area was only to be charged 1½d. an acre for that land, then the selector in the grazing area should pay 3d. per acre for all the agricultural land in his selection. The principle cut both ways. But he did not see why anyone who took up 5,000 acres should not cultivate as much of it as he liked, without let or hindrance.

Question—That the words proposed to be omitted stand part of the clause—put; and the Committee divided:—

AYES, 26.

Messrs. Rutledge, Miles, Griffith, Dutton, Dickson, Sheridan, Macdonald-Paterson, Foote, Groom, Kellett, Brookes, Mellor, Isambert, Jordan, White, T. Campbell, Beattie, Salkeld, Grimes, Kates, Buckland, Bailey, Ferguson, Macfarlane, Higson, and Horwitz.

NOES, 13.

Sir T. McIlwraith, Messrs. Archer, Norton, Morehead, Macrossan, Black, Jessop, Nelson, Stevenson, Lalor, Govett, Palmer, and Lissner.

Question resolved in the affirmative.

Mr. NELSON asked if he should be in order in moving that the amount be fixed at 2,560 acres?

The CHAIRMAN said it was too late, the amount having been fixed at 960 acres by the last division.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS moved that the words "except as next hereinafter provided" be omitted from subsection 3.

Mr. MOREHEAD said the Committee were entitled to know why the words were to be omitted. He supposed there was some meaning in the amendment. Possibly there was none.

The PREMIER said the words proposed to be omitted referred to the 4th subsection, which would have to be left out.

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN said they had now adopted the principle of survey before selection, and according to the last division 960 acres might be selected in an agricultural area. The Premier had told them that a man would be able to select 960 acres in several small blocks—that he need not take it all in one block. How was it intended to prevent the best of the land of several 960-acre blocks being selected by one individual, leaving the worst of the land to others? If the land was surveyed in 80-acre blocks, a man might select twelve of them. Something must be done to meet the difficulty he had pointed out, or it would be a bar to selection.

The PREMIER said that if the land was surveyed in 80-acre blocks he did not think the Government would allow the maximum to be 960 acres. The land was to be surveyed, and that would prevent a man from picking out all the good pieces. If the land was so good that 80-acre blocks were considered sufficiently large, the maximum would be fixed at 320 acres instead of 960 acres.

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN said the selector would be able to select to three times the size of the smallest block within the area. One selector would be able to "peacock" an area having a maximum of 960 acres, according to the size of the blocks into which the 960 acres would be divided for selection. Of course, if the area were divided into 960-acre blocks, the selector must take one; but if in 320-acre blocks, he would be able to take three—he would be able to "peacock" three areas of 960 acres each. That was an evil that should be provided against.

The PREMIER said that if the land was of such a character that 320 acres were a proper area, it would not be any great injury if, from want of competition, one man got three blocks? He would have to keep up a separate establishment on each one, to improve each one, and to pay the full rent for each one; and he could not get the freehold of more than one. At least it would take him thirty years to get the freehold of the three. He did not think the danger was such as to be worth guarding against.

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN said the evil would be that the balance of the 640 acres would not be worth selecting by anybody else. Supposing a man picked out 320 acres out of a 960-acre block—the only good agricultural land upon it—it would not be worth anybody's while to take up the other 640 acres.

The PREMIER said that if a piece of land was surveyed as a 960-acre block the selector must either take it all or leave it. He could not pick a bit here and a bit there. A man must take the block as it was surveyed. But a provision to that effect would have to be inserted in a subsequent clause.

Mr. KELLETT said the difficulty could be got over by striking out the minimum area, and

then let it be proclaimed that 160 acres should be the quantity, and no more. If there were parts of it fit for agriculture, the amount could be reduced by proclamation to 160 acres in such cases. They would only have to strike out the latter part of the subsection and proclaim 160 acres instead of 320 acres, and thus get over the difficulty of having the good portions picked out and the inferior ones left behind. It would make the clause work much better.

The HON. SIR T. MCILWRAITH said he would like to understand the amendment. He did not clearly understand the explanation of the Premier. Supposing the maximum area selected in an agricultural area was 960 acres, and the Government determined to survey it in 320-acre blocks, the maximum being 960 acres; that selector would be entitled to select three blocks. Supposing he selected three contiguous blocks, and resided permanently on one of them for the ten years prescribed in the 68th section; did he understand the Premier to say that according to the Bill he would be entitled to only 320 acres?

The PREMIER: Yes; that is how the Bill now stands.

The HON. SIR T. MCIWRAITH said it would have to be altered, because surely it could not be the meaning of the Bill that, while it granted the right of the selector to select the maximum area in any agricultural district, the Government should have the power of simply coming in and surveying blocks in smaller areas, and preventing his selecting the amount the law allowed him. They had decided that a man should be entitled to select the maximum area; but the Government were enabled by that clause to limit the amount of land. The amount might be fixed at 960 acres, and it might be surveyed in 80-acre blocks, and the power of the selector to purchase would be limited to that. That was not the intention of the Bill, surely.

The PREMIER said that question came in in the clauses relating to the acquisition of freehold. He would point out how very fair it was. They could not divide the country into little districts of half-a-mile square. Where the quality of the land was poor the maximum of 960 acres should be allowed; but some parts of the country might be so rich that 80 acres would be quite sufficient to make a living out of—as good as 960 acres in inferior parts. A man would have to take his chance. If he wanted to acquire an area of 80 acres he could have it at 2s. 6d. an acre; but if he wanted an area of 960 acres he could take what he wanted. There was a great deal to be said on both sides of the question. However, the present was not the proper time for the discussion to be raised.

The HON. SIR T. MCILWRAITH: When do you propose to raise it?

The PREMIER: At the 68th clause.

Mr. MOREHEAD said the passing of the amendment of the hon. member for Darling Downs would entail so many amendments to the succeeding clauses of the Bill, that he thought it would be as well if the Government came down on Tuesday with a revise of the Bill. They would not get very far with it that night. He held in his hand twenty-six amendments of the Government, and there would be a great many more to fit in with the amendment carried by the hon. member for Darling Downs. They should have the Bill in their hands in an amended form, at any rate, up to the termination of Part IV.

The PREMIER: That is intended.

Mr. MOREHEAD said they were working in the dark as it was, with all those amendments, which would lead to an immense deal of trouble afterwards; he was certain that the time was only being wasted.

The PREMIER: No, it is not; unless you are determined to waste it.

Mr. MOREHEAD said the Premier was quite in error in saying that they were determined to waste time. He wished to understand the Bill at any rate, and he supposed that many other members also wished to understand it. There was not a day passed but that they got amendments sent down, or even brought into the Committee, while it was sitting, by the Government themselves on their own measure. It would be much better for the Government to come down on Tuesday with all the amendments which were consequent upon the decision arrived at with regard to selection after survey.

The PREMIER said that if the hon. gentleman would only look down the subsequent clauses he would be able to see in five minutes all the amendments that would be necessary. He had himself had them all marked off hours ago, and could enumerate them in a moment. He did not wish to puzzle the hon. gentleman. He intended to state, when the House adjourned, that the Government proposed to have that part of the Bill reprinted, showing the amendments already made.

Mr. JESSOP said that the suggestion of the hon. member for Balonne was a very good one, as it would enable everyone to see what was intended.

Question put and passed.

Mr. KELLETT moved that the words "be less than 320 acres" be omitted.

The HON. SIR T. MCILWRAITH: What are your reasons?

Mr. KELLETT said he had given his reasons before, and scarcely thought it necessary to do so again. He did not see the advantage of having two maximums in the clause. They had already fixed the maximum area at 960 acres, and the Minister for Lands could, by proclamation, define the area below that that could be taken up in any district. As a rule the agricultural areas would be small, and the Minister could proclaim any maximum area he liked as open for selection—possibly 120 or 160 acres. He thought that would get over the difficulty suggested by the hon. member for Townsville as to the necessity of the best lands being set apart in small areas for agriculturists. There was a class of agriculturists who cultivated their land without going in for grazing at all, and provision should be made for such men by allowing them to take up small areas. In such places as the Rosewood Scrub, for instance, 160 acres would be quite sufficient for a man to take up. Three hundred and twenty acres there would be more than a man could till for a long time, and for that reason he had moved the omission of the words.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS said that upon consideration he was inclined to accept the amendment. It could do no harm, as it left ample power in the hands of the Government to determine the area that could be taken up in different localities. He had no objection to offer to it.

The HON. SIR T. MCILWRAITH said that was just an exemplification of the way in which the Government managed their business, so as to waste the time of the Committee. He could see no reason why there should be a minimum fixed to the maximum area to be selected, and therefore, at an earlier hour, he proposed exactly the same amendment that the hon. member for Stanley now moved; they had some discussion

upon it, in which the Premier intimated that it was a very bad thing that the Government should have the power of fixing the minimum as low as they liked, and he was put down in that way. Now, however, when a supporter of the Government, later in the debate, brought forward the same amendment and gave the same reasons that he (Hon. Sir T. McIlwraith) had given, the Minister for Lands rose and accepted it. If the Government conducted their business in that way, he thought the Premier and the Minister for Lands ought to be the last two men in the Committee to complain of waste of time.

The PREMIER said the hon. gentleman's memory was bad; it did not even carry him back to what took place that evening correctly. It was quite true that the hon. gentleman, at an earlier period of the evening, adverted to the point in question, and he (the Premier) thought there was a great deal in it. Instead of the Government objecting to it, as the hon. gentleman had stated, he had said that they did not entertain any strong opinion upon the subject one way or the other; and while he (the Premier) admitted the arguments in favour of the hon. gentleman's suggestion, he at the same time pointed out reasons in favour of retaining the words in the clause. He did not express a strong opinion one way or another; and before the matter went further the hon. member for Townsville moved an amendment which intercepted the debate on the point, which was then confined to that amendment; and when they came back to the question again he fully expected that the amendment would have been moved by the hon. the leader of the Opposition, instead of by the hon. member for Stanley.

Mr. MOREHEAD said he understood from the hon. gentleman, when replying to the hon. member for Townsville, that if the area was fixed at, say, 80 acres, a selector, having taken up that area as an agricultural selection, could make no other selection, and that he must hold it continuously for ten years before he could make it freehold. He certainly thought that that did not meet the views of a large number of members of the Committee. He was of opinion that a very much larger area than 40 or 80 acres should be allowed to be made freehold. He believed in the minimum of the maximum area being fixed, and therefore he should vote against the amendment of the hon. member for Stanley.

Mr. MACDONALD-PATERSON said that, as he understood the Bill, any man living in the colony might take up 960 acres of agricultural land in as many selections as the Government pleased to give him.

Mr. MOREHEAD: And he can only get the freehold of one?

Mr. MACDONALD-PATERSON: And he might get the freehold of the 960 acres.

The HON. SIR T. MCILWRAITH: No; only of one selection.

Mr. MACDONALD-PATERSON said it was all very well to say that a man would only take up a small area at the start, but when he got under way and became prosperous—as he hoped all agricultural settlers in the colony would—he would want to take up more land; and if the interpretation put upon the clause by some hon. members were true, he would not be able to take up any additional area beyond the selection he took up in the first instance. If that was the meaning of the clause, he (Mr. Macdonald-Paterson) should certainly vote against it.

Mr. MOREHEAD: That is what the Premier has told us.

Mr. MACDONALD-PATERSON said that was not the intention of the Bill at all; and he was sure that a great majority of the members of the Committee never thought that it was the intention. He contended that every *bonâ fide* resident in the colony ought to be at liberty to take up 960 acres of freehold land.

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN said if the amendment of the hon. member for Stanley were carried they would only have a maximum area of 960 acres fixed by the Bill, and the Government would then be able to fix the area which a man would be able to take up at, say, 80 acres, as had been suggested by the hon. the Premier. He did not think the Government should have the power of fixing the maximum area at 80 acres. He thought the maximum should not be less than a selector could take up at the present—160 acres; that that was the least area the Government should be allowed to fix. Of course, if a man thought fit to select less he should be able to do so; but he should not be prevented from selecting 160 acres if he chose to take up that area. The acceptance of the amendment would put that power in the hands of the Government; and he certainly thought it was not a desirable power to put into the hands of the Minister for Lands—a gentleman who believed that if a man took up five acres of land he took up five acres too much. That was the opinion which the hon. gentleman had expressed frequently in that Committee; and he thought they should restrict the power of the Government with regard to the area below which they should be allowed to give. He certainly hoped that the Committee would not allow the amendment to pass.

Mr. KELLETT said he did not think that the amendment affected the question at all in the way that had been pointed out, because there was no minimum before, but there were two maximums; and he proposed that the maximum of 320 acres should be struck out, because the Minister for Lands could proclaim the maximum area that could be taken up in any district. They could claim the maximum as they chose in any district, but what he wished especially to mention was that he was not in the Chamber when the hon. the leader of the Opposition spoke on the subject, and had not heard of his intention to move an amendment, directly or indirectly. On the first occasion of his reading the Bill he could not see the value of the proposition, and he thought still it was very advisable in some districts that so large an area as 320 acres should not be proclaimed. It resolved itself into this: that when it had to be surveyed previously to selection, it was the same as making the minimum 80 acres. If it was surveyed into 80-acre blocks there it stood, and they must take it up. If the survey was to be beforehand, they were really making the minimum by surveys.

The HON. SIR T. MCILWRAITH: No. He can take it in blocks up to the maximum.

Mr. KELLETT said he understood they could acquire a certain quantity of freehold land up to the maximum, but what the hon. gentleman said was something new to him.

Mr. MOREHEAD said the Premier had stated distinctly that, supposing a man was entitled to 320 acres and took it up in four blocks, he would only get the title of freehold for the 80 acres on which he was living, and then only after ten years' residence.

Mr. FERGUSON said he did not agree with the amendment at all. He thought 320 acres was a small enough maximum in any part of the colony—wherever it was. If the amendment was passed the Government had power to make it 50 acres; but they could not make it more than 80 or 100 acres, which was encouraging the people to go on the land to starve themselves,

He did not think there was any part of the colony where a man should be encouraged to settle on less than 320 acres. The Government had power to fix the maximum in any district. He did not at all agree with the amendment, and should vote against it.

The HON. SIR T. McILWRAITH said he asked for information more than anything else, when he asked the reason why the maximum minimum should be arranged at all, and he must say he agreed with the answer given by the Premier—namely, that it was not a power the Government should have of limiting their maximum area to as low an area as they chose in any district. He did not think the hon. member who moved the amendment had considered its result. He did not believe there was any district in the colony where the maximum would be fixed at a less amount than 320 acres. He thought no Government would abuse such a power, but he did not see why they should have the power. The clause suggested a matter for consideration, and it would save time if hon. members made up their minds on the question. It was quite clear that hon. members did not know how the survey that had been decided on before selection limited the amount of area that could be acquired as freehold. That would have to be provided for; because, when they arranged to take free selection after survey, they certainly must come to the conclusion that the amount to be selected by any selector, in any agricultural area, was to be limited to the particular size of blocks that the Ministry might choose to survey the land in. They did not for a moment suppose that they put into the hands of the board or the Minister the power of limiting the amount of selection. They had decided the maximum area that a selector should select in a particular area—between 320 and 960 acres—but the further restriction was not contemplated that it should be divided into 80-acre blocks, and that the right of purchase should be confined to one of those 80-acre blocks. That was the interpretation which had been given to the clause by the Premier, and it would have to be amended if the Committee thought as he did.

Mr. KELLETT said he must say that when he moved the amendment he had not understood what the Premier said—that they could only acquire one freehold. He did not think that by reducing the area—as he thought might be advisable in some spots—they could take up to the maximum and acquire what they held. He did not think if a man held one block he could not take up another, or else he should not have moved the amendment he had. He asked leave to withdraw the amendment.

The HON. SIR T. McILWRAITH said before the amendment was withdrawn he would suggest a question, which the Premier would have to consider. Supposing a maximum of 960 acres was fixed in any particular area and the Government decided to survey it into 320-acre blocks, he thought that the power of acquiring the land should remain as it was up to 960 acres, but that residence on any one of those 320 acres should be taken as residence on the other blocks. They should not be allowed to do what was called "peacocking." They ought to take up selections adjoining one another. He did not think, if land was surveyed into 80-acre blocks, they should be allowed to take up 960 acres in 80-acre lots which did not adjoin each other; and that residence on one should be taken as residence on the land.

The PREMIER said he was just going to point out very much what the hon. member had said—not because they could deal with it then, but that they might understand it now, and then be able to deal better with it when they got on further. The scheme of the Bill, before the idea of survey before selection was introduced, was that up to the maximum appointed by the Government it should be entirely for the selector to say what land he should take—if a maximum of 960 acres he could take 960 acres to make a freehold. The effect of the alteration, by requiring survey before selection, changed that scheme, and now the man could only get the freehold of the selection on which he resided. He was disposed to think that the other scheme might be altered. But, in considering the question of acquiring the freehold by residence, it had to be borne in mind that a man might not take up all at once; he might take up one block this year and next year he might be able to acquire another, and in the course of three or four years he might take up another, and in the course of another three years he might take up another, until at the end of ten years he had taken up the maximum area. He only mentioned the matter now because the point had to be thought out, and worked out, before they could come to a decision.

Mr. MOREHEAD said that exactly bore out what he said a short time before—that the clause moved by the hon. member for Darling Downs (Mr. Kates) had led to certain complications with regard to subsequent portions of the Bill which required time for consideration. There was no use in hurrying the measure now. The Premier had shown them very clearly that there was a very important matter to be thought out and considered, and a very important clause would have to be amended in regard to it—the 68th clause, and any preceding it. He thought it would very much facilitate matters if the Government saw their way, after the passage of the clause—if it was passed—to report progress, so as to give them time to bring down their amendments, consequent on the amendment of the hon. member for Darling Downs being carried.

Mr. MACDONALD-PATERSON said he was glad to hear that the Premier was favourable to selectors taking up the maximum area. But the effect of the new clause moved by the hon. member for Darling Downs (Mr. Kates) was such that they had better adjourn till next week in order to consider the altered aspect of the Bill.

Amendment, by leave, withdrawn.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS moved the omission of the words "except as next hereinafter provided" in the 2nd line of the 2nd subsection of paragraph 3.

Amendment put and passed.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS moved that the words "two thousand five hundred and sixty" be substituted for the words "five thousand" in line 7.

Mr. NORTON asked whether it was the intention of the Government to allow selectors to cultivate any portion of their grazing areas? He did not mean for their own use, but in order to sell the produce.

The PREMIER: They may do what they like with their land.

Mr. NORTON said he was glad to hear it, because during the debate on the second reading the Colonial Treasurer stated that the selector would have merely a grazing right. It appeared, however, that the hon. gentleman was not correct—that he was making a rash statement, on the spur of the moment.

The COLONIAL TREASURER said he was surprised at the interpretation put on his remarks by the hon. gentleman—an interpretation which he disclaimed entirely. He merely referred to the rental which would accrue to the State

from grazing areas, and never expressed an opinion as to the mode of occupation or the profit the grazier would enjoy from his holding.

Mr. MOREHEAD said the Minister for Lands ought to give some reason for the proposed amendment.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS said it was considered that in some districts 2,560 acres would be quite enough for a grazing area.

Mr. MOREHEAD said he admitted it would be large enough from a dummying point of view. He supposed the amendment was intended to give increased dummying power, for there could be no other reason. The larger the area the more expensive it would be to improperly secure that portion of a run thrown open to selection; and it would be less costly to secure the land in areas of 2,560 acres than in 5,000-acre areas.

Amendment put and passed.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS moved the omission of subsection 4.

Amendment put and passed.

The PREMIER said he had one or two amendments to propose in order to make the proclamation referred to in subsection 5 correspond with the practice with respect to proclamations of land to be sold at auction. He moved the insertion of the words, "the numbers of the lots and their area and" after the word "specify."

Amendment put and passed.

The PREMIER moved the omission in line 14 of the clause of the words "the land," with a view of inserting the words "each lot."

Question—That the words proposed to be omitted stand part of the clause—put.

Mr. NORTON said he would like to show the hon. the Colonial Treasurer that he was wrong in what he had said on the second reading of the Bill, and ever since the second reading he had been waiting for an opportunity of doing so. He would refer the hon. member to page 331 of *Hansard*, and there he would find the following:—

"The hon. member for Port Curtis asked why holders of grazing farms should not have the right of acquiring the fee-simple of their land in the same way as holders of agricultural areas. I contend that if the hon. gentleman had paid any attention to the remarks of the Minister for Works he would not have troubled the House with such a question; because the Minister for Works clearly pointed out that the holder of grazing land has the grass-right of his land only; while the agricultural holder puts into the soil his time, his money, and his labour, and for such he has the right to acquire the fee-simple. The former, with only his grass-right for thirty years, has not the same claim to consideration as the holder of an agricultural area."

The position they were in was this: An agricultural farmer had the right to buy under the provisions of the Bill, but a farmer taking up his grazing land, although he might take up 500 acres and cultivate a part of it and put all his labour into it and spend money upon his holding—although he might hold it for thirty years he would never be able to acquire a freehold. Then in the agricultural districts a man might be in the same position. He might have land there that was utterly unfit for cultivation; he was not obliged to cultivate one acre, but because it was in an agricultural district he was allowed to make a freehold of it in ten years. The thing was an utter absurdity. However, he was glad to have proved the hon. the Colonial Treasurer to be wrong.

The COLONIAL TREASURER said he did not intend to occupy the time of the Committee by entering into a debate upon a question which was not relevant to the clause. Perhaps when they came to clause 68, and if it was not too late in the evening, he would reply to the hon. member. Possibly he might have something to say when the proper time arrived.

Mr. NORTON: Another idea might occur to you then.

Amendment put and passed.

Mr. FERGUSON said they had now arrived at a part of the clause to which he had referred earlier in the evening—the minimum rent of the grazing areas. They had already decided that the minimum rent of the present pastoral lessees should be 10s. per square mile, and for the resumed portion of the run £4 per square mile, or eight times as much. There being no difference whatever between the two halves of the runs, he could not see why the small grazier should be asked to pay £4 per square mile, when the minimum rent for the large grazier had been fixed at 10s. per square mile. If the minimum was fixed at such a high rate as £4, the result would be that the resumed half of the runs would never be taken up, especially taking into consideration the provision which had been agreed to with reference to selection before survey. The small graziers had to compete with the larger holders; they had to fence their holdings within two or three years and do many things which the large graziers had not to do; and he therefore contended that they should not be asked to pay such a high rent. Instead of £4, the minimum ought to be fixed at £2 per square mile. That was only fair because it was always within the power of the board to raise the rent. It was not necessary to say much more, but he intended to move, on the 16th line of the clause in subsection 5, that the word "halfpence" be omitted, with a view of inserting the word "farthings." If there was 20,000 acres of an inferior class of land, why should a man not have the right to take it up at a reduced rate? A great deal more country would be likely to be occupied if his amendment were carried than would be the case under the minimum fixed in the Bill. He begged to move that the word "halfpence" in the 16th line be omitted, with a view of inserting the word "farthings."

The MINISTER FOR LANDS said the hon. gentleman did not seem to understand why the price had been fixed at 1½d. in one case and as low as 10s. per square mile in another. The reason was that the man paying 10s. a square mile for some of his country would have it for fifteen years, while the other man had it for thirty years. Again, the man paying 10s. a square mile would only pay that price for those lands where settlement was not likely to occur; that was for lands of a very inferior quality indeed. That price was originally fixed at £1, but was reduced to 10s. Settlement was certainly not likely to occur on any land that was worth only 10s. a square mile. No man would ever attempt to take up 20,000 acres in a place where the land was only worth 10s. a square mile. He had no objection to the amendment making ¾d. an acre the minimum, as it would after all be left to the board to determine the value of the land.

Mr. JESSOP said the hon. member for Rockhampton thought there should be a reduction in the price for grazing areas, and he agreed with him, but he should have liked him to go further and reduce the minimum for agricultural areas also. He thought such a reduction would meet with the approval of the Committee. If the hon. member would withdraw his amendment for the present, he would move that the minimum price for agricultural areas should be 2d. instead of 3d. per acre.

Mr. FERGUSON said that, with the permission of the Committee, he would withdraw his amendment to enable the hon. member for Dalby to move the amendment he proposed.

Amendment, by leave, withdrawn.

Mr. JESSOP: I beg to move that the word "three" in the 15th line be omitted, with a view of inserting the word "two," making the price for agricultural areas 2d. per acre instead of 3d.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS said he could not accept the hon. member's amendment. If the land was not worth 3d. per acre for agricultural purposes, it was a mistake to throw it open for agricultural purposes. He thought the minimum price for agricultural land mentioned in the Bill was quite as low as it should be.

Mr. NORTON said the hon. gentleman had himself pointed out only a short time ago that only a very small portion of the land selected would be fit for cultivation. The hon. gentleman considered 150 or 160 acres of good land out of 960 was a very fair proportion. Why should the hon. gentleman call the rest good agricultural land and charge 3d. per acre for it. The Minister would proclaim a certain district as an agricultural area, and it did not matter whether one-half, one-fifth, or only one-tenth of it was agricultural land, it would all be called agricultural land—and 3d. per acre would have to be paid for it; while equally good land just outside of it, but not in an agricultural area, could be got for very much less than 3d. per acre. A man might not cultivate the land in an agricultural area, and another man might cultivate the land in a grazing area. It was optional with them to do what they liked with it. There was nothing to compel a man, under the Bill, to cultivate the land he took up in an agricultural area. As he had said, the Minister for Lands admitted that in a block of 960 acres a man might not get more than 160 acres of good agricultural land. It was right, perhaps, that he should pay the 3d. per acre for that, but he would also have to pay 3d. per acre for the balance of 800 acres, which was not good agricultural land.

Mr. GROOM said he did not think any farmer would object to pay the Government 3d. per acre for good agricultural land. He knew farmers himself who were now paying squatters on the Darling Downs 10s. per acre per annum for land. He also knew a member of that House who had recently let land at 5s. per acre per annum on a clearing lease, and the persons who rented it gave promise of doing exceedingly well, and their progress during the present year had been something wonderful. No farmer would, he believed, object to paying the price mentioned in the Bill for good agricultural land.

Mr. NORTON: But it is not agricultural land.

Mr. GROOM said he had heard a good many observations that evening about the land not being agricultural land. If the land was set apart as agricultural land it would, he presumed, be agricultural land and not grazing land. The grazing areas were distinct altogether from the agricultural areas. He thought it would be admitted that the pick of the agricultural land had already gone into the hands of large freeholders.

The HON. SIR T. MCILWRAITH: No.

Mr. GROOM: A very large proportion of it.

The HON. SIR T. MCILWRAITH: You cannot get the Darling Downs out of your head. The colony is not the Darling Downs.

Mr. GROOM said he was not speaking particularly now of the Darling Downs, but he knew that was the case elsewhere, besides on the Darling Downs; and he said again that a very large proportion of the best agricultural land in the colony had already been secured.

The HON. SIR T. MCILWRAITH: No.

Mr. GROOM said a very large proportion of it undoubtedly had been secured, and under those circumstances he did not think that 3d. an acre per annum was at all an excessive rent for a farmer to be asked to pay for agricultural land. If a farmer was not prepared to pay 3d. per acre for agricultural land, he had better not go into agriculture at all. He thought it was useless for the Committee to reduce the price mentioned in the Bill. In regard to the amendment moved by the hon. member for Rockhampton, he had heard complaints that 1½d. per acre for grazing lands was a great deal too high, and he was prepared, therefore, to support the hon. member in his amendment; but he thought the price fixed for agricultural lands—namely, 3d. per acre—should be adhered to.

Mr. NORTON said the hon. member's argument was a good one so far as it applied to good agricultural land; but the Minister for Lands himself had told them that it would not be good agricultural land, and surely they could take that hon. gentleman's opinion as worth something. The Minister for Lands had told them that if a man taking up 960 acres got 160 acres of good agricultural land he might think himself very fortunate. The hon. member's argument applied in the case of the 160 acres of good agricultural land, but in the case of the balance of 800 acres it did not apply at all. Take the case of the Darling Downs. A man taking up a 960-acre block of land there might get 160 acres of good land, and 800 acres of stony ridges, and why should he have to pay 3d. per acre for the ridges? The hon. member knew the country well enough and he knew that in many cases where there was good land the ridges came down to it, and it was just a mass of stone. It was called agricultural land, but it was not agricultural land at all. The hon. member confused two ideas—his idea of what the clause expressed with what it did not express; it called land agricultural that really was not agricultural. As for the selector who took up 960 acres, he would have to pay 3d. an acre for 700 or 800 acres of grazing land, unfit for anything else but grazing.

Mr. GRIMES said he would point out to the hon. member who had just sat down that the agricultural areas would be picked blocks. They would be picked first for the quality of the land, and secondly, on account of the facilities for getting produce to market. He took it that the Government would never choose agricultural areas where selectors would have to take produce by road more than thirty or forty miles to market; they would choose them near the railway lines, or near some navigable river. In those cases 3d. an acre would not be too much to pay. To have the areas near a railway or a navigable river would make them much more valuable than if selectors had to cart their produce to market.

Mr. BLACK said the hon. member for Oxley assumed that agricultural areas were only to be proclaimed within thirty or forty miles of a market. Then what about all the agricultural land in the North, for a large portion o which there was not a market nearer than New South Wales or Victoria? Surely the Government did not accept that new explanation of where agricultural areas were to be? The hon. member for Toowoomba gave the Committee to understand that a large proportion of the agricultural land in the North was already selected. He thought the hon. member made a great mistake. The hon. member had travelled through the northern portions of the colony, and he

must have seen or heard of the millions of acres there awaiting development. It would do the colony much harm if they were to tell immigrants that the largest proportion of the agricultural land was selected. He maintained that not one-tenth of it was selected. In reference to what the hon. member said about land at Darling Downs having been let at 5s. an acre on clearing leases——

Mr. GROOM: Not on the Darling Downs.

Mr. BLACK: Well, in the portion of the colony to which the hon. gentleman referred. He had no doubt that that really was the case; but he could tell the hon. gentleman that he knew of lands that were let on five years' clearing leases for nothing at all. He thought that, considering that selectors would have to take up good and bad land together, and that, as the Minister for Lands had given them to understand, 150 acres of agricultural land out of a block of 960 acres was quite sufficient for any man, thus leaving 810 acres for grazing purposes, the minimum rental might fairly be reduced to 2d. per acre. It would remain with the Minister for the time being to increase the rent if the land was really worth more. As it was understood, as he had said, that the agricultural selector was to take good and bad land together, and pay an equal rent for both, it was only fair that it should be in the power of the Minister to fix the minimum rent at less than 3d.

Mr. NELSON said he would draw attention to the fact that they were now fixing the minimum rent — that was to say, they were now fixing the rent which the worst agricultural land in the colony was supposed to be capable of paying. They knew that much of the land was not worth paying rent for at all. Anyone who had travelled much would know that that was the case, not only in Queensland, but in other places. Even in Ireland, which had been settled so long, he saw by a return laid before the House of Commons there were 6,000,000 acres which returned no rent whatever. In the United States he also saw, from a return, that out of 1,600,000,000 acres there were no less than 300,000,000 which were supposed to be valueless and which returned no rent. If the minimum value of the worst land in the colony which could be called agricultural land was worth 3d. per acre, were they to suppose that if they began, say, at Cape York at 3d. per acre they would keep on adding to the value according to the increased advantages—according to the situation of the land and the facilities for getting to market? If so, by the time they got to the settled districts the land would be worth about ten times as much. Considering that the Committee were fixing the rent for the lowest description of agricultural land, the rent in the part of the country where he lived would be something enormous. With regard to land being let at 10s. an acre, as mentioned by the hon. member for Toowoomba, he believed there was some land placed at that price; but he had been told by the gentleman who let it that though he made an agreement with a man to take the land at that price, the matter went no further—the man agreed to take up the land, but never did so. That, therefore, was nothing to judge by. He thought, considering that they were fixing the rent of the lowest description of land, that if they reduced it to 1d. an acre it would be quite enough, especially if they were going to trust to the board to assess the land at a fair value.

Mr. FOOTE said that, according to the hon. member's speech, it might be thought that there was no good land in the colony away from the coast or rivers. His experience was that for agricultural land 3d. an acre was not one iota too high. The object of the Bill was to induce settlement and increase the revenue. It was quite clear that the revenue from the land was not what it ought to be. The holders of the land had not been bearing an equitable portion of the burden of taxation, and it was quite time they should pay their share. Supposing half of the 960 acres was fair agricultural land, was 3d. an acre too much for the whole? He did not hold with the hon. member for Oxley that the Government should fix the agricultural areas on a navigable river or contiguous to a railway station. He believed that settlement would take place under the clause—not so much with a view to raising produce to be sent to market, as for the raising of stock, especially sheep. The agriculturist could raise sheep very much better than the grazier. Where the grazier could only keep one sheep, the agriculturist, if he knew how to use his holding, could keep ten or twenty, and produce wool with a far superior staple, and a better carcase of mutton. He knew he would rather have agricultural land and pay 3d. an acre, than take grazing land. Of course, if a man had not sense he could not use it, any more than he could use money he did not possess. If a man had any sense he would not take up inferior land; if he did so he would not be likely to succeed very well. There was abundance of fair agricultural land in the colony, especially on many of the Northern rivers; and he believed it would be used principally for the raising of stock, and not for growing sugar-cane or maize, or those other products which could only be got to market at a great expense.

Mr. BAILEY said he could not agree with the last speaker, that the farmers did not bear their fair share of the taxation of the colony.

Mr. FOOTE: I did not say the farmers; I said the holders of the soil. I alluded principally to the graziers.

Mr. BAILEY said the farmers had paid over and over again for their land; they had always to pay the very highest price, and were still called upon to pay a higher price than anybody else. If, according to the calculation of the hon. Minister for Lands, the farmer got only 150 acres of agricultural land out of 960 acres—instead of paying 3d. an acre he would be practically paying 18d. Another consideration was that much of the land was covered with dense scrub, and would cost £10 to £15 an acre before it could be used for agriculture. It would be better to give it to him for nothing, and pay him for taking it, as then lands which were useless now would be made useful to the country. That would be better than taking the last penny they could get out of the farmer's pockets. A rent of 3d. an acre did not seem extravagant in itself; but considering the time and money which had to be expended in making the land fit for use, he could not see why the farmer should have to pay more than the man who received his land in a state in which he could use it. As for sheep farming and grazing on those agricultural lands, the idea was almost absurd.

Mr. FOOTE: Not at all.

Mr. BAILEY said he did not know what it might be in the paradise about Ipswich and the Darling Downs; he spoke from his own experience up north. They had tried the sheep-grazing business, but it was not a success. They could not put ten or twenty sheep where the squatter could only put one.

Mr. FOOTE: You did not know how to do it.

Mr. BAILEY said they had tried to learn, but failed. They had to work against difficulties which people down here knew nothing about. The farmer was willing to bear his fair share of

the burden of taxation; but he did not think it was fair that he should be asked to bear more than his neighbours.

Mr. SALKELD said he thought that hon members who objected to the minimum rental for the agricultural farms hardly considered what it amounted to. Threepence an acre on 960 acres—which was the maximum area allowed—amounted to £12 a year. The hon. member for Northern Downs had said that the selectors would pick out the best land first. That was very true. They did not anticipate that the selectors would take the worst land first; nor was it in the interest of the colony that they should do so. It was not advisable that the poor land should be taken up too quickly. In every district the worst land was left, sometimes for years; but there was no harm in that. When population increased, and land became more scarce, it would all come in; and there was no wisdom in reducing the minimum rent below 3d. an acre, on purpose to meet people who wanted to take up the worst land in the district. No matter how small the districts proclaimed by the Government might be, there would always be some poor land included in the agricultural areas; but to think that a rent of £12 a year for 960 acres was going to be a burden on a man was simply ridiculous. If they considered the difficulties of carriage, the quality of the land, and many other circumstances in connection with the occupation and utilisation of the land, he thought the proposed rent was a comparatively trifling amount. He believed that the only effect of reducing the prices would be that the land would be taken up by people for purposes other than those contemplated in the Bill. He would, therefore, decidedly oppose any reduction of the rent in either the agricultural or grazing areas. The annual rental of 1,000 acres in a grazing area was only £6 5s. If the land was not worth that it was not worth anything. It must be very miserable land indeed, and a man had better have nothing to do with it.

Mr. ANNEAR said he agreed with every word that had fallen from the hon. member for Bundanba. He was in Maryborough a few days ago, and happened to see in the butchers' shops there some sheep that had been bred and raised by one of those farmers who had been referred to by the hon. gentleman. They were bred and raised by Mr. James Dowser, of Tiaro, close to where the hon. member for Wide Bay lived. He had also seen sheep from the northern parts of the colony and from the Darling Downs, and he must say that not one of them could be compared with those from Tiaro. He considered that a measure which offered a man an agricultural farm at half-a-crown an acre was a very liberal measure indeed, and that thousands of people in the mother-country would be induced to come to the colony and take advantage of its provisions. In his opinion, half-a-crown an acre was the lowest amount anyone should be asked to pay. He felt quite sure that the Bill was a Bill for the people, and that, if the clause under discussion were carried out in its integrity, the result would be of great benefit to the country. The clause which had been introduced by the hon. member for Darling Downs, providing for survey before selection, was one of the best features of the Bill. The hon. member for Townsville had referred to the land laws of America. He (Mr. Annear) thought they could not refer too often to America. If they copied what had been done in that country greater facilities would be given for settling the people on the soil than were afforded at the present time. He had seen people introduced into the colony without any attempt being made to put them in the way of ascertaining what lands were thrown open and available for selection. He felt certain that the amendment which had been passed that evening would prove beneficial, not only to the people now in the colony, but also to the thousands yet to come.

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN said he was afraid that there were some hon. members who had spoken on that subject who did not quite understand it. The hon. member for Bundanba, who lived in the heart of an agricultural district, and the hon. member for Toowoomba, did not, he thought, quite understand the question. If the 3d. per acre which was to be paid by the selector was to go towards the ultimate payment for the land as a freehold he could comprehend the arguments that had been advanced, but hon. members must recollect that the 3d. per acre was to be paid by the agriculturist for the use of the land.

Mr. FOOTE: We know that very well.

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN: If the selector wanted to make it a freehold afterwards, he must pay the price put upon it by the Government. Let hon. members compare the treatment of other occupants of the soil under that Bill with the way agriculturists were treated. He would take the big squatter first. The Committee reduced his minimum rent on the previous evening to 10s. per square mile. Now, what was the reason for reducing the minimum rental to be paid by the pastoralist to 10s. a square mile, and making the agriculturist pay 3d. per acre or about twenty times as much? What was the justice of such a difference? In each case the soil was simply being used, and in neither case was a freehold to be acquired by the payment of the money. Then coming to the grazing farmer, they found that he got his land at 1½d. an acre, or one-half the amount paid by the farmer. Why should the agriculturist be compelled to pay twice as much as the grazier, and twenty times as much as the squatter? He could see no justice in such an arrangement. If the Bill provided that the 3d. per acre should go towards the payment for the fee-simple, then there might be some ground for fixing that amount, but after he had paid that rental for a number of years he was no nearer securing a freehold than he was at the start. If he wished to buy the land he had to pay the price fixed by the Government whatever that price might be, and it was not to be less than £1 per acre. He thought the amount specified in the amendment proposed by the hon. member for Dalby was too high, seeing that the payment was for the use of the soil only.

The PREMIER said that surely if the use of the land was not worth the interest of 5 per cent. on 5s., the land ought not to be taken up as agricultural land at all. He thought that was a complete answer to the argument of the hon. member for Townsville.

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN: It is no answer at all.

The PREMIER said he repeated that if the land was not worth the interest of 5 per cent. on 5s. it ought not to be taken up at all, and the State was only deluding people by asking them to take it up as agricultural land.

Mr. FOOTE said the hon. member for Townsville seemed to think that no member understood the clause but himself, but he (Mr. Foote) could assure the hon. gentleman that there were other members of the Committee who thoroughly understood the whole question. The hon. gentleman had stated that the selector had to pay £1 per acre if he wished to purchase his land. Well, supposing he had, that was a very low price

indeed. But the selector would still be subject to taxation under the Divisional Boards Act—that celebrated measure brought in by the late Government—to the extent of a 1d. or 1½d. per acre. Really the rental fixed by the clause under discussion was a very small interest after all, and he thought it would be conducive to the settlement of the lands and an increase in the revenue of the colony, if the clause were passed by the Committee.

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN said the Premier's reply, that if land was not worth taking up at the interest on 5s. per acre it should not be taken up at all, was no answer whatever to his objection. That payment was simply for the use of the soil, not for the soil itself. There were millions of acres in the hands of the pastoral lessees, for whom they had provided a minimum rental of 10s. per square mile, of far better agricultural land than would be thrown open for selection under that part of the Bill.

The PREMIER: Then they will have to pay more than 10s. per square mile for it.

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN said that if the board fixed a higher price, well and good. They also had the power of fixing the rent of agricultural land higher than 3d. per acre. But they were now fixing the minimum rent, below which the board could not go; and it ought to be left low enough to meet all cases. He saw no reason why the agriculturist should be asked to pay a higher rate than any other occupier of the soil.

Mr. MACFARLANE said he failed to see the injustice to the agriculturists as pointed out by the hon. member for Townsville. The Bill dealt with three great classes of occupiers—the squatters, the small graziers, and the agriculturists. Where was the injustice to the agriculturist if he had to pay 3d. an acre, while the squatter paid only a farthing? He failed to see it. If the whole of the land of the colony could be taken up for agricultural purposes the same rent would be paid for all; but, as that was not the case, they must use the land to the best advantage—letting the best of the land to the farmers, the next best in small grazing areas, and the remainder in large areas to the squatters, who had a perfect right to pay a smaller rent for it. Threepence an acre was not the interest on borrowed money; and if a farmer could not afford to pay 3d., or even 6d., an acre for the best land in the colony, he had far better seek some other occupation.

Mr. BAILEY said that hon. members were losing sight of the actual circumstances of selectors. Not many of them would take up the maximum area. Many of them would take up 320 acres, and of that area perhaps 50 acres would be real agricultural land—dense scrub. The selector would thus have to pay a rent of 1s. 6d. an acre on the only land fit for his purpose, and it would take three years before he got that land into anything like proper condition.

Mr. FOOTE: No.

Mr. BAILEY said that if a selector could clear 50 acres of scrub and put it into cultivation within three years he would be a very clever man.

Mr. FOOTE: It can be done in the first year.

Mr. BAILEY said it was not until a selector had got his plough into the ground—and he would have spent £15 an acre before that was done—that he began to make any profit out of his land. It was different with the grazier. The grass was already growing, the land was clear, and all he had to do was to put his cattle upon it. Those men had also to pay a lower rent than selectors who had to take up dense scrub.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Why should they take up dense scrub?

Mr. BAILEY said that nearly all the suitable land was dense scrub, except on the Darling Downs. It was rather hard on the farmers to make them pay as high a rent as 1s. 6d. per acre, but they had got pretty well used to being treated in that way.

Mr. JORDAN said he had known many farmers who would willingly give £10 or £12 an acre for scrub land. He had been selling land of his own to Germans on the Logan at from £9 to £10 an acre, and they were glad to get it, and instead of it taking them three years they got a crop off it the first year. Their plan was to cut down the scrub, burn it off, and plant maize between the stumps; and in a short time the stumps rotted, and could be easily removed, and then they could sometimes take two crops a year off the land. Farmers knew how to manage those things better than some gentlemen at Wide Bay. If a man, and especially a learned man, had to pay for his labour, he generally had to pay "through the nose" for it, and he was seldom a successful farmer. He (Mr. Jordan) never advocated farming by capitalists; squatting was the proper sphere for them. There was something in what the hon. member for Townsville had pointed out, that that 3d. an acre was not to go towards fee-simple, but for rent. The amount was certainly low for really good agricultural land. But in some of the areas there might be a large proportion of poor land, and as they were now engaged in fixing the minimum, it might be advisable to fix the minimum in such cases at 2d. per acre. He himself was satisfied with the rental as named in the Bill; but as the Minister for Lands was prepared to reduce the minimum for grazing land from 20s. to 10s. per square mile, it might be a reasonable thing to reduce the minimum on agricultural farms by one-third. Many blocks of 960 acres might contain not more than 150 acres of good agricultural land, and in such cases it would be well to make the minimum rent 2d. an acre.

Mr. HIGSON said that scrub land was ten times more valuable than other land for agricultural purposes. Not six months ago, £6, £7, and as much as £10 an acre was given for land of that description at Scrubby Creek, near the station of the hon. member for Blackall, at Gracemere; and it had paid the buyers very well. The small interest of 5 per cent. on the purchase money would represent a rental for that land of 7s. an acre. He thought it was very liberal indeed.

Mr. JESSOP said he was glad the discussion had arisen, as it showed the Committee and the country generally who were the true Liberals. Some gentlemen on the other side set themselves up to be supporters of the poor working man, yet they wanted to charge him a higher rent. Twopence an acre was quite enough.

Question—That the words proposed to be omitted stand part of the clause—put.

The Committee divided:—

AYES, 22.

Messrs. Griffith, Miles, Dutton, Rutledge, Dickson, Sheridan, Foote, Macdonald-Paterson, Salkeld, Grimes, Kates, Donaldson, Macfarlane, Ferguson, Horwitz, Higson, Annear, White, Jordan, Isambert, Brookes, and Groom.

NOES, 14.

Sir T. McIlwraith, Messrs. Norton, Archer, Morehead, Black, Macrossan, Jessop, Lalor, Bailey, Mellor, Nelson, Lissner, Govett, and Palmer.

Question resolved in the affirmative.

Mr. FERGUSON moved that the word "farthings" be substituted for "halfpence" in the 16th line.

Question—That the word proposed to be omitted stand part of the clause—put and negatived.

Question—That the word "farthings" proposed to be inserted be so inserted—put.

Mr. MOREHEAD said that the Committee seemed inclined to serve some classes of agricultural selectors, as they were prepared to serve the grazing selector.

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN said he did not see why any difference should be made at all. The runs were supposed to be divided in the most equitable way. The grazier got one half at the minimum rent of 10s. per square mile, and the other half was to be divided amongst the small graziers, who were to be charged nearly four times as much as the large grazier who had held the same land, and probably paid the same rent for it, for many years. That was the way the Government were going to encourage the small settlers. If anything, the small settler should have it at a still less rent. It was not because there was a difference of fifteen years in the tenure: that did not make any difference in the value of the land—one-half being for fifteen years and the other for thirty years. That was not sufficient to make the difference between less than a farthing per acre and three farthings per acre. He contended that it was not fair, and certainly not in the interests of settlement to do so. Either the man who held half a run should pay more or the small graziers should be put upon the same footing.

Question—That the word proposed to be inserted be so inserted—put and passed.

The PREMIER moved that in subsection 7 the word "may" be omitted for the purpose of inserting "shall." He said the amendment was necessary in consequence of the decision that had been come to respecting the survey of land before selection.

Mr. NELSON said, before that was put, he should like the Premier to allow him to move an amendment in subsection 6. He did not see why agriculturists should have a privilege which graziers had not; and in order to encourage men to settle down on the land, make their homes upon it, and to improve it, he should move that subsection 6 be amended by the omission of the words "in the case of land in an agricultural area," so as to read to the following effect:—

"The proclamation shall further specify the price (not being less than 20s. per acre), at which the lessee may purchase his holding, or any portion thereof, not exceeding 960 acres in fee-simple, as hereinafter provided."

He believed such a provision would do an immense deal to encourage people to improve their lands. A man who was only a tenant would not spend his money in improving the land, but if he had a prospect of making it his own at some future time, and being able to hand it down to his children, he would do so. It would also enable graziers to combine agriculture with grazing. A man who had a large area under leasehold might not devote himself entirely to sheep and cattle. It might suit his purpose to cultivate the soil as well, but he would certainly not do so if he had only a tenure which he knew he would have to give up in a certain time; or one under which he would have to pay an additional rent for every acre he cultivated. He felt satisfied that if the same privilege was extended to small graziers as to agriculturists it would conduce very much to the proper settlement of the country.

The PREMIER said, with the permission of the Committee, he would withdraw his amendment.

Amendment withdrawn accordingly.

Mr. NELSON moved, in the first place, by way of further amendment, that the words "in the case of land in an agricultural area," at the beginning of subsection 6, be omitted.

The PREMIER said he thought the Committee had pretty well made up their mind that they did not intend to allow any alienation of land in grazing areas, and, therefore, the sooner they came to a division on the question the better. What the hon. gentleman proposed was, practically, that every lessee in a grazing area should have a right to pre-empt a mile and a-half of country, and the Government were not prepared to accept it.

Question—That the words proposed to be omitted stand part of the clause—put and passed.

On the motion of the PREMIER, the clause was further amended by the omission of "may" in the 1st line of subsection 7, and the substitution of "shall"; the omission of the words "land by the proclamation" in the 2nd line of the same subsection, and the insertion of the word "lot."

Clause, as amended, put and passed.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS moved that the Chairman leave the chair, report progress, and ask leave to sit again.

The HON. SIR T. MCILWRAITH said he understood from the hon. the Premier that the Bill would be reprinted and circulated amongst the members by Tuesday next.

The PREMIER said he proposed to reprint that part of the Bill which had been passed, and also to circulate amendments that would be necessary to be made in consequence of having adopted the principle of survey before selection.

The HON. SIR T. MCILWRAITH said it would be convenient to hon. members if the Government would print the Bill, showing in black letters the amendments which had been made.

The PREMIER said the Bill would certainly be printed in the way the hon. gentleman had indicated.

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

ADJOURNMENT.

The PREMIER moved that the House do now adjourn.

The HON. SIR T. MCILWRAITH: I wish the hon. the Premier would state the business that will be before the House next Tuesday. To-morrow is private members' day, and many hon. members will not be here.

The PREMIER: We will proceed with the Land Bill on Tuesday and Wednesday, and probably on Thursday.

Mr. MOREHEAD: Does the hon. the Premier intend to go on with the Jury Bill to-morrow?

The PREMIER: No.

Mr. MOREHEAD: The Pharmacy Bill will be taken, I suppose?

The PREMIER: I understand so.

Mr. MOREHEAD: It appears to me the three Bills are not of any pressing importance, and as possibly there will be no quorum to-morrow, we might as well adjourn till Tuesday.

The PREMIER: There will be a quorum, I think.

Mr. MOREHEAD: Are any of them Government Bills?

The PREMIER: No.

The HON. SIR T. MCILWRAITH: You will not take any Government Bill to-morrow?

The PREMIER: No.

The House adjourned at nineteen minutes to 11 o'clock.