Queensland

Parliamentary Debates
[Hansard]

Legislative Assembly

TUESDAY, 21 OCTOBER 1884

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY.

Tuesday, 21 *October*, 1884.

Appropriation Bill No. 2.—Assent to Bills.—Petitions.—Pharmacy Bill—third reading.—Crown Lands Bill—committee.—Native Labourers Protection Bill.

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

APPROPRIATION BILL No. 2.

The SPEAKER said : I have to report to the House that I duly presented to the Governor the Appropriation Bill No. 2, and that His Excellency was pleased, in my presence, to subscribe his assent thereto in the name and on behalf of Her Majesty the Queen.

ASSENT TO BILLS.

The SPEAKER announced the receipt of messages from His Excellency the Governor stating that, on behalf of Her Majesty, he had assented to the following Bills :—Maryborough Racecourse Bill; Appropriation Bill No. 2; and the Health Bill.

PETITIONS.

Mr. BLACK presented a petition from the inhabitants of Walkerston, Mackay district, relative to the regulation of the liquor traffic.

Petition read and received.

The HON. SIR T. MCILWRAITH presented a petition from some 200 farmers of the Bundaberg district, praying that the House would be pleased to favourably consider a measure enabling growers of agricultural produce of any kind to enjoy equal privileges with sugar-planters in the employment of Polynesian labour.

Petition read and received.

PHARMACY BILL—THIRD READING.

On the motion of Mr. BAILEY, this Bill was read a third time, passed, and ordered to be transmitted to the Legislative Council with the usual message.

CROWN LANDS BILL—COMMITTEE.

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

Clause 38—"Maps to be exhibited"—passed as printed.

On clause 39, as follows :—

"The commissioner shall keep a register in which he shall enter all applications to select land in the consecutive order of their receipt and the day and hour on which they were lodged, and each applicant shall himself or by his duly constituted attorney sign his name to such entry.

"When any such application is approved or rejected, or otherwise dealt with, the commissioner shall make a memorandum of such approval or rejection opposite the entry of the application in the register.

"Such register shall be open to public inspection during office-hours."

The MINISTER FOR LANDS (Hon. C. B. Dutton) moved that the word "commissioner" in the 1st line of the clause be omitted, with a view to insert the words "land agent."

Mr. ARCHER said he supposed the amendment was for the purpose of showing what the duties of the land agents were to be. Up to the present time they had been mentioned without its being shown that they had anything to do in connection with the administration of the Act.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS said the amendment was proposed because in many cases the commissioner was an outside officer, and somebody must be left in the office to receive applications for selections. It would be more convenient, therefore, that the land agent should be named in the Bill as having power to do that. The matter had been so fully discussed on a previous occasion that he did not think it necessary to make any explanation when moving the alteration.

Amendment agreed to; and clause, as amended put and passed.

On clause 40, as follows :—

"No person who is under the age of eighteen years, or who is a married woman not having obtained an order for judicial separation or protecting her separate property, or who is in respect of the land applied for or held, or any part thereof, or interest therein, an agent, trustee, or servant, of or for any other person, shall be competent to apply for or hold any land under the provisions of this part of the Act."

Mr. DONALDSON said he thought the age of eighteen was rather excessive in that case. It was not often that one of a family of the age of eighteen years continued with his parents on a selection, but it frequently happened that sons of a younger age remained. He would therefore move that the word "eighteen" be omitted with the view of substituting the word "sixteen." That was the age adopted in New South Wales. He had, however, no objection to a much younger age, and if hon. members desired an amendment fixing it lower than sixteen he would not propose his at present.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS said the age fixed by the present Act was eighteen, and he certainly thought that was quite young enough. Any person of a younger age than that could scarcely make use of the land in the way and for the purposes contemplated by that Bill.

Mr. DONALDSON said he took exception to the view expressed by the hon. Minister for Lands. He (Mr. Donaldson) thought it was very desirable that family selection should be encouraged, and that was his chief reason for advocating the reduction of the age as specified in the clause before the Committee. The selector would not have the right to sell his land for many years after he took it up. The hon. gentleman said that eighteen was quite young enough for anyone wanting to make a start in life, and that was quite true. For that reason he (Mr. Donaldson) still thought that his amendment was desirable, and he would point out that, even if a person were allowed to select at sixteen, he would arrive at maturity before he could realise on the land.

Mr. ARCHER said he could not quite agree with all that had fallen from the hon. member for Warrego. He thought the age of eighteen was quite young enough; it was time enough for any person to enter upon an independent course in life, or take a business on his own shoulders. He certainly could not support the proposal of the hon. member. He would rather see the clause amended in the opposite way.

The HON. SIR T. McILWRAITH said he believed with the member for Warrego that they ought to give a good deal of consideration to what the hon. gentleman called family selection. But he (Hon. Sir T. McIlwraith) did not think that kind of settlement was to be got by lowering the age of eligible applicants below eighteen, the standard in the Bill. In his opinion no one under that age could be said to apply for the land for his own use; in such a case the parents would probably hold as much interest in the selection as the applicant, and possibly a good deal more. The way family selection would be encouraged would be by relaxing the conditions of residence. He believed that children of the age of eighteen ought to be allowed to select with all the privileges given by that Bill, but that the condition of personal residence should not be enforced when their parents lived in the same district. It was in that way, he thought, that some encouragement should be given to family selection. At the proper time he would move an amendment—unless the Government took into consideration the suggestion he had made and proposed it themselves—to the effect that residence should be considered to be performed by the children when they resided at the selection of their parents in the same district.

Mr. JESSOP said he quite agreed with the views expressed by the hon. member for Warrego, that children should be allowed to select before they attained the age of eighteen. It would be many years before they could realise on their land, and there was a good deal of preparatory work required on a selection before it was brought into a condition of productiveness. Many a young man left home before he reached the age mentioned in the Bill, because there was nothing for him to do; whereas if he could take up a selection he would probably stay with his parents. As the leader of the Opposition had already suggested, they should allow the residence on one selection to do for both father and child. He hoped the Government would agree to reduce the age, and would move that the word "fifteen" be substituted for "eighteen."

The HON. SIR T. McILWRAITH said he would like to know what was the idea of the Government with regard to the suggestion he had made. If they looked favourably on the proposal, he might arrange now where the best place would be to insert an amendment allowing residence under the parents roof to do for residence on both selections when they were in the same district. If the Government approved of that, it would save a good deal of discussion on the clause, and facilitate matters considerably.

The PREMIER said the suggestion was entirely a new one, and he would like to consider it a few moments longer to see how it would work. He understood the hon. gentleman's suggestion to be that the residence of a minor with his father or mother, or step-father or step-mother, in the same district, should be deemed to be sufficient residence on his own holding. There might be some difficulty about its being in "the same district," for a grazing district might be fifty, sixty, or one hundred miles in extent. The best place to insert an amendment of that kind would be, either in a new subsection in clause 53, or in a new clause after clause 68, which ended that part of the Bill. But there was another question involved in the subject. The Government proposed to introduce clauses allowing the acquisition of land in small areas as homesteads—analogous to the present homestead clauses — after five years' residence. The present suggestion, applied to those clauses, would enable minors to acquire land after two years' residence; and that was also a matter worth considering. It would be as well if hon. members would think over the suggestion, and see how it would work, before they got to clauses 53 or 68 of the Bill.

The HON. SIR T. McILWRAITH said the Premier had put the matter in a light which he himself should have put it in, had he gone more fully into it. He saw the difficulties pointed out, although in his opinion they were not difficulties. He considered that they were not giving nearly enough facilities for children growing up in the colony to acquire land. He did not see why children born in the colony, and who had reached the age of sixteen years, should not have all the privileges of their fathers; so that by the time they were twenty-one or twenty-two they would be in a position to take wives and settle down on the land. It was with that object that the suggestion was made, and it appeared to commend itself to the Committee, especially after the way in which the rights of homestead selectors had been cut down. He should, therefore, support the amendment of the hon. member for Warrego to reduce the age from eighteen years to sixteen years, with the idea of moving further on that personal residence should not be exacted on their selections, if they resided with their parents and within a reasonable distance of their selections. The Premier had pointed out a difficulty, that if a district was 100 miles long some selections might be taken up without any residence at all. His idea was that the selections contemplated by the amendment should be within such a reasonable distance that the parents of the children might see the selections almost every day, and perform the work of settlers upon it. The conditions must be performed in those as in all other cases. He considered it a step in the right direction that in the present clause they should reduce the age from eighteen to sixteen years.

Mr. DONALDSON said he heartily endorsed all that had been said by the leader of the Opposition with regard to the residence conditions of minors, and he had intended to move an amendment to that effect further on. With regard to selection in Victoria, under the Act of 1869, there was nothing more popular than the system of family selections, and the Minister for Lands never insisted that residence should be done for each separate block of land, provided the family lived together. In that case, it was true, the age was eighteen years. It was frequently found very inconvenient for the girls of a family to have a different

residence for themselves; but as the Minister had certain powers, he ruled that where both daughters and sons resided with their parents one residence was sufficient. In Queensland, also, he believed family selections would be popular, especially as it would enable people to get good-sized holdings; and it was for that purpose that he was desirous to see the age reduced. He moved, as an amendment, therefore, that the word "eighteen" be omitted from the clause, with the view of inserting the word "sixteen."

Mr. MOREHEAD said he should certainly vote for the amendment. In all their previous land legislation sufficient prominence had not been given to the claims of the native-born of the colony. Children born in the colony should have special concessions made to them. Their fathers had toiled here, and had given hostages to fortune, and they were decidedly entitled to a concession as against persons imported from Europe, at the expense really of those taxpayers —those very people. He hoped the Premier would recognise that the native-born had a special claim on the country by so lowering the age, in their case, that they would be able to select land on which they could subsequently settle. He trusted that the Government would see their way to make an amendment in that direction.

Mr. SCOTT said he was not sure that the amendment would work so well altogether as under the residence clause at present existing. It would not simply apply to children residing with their parents, but to anyone. If they chose to reside upon their land they could do so; but he considered that a child of sixteen years of age ought not to be living away from his parents on a selection at all. He thought the age of sixteen years was too young, and it would be a demoralising thing that children should be living apart from their parents at that age. If the amendment was to apply to children residing with their parents, well and good; but if it was to apply to all children he should oppose it.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS said the effect of allowing children to reside with their parents would be that they would be used as dummies by them. It would mean nothing more or less than that. How would the conditions be carried out in the way of improvements, and how were they to work in the matter of grazing farms? In one family there might be children ranging from sixteen years to twenty years of age, who might take up four different grazing farms, and do nothing whatever with them for four or five years, except to keep them as a kind of outpost to shut out *bonâ fide* occupants. It was going far enough, when they could act for themselves, that reasonable opportunities should be given them to commence life. Why not commence with a child as soon as it was born, and set aside a piece of land for it, and say that that piece should not be touched by anybody until that child had reached its majority? One was as reasonable as the other. It was time enough when children reached an age when they were fit to enter upon the concerns of life, that they should have opportunities of taking up land and using it under the conditions laid down in the Bill; but to allow parents to secure land for their children before they were fit to enter upon it was absurd. He was desirous of seeing his countrymen and women get every advantage they could, but he was not going out of his way to give them special advantages. It did not mean carrying out the intentions of the Bill. It would enable parents to hold land without making any use of it for some years—simply on the belief that the parent held it for his children. He thought it was quite enough when children had attained an age at which they would be able to work, to give them opportunities of entering upon the land. It was time enough to do that when they were fit to use it.

Mr. NELSON said the hon. gentleman could not even admit the amendment without supposing that parents would make use of their children for dummying. He was sure every hon. member of the Committee could see that what they were working for on that occasion was not a concession, but only what the people had a right to. It must be recollected that the area of land a man could hold in Queensland could not exceed 960 acres. A man with a large family, when he was going to settle his family, would have to introduce a system of subdividing the property. He could not otherwise settle his sons without sending them probably to the other end of the colony, or to some far-away district, which it was not a desirable thing to do. Why should not a man be able to take up a farm for his son, if he was born in the colony especially, as it was a guarantee that the man had lived there for a certain number of years at least, according to the age the applicant had arrived at? He would make an arrangement to allow them to select at twelve years of age—that was, that the parents should be enabled to take up land for them, which would become their property when they were able to make use of it.

Mr. BLACK said the Minister for Lands stated that parents would make use of their children for dummying. The hon. gentleman seemed to wish to prevent legitimate settlement owing to his absurd dread of dummying. Surely, with the complicated machinery which he contemplated bringing into action in connection with the Land Bill, he could see that it was properly carried out! He had not the least doubt about that. It was unreasonable that *bonâ fide* selectors, and those, above others, who had large families, should be debarred from selecting a piece of land sufficient to place their children upon when they came of age. The hon. gentleman said they would hold the land and do nothing with it. According to his (Mr. Black's) idea they would do nothing of the sort. If it were a grazing area they would be bound to put a fence round it within three years, during which time they only held a license for the land. He assumed that those conditions would still apply. If they took up land as an agricultural area, and it was intended to extend the term to five years—within which time they only held licenses—if it were proved that they had been dummying the land, surely the Government would step in and have the application cancelled. There would certainly be no condition as to stocking; but the condition of fencing would be made applicable, no matter what was the age of the applicant.

Mr. ARCHER said that of course, with the modification introduced by the leader of the Opposition into the amendment, he had not the slightest objection to it. His idea previously was that selections would be taken up which would not be worked for the benefit of Queensland at all.

The PREMIER said it would be necessary now to go into the whole question, if hon. gentlemen opposite were going to change their minds altogether. The hon. member for Blackall now saw his way to allowing infant children to select.

Mr. ARCHER: No.

The PREMIER said the hon. gentleman proposed, in the case of two grazing farms of 20,000 acres each, to allow two girls to select one each. One would be a little older than the other; but the hon. gentleman proposed that they should be allowed to select a farm of the maximum area; neither of them would live on the farm; and their brothers might live in some other

part of the district, fifty or sixty miles away; could the hon. gentleman suggest a more admirable idea for "mopping up" the district? There would be no condition of residence or occupation, or anything but putting a fence round it and putting stock on it. A man with half-a-dozen children would be a most useful person indeed. The matter would require a great deal further consideration if they proposed to amend the clause in that direction. In the first place he did not see how the absence of personal residence would be justifiable in the case of grazing farms, certainly of large ones. Surely no one desired that children of sixteen years of age, or even younger, should live away from their parents? That would not be good for the settlement of the country in future. It would not be conducive to the actual occupation of the colony at present. It would not be good for those families themselves to require minors to perform the conditions of residence by living away from their parents. If the privilege was given it would have to be confined to those who lived within such a distance from their selections that they would be able to attend to them. The object of the Bill was not simply to facilitate the acquisition of land by children or anyone else, but to facilitate the occupation and actual settlement upon the land. Settlement by children was only making provision for children, and not real settlement at all. It was necessary to consider it from every point of view. What distance was to be fixed as that which the child of the lessee might live away from his selection? Certainly it should not be more than ten miles. Of course one effect of adopting the suggestion to reduce the age to sixteen years would be that, in the case of agricultural farms, children who had parents living in the district would be enabled to get the freehold of farms by the time they came of age. That would be desirable from one point of view, but it would not facilitate selection in the sense they desired by inducing other people to come to the colony. The greater part of the land would be given away to their children, and whilst they certainly ought to receive consideration, still immigration ought to be encouraged. It was only the other day that hon. members opposite were talking about the homestead clauses as the most effective immigration advertisement possible; but if they allowed every child of sixteen to take up a homestead, and get the fee-simple at twenty-one, it did not seem to be the way to encourage immigration. They could not afford to give away the land in that extremely liberal fashion. The proposition of the hon. member for Warrego, combined with that of the hon. member for Mulgrave, would amount to giving away the homesteads without any personal residence whatever. That would be a great innovation, and while there might be good reasons for it, they had yet to be pointed out.

The HON. SIR T. McILWRAITH said that the Government had introduced a Bill under which a man could take up 20,000 acres in every district in the colony; so that if there were fifty districts he could take up 1,000,000 acres. Yet the hon. member stood aghast at the notion of a man with two daughters being able to take up 40,000 acres! The Government were beginning to wake up now to what was in their own Bill. The hon. member was afraid that if each member of a family were allowed to take up 960 acres under the homestead clauses they would mop up the whole of the 90,000,000 acres. Had the hon. member thought what those figures meant, and how easily they could spare any amount of land provided they encouraged settlement? It would not hurt immigrants to know that the colony was liberal to her own children; it would only make them regret they had not come earlier. The only practical objection which had been raised by the Premier was that it would be unfair to allow the son of a man residing in a district to take up a selection, and give him the privilege of performing the condition of residence at the father's house, if that house were not a reasonable distance from the selection. He admitted there was force in that objection, but he did not agree with the Premier as to what would be a reasonable distance. The Premier said ten miles, but he thought twenty miles would not be too far.

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN said he thought the hon. the Premier forgot that on grazing farms personal residence was not compulsory, nor on agricultural farms, unless the lessee wished to secure the freehold. Why should not a father be allowed to take up a selection for a child of sixteen, and let the child become owner of it when he came of age? A provision of that kind had acted very well in New South Wales, but the drawback there was that the child was obliged to live on the selection, which sometimes led to a great deal of demoralisation. Still, in other respects, it had worked very well, and had led to a great many young men and women having selections of their own when they came of age.

Mr. KATES said the hon. member who had just sat down wished to know why a man should not take up a selection for his child sixteen years of age? But, supposing when the child came to years of discretion he did not wish to be a farmer or grazier, but chose to be a soldier or a lawyer, or something of that kind, what would become of the land then? He thought eighteen was just about the age that young men arrived at years of discretion, and if they were allowed to take up land before that they would simply be dummying for their parents.

The HON. SIR T. McILWRAITH said he thought a good deal of misunderstanding arose from the misapplication of words. He did not believe it was an immoral thing for children under twenty-one years of age to take up land under the advice of their parents, and he did not think it was looked upon as dummying in any district in the colony. The law, he thought, made it dummying, but it was certainly not immoral in itself. Why should they pass a law which would actually cause immorality? It was a wrong thing that children—unless they were married, or had to go away to business—should be separated from their parents at the ages of sixteen to twenty-one; and why should Parliament force them asunder? It had been proved in the neighbouring colony to give rise to a great deal of immorality; and they ought to provide against that by allowing the children to reside with their parents. Even if it were true that the land in this case would be taken up for the parents, he did not think any great harm would be done; at all events, not sufficient harm to prevent their offering every encouragement to men with families to settle on the land. They should give the right of selection to every member of a family above the age of fifteen years, and give an extended privilege to children born on the soil. If they gave them the additional right of performing the condition of residence at their parents' house, they would be doing what was right for the colony, and be giving an immense relief to the farming classes. He believed that encouragement of that kind would lead to more and better settlement than they had had in the past.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS said he admitted it would not be right to expect children to leave their parents before they were twenty-one years of age; but they could take up land when

they were eighteen, and occupy it through an agent. If their parents could make use of the land for them, they could keep somebody else on it. The only thing was that that would not secure to them the freehold; but they might hold it as a leasehold. That might be an advantage or disadvantage, according to the prejudices or ideas of different people; but if children had an opportunity of securing land at a certain age he thought every reasonable provision had been made for them.

Mr. MOREHEAD said he could not follow the arguments of the Minister for Lands. He had again gone back to the old dummying cry. Why, under the Bill as it stood, there was nothing to prevent any person in Brisbane from taking up land for purely speculative purposes, and surely if land was to be taken up in any way whatever it should be taken up for family settlement, even if the law had to be stretched to allow that to be done. They ought to give every facility for the settlement of families, and he said further that he considered that those families who were already on the soil should have additional advantages. He was astonished at the Minister for Lands, who had got such an abhorrence of foreign capital, not advocating warmly the proposal he had made—that Queenslanders born and bred should have special favour shown to them in the matter of settlement. There was a great deal in the contention that had been set up that the native-born Queenslander had exceptional claims on the country. If the amendment of the hon. member for Warrego were carried, he intended to move a proviso giving effect to the views held by him—and held, he believed, by a large number of the members of the Committee—that Queenslanders should have special advantages in the matter of age as compared with strangers.

Mr. JORDAN said he thought a feeling obtained on his side of the Committee that the amount of land allowed to be taken up by small settlers was already too large. He felt that way himself very strongly, and he thought the Bill gave quite enough in allowing men to take up 20,000 acres in a small pastoral area. The effect of the suggestion of the hon. member for Mulgrave would be that families would become separated, and would absorb very large areas; and he did not think that would be found to be very profitable to the colony. He believed in family settlement thoroughly, but he wanted to see a large number of families on the land. He did not want to see one family absorbing a very large quantity of land, because they wanted a large population in the colony to turn the land to the most profitable account. The children in the colony were too precocious already, and they should not encourage the notion that children of fifteen years of age should have land of their own. The idea was pernicious. He believed in family settlement on small holdings; and in new countries, where labour was both scarce and expensive, it was to the settlement of families that the small farmers had to look to for profitable labour. He would encourage the children to stay at home and help their father and mother to work their holdings. He maintained that small holdings were much more profitably worked than large ones, for the really successful farmers in the colony were the persons who held small quantities of land and worked it well. He should strongly object to the amendment, and hoped the Minister for Lands would not accept it. It would be a most pernicious thing to allow children to take up land and fulfil the conditions of occupation by living with their father and mother, perhaps twenty miles away. He did not believe the proposal would work, but that it would defeat the real object of the Bill—namely, the settlement of the people on the lands of the colony.

Mr. NORTON said he must confess he could not see that there was any very great objection to the proposal. He knew that in New South Wales, under a similar system which existed there at the present time, children could take up selections within four or five or six or seven miles of their parents' holdings. They were obliged by the Act to reside on their selections, but what was called residence was a nominal arrangement only. He had had opportunities of watching many cases where children who had taken up selections went out every night and came back in the morning. They had to do the work on their own places and help their father on his; but for all practical purposes they might just as well have slept under one roof. He believed in those cases the children would have been much better off if they slept at home, because although in some cases no evil effects might arise, there were a great many cases where they would. The Bill provided for selection by girls over the age of eighteen. Well, surely it would be an objectionable thing for girls to reside on their selections at that age. He thought it would be very much better if they were allowed to take up selections and reside under their parents' roof. The hon. member for South Brisbane said that he thought the area which was allowed to one man to take up was quite sufficient for any family. He (Mr. Norton) did not altogether believe in that view. The man who had no family had a right to take up 20,000 acres, and he could make a very profitable living out of it; but why should a man with a family of six or eight not be entitled to select land for his children? His expenses and requirements were far greater than the man with no family, and he had to look forward to the time when his children had to be provided for. Therefore, he saw no reason why a man in that position should be prevented from taking up a reasonable amount of land for each of his children, so that it might be transferred to them when they came of age. A provision of that kind could be made without any difficulty. He was quite sure that, taking the people of the colony at large, among the men who had families of their own a provision of the kind suggested would be most popular, because parents were naturally very averse to allowing their children to go away when their were young to mix with strangers, and take the chance of their turning out well or badly according to the class of people with whom they came in contact. So long as they were at home the parents had an eye upon them, and it was only natural that parents should wish to have an eye on their children, and not wish them at sixteen years of age to start work on their own account. He had known many who had done so at that age, and in his own case he was at work on his own account at eighteen years of age. But he thought it was an undesirable thing that young fellows of eighteen should go away by themselves, and be obliged to live on their selections by themselves when they might be living under their parents' roofs.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS said the hon. gentleman took a very sentimental view of the matter altogether. Provision was made in the Bill to meet cases of the kind mentioned by the hon. member. A man with a family could take up land within the restricted quantity, and by working it could keep it as a going concern for his son when he became of age to take it up himself. What could be more liberal than that? If a man had sons growing up, he could take up land and occupy it by bailiff, work it into a going concern, and hand it over to his son when he was of an age to deal with it himself. But to allow a man to take up selections and holdings for his children, which he was

not prepared to use and had no intention of using for them, or getting into condition for them to use when they were able to do so, would be doing an injury to the country and to those who might wish to take up the land which that man might not be making any proper use of. If there was some condition making it imperative on a man taking up land for his children to make some fair use of it, there might be something in it; but where there were no conditions but the payment of rent a man might easily acquire in the way suggested a great deal more land than he could fairly make use of, and he would perhaps just let it lie over until he could dispose of it to advantage or until his child could do so.

The HON. SIR T. MCILWRAITH said the hon. gentleman was arguing as if he had never read his own Bill. What did the clause under discussion amount to? It amounted to this: that the Government had come to the conclusion that a person of eighteen years of age was quite qualified to have all the privileges under that Land Bill. It was easy to see that a person of eighteen years of age, and whose family were in a certain district, might be obliged to perform the conditions of selection some miles away from his family, and that would actually be doing harm to the State and the family, instead of doing good. The Opposition were arguing that a person eighteen years of age should not be obliged to live away from his family. He did not think there were two opinions in the Committee upon the desirability of children living in the one house with their parents until they were of age to do for themselves. But quite a different question from that had arisen, and that was whether the age might not be made sixteen instead of eighteen; and a good deal might be said on both sides of that question, although he should vote for the amendment of sixteen years; but on the other question of allowing those persons to reside with the family, there were not two opinions in the Committee.

The PREMIER said there was nothing in the Bill requiring children to live away from their parents. The scheme of the Bill was simply that people should not take up land unless they were prepared to use it. They must use it, and must not take it up for purely speculative purposes. The proposition now made was to allow people to take up land who would not use it. It was quite inconceivable that a lad of sixteen years would take up land and utilise it. The proposition amounted to this: They were asked to allow parents to take up land for their children in advance, and exempt them from having to make any use of it until the children had arrived at the age of twenty-one years. The addition suggested by the hon. member for Mulgrave was that they should allow children of the age of sixteen years to take up a homestead selection and get the fee-simple of it, without residing on it at all, on the payment of half-a-crown an acre. If they reduced the age to sixteen years, and allowed residence with parents as an equivalent for personal residence, that would really be letting those people acquire homestead selections without residence at all; and he thought homestead selection without residence was a contradiction in terms. The question before the Committee now was whether sixteen or eighteen years was the proper age. Persons who were eighteen years of age might be considered competent to utilise land in many cases, but he was quite certain a person sixteen years of age was not competent to utilise land; it could only be taken up for them and retained until they were old enough to do something with it. It was found, in New South Wales, that reducing the age of a person competent to select land upon the condition of personal residence encouraged the scattering of families. Under the Bill before them, however, a farmer might take up land for his children if he desired to do so, but he must occupy and utilise it for them. He thought it would be better to separate the question of residence with parents or otherwise from the question as to whether the proper age was sixteen years or eighteen years. Of course they knew hon. gentlemen on the other side did not believe in the principles of the Bill, and they, therefore, did not expect them to propose any amendments that would have the effect of facilitating the passing of those parts of the Bill; on the contrary they might naturally expect, from hon. gentlemen opposite, amendments that would be more likely to have the effect of defeating those principles. They therefore looked with some suspicion upon amendments coming from the opposite side dealing with the settlement of the land on the principles of the Bill. He had pointed out the effect which the amendment suggested would have, and he felt sure the Committee were not prepared to adopt any scheme that would have the effect of securing the alienation of the land in great quantities.

Mr. JORDAN said there was something in the objection that they should not encourage children —say, of eighteen years of age—to go away from their homes. But there was another way of overcoming the difficulty besides that suggested by hon. gentlemen opposite, and that was altering the age from eighteen to twenty-one years. That would get over the difficulty at once. Let them make the age about the marriageable age, for that was the time they wanted to "swarm." He should, himself, like to see personal residence made a necessity. That was an additional reason for having the age fixed at twenty-one instead of eighteen years. It would certainly add to the other safeguards in the Bill to prevent the possibility of what they all professed to believe was a great evil—that was, the dummying of land.

Mr. GRIMES said he looked upon the amendment proposed by the hon. member for Warrego, together with that suggested by the leader of the Opposition, as a very dangerous amendment indeed. He could see no reason—with the clauses having reference to mortgages remaining as they were in the Bill—why an agriculturist engaging a labourer with a large family should not take up land in the names of his children, if the amendment was passed, and secure himself by mortgage until the whole would eventually become one large estate. There was no reason either why the Crown tenant could not do the same thing with the leasing lands. If the Government allowed the amendment to pass, it would not make a bit of difference in the prevention of the accumulation of large estates that at present existed under the present law.

Mr. DONALDSON said he regretted very much to hear the Premier make the assertion that hon. members on the Opposition side appeared desirous of introducing amendments which would have the effect of defeating the objects of the Bill entirely. He could assure the Committee that he had no desire to introduce any such amendments. He had had opportunities of observing the working of the various Land Acts in the other colonies, and he believed that family settlement was the best form of permanent settlement they could have. That had been the experience of the other colonies, and he believed it would have a similar effect here. From his experience and long residence in the other colonies, and the large extent of country he had travelled over, he was quite sure that the most permanent kind of settlement

they could have would be by allowing two or three members of the same family to select land contiguous to each other. They had been worked together, and had always been profitable to the holders. The consequence was that people had not parted with their selections in the interior as many other selectors had done. He thought sixteen was a much more desirable age than eighteen. With regard to the remarks of the hon. member for Oxley, who said that it would be quite competent, if the age were reduced, for any person to get large families around him, get them to dummy lands, and so form large estates, he denied that entirely. It would be impossible for a minor to mortgage lands until he arrived at the age of twenty-one. It would be no advantage to the agriculturist to try and get families around him, because no bond that a minor could enter into would be legal. In many districts where settlement was likely to go ahead pretty fast, a man with a large family might take up the maximum area, which might be 320 acres in those places. In the course of a few years the family would grow up, but probably by that time all the land in the district would be selected, and there would be none for the children to settle on. He contended that it would be better for the country if members of such families could settle near each other; and if the age were fixed at sixteen, by the time the children arrived at the age of twenty-one they would have land on which to settle. On the other hand, if they were debarred from selecting until they arrived at the age of eighteen, all the land in the district, as he had said, might have been absorbed in the meantime. The desirability of promoting settlement by residents in the colony at the present time should be recognised. He had heard it argued that the Bill would be a fine advertisement for promoting immigration; but he contended that the people in the colony should be considered, as it was proposed to do by the amendment. He therefore hoped the Government would take a different view to that they had advocated with regard to the age. The hon. member for Darling Downs (Mr. Kates) said that young men, on arriving at the age of twenty-one, very often did not care to be farmers, preferring to go abroad. How was it that such young men did not follow the occupation they had been brought up to? Was it not very often because they had no land to settle on, except that belonging to the old people? If they had farms of their own they would settle on them, instead of going "soldiering," as the hon. member remarked. Every facility should be given to members of a family to get land, and the different blocks should be adjoining, to enable residence to be carried on in one place. Such a provision in the Bill would be a perfect safeguard against dummying.

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

AYES, 23

Messrs. Rutledge, Dutton, Griffith, Dickson, Sheridan, Buckland, Higson, Beattie, Smyth, Brookes, Grimes, Macfarlane, Bailey, Mellor, White, Foxton, Moreton, Kates, Miles, Foote, Jordan, Aland, and Groom.

NOES, 14.

The Hon. Sir T. McIlwraith, Messrs. Norton, Archer, Black, Palmer, Donaldson, Lissner, Jessop, Morehead, Macrossan, Scott, Lalor, Ferguson, and Nelson.

Question resolved in the affirmative.

Mr. MOREHEAD said he intended to test the feeling of the Committee on the question he raised before—namely, as to recognising the absolute right of Queensland native-born children of a certain age to take up land; and he would therefore move that the following words be added at the end of the clause:—

Provided that any person of the age of twelve years, born in the colony of Queensland, shall be deemed competent to apply for and hold any land under the provisions of this part of the Act.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS said that last amendment was altogether too absurd, and he would oppose it in every form.

Mr. ARCHER said he should have liked very much to have heard the reason why the Minister for Lands objected to the amendment. As it was, he only heard the last words the hon. gentleman said—"I will oppose it in every form." It would really be better for that side of the Committee if the hon. gentleman would make himself heard. He (Mr. Archer) did not hear what the hon. gentleman said in his last speech. Of course, he did not suppose there was any argument or any great weight in what he said. If the hon. gentleman would speak to his boots and mutter, it was impossible that his words could be heard on that side of the Committee. As he (Mr. Archer) had already stated, all that was audible just now was the last sentence, "I will oppose it in every form."

The MINISTER FOR LANDS said what he did say—if he did not speak clearly enough—was that the amendment now proposed was the amendment that the Committee had just disposed of in an exaggerated form, except that the advantages it conferred were to be confined to native-born children. They were not to allow anyone else to participate in the advantages it was proposed to offer. Well, he was not quite so thoroughly Australian—not so Australian to the backbone—as not to permit anyone else to receive the advantages extended to native-born people. Australians did not want any special advantages; all they wanted was a fair field and no favour, and the opportunity to enable them to place their children on the land when they were of an age that they could utilise it. They did not wish to see the land alienated in a wholesale manner, so that there would be no possibility of obtaining it when their children could work it, as was the case in New South Wales. But to say that land should be set aside for children of the age of twelve years was anticipating things a little too much. If they did that they would be dealing with matters with which the Legislature had no concern. It was the duty of parents to provide their children with a start in life, and not of the State. He did not desire, and he did not think anybody else desired, that land should be set aside in the manner proposed in the amendment. He repeated that it was the duty of parents to provide their children with the means of starting in life. But let the State take care that there should be an opportunity for everyone to get land when they were able to use it.

Mr. MOREHEAD said the hon. gentleman was quite right when he contended that it was the duty of parents to look after their children. It was also the duty of the State to look after those within its borders. The same duty was on the State as on the parent. He contended that it could not be disputed that the claims of native-born subjects stood far above those of any people coming from Europe or any other part of the world. The hon. gentleman also said that as an Australian he was quite ready to hold his own, and that all he asked was a fair field and no favour. Let him look at the map hanging on the wall in that Chamber, and see the country in the southern part of the colony excluded from the schedule area of the Bill—excluded because the people down there did not trade with Brisbane. Was that fair play? How did the hon. gentleman square that with the arguments he had now advanced? He (Mr. Morehead) maintained that from a

national point of view the amendment was of far more importance than the hon. gentleman seemed to attach to it; and the absurd way in which he had treated it showed that he had not given it due consideration. As the hon. gentleman must know, the number of persons who would be able to select under the amendment was very limited, and would be for a considerable time yet. He (Mr. Morehead) maintained that Queenslanders had every right to consideration—that those who were native-born had a claim above those who were imported into the colony; and he said that without any fear of contradiction, either inside or outside that Committee. Those men whose children, he contended, should receive consideration, must necessarily have spent a large portion of their lives in Queensland, and they ought to receive due and full recognition at the hands of that Committee — a recognition beyond that which was proposed to be extended to those who came from other colonies and other parts of the world to settle on the lands of the country.

Mr. JORDAN said the hon. member for Balonne was generally logical, but he was not so in the present case. The hon. gentleman laid down an arbitrary line at twelve years of age. That would be an injustice. According to his own argument he demanded justice for the children who were born in the colony. If they were to allow any advantage at all they should consider all children born in Queensland. But the hon. gentleman only proposed to deal with those of the age of twelve years. How about the smiling babe in the cradle? They would do a manifest injustice to that little babe by not allowing it the same privilege. And the little two-year old—would they not protect its claims? Twelve years was an arbitrary line.

Mr. MOREHEAD: Eighteen years is an arbitrary line.

Mr. JORDAN said the hon. gentleman stated that he contended for the amendment on principle. If he intended to extend the advantage proposed to every child in a family, members on his (Mr. Jordan's) side of the Committee might possibly consider the suggestion.

Mr. NELSON said it was the hon. member for South Brisbane who was illogical, because the limit of age must be fixed somewhere, and they had already fixed eighteen as the lowest age at which immigrants to the colony could take up land. All that he and others who supported the amendment claimed was, that a man who had lived in the colony with his family for twelve years and upwards should be entitled to a concession of at least six years. A man who arrived from Germany or any other part of Europe, with a family of eighteen years of age and upwards, could take up a selection for every one of them, immediately on the Bill becoming law; and they considered that a concession of twelve years as against eighteen, in favour of children born in the colony, was only fair and just. He was sorry to hear the Premier say that he looked with the greatest suspicion upon everything that came from that side of the Committee. He was afraid the hon. gentleman was becoming a pessimist, like his colleague, the Minister for Lands—he had got inoculated with that hon. member's pessimism through sitting alongside him; still it was allowable to be taught even by an enemy; and no sufficient reason had been shown why the amendment should not be carried. If nothing the Opposition might say would be listened to, it was but carrying out what the Minister for Lands said on the second reading of the Bill—that it would be carried in spite of them.

Mr. BAILEY said the amendment was worthy of more consideration than it was receiving at the hands of the Committee. In Australia and in America the tendency of the younger portion of the country population for years had been to drift to towns. That was a most deplorable state of things, and was constantly getting worse. If they had boys brought up in the bush—strong, hardy, good-working lads—why not give them every encouragement to stop there, and so keep them out of towns where they would become either larrikins or shopboys? It was a question for very serious consideration, that of giving every possible encouragement to the children of farmers or graziers, or whatever they were, to follow their father's occupation under the most favourable circumstances. He could see nothing very wrong in the amendment, and should have great pleasure in voting for it; and he hoped that the Government, and his hon. friends also, would reconsider their decision, and do so likewise. There could be nothing wrong in giving country lads an opportunity of remaining on the lands of the colony instead of drifting into towns. They were constantly bringing inexperienced immigrants into the colony, and sending them to settle on the land; while their native-born country lads, who might otherwise become most valuable members of the community, were allowed to drift into the towns until the towns were getting overburdened with an unreproductive population, with the inevitable result that there would be a vast quantity of pauperism to contend against before many years.

The PREMIER said the hon. member had evidently no idea of the meaning of the amendment before the Committee. The amendment was no doubt a most admirable one from one point of view, because it would enable the father of a family to take up selection after selection. He might take up the maximum area of 20,000 acres for a son of seventeen, the same for another son of sixteen, and every succeeding year down to twelve; and when he had exhausted the whole family he might go on with his other relations until he had got possession of twenty or thirty farms. If that was what the hon. member for Wide Bay advocated, he had a very singular notion of the way in which to keep young men in the country instead of letting them drift into towns.

Mr. BEATTIE said the Premier's argument was not a sound one. The hon. gentleman forgot the amount the colony was paying to induce immigrants to come out and settle on the land. What was asked was simply that children who were born in the colony, and had cost the colony nothing, should have the right of purchasing land on certain terms. Not many years ago the land-order system was in force, and every child introduced into the colony received half a land-order, while the child born in the colony received nothing. Who made the colony, but the people who had lived in it and brought it up to its present state? And they had a perfect right to be considered in the passing of a Bill of that description. He did not know that the amendment, as worded, could be carried out——

The HON. SIR T. MCILWRAITH: Why should it not be carried out?

The PREMIER: No doubt it would be carried out.

Mr. BEATTIE said the question was one that required serious consideration; and he did not see why children born in the colony should not have the concession as well as those to whom years ago they gave land-orders.

Mr. SMYTH said that, no doubt, the amendment was introduced by the hon. member for Balonne from purely patriotic motives; but it was class legislation of the worst sort. It would not be pleasant for immigrants coming into the

colony to find that they were on a worse footing than another class of their fellow-colonists. As to the remarks of the hon. member for Wide Bay about country lads becoming shopboys in towns, where else could they learn their trades? And tradesmen were as necessary to the colony's welfare as farmers or pastoralists. If the amendment were allowed to pass it would result in more dummying than had ever been known before. He (Mr. Smyth) was as thorough an Australian as the hon. member for Balonne, but he did not want to be placed on a better footing than any other white inhabitant of the colony. They might as well ask that the native-born should have his name put on the electoral roll at an earlier age than others, or that he should enjoy other privileges and liberties granted by Acts of Parliament before any other class of persons in the colony.

Mr. FOOTE said he could not approve of the amendment. He failed to see why a person, because he was native-born, should enjoy rights and privileges beyond any other person who came to the colony and settled in it. If a right of the kind contemplated were given to anybody, it should be given to the settlers of thirty or forty years' standing, who had borne the burden and heat of the day, and had assisted to make the colony what it was. He would suggest to the hon. member to withdraw his amendment and introduce another for a bonus on every baby born in the colony. They would then be able to ascertain the value of natives—whether £10 or £20, or whatever it might be. He wanted to know what value native-born people were to the State more than any other class of settlers. As for the remarks of the hon. member for Wide Bay about the population of the inland towns, that would always be the case. In the rural districts lads were not always satisfied with employment as farmers or graziers. Many of them, like other children, varied in their tastes; some wanted to be one thing and some another, and it would be utterly absurd to put a lad who had a taste for engineering on to a farm, or one who had a taste for carpentering or for any other calling. Unless a boy had a taste for farming or grazing he was not very likely to stick to it. He failed to see any reason why a boy of twelve years of age should be allowed to select land.

Mr, MOREHEAD said he thought he had more sympathy with babies than the hon. member, perhaps. The hon. gentleman seemed to defend the rights of old settlers from a selfish point of view. He could not see why the hon. member for Bundanba should have such a down on babies. It would be a stretch of imagination to suppose that the hon. gentleman ever was one himself; possibly he might have had some sympathy for them if he had been. With regard to the argument of the Premier as to the dummying that would be carried on under the clause if it were carried as amended, he would point out that the hon. gentleman was really frightened of a shadow. At the present time there were a very small number of Queensland-born children of the age of twelve years; and he thought his hon. friend the member for South Brisbane, as a late Registrar-General, could bear him out in that. Of course the number would increase from year to year, and he thought it was very fair that those children, as they grew up, should have the privilege of selecting on the terms and conditions set forth in the amendment. As regarded the dummying, it had been said over and over again that a man did not want the assistance of children—it did not matter whether they were under eighteen or under twelve—he could dummy, under the provisions of that Bill, every acre in the country quite outside the conditions contained in the clause under discussion. He hoped, with the hon. member for Wide Bay, that the matter would receive a great deal more consideration at the hands of the Government than it had received heretofore, and the Government would then see the expediency of supporting the amendment, which would enable the native-born and others to settle down upon the lands rather than to gravitate towards the towns, the effect of which was accurately stated by the hon. member for Wide Bay. They would either become larrikins or shopboys, instead of becoming an industrious body of men. If such an amendment as that proposed were carried it would have the effect of promoting close family settlement, and they would have the same state of affairs as prevailed in America, where close settlement was increasing from day to day, and where there was great agricultural settlement throughout the land to the benefit of the State. He did not see why they should extend the same privileges to men who came from the other side of the world, and put them in the same position—men whose passages they had paid. That was a matter that had been forgotten, except by the hon. member for Fortitude Valley, who alluded to it. They were taxed to bring more people out here, and then they were to be put on exactly the same level as native-born people, and compete with them in every possible way—in trade, or as producers, or as agricultural farmers; and yet, when they asked for what might be called a *quid pro quo*, some members of the Committee refused, the Government especially, to even give those men the consideration they were entitled to.

Mr. FOOTE said he might not have had such a large experience of babies as the hon. member who had just sat down, who might have had a very large experience in that line, and consequently have a great deal of sympathy towards the posterity of the colony. The hon. member might be biassed to a greater extent than he ought to be. He believed in fair play, and, although the hon. gentleman contended that dummying could not take place under his amendment, he thought it would open the door to dummying, which would be carried on to a very great extent. Supposing that a family of ten children—and the hon. gentleman might have ten or twenty for all he knew—but supposing he had ten children of twelve years of age and upwards, he could take up selections for each; and if there were many gentlemen of that character in the colony who had very large and prolific families the whole colony would soon be absorbed, and there would be nothing left. It was a most serious clause, and, as the hon. gentleman said, it deserved serious consideration at the hands of the Committee. He should very seriously object to it.

Mr. JESSOP said there was one point which had been missed, and that was that a father had to provide for his children. There were thousands of men in the colony who had plenty of money for themselves, but who were thinking out the problem of how to benefit their families. The duty of a man was to provide for his family and obtain a piece of land for them. It would be the best possible thing to allow the amendment to pass. The native-born children should have some privilege. As to the whole of the land being absorbed, it would take centuries to do that.

Mr. BAILEY said he could speak from his own practical knowledge from having spent twenty years amongst farmers and small graziers. He knew many heart-rending cases where there were sons of the age of from fourteen to sixteen years and there was no opportunity of their taking up land near to their father's farm, and

the family thus had to be broken up. The boys went into town, sometimes to trade; but they generally became shopboys or something of that kind. And as the farmer got older and less able to work, he had less help. Under the proposed amendment they should have close family settlement, and a farmer could say to his boy of eighteen years of age, "There is a piece of land ready for you." That would be a most wholesome state of things to encourage, and he hoped the amendment would pass. He was afraid it would not, but he hoped it would.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS said that if a man took up a selection, especially in the coast districts, when his family were young all the land around would be taken up, and they would have to go further afield than they had at present. The want of being able to secure land drove the boys into town; whereas, if the land were open to them when they were fit to use it, in the country, there was no necessity for them to go into town. It was not necessary that they should be adjoining their parents' selections. If land were to be left for all those years without any real use being made of it by occupation, the whole purpose of the Bill would be defeated.

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

AYES, 15.

Hon. Sir T. McIlwraith, Messrs. Norton, Archer, Morehead, Macrossan, Black, Stevenson, Scott, Lissner, Lalor, Bailey, Jessop, Beattie, Donaldson, and Nelson.

NOES, 23

Messrs. Griffith, Sheridan, Dutton, Miles, Dickson, Rutledge, Brookes, Groom, Aland, Smyth, Isambert, Jordan, Foxton, Foote, White, Buckland, Mellor, Kates, Grimes, Moreton, Midgley, Higson, and Macfarlane.

Question resolved in the negative.

Mr. MOREHEAD said that the main objection raised by the hon. the Premier to the amendment which had just been negatived was that it would enable fathers of families, members of which were over twelve years old, to take up very large areas, amounting to over 20,000 acres. He did not himself think there was anything in that contention; but, to prevent any such contingency arising, he was quite willing to modify his proposal so as to make the right of selection under the clause apply only to agricultural farms. That, he thought, should remove from the hon. gentleman's mind any fear of the mopping up or absorption of a large quantity of the public estate. He would propose to amend the clause by adding the following words:—

Provided that any person of the age of twelve years, born in the colony of Queensland, shall be deemed competent to apply for and hold any land under the provisions of this Act dealing with agricultural farms.

Mr. STEVENS said, in reference to that question, that he might say there were many young people at the age of sixteen who had a good idea of what they were going to do in the future, and had a fairish knowledge of business. Therefore, he thought that if the age were increased to sixteen, instead of being left at twelve, the amendment might receive more support than it otherwise would.

Mr. BLACK said there was one point in connection with the amendment which had been lost sight of—one, he thought, which might have some weight with the members of the Committee. Although the Bill provided that no selector should hold more than the maximum area in one district, it also provided that, in the event of a mortgage or of a lease falling in, in the event of a man wishing to become the purchaser of a lease he would not be able to do so if he held the maximum area. It might often happen that a man with a family who held the maximum area under the Bill might be desirous of acquiring an adjoining selection, the selector of which had been unsuccessful; and it was only right in order to prevent large families being unnecessarily dispersed that he should be able to acquire the lease of an adjoining selection for one of his children. That was a very strong point in favour of the amendment of the hon. member for Balonne, and one that had been lost sight of.

The PREMIER said for one case where the provision might act beneficially there would be five hundred where it would be used for the purpose of acquiring land contrary to the provisions of the Bill. He had already pointed out that an opportunity would be given to take up selections just as fast as they could transfer them. They were not going to allow the provisions of the Bill to be overridden for the benefit of a very few persons. The question had been discussed quite fully enough, but he would commend to the notice of the hon. member for Balonne a Bill introduced to the House by the late Mr. Forbes, which dealt with the subject. It was called the "Anglo-Native-born Settlement Bill." It was a "fad" of that gentleman's, and he believed both the hon. member for Balonne and himself had had the pleasure of voting upon the question, but it was certainly not applicable to the Bill now before the Committee.

Mr. MOREHEAD said he did not know or care whether the Bill mentioned by the Premier was a "fad" of the introducer, or whether it was applicable to the present Bill. There was a good deal in what had been said by the hon. member for Logan (Mr. Stevens), and he was prepared to alter the amendment by the substitution of "fifteen" for "twelve." He could give a good many reasons in favour of the alteration. In the first place, it would reduce the number of individuals whom the Minister for Lands said were to be used as dummies. Again, he did not think that either the Premier or the Minister for Lands would have the hardihood to tell the Committee that the native-born inhabitant of this colony who had lived here for fifteen years was not in every way superior to the imported article at eighteen. He was perfectly certain he was. One fault of the natives mentioned by the hon. member for South Brisbane was that they were too precocious. That was a good fault, at any rate; and natives at fifteen years of age were much more competent to select land and become good colonists than the imported article. With the permission of the Committee he would amend his motion, as had been suggested, by substituting "fifteen" for "twelve."

The PREMIER said he did not want to discuss the question at much greater length. They had determined that eighteen should be the maximum age, and now the hon. member was trying to attain his object by saying, that persons of fifteen might take up selections. This was how the amendment would operate: A father would select the maximum area, and transfer it to his child at fifteen; select again, and transfer it to another child at sixteen, and another at seventeen. So that one man would get into his hands five or six selections; and he might select in the same way for his neighbours' children. Was it not monstrous that that particular privilege should be given to natives of Queensland? Why not let the natives of New South Wales, Tasmania, and Victoria have the same privilege if it was to be granted at all? If they adopted such a provision they would be the laughing-stock of the whole world. He hoped the matter would now be allowed to drop.

Mr. MOREHEAD said surely the hon. member must forget the arguments used by his colleague

for not throwing open the southern portion of the colony—that it would induce people from New South Wales to come over here and select. That statement was made over and over again.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: No.

Mr. MOREHEAD said that was the record, and the hon. gentleman could not get outside of it. One of the reasons given by the Minister for not throwing open the southern portion of the colony was, that the business connections of that portion of Queensland were intimately allied with New South Wales. Now they were told by the Premier that the colony was to be thrown open to everyone. He thought a strong case had been made out in favour of the amendment.

Mr. STEVENS said, as far as what had fallen from the Premier was concerned, he had no objection to natives of other colonies being included, but the hon. gentleman was wrong if he thought the subject had not been talked about outside that Committee. A great many people had considered it very seriously. He quite thought that natives were entitled to some consideration. It was because the natives represented a large portion of the community that he had spoken as he had done, and he regretted that important business had called him away when the Premier was giving his reasons for disagreeing to the amendment. He had no wish to take up the time of the Committee by speaking at length on the subject, but if the question came to a division he should vote for it.

Mr. BROOKES said it seemed to him that hon. members who were advocating that preposterous amendment were trying to get the character of being generous and charitable under false pretences. They wanted to give away what did not belong to them to those to whom it would not be of the slightest use. Unless he had entirely misunderstood all the facts bearing on the question, he could say this—that they might do what they would with boys of fifteen and sixteen, but they would not get them to stay on farms. There was no mistake about that. He knew he might appeal to the hon. member for Balonne, who was one of the most intelligent members of that Committee, because that hon. gentleman knew perfectly well that what he said was true. The cry in the United States was that the boys would go into the towns. That would be so here, and they could not prevent it. They might pass any amendment of that kind if they liked; and what would they do? They would simply throw away a great quantity of land and open folding-doors through which no end of jobbery and corruption could come in. That was as clear to his mind as the light from the lamps in that Chamber. So far as the giving of any preference to the native-born people went, he thought they were getting astray on that point. The land was worth nothing until it was used; agricultural land was worth nothing until it was used for the purposes of agriculture. If, therefore, it were true —and he asserted that it was—that the native youth would go into the towns and become engineers and enter other professions and trades——

Mr. BAILEY: Larrikinism!

Mr. BROOKES said, if that were true, to whom were they to look for the cultivation of the agricultural land, but the immigrant? He regarded with immense suspicion the present endeavour to give a special privilege in the acquiring of land to native-born youths. It was to the newly arrived immigrant they must look for the cultivation of their lands; and yet they endeavoured to handicap him in favour of boys who would not take advantage of the gift, or use it for the purpose for which it was given to them.

Mr. NORTON said the hon. member who had just sat down had used some strange arguments. Did the hon. member contend that they ought to keep the land for newly arrived immigrants to cultivate?

Mr. BROOKES: Yes.

Mr. NORTON said the hon. gentleman contended that they should keep the land under cultivation, and go on importing people to settle upon it.

Mr. BROOKES: There is no other way.

Mr. NORTON said the hon. member had told them that none of their native-born children would cultivate the land. If that were so, what was the use of their taking all the trouble they took to settle people upon the land? If the children were not to settle upon it after all, it was all a fallacy. They were to go on importing an agricultural population to take the place of the present agricultural settlers as they died off. A more unwise argument he had never heard. The hon. member said also that they wished to make a show of being liberal with what did not belong to them. The argument all along used in connection with that Bill was that the land belonged to the people. Who were the people? Were they the people in foreign countries, or the people already here, or the native-born people?

Mr. BROOKES: It does not belong to us.

Mr. MOREHEAD: Then why are you dealing with it?

Mr. NORTON asked, if it did not belong to the people here, who did it belong to?

Mr. BROOKES: To the people coming.

Mr. NORTON said the hon. gentleman used the strangest arguments ever brought forward in that Committee. He knew that subject had been discussed outside that Committee. He had often heard working men, who had been in the colony for years, contend that they were entitled to some consideration over and above people coming into the colony, because they had to pay the cost of bringing those people into the colony.

Mr. FOOTE: Who paid their costs?

Mr. NORTON said he thought a great many of them had paid their own, though he did not know who paid the hon. member's. He did not think the hon. member could have any children of his own. The hon. member for Balonne said he supposed the hon. member must have been a baby some time himself, but he had grown out of that. The hon. member had no sympathy with anything dealing with children at all. The hon. member appeared to favour only "old settlers," as he called them.

Mr. FOOTE said he did not think there was much difference between the Bill and the amendment before them, as there was only a difference of three years between the ages of fifteen and eighteen years. The hon. member for Port Curtis made out that he (Mr. Foote) had no children of his own, but he found that a person who had no children of his own usually had to support other people's children. That was not an uncommon thing. He did not know whether the hon. gentleman was in that position, though he might be for all he knew. He maintained that the Committee should not legislate specially for children. The children should take their chance as they grew up with the other people in the colony. He could not see why special advantages should be given to them. If their native-born youth had the privilege asked for granted to them it would, as the Premier had shown, open the door to dummyism. The hon. member read parties by their sympathy for children. They might put the hon. member down to be the father of a large family, and that might

account for his interest in the amendment. He (Mr. Foote) could speak from an unprejudiced point of view—which was in the interest of the colony on that subject—and he said the age of eighteen was a very good age at which to allow persons in the colony to select land. One hon. member had said that if the amendment was carried a farmer would be able to have all his family settled around him; but he saw considerable difficulty in that. Suppose a child was born this year the father would have to wait for twelve years before he could select land in that child's name, and in the meantime all the land around him might have been selected, and if he desired to select land for that child he would have to go elsewhere for it. He trusted that the Government would adhere to the Bill, which was quite liberal enough.

Mr. MOREHEAD said he wished to put the Minister for Lands right with regard to what he said in moving the second reading of the Bill. On that occasion the hon. gentleman said:—

"As to the boundaries themselves, as defined in the 1st schedule, the intention was to avoid opening land under the operation of this measure near the border of New South Wales until we are prepared with our railways to provide for settlement there. If we had run the boundary of the schedule down to the border of New South Wales, there would probably be a good deal of settlement come over from that colony. In fact, I know that a great many people there are prepared to take advantage of the passing of any Bill of this kind that will enable them to settle upon our lands in that locality, and the result would probably be that, before we have provided railway communication to carry on our trade there, a large portion of that business would be taken to New South Wales. Consequently, I thought it was desirable that the operation of the Bill should be confined to those portions of the colony that we are able to reach by our own railways."

That confirmed every word he (Mr. Morehead) had said.

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

AYES, 19.

Sir T. McIlwraith, Messrs. Archer, Nelson, Bailey, Jessop, Norton, Black, Stevenson, Kellett, Lalor, Morehead, Macrossan, Mellor, Donaldson, Moreton, Stevens, Ferguson, Midgley, and Palmer.

NOES, 20.

Messrs. Rutledge, Griffith, Dutton, Dickson, Miles, Foxton, Groom, Aland, White, Smyth, Brookes, Jordan, Isambert, Sheridan, Buckland, Foote, Grimes, Kates, Higson, and Macfarlane.

Question resolved in the negative.

Mr. NELSON said he did not like to see such an important amendment disposed of in that way. He thought, however, the question would not require much more argument. He would move the same amendment, substituting "sixteen years of age" for "twelve years of age.' That was only giving native-born Queenslanders a concession of two years, which, he thought, was a very small one.

The PREMIER said, before any amendment was put, he would say that he hoped the good sense of the Committee would prevent any further amendment being moved making a difference because a person happened to be born in Queensland. They would be the laughing-stock of the whole civilised world if they adopted such a proposal. Some hon. members voted for the last amendment simply because they desired to embarrass the Government in the passage of that Bill. Others, no doubt, voted for it because they believed in it. He would say distinctly that he had not the slightest doubt that a number of members voted for the amendment with a desire to embarrass the Government. If they could succeed in making the measure look ridiculous, nothing would give them greater pleasure. As he had said before, he looked with grave suspicion on amendments emanating from some hon. members on the opposite side of the Committee. He hoped they would not make themselves ridiculous by allowing such a proposition as that now submitted to be seriously made. The Government did not treat the last one as serious. The Committee would appear very ridiculous were they to seriously consider a proposal making it dependent upon a man living north or south of the artificial boundary line between this colony and New South Wales when his child was born, whether that child could take up land under the provisions of the Bill.

The HON. SIR T. McILWRAITH said he wondered whether the hon. gentleman presumed that the matter was only getting serious because he was getting angry. Hon. members on the Opposition side of that Committee had been serious all through, and he had no doubt that hon. members who had voted with them had also been serious. It was quite clear that the Government had not given the subject consideration. He (Hon. Sir T. McIlwraith) had heard very strong reasons why they should show a preference to children of the soil. The Premier had ridiculed the matter, but it had often been discussed in that House. They had often tried to enforce the principle that they ought to encourage the native-born population; and solid arguments had been advanced in favour of the principle. If the age in the amendment were under sixteen, he would support the member for Northern Downs, as he had supported the proposal made by the member for Balonne fixing the age at twelve years. The Premier was quite out of order in speaking before the amendment was put, and he (Hon. Sir T. McIlwraith) would wait until that was done to see whether the Premier could bring any solid arguments against it. Possibly the majority the hon. gentleman had been accustomed to wield during the last three months had dwindled down to the smallest possible proportions.

Amendment put.

The PREMIER said he spoke before the amendment was put in order to save the thing from being the perfect farce which some hon. members evidently desired to make it. He was serious in saying that. There were certain hon. members who desired by any means to turn the Bill into a laughing-stock, and to make it impracticable and unworkable. The Government desired to see the Bill retain a rational shape, and he was going to move an amendment upon the amendment, so that if it was by any possibility carried—which he hoped it would not be—it would be at least rational. He proposed to omit the words "colony of Queensland," with the view of inserting the words "Australasian colonies." The Government would oppose the amendment at every step, but at least they would try to save the Parliament from ridicule. Some hon. members who voted for the last amendment evidently did not understand it; but there were others who knew very well that it would have the effect of impairing the usefulness of the Bill.

Mr. NELSON: No.

The PREMIER said that was the case. The amendment did not only provide for children of sixteen selecting land, but it allowed any person to transfer any land to a child of sixteen; and the transfer might go on, as he had pointed out before, indefinitely. Imagine the complications it would give rise to—the facilities for dummying and for defrauding creditors! It would open facilities for fraud, not only upon the country, but upon creditors. A man had a selection, got into difficulties, and assigned his selection to a

child of sixteen. You could do nothing with a child of sixteen; the selection was gone, and the creditors were defrauded. He did not know whether the hon. member who proposed the amendment had thought of that. He hoped he did not.

Mr. NELSON: Yes, he did.

The PREMIER: That it would enable a man to defraud his creditors? He gave the hon. member credit for not having thought of it. At any rate, he hoped the Committee would not stultify itself. Had any country in the world, holding itself out as a suitable home for people in other parts of the world, ever attempted to say that their native-born children should possess rights over those of other countries?

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN: Yes.

The PREMIER said he was aware that certain political rights in America were confined to native-born subjects.

Mr. ARCHER: Only a native-born subject can be either president or vice-president.

The PREMIER: Nor do we allow aliens to do certain things in this colony.

Mr. MOREHEAD: They can become Premiers.

The PREMIER said that hon. members were the trustees of the land, not for themselves only, or for their children born in Queensland, but for the whole British Empire. Surely they did not consider they had the land for themselves? If they did, why not reduce it to its ultimate absurdity, and share up the land among the people now in the colony?

Mr. MOREHEAD: If we are trustees for the British Empire, why not allow people at home to select without leaving England?

The PREMIER said they desired to have the selectors here. He hoped hon. members would give the question serious consideration. Hitherto all questions of that kind had been treated as a kind of joke—they had been made and laughed at on the discussion of every Land Bill. Some hon. members were now treating it as a joke, while others were treating it seriously.

Mr. MOREHEAD: Who is treating it as a joke?

The PREMIER: Hon. members can answer that question for themselves.

Mr. NELSON said the Premier's amendment did not meet the case; because there was no reciprocity on the part of the other colonies with respect to the taking up of land. When the other colonies proposed to do anything of that sort, he, and those who agreed with him, were prepared to reciprocate with them. He was sorry the Premier had descended to such claptrap as that the object of his amendment was to obstruct the Bill. It was nothing of the sort. His sole desire was to see it made as good a Bill as possible. The Premier had, as usual, most enormously exaggerated the effect of the amendment. Very few persons would be eligible or competent to take up land under it; so very few would take advantage of the concession that it would make practically no very great difference in the settlement of the land, while it would be a most gratifying concession to people who had lived in the colony for a great number of years, had been contributing to the revenue, building railways, making roads, and helping on the progress of the colony. The concession would be especially useful to the farming class, who would be able to take up land for the sake of their children—making the land their savings bank, of which their children would reap the benefit when they came of age.

Mr. KELLETT said he was sorry that he was not present earlier in the evening, because he was anxious to be in the Chamber when the clause came on. He hoped the Premier would not consider that he had any intention of obstructing the Bill; but soon after he received a copy of it he wrote opposite to the clause these words, "twelve years, parents in trust." That was a memo. he made to draw his attention to it again. It would have been a great improvement if the eighteen years had been reduced all through, not only with regard to the native-born, but to those coming from all parts of the world. If the Bill were to be a success—which he hoped it would be—by the time that the young children now in the colony had arrived at the age of eighteen years they would have to go a long way further to get a homestead, or else give up farming altogether and live in the towns, where there were too many people already; or else, if they were inclined for the bush, they would have to go out near the Gulf to get land. He hoped that when that time arrived they would have to go out near the Gulf. It would be a great improvement to reduce the age to twelve years, as he had always thought that the young people of the colony should have special inducements held out to them. Their parents came out years ago, and had had to bear the burden and heat of the day, and were the best colonists. They had reared up families, which was a matter of great importance. A Bill ought to be brought in to tax all bachelors.

The HON. SIR T. MCILWRAITH: And others besides.

Mr. KELLETT said, certainly, bachelors. He was satisfied that those at present engaged in farming would teach their children, and make them good farmers too. That had been his opinion for many years, and he was sorry that the Premier should think that there was no special reason why people of the colony should have special advantages. A man might come out from England, and as soon as he arrived, if he had any children over eighteen years of age, they could all take up land; but he contended that native-born children of thirteen or fourteen years of age, if they had been brought up in the bush, would be more fit to take the management of a farm than any young fellows of eighteen from any other part of the world. He trusted that, considering there was only two years' advantage asked, the Minister for Lands would consider that those children were entitled to some allowance. Such an advantage would be received by all the farming districts with the greatest pleasure. There was nothing else in the Bill which would be accepted with so much favour. He thought the concession might be very fairly granted, and it would be very satisfactory to the colonists.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS said he would ask where the argument of the hon. gentleman led to? Simply to this: that a great deal of the land of the colony was to be locked up for the children who were growing up to manhood—not to be used. It was simply to be set aside until those youngsters could use it. It was no use arguing about it. Those children would not be fit to deal with it; that was generally admitted. They could not do so until they were twenty-one years of age. So, practically, the effect would be that the land would be locked up until they had reached that age. That would be a most suicidal policy; it was a monstrous proposition. If their parents could use it there might be something in it; but it could not be used, because the father would already have selected the maximum quantity of 960 acres, a portion being agricultural land. But if the amendment was carried he might have three, or four, or five children between the ages

of sixteen and twenty-one, and with those five children he could take up 4,500 acres of agricultural land, which would lie idle for years before it could be utilised. If a man could do that, it would be actually locking up the land from use. When the children grew up they could go further afield, as others had had to do. The proposition was a simple absurdity—monstrous in the extreme. If the object was to secure to those men five or six times the quantity of land they were entitled to, that was the best way of doing it. If they wanted to do that they should extend the area to 5,000 or 6,000 acres; but to do it by a side-wind in that way was a thousand times worse.

Mr. MOREHEAD said that the hon. gentleman, instead of combating the arguments which were brought forward by the hon. member for Stanley, simply said that the arguments brought forward by the other side were monstrous or absurd. He would ask members of the Committee how many of them had had to work for their living since they were sixteen years of age, and were they worse for that? He said, no; and he maintained that a youth of sixteen in the colony was quite competent to work the selection that he would be able to take up under the clause. All that was asked was that a concession of two years should be allowed for native-born children—that they might be allowed that handicap as against the eighteen years old of other selectors. It was asking very little, and he was certain that if the Minister for Lands and the Premier, instead of laughing, or affecting to laugh—because the result of the last division showed that it was no laughing matter—would give due consideration to the arguments brought forward in favour of the concession, they would be agreeable to it. With regard to the amendment of the hon. Premier, that the concession should be extended to all Australasian youths, the reason given by the hon. member for Northern Downs that there was no reciprocity was a sufficient answer. The amendment of the Premier was not one that the Government would have assented to if it had been moved from the other side of the Committee. One of the strongest arguments which had been used against the amendment by the hon. the Premier and the hon. the Minister for Lands was that its effect would be an enormous amount of 'dummying by those lads—children they were called by the hon. the Minister for Lands. He had never seen a child in Queensland sixteen years old. At that age the young Queenslander was very well developed in body and intellect, and in many cases might be favourably compared in either respect with some of the members of the Ministry. But if the contention of the hon. member was correct, how much wider would be the scope for dummying if the amendment were made to apply to natives of the whole of the Australasian colonies instead of to Queenslanders alone? He hoped, with the hon. member for Stanley (Mr. Kellett), that the amendment would be agreed to. He felt certain that a great majority of the Committee were in favour of a certain concession being made to the native-born youth. No argument had been brought forward against the proposal—nothing but the bare assertion of the Premier—that it was intended as an attempt to destroy the Bill. That statement he (Mr. Morehead) distinctly denied. Though he had moved the amendment he was not the first to think of it, as when he came to the House he met several hon. members who had already thought of it, and were prepared to move it if he had not done so. He claimed no originality in the matter, and he brought it forward purely on the broad ground of justice—at least, what he considered justice, being just to our own first. The whole world, they knew, was, to a great extent, ruled by selfishness, and perhaps he need not base his proposal on any higher ground. At any rate the division which had just taken place would show the Government that a large section of the Committee shared the opinions expressed by members on the Opposition benches, no matter how obnoxious those opinions might be to the Premier and the Minister for Lands. Those opinions had certainly not been formulated into words with any intention of harassing the Government or impeding the passage of the Bill, but with the simple desire to do what they considered justice to those born on the soil.

Mr. BROOKES said he looked upon the amendment as an excellent piece of party tactics on the part of the squatters. He was satisfied that the amendment was not introduced in the interests of the agriculturists or the young men of sixteen. What the hon. member for Balonne had said about justice, and looking with a favourable eye on themselves first, he looked upon as mere nonsense. The hon. member knew perfectly well what he wanted, and the hon. Minister for Lands had pointed it out. If the amendment passed there would be an enormous quantity of land lying useless.

Mr. MOREHEAD: How can it happen?

Mr. BROOKES said he would show how it could happen. He would make this concession: that if it did not lie useless it would be because it would all be mopped up by the squatters. He would like to ask what use were the grants formerly given to volunteers? They all knew that they were sold at less than their value, and that their real intention was never fulfilled—though, perhaps, it was never intended that the volunteers should go and cultivate the land. The amendment proposed to give a lot of land to young men of sixteen, and the idea on that (the Opposition) side of the Committee appeared to be that, as a matter of inevitable consequence, they would all go and turn farmers. How many young men of sixteen were there born in Brisbane, and who had never been out of Brisbane—would they take that land and there and then turn farmers? What would they do with it? At all events, it would be set aside in trust, and there would be a large tract of land lying unoccupied, and a mere hindrance to the settlement of those new arrivals who would be ready to take up the very same land and turn it to account. He looked upon the concession to the native youth as a mere sentimental idea. The Bill would give every facility to any young man of eighteen who was capable of going on the land and making good use of it. The difficulty the farmers had to contend with was in getting their sons to continue in the same vocation as they themselves followed; he had very seldom seen a second generation of farmers. The sons almost invariably struck out for themselves in situations as clerks or in commercial life, and the amendment would not put a stop to that. He regarded the amendment as a mistake, so far as it received the support of those hon. members who had hitherto supported the Bill; but he had to say that he regarded it with great suspicion as coming from the other side of the Committee, and being pressed with so much earnestness by such gentlemen as the hon. member for Northern Downs, the hon. leader of the Opposition, and the hon. member for Balonne. He knew that in that matter—he did not wish to apply to them any rule he was not willing to apply to himself—they were seeking not the interests of the native-born, but of themselves. They knew that if the amendment passed they would come into possession of the lands, and in the meantime the Bill would be hampered in its operation, the principle of the Bill would be interfered with, and Parliament would lie exposed to the taunt that, while they were expressing liberality towards the working

population of Europe, they were giving away in a very useless and trivial manner valuable land which was not their own to give. They had no business to regard the lands of the colony in any other light than as land placed in their charge as trustees. He had no right, for instance, to give a tract of land to his son, aged sixteen, when he was or ought to be in a position to provide him with the land in open market; just as anyone else got it, and on the same terms; provided always he wanted to settle on the land. But the amendment, if it passed, would enable him to give to his son of sixteen years a piece of land when he knew he would never go farming. Of course he should avail himself of the opportunity the amendment would give him, and so would thousands of people in Brisbane. Let them see, then, what a large amount of land that would represent, every acre of which he should consider was wrongly diverted from the intentions with which the Bill was imbued from its very beginning. He trusted hon. members would consider well what they were doing. The hon. member for Stanley said he had been spoken to many a time by his constituents on the subject. Perhaps so; and it was very natural for the hon. member to think in the same way as his constituents did, and at the same time be conscientious in his advocacy of the amendment. But the hon. gentleman's constituents who advocated such an amendment had done so rather thoughtlessly. They did not see the whole bearing of the proposal, and he (Mr. Brookes) thought the Committee should act on liberal principles; making the Bill as it was assuredly intended to be, for the benefit of the whole colony. They should in fact think twice before they embodied in the measure such a very dangerous element as the amendment included.

Mr. MIDGLEY said since he had been in the House he had made it a rule not to care or notice from which side amendments might come so long as they were good amendments. He did not think there was any necessity to introduce any strong party feeling into such a matter as that they were now discussing. The question was preeminently one in which the country constituencies were interested. It was a matter that was mentioned to him during his canvassing. He remembered the question being put at one meeting—if he was in favour of granting some special concession to the native-born children with regard to the taking up of land; and he remembered distinctly replying that he believed thoroughly in the encouragement of native industry. He thought the whole question resolved itself into one of expediency as to whether they should grant to the young people born in the colony any advantages over others. The difficulties that had been mentioned in the working of the Bill he took to be, in a large measure, imaginary. If there was likely to be a large amount of dummying by granting land to children of sixteen, it would not be very much decreased by granting it to those of eighteen years of age. He knew of lots of young people in the colony, sons of farmers, who would gladly avail themselves of such a provision. It would enable young fellows to settle down on the land; it would induce those who, perhaps, chafed and fretted somewhat under the restrictions to which they were subjected on their father's property, to go upon the land and cultivate for themselves. Those young fellows got to dislike farm life because there was nothing in it immediately conducive to their own interests—nothing to act as a kind of inspiration to them; but if they could take up selections of their own he believed the colony would derive from them by far the best class of farming population that they would have in Queensland. The principle of tenancy or occupation by bailiff was recognised all through the Bill, but if the law was that there must be residence those young men would have to reside on their farms, and they would have to comply with the same conditions applicable to the other selectors who made up the farming community. He thought young men who had been born and bred on a farm, and who had themselves tilled the soil, were likely to be better colonists and more serviceable to their country than new chums; and he thought they would be doing wrong not to give them some consideration. The same principle was recognised in other ways. There were many men on his side who very strongly advocated that the offices of the Civil Service should be filled as much as possible by those who were colonists, and he thought that a right principle. He felt confident that if the amendment was passed it would not work any mischief, but, on the contrary, a great deal of good, and be very acceptable to and much appreciated by the farming population of the colony.

Mr. KELLETT said he rose to object to the kind of language used by the hon. member for North Brisbane (Mr. Brookes). The hon. member had made use of such expressions as "nonsense" and "absurdity," and so forth. He (Mr. Kellett) would not care to give his private opinion of gentlemen who used such language as that, as if he did do so perhaps his remarks might not be of the most favourable kind. He allowed hon. gentlemen to have their opinions, and they must allow him to have his. He was bound to have his own opinion and to express it when necessary, no matter who liked or disliked it. The hon. member had hinted at the fact of pressure having been brought to bear upon him by his constituents, but his constituents knew him too well for that, and they knew that, no matter whether it was electioneering time or any other time, he had always expressed his own views without fear. He was convinced the amendment, if carried, would do good, and he would not say what he thought of those who insisted that it would have the effect of locking up the land. He would not say what he thought of such a statement. Why, any conditions that were considered necessary by the Minister might be imposed upon those who took up land under the conditions suggested. The young fellows of the colony were well able to farm for themselves at sixteen years of age. He had seen them carrying off prizes at the agricultural shows, and able to work the plough with men three times their age. He contended, with the hon. member for Fassifern, that the amendment would be most useful, because it would keep the young men near their own home where they had been brought up, instead of making them wander all over the colony in search of homes. The natives of the colony were far more capable of managing a farm and taking care of themselves than many of the immigrants who came out here with farming experience. They understood the climate and the soil, and they profited by their fathers' mistakes; whereas the English farmers were, for the first two or three years of their residence in the country, generally failures, except in those cases where they had been wise enough to take advice from their neighbours. He was satisfied in his mind—not because of any pressure brought to bear upon him by his constituents—that what was proposed was a good thing. He had no doubt it would be acceptable to the people of the colony, and would be of great benefit to the country.

Mr. MOREHEAD said he knew that almost every member on the Committee would like to hear something upon that matter from the

oldest member of the House—Mr. Groom. He thought that hon. gentleman had before now supported the contention set up by the Opposition side of the Committee, and by many hon. members on the other side. That hon. member had been in favour before now—and he was sure he had not changed his opinion—of reducing the age at which persons should be allowed to select. He thought also that the hon. member had been in favour of giving, so to speak, exceptional advantages to native-born children. He trusted the hon. gentleman would give the Committee his opinion on the subject.

Mr. MACFARLANE said he could not help thinking that the amendment, if passed, would be very like class legislation. Why should they give the native-born youth privileges which were not given to those who came to the colony within the last few years? Were they to get special privileges on the mere fact that they were native-born children? He should have supposed that all men were equal. The law certainly recognised all men as equal. If they passed such an amendment as that proposed, they would not be considering the native-born people as men and women, but as persons who by chance happened to be born in the colony. The youngest of his children would, if the amendment were carried, come under the advantages it provided, for one was fifteen and the other seventeen; but he should be ashamed to have his children enjoy advantages denied to other children. He knew that some years ago there was a good deal of complaint from people here about native-born children not being considered in the matter of land-orders; but there they had some ground for complaint, for the children of certain immigrants were granted land-orders, a privilege which they did not possess for their own children. He thought it wrong to pass an amendment such as that proposed, and make a difference between native-born children and the children of those who had come here within, say, the last fifteen years. In any case, he hoped the clause, as amended by the Premier, would be passed in preference to the one introduced by the hon. member for Northern Downs.

The HON. SIR T. MCILWRAITH said it was amusing to hear an hon. member like the hon. member for Ipswich talking about all men being equal, and founding an argument upon such a general proposition as that. Would not anyone be astonished to be told that that gentleman had taken part in legislation concerning Chinese, kanaka, German, and coolie immigration within the last few years? It was a very fair thing to ask that on special grounds they should give some consideration to the youth of the colony. The arguments in favour of such a proposition had been repeated by a number of gentlemen. He was not going to repeat them again, but he considered they had not been met by the Premier. How did the Premier propose to meet them? The hon. gentleman brought two arguments against the proposition—first that it would introduce a gigantic system of dummying. According to the Premier a man had only to take up a selection and transfer it to a lad of sixteen, and then take up another selection and transfer that also to a lad of sixteen, and so on; and by some process of reasoning, which the hon. member did not explain to the Committee, that was to go on *ad infinitum*. But if they adopted the amendment which the hon. gentleman himself proposed, they might just add a little on to infinity, as it would increase immensely the great evil spoken of, because the hon. gentleman proposed to extend the privilege to the youth of all the other colonies. The hon. gentleman said that if they passed the amendment they would make themselves the laughing-stock of the colony. He had asked how would the news be received in England, when it was known that they had passed a law giving an advantage to persons born on this side of the dividing line. But the fact was that he seemed to see the inevitable; and rather than suffer defeat he would like to see his own amendment carried in preference to that of the hon. member for Northern Downs. The hon. member for Stanley represented a farming constituency, and he (Hon. Sir T. McIlwraith) could tell that Committee that he was inundated with letters from the farming classes asking for a concession of that sort. He would have gone further and given a concession to the children of the farming class actually resident in a district—given a concession in the matter of residence to the sons of farmers actually resident in a district, and who had actually taken up selections themselves. The substantial argument at the foot of the amendment was, that they should do something to encourage native-born children. The hon. member for North Brisbane said the children of farmers were constantly flocking to the towns; but that was really an argument against himself. Why did they flock to the towns? Because they had no inducement to stick to the country, where they might do a great deal better than by flocking into the towns. The Minister for Lands—and the junior member for North Brisbane followed his argument—said a large amount of land would be locked up; but they argued on the assumption that the land was not to be subject to the same conditions as other lands under the Bill. The only advantage given was that native-born children would have an advantage of two years in the time of selection. The argument that it was proposed from the Opposition side simply because it would facilitate dummying was cut away altogether, because it applied simply to grazing areas.

Mr. JORDAN said the proposition before them was to give a special advantage to native-born children. He had already said that one of the strongest objections some hon. members had to the provisions of the Bill with reference to the agricultural areas was that those areas were too large—namely, 960 acres. Under such a proposal as that before the Committee a farmer could take up four times that; that was, 3,840 acres, some of it rich scrub land. He saw great objection to that. It would lead to wholesale dummying and would not be a good provision for the farming class. Under an amendment that had been circulated by the Minister for Lands, any farmer's son who chose to follow in the footsteps of his father and take to farming could get 160 acres at 3d. per acre, and at the end of seven years he could turn it into a freehold; the payment of 3d. per acre being counted as part of the 2s. 6d. an acre the full amount he had to pay for the land to make it his own. Could anybody say that that was not a most liberal provision? The hon. member for Wide Bay had drawn a frightful picture of the difficulty farmers' sons had in getting land, and how in consequence of that they were driven into the towns to become larrikins and shopboys; but with such a provision as the Minister for Lands was to propose there could be no complaint of that kind. What greater facilities could be offered? How could it be represented that under such a system there would be any difficulty in farmers settling their sons on the land? The fact was that the reason why the amendment was supported by hon. members on the other side was that they had always this idea in their minds, "Here, we have this country; let us divide it among ourselves." They had always been opposed to immigration, and in favour of keeping people from coming from the old country.

Now they proposed to keep people from coming from the other colonies, because, as he understood the amendment of the Premier, it was that the privilege should be extended to such people. The other day it was proposed, in the Immigration Bill, to give a bonus to people who came to the colony with capital and farming experience; and it was then said that they would interfere with people already here, and the amendments were rejected on that account. Now it was proposed to go to the other extreme. They were now proposing to give certain privileges to native-born children. The Minister for Lands said that the Bill would attract a great number of persons from the other colonies; and it was now proposed to give certain privileges to native-born Queenslanders only, offering no particular inducement to persons in the other colonies. To his mind the thing was a great mistake; at all events, he could easily understand that, under the operation of such an amendment, there would soon be no farming land to be got; they would have to go to the Gulf of Carpentaria to get any. The effect would be, as the Premier had said, that all the best lands of the colony would be very soon mopped up.

The HON. SIR T. MCILWRAITH said the hon. member for South Brisbane had gone back to that old speech, that they had heard about a dozen times. He harked back to those amendments he tried to introduce into the German-Coolie Bill the other day. He not only proposed that Germans should be brought out at the expense of the taxpayers of the colony, but that in addition they should each get a land-order of the value of £20 or £30—he was not quite sure which, but one was quite as absurd as the other. While the youth of the colony were looking for employment and land, the country was asked to pay the full passages of a certain class of agriculturists from the northern part of Europe; there being at the same time plenty of people in the old country who were willing to pay half their passages. That was the way the native-born were to have been handicapped. The fact was that it was their duty to recognise the native-born, and it was proposed to do that by reducing the age in the Bill. That opportunity the hon. member for South Brisbane used to make his old immigration speech. The hon. member would still consider that the state of things was the same as when he went to England as immigration agent. Under the Acts of 1868 and 1876, under which the best land was taken up, a large number of people were settled on the land; but the object hon. members had in voting for the last amendment was to give special facilities for the sons and daughters of farmers to take up land in the agricultural districts. It was the desire of the Committee to give what advantages they could to Queenslanders. He believed that a native-born youth of sixteen was better able to take up and utilise land than a raw youth of eighteen coming from England.

Mr. FOXTON said if the amendment of the Premier went to a division he should vote for it. As he voted against another amendment, he desired to give his reasons for voting for the present amendment. It had been said that the remark of the hon. member for Northern Downs—that there was no reciprocity in that proposal—was a sufficient answer to the Premier's amendment. Reciprocity in what? In the inducements to families to come from the other colonies? Surely they did not want to wait until the other colonies had the same facilities. His impression was that the scheme of the Bill would settle a large population on the land; and where was that population to come from? Was it from the old country? He ventured to think that those who had had colonial experience in the southern colonies would be very much better colonists than people imported from the old country. He considered that the facilities which would be afforded to native Australians by the Premier's amendment would offer material inducements to men who had families to come from the other colonies and settle in Queensland. For those reasons he should support that amendment.

Mr. NELSON said he did not think the hon. gentleman who had just sat down was aware that the people of New South Wales already enjoyed the privilege in their own colony which it was now proposed to give them in Queensland. In New South Wales the minimum age at which a person could select was sixteen years. He did not want to go over the whole ground again, but would simply point out that the evils which it was predicted would follow if his amendment were adopted were not so serious as was alleged. The Minister for Lands said that it would allow a man with a family to take up 4,000 or 5,000 acres of land more than he would otherwise be entitled to under the Bill, and the statement was repeated by the junior member for North Brisbane, and afterwards by the junior member for South Brisbane. But none of those hon. gentlemen had attempted to show how that would be done. He (Mr. Nelson) denied that the amendment would have that effect. The extreme amount of land that could be taken up by any one person was 960 acres, and in order to enable him to select the quantity mentioned by those hon. members he would require to have five children from sixteen to eighteen years of age.

The PREMIER: They need not be his own children; he can get some orphans.

Mr. NELSON: The Premier said a man could get orphans. Well, some persons might do that, but there were not many who would go to that trouble for the sake of dummying, and have to transfer the land afterwards. If a man wanted to do that, for every native-born youth of the age of sixteen years he could get to serve his purpose, he could get ten not native-born over the age of eighteen years. Surely the Premier did not contend that the children of the soil were more nefarious and more vicious than the Germans to be imported.

Mr. SMYTH said the Committee decided, in the early part of the evening, that the native born population should have no concession—that they should be put on exactly the same footing as other people in the colony. Now it was proposed by the squatting party that they should grant a concession to agriculturists, although members on his side of the Committee representing farming constituencies did not ask for it. The Committee were asked to agree to an amendment providing that the sons and daughters of farmers should have the privilege of selecting land at an age two years younger than the children of pastoralists; that was, that the farmer should be allowed to take up land at sixteen years of age, whilst the latter could not secure pastoral holdings under the age of eighteen. The leader of the Opposition had said that the hon. member for South Brisbane had attempted to draw a red herring across the trail. Well, he (Mr. Smyth) thought the Opposition had certainly drawn a red herring, and they had got some hon. members on his side to support them. He did not think, however, they could be serious in their proposal. At any rate he would vote against any amendment giving a special privilege to anyone. The people now in the colony should have no more privilege in selecting land than they gave to persons from the other colonies, or Great Britain, or Europe.

Mr. ARCHER said the hon. member who had just spoken was a little confused. He represented hon. members on that side as squatters who wished to impose on the other side of the Committee a concession they did not care about. The hon. gentleman evidently did not know what he was talking about. He (Mr. Archer) certainly represented more selectors than the member for Gympie. Blackall in his electorate was surrounded by selectors. The hon. gentleman was no more a representative of selectors than he (Mr. Archer) was, and yet he came and talked to that Committee about them knowing nothing of what he was speaking about. He was wrong in all his statements. The next time the hon. gentleman wanted to make an impressive speech he would do well to get up his facts before doing so, as his remarks would then have more weight.

Mr. FOXTON said he just wished to add one word in reference to a remark made by the hon. member for Northern Downs. The hon. gentleman assumed in his arrogance that he was the only member of that Committee who knew anything about the land laws of New South Wales. And when he spoke an hon. member sitting on the same side as himself laughed immoderately. He would remind that hon. member that the loud laugh betrayed the vacant mind. He (Mr. Foxton) had yet to learn that the remark of the hon. member for Northern Downs, as to the fact of sixteen being the age fixed by the law in New South Wales, derogated one iota from the force of his (Mr. Foxton's) argument. On the contrary it added strength to it.

Mr. MELLOR said he did not like to give a vote on the question without saying a word or two. He might say that he gave his vote on the last amendment in all seriousness. He believed that the age of sixteen was quite old enough for a selector in an agricultural district, and would like to have seen it applicable to all persons, and not confined to Queenslanders, as they had not given concessions enough to agriculturists. The hon. member for South Brisbane said he had seen a second generation of farmers. He (Mr. Mellor) had also seen a second generation of farmers—in this colony, too—and the conclusion he had arrived at was that they should, as much as possible, give concessions to agriculturists. He would go with the leader of the Opposition in the direction the hon. gentleman had mentioned earlier in the evening, and allow farmers' children to take up land and reside at home, that residence being counted as residence on their selections. At a meeting held in his (Mr. Mellor's) electorate not long since, a resolution was passed—and he agreed with it—stating that "All selectors' sons who wish to become selectors themselves can do so; and residence under their fathers' roof shall be considered equivalent to residence on the selection, provided both are situated in the same district." The hon. gentleman had stated his intention to propose something to that effect, and if he did he (Mr. Mellor) would feel very much inclined to support him.

Mr. DONALDSON said the arguments he used, in moving his amendment at an earlier period of the evening, were entirely in favour of agriculturists. Not a single hon. member on his side of the Committee had had the slightest idea of the amendment he intended to propose. He was simply giving expression to an opinion he had formed long ago in Victoria, that the age of eighteen was too high; and he had adopted sixteen years, because that was the limit fixed by the New South Wales Land Act. But he was not so particular as to age, because, even if the selection was granted at sixteen, the selector would be at least twenty-six, and probably twenty-eight, before he could get the fee-simple of it. The Minister for Lands said that if the amendment were carried it would enable one man to select four, five, or six 960-acre farms. But that could be done now if the man had sons over eighteen years of age. They could take up contiguous selections, which amounted to the same thing. The amendment would only allow a man to make one more selection than the proposition of the Government, for it did not often happen that there was more than one son in a family between sixteen and eighteen. If his amendment had been accepted, much time would have been saved; and he was anxious to see the Bill through so as to get away. As to drawing a red herring across the trail—which the hon. member for Gympie said some hon. members on the other side had sniffed at—he had no such intention. His sole object was to make the Bill a good one.

Mr. ISAMBERT said the subject of the amendment was an old acquaintance. It was another form of the Conterminous Selectors Relief Bill, which was supported in the last Parliament by Mr. Allan, Mr. De Burgh Persse, and Mr. Baynes. At the last general election, he (Mr. Isambert) was asked if he was in favour of giving special advantages to native-born children, and he replied "No," because he believed that such concessions would most effectually prevent settlement. He was not surprised at the amendment being moved from the other side; it was quite consistent with their policy; and they were trying, on the most flimsy pretexts, to pose as the champions of the people. With regard to the expression made use of by the leader of the Opposition—whom his friends considered the greatest statesman in Australia—when he spoke of the immigration of "German coolies," he would only remark that no real statesman could have uttered such insulting language towards a great and friendly nation.

Mr. GRIMES said that, if the amendment simply enabled agriculturists to select land for their sons, probably there would not be much objection to it; but it must be borne in mind that it would enable any person to select for any child of that age. That was where the mischief came in, and for that reason, seeing the mischief that might arise from it, he was unable to give it his support.

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

Original amendment put.

The Committee divided:—

AYES, 17.

Sir T. McIlwraith, Messrs. Archer, Norton, Nelson, Black, Stevenson, Lalor, Kellett, Lissner, Morehead, Mellor, Donaldson, Jessop, Midgley, Macrossan, Palmer, and Ferguson.

NOES, 22.

Messrs. Griffith, Sheridan, Dickson, Dutton, Miles, Rutledge, Groom, Aland, Brookes, Foxton, Isambert, Jordan, Grimes, White, Foote, Buckland, Smyth, Kates, T. Campbell, Higson, Salkeld, and Macfarlane.

Question resolved in the negative.

Clause put and passed.

On clause 41, as follows:—

"Any person desiring to select Crown lands under this part of this Act must lodge with the commissioner an application in the prescribed form, and must himself or by his duly constituted attorney sign the entry of his application in the register of applications.

"The application must give a clear description of the locality and boundaries of the land applied for, and must state whether it is already surveyed or is unsurveyed.

"The application must be accompanied by the full amount in cash of the first year's rent, together with the survey fee.

"Applications shall take priority according to the order of their being lodged with the commissioner.

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

The MINISTER FOR LANDS moved that the words "land agent" be substituted for the word "commissioner" in the 49th line.

Amendment put and passed.

On the motion of the MINISTER FOR LANDS, all the words in the second paragraph after the word "must" were omitted, and the words "be for a lot as surveyed, and must refer to it by its number as specified in the proclamation" inserted in their place.

Mr. MOREHEAD said he would have to take the Committee back a little to clause 33. He pointed out to the Minister for Lands, when that clause was under discussion, that it would lead to any amount of complication in deciding who was the first applicant. The Minister for Lands said he did not see the least difficulty about it, and it could be easily met. He now found in clause 41 that the Minister for Lands recognised that there was a difficulty, and he proposed to meet it in one of the ways suggested by him. The hon. gentleman proposed to meet it by lot. Perhaps he would say why he had made that distinction, and why he sneered the other night when the lot system was mentioned.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: I did not.

Mr. MOREHEAD said he suggested that there were two ways of meeting the difficulty; one was by the lot system, and the other by the auction system. It would be utterly impossible by the 33rd clause to say who was the first applicant. That difficulty was recognised in the 41st clause, and he wanted to know from the Minister for Lands, if he knew anything about the Bill, how the discrepancy between the clauses came to exist.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS said he thought it was an understood thing that the 33rd clause was to be recommitted for the purpose of dealing with that matter. He had told the hon. member previously that it was intended to decide by lot between two persons putting in applications for the same piece of country at the same time.

Mr. MOREHEAD said that what the hon. gentleman had stated, when the 33rd clause was under discussion, was that he could not conceive the possibility of there being two applications put in at the same time. He (Mr. Morehead) on that occasion reminded him that he had previously expressed his inability to conceive of the two members of the board disagreeing.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: If I did not see it then, I see it now.

Mr. MOREHEAD: The hon. member admits that he was wrong, then?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: No, I do not.

Mr. MOREHEAD: But the hon. member is going to make the alteration?

The PREMIER: It was promised the last night.

Mr. MOREHEAD said he was sorry to annoy the hon. the Premier, because it always vexed himself. At the same time he wanted to point out that, whereas in clause 33 the Minister for Lands did not make any provision for the case of two applicants, in clause 42 he met the difficulty exactly as he (Mr. Morehead) had suggested; yet the hon. member would not admit he was wrong.

The HON. SIR T. McILWRAITH said he thought the survey fee was mentioned for the first time in the clause. He wished to know if the survey fee was to be the full cost of survey, because in the Lands Office it did not always mean that?

The PREMIER said that clause 123 provided for the framing of regulations:—

"Defining the survey fees which shall be payable in respect of any holding applied for, surveyed, or subdivided under this Act."

The fees were supposed to cover the cost of survey. Various attempts had been made to fix them by Acts of Parliament, but always unsuccessfully, because circumstances varied so widely in different cases.

The HON. SIR T. McILWRAITH: Does the survey fee here mean the actual cost of survey?

The PREMIER said it would be so as nearly as possible. The amount would be prescribed by the regulations. He presumed it would not be practicable to say exactly what each holding would cost, but no doubt some such principle would be followed as had been followed hitherto, the amount varying according to area and to the character of the country.

Mr. MOREHEAD said he thought the opportunity was a good one for discussing a large question—which was the better system in deciding which of several applicants was to obtain a piece of land—auction or lot? There was a great deal to be said on both sides. The Government in clause 41 had adopted the system of choice by lot, but the 42nd clause did not in any way provide a check for the dummying which had taken place under the lot system heretofore. Clause 42 said:—

"No person shall on the same day lodge more than one application for the same land."

But it did not say that two dozen people, as agents for one person, should not put in applications for the same land. His opinion was that the only honest plan was the auction system. The lot system gave rise to all sorts of dishonesty, as a large number of persons who were really dummies were put in as applicants, while the auction system narrowed down the competition to those individuals who were really desirous of acquiring the land, and was in every way much more beneficial to the State. He thought the Minister for Lands should give his reasons for preferring the lot system.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS said he thought he had alluded to the matter before. He looked upon the auction system as a vicious one, because it gave an opportunity not only for buying off an intending selector by offering him a premium to keep away, but also had a tendency to make a man pay more for his land than he should be required to pay. The object of the Bill was to get a fair rent from the land, and the men who entered upon the land should be expected to pay that fair rent and no more. They should not be subjected to the risk of being forced to pay a higher rent by someone who wished to do them an injury.

Mr. MOREHEAD said the hon. member had not touched upon the objection he had raised to the lot system—the opportunity it gave for dummying by putting in a lot of dummy applications, as had been done over and over again both in Victoria and Queensland. In the 34th clause of the Bill the hon. member had admitted the auction system. Why should they now go back to what he (Mr. Morehead) hoped had been the exploded lot system?—because it was absurd to think it would not lead to the abuses in the future that had characterised it in the past. The auction system was the purer of the two, and was very much more beneficial to the State.

Mr. KATES said that both systems had their disadvantages. Under the lot system, a person wishing to take up a piece of land might have to wait for years before the lot fell to him; while under the auction system people ran one another up in the auction-room, and bitter ill-feeling amongst neighbours was often the result. He thought it would be better if a man wishing to select a piece of land were to send a tender to the commissioner. He would look at it, and determine in his own mind what he could afford to give; there would be no running-up in auction-rooms, and the man who really wanted the land would give the best price he could afford to give. That would be advantageous to the State, and secure the land to the man who most valued it.

Mr. MOREHEAD said the suggestion of the hon. member for Darling Downs was an excellent one, and would meet the difficulty raised on both sides. He thought the tender system would be by far the best way of dealing with the matter. Let it be known that certain land was open, and let sealed tenders be sent in by those who were anxious to take up land. He should support any amendment to that effect.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS said the suggestion, if carried out, would bring about the same condition of things they had experienced in the past. A man would tender more for the land than he was able to pay year after year. The system would be the most objectionable that could be adopted, because it would be found that constant applications would be made to the Government from men desirous of being relieved of the rent they had been induced to pay. When they were tendering, men would pay more money than they could well afford, and would so cripple themselves that they would not be able to carry out their undertakings. It was desirable that a man should have as much cash as possible when entering upon his land, instead of having his resources crippled in the way they would be if the tender system were carried out.

Mr. MOREHEAD said he was certain the hon. member for Darling Downs did not care whether the tendering was in the shape of a cash premium or lease rental. The system was certainly far preferable to any he knew of.

Mr. KATES said he would point out that if land was surveyed before selection the selector would invest only what he could afford to give. If he could afford to give a fair price he would put it in his tender and no one would know anything about it. In regard to the lot system, he knew himself a great many people who had applied year after year for a piece of land and they were unable to get it.

Mr. FERGUSON said he did not believe in the lot system at all, having seen the evils of it in so many cases. When a select piece of land was proclaimed open for selection, he had seen as many as fifty people apply for the one piece, only two or three of whom had really put in applications. They got anyone to apply for the land, knowing that it would be decided by lot; and in some cases they obtained twelve chances instead of one. Then perhaps the person to whom the lot fell would not be the one who would take up the land. He felt sure that the same evils would be perpetuated; and he should support a system by which the highest tenderer obtained any land that was put up for selection.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS said the hon. member apparently did not understand that part of the Bill which provided that the man who obtained land by lot must use it. He could not transfer his license, but must hold it for three years before being able to dispose of it. The hon. gentleman had argued that the man who got the land very often did not use it. He could not do that under the present Bill. He must either use it, or abandon it and forfeit his license. As to the objections to the lot system, he could not see any objection to it at all. All those who applied for the land had equal chances, and if they did not intend to use it, it was of no use trying to draw it. They must either utilise the land or abandon their claim.

Mr. DONALDSON said he quite agreed that all the systems—the lot system, the auction system, and the tender system—had their faults, and could all be abused. It was not his intention to move any amendment. He had had enough of amendments, but he would make the Committee a present of a suggestion, by which the subject might be narrowed down considerably. Instead of the first applicant being entitled to the land, the man who first marked out the ground that he was desirous of selecting ought to have the land. As the case was now, if two or three men were desirous of having the land, the fastest horse reached the commissioner first, and the man who had a racehorse had an advantage over the others.

Mr. MOREHEAD said he did not see how the first marking of the ground was to determine the matter. The man who came second could pull out the first man's mark. He hoped the Government would accept the suggestion of the hon. member for Darling Downs.

Mr. JESSOP said he could not see that marking the ground would do any good. He believed in the auction system. It was far better than any other he knew of.

On the motion of the MINISTER FOR LANDS, the clause was verbally amended on the 4th line by the substitution of the words "land agent" for "commissioner."

The MINISTER FOR LANDS moved the omission of the word "commissioner's," in the 6th line, with the view of inserting the words "land agent's."

The HON. SIR T. MCILWRAITH said the Premier had defined the land agent as the "commissioner's clerk," and it now seemed that the commissioner's clerk was going to have a different office altogether from the commissioner himself. It appeared to him that they were striking out the whole of the duties of the commissioner, and putting them on to the land agent.

The PREMIER said the question had been discussed before. The land agent would be in the office all day and would receive applications. When the matter was discussed before it was pointed out that under the present system the office was called the land agent's office, and, on consideration, the Government thought it just as well that the name should be retained. Consequently that amendment was moved, as a similar amendment was moved in clause 39.

Amendment agreed to.

Mr. FERGUSON said there was one matter he would like to understand before the clause passed. The Committee had already greatly altered the Bill by affirming that there should be survey before selection. As the Bill stood, the selector had to make his application at the lands office, and had to wait perhaps for six months before his selection was confirmed. He wished to know how they were to have survey before selection, if a selector would know at once whether his selection would be confirmed; and also what would be the value of the improvements on the selection he would

have to pay for? If that could be known it would further facilitate selection to a great extent.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS said the hon. gentleman, he thought, wished to know if there would be any delay after an application had been made before the confirmation of it took place. There would, of course, be the necessary delay occasioned by the report of the commissioner upon the application having to be confirmed by the board as to the value of the improvements that would have to be paid for; that would be specified with the proclamation throwing the land open to selection. The proclamation was to give a full description of the land, together with the value of the improvements upon it.

Mr. BLACK said there was another matter he would like to point out. It frequently happened that there was a great rush at the lands office, especially under the present Act; and he found that under the Bill there was provision made that, if two or more applicants should be present at the time of the opening of the commissioner's office, the applications lodged by them should be deemed to be lodged at the same time. He had seen a great many applications at land offices, and he thought it would be better that all applications lodged during the same day should be granted simultaneously. In order to effect that the clause should read—"Provided that if two or more applications shall be lodged on the same day, at the commissioner's office, they shall be deemed to be lodged at the same time." He did not think there could possibly be any objection to an amendment of that kind.

The PREMIER: It is too late now to make that amendment.

Mr. MOREHEAD said he thought there was a great deal in the objection raised by the hon. member for Rockhampton. The 41st clause provided that the application was to be lodged by the applicant personally, and he was to pay the first annual payment and the cost of the survey; and the 47th clause said that if there were upon any land selected under that part of the Bill any improvements, the selector should pay the value of such improvements to the commissioner within sixty days of the date when the value thereof had been determined. He thought the proclamation throwing the land open to selection should mention the estimated value of the improvements.

The PREMIER: That is fixed by an amendment already made.

Mr. MOREHEAD said that amendment did not compel the applicant to send in a cheque.

The PREMIER: Not for sixty days.

Mr. MOREHEAD said he knew that, and that was just the objection he took to the clause. He said that when a man made an application he should lodge with his application a cheque or bank receipt, as might be agreed upon by the board or by the officer in charge of the matter, for the estimated amount of the improvements on the land he desired to select. It would be quite clear to every member of the Committee that, if application was made for improved lands in that way, it would be a substantial guarantee on behalf of the applicant that those improvements would be paid for. He certainly thought that the applicant should, as a guarantee of the *bona fides* of his application, be compelled to deposit with his application a cheque or a sum of money equal to the estimated amount of the value of the improvements on the land he applied for.

Mr. FERGUSON said that, as the Bill now stood, the land was to be surveyed before it was thrown open for selection, and he thought the improvements should be specified in the proclamation throwing it open for selection.

The PREMIER: That is provided for.

Mr. FERGUSON said it would save a great deal of trouble to the applicant if he knew before he made his application the amount of the improvements he would have to pay for. He would then have the option of taking up the land or not before he paid down his money; and then, if he paid down his money and his rent, the selection should be confirmed at once without any further delay.

The PREMIER said that the Bill provided that the proclamation declaring the land open to selection should state the value of any improvements on it. That was in clause 37 as amended last week.

The HON. SIR T. MCILWRAITH said that what the hon. member for Rockhampton referred to was that the Bill formerly provided for selection before survey; now it provided for selection after survey. They had gone a certain length in providing that the proclamation should state the amount of improvements, but they had only gone half-way in the amendment to be proposed by the Minister for Lands in clause 47, because that provided for a certain time for payment after the valuation. But if they took into consideration what the proclamation actually stated there was no reason for that delay at all. However, that was an objection that they could deal with when they came to clause 47.

Mr. MOREHEAD said he thought it would be better to deal with it now. The proclamation was to declare the value of any improvement on any lot declared open for selection; that was, the lots that were declared open for selection under the 41st clause. After survey the value of the improvements was to be stated, and that value ought to be paid in the same way as the first year's rent. He hoped the Minister for Lands and the Premier would see the desirability of the alteration.

The PREMIER said that, supposing there were ten applicants and the improvements were valued at £500, was each of them to be expected to pay down that amount? It would be quite time enough when the application was approved. That was a matter that could be dealt with when they came to the 47th clause. If the time was too long, then lessen it; but reasonable time must be given to successful applicants to get the money.

Mr. MOREHEAD said he did not want to obstruct in any way, and, although he thought it would be much better if his suggestion were accepted, he would be quite prepared to deal with the matter when the 47th clause came on.

Mr. KATES said he had an amendment to propose in the clause. He had already pointed out that he thought the two systems of disposing of the land were unsatisfactory. He looked upon the lot system as nothing but gambling. From his own experience he knew of men who had drawn for one, two, and three lots, and, failing to get any, had left the colony in disgust. The public auction system was also undesirable, inasmuch as in an auction-room they often found one neighbour bidding against another, and in the excitement running each other up to more than either could pay, and more than in calm moments they would be prepared to give. He thought, therefore, the right of priority should be determined by tender, and he would move that the word "lot" be omitted for the purpose of inserting the word "tender."

Mr. ISAMBERT said he would like the hon. member to explain the amendment. Was the

amount of tender to influence the annual rent? Supposing a man tendered £10—was the annual rent to be so much per cent. on that, or was it to be fixed irrespective of what the amount of the tender might be?

Mr. KATES said he had pointed out that both systems were objectionable; and he thought the best way was that, where there was more than one applicant, the price should be settled by sealed tenders.

Mr. ISAMBERT said that was not the explanation he wanted. The annual rent was 3d. per acre. Did the amendment mean that the amount of the tender should influence the amount the successful applicant paid to acquire the freehold?

Mr. FERGUSON said that if the proclamation price was £12, and the amount of the tender £14, then he supposed the rent would rise in the same proportion. The annual rent would be raised according to the amount paid down.

Mr. DONALDSON said the idea was an absurd one, for the reason that it would lead to some infatuated person, who knew nothing of the land he applied for, paying double the rent fixed by the board, and other people in the same district would probably suffer through his foolishness by having to pay an increased rental.

The PREMIER said that, as he understood the proposition, if adopted at all, it must be that each applicant must send in a tender offering a cash premium. The objection that there had been to the auction system was this: that in the heat of the moment the bidders only thought of the amount they were paying down, and did not think that they had to pay the same sum for nine successive years. Persons were thus led in the excitement of the moment to make a bargain that they did not intend to make, and had afterwards to apply to the State for relief. He must confess, however, that he always liked the auction; but perhaps that was because he had something to do with its introduction in 1876.

Mr. MIDGLEY said, when he first heard the amendment proposed by the hon. member for Darling Downs, he was rather in favour of it; but, on second thoughts, he believed the clause would be better as it stood, for the reason that the system of tendering would be open to a good deal of abuse just the same as the auction system. It might probably lead to a great deal of prearrangement and collusion between the parties applying for land, unless the various applicants could be kept unknown to one another, which he supposed would be hardly possible. He did not understand how an applicant could be perpetually disappointed in applying for land under the lot system, because the Bill provided that a man could only have a certain quantity of land in a particular district. When an individual was applying for a farm, and someone else applied for the same selection, they took their equal chance at lot. If the unsuccessful applicant afterwards went in for another piece, he would not be opposed by the man who had previously got an agricultural farm, though there might be some other competitor in the field. He thought the Bill as it stood was far simpler than it would be if amended as proposed, and that it would not result in any injustice to anyone. He was afraid that the system of deciding by tender would lead to a great deal of abuse—that at times there would be propositions made by one applicant to buy another off, just as there were now under the auction system.

Mr. GROOM said he believed that the principle of survey before selection, which the Committee had adopted, would obviate a great many of the difficulties which had occurred in the past. Under the old system, it often happened that five or six persons would apply for selections overlapping one another, and that was how difficulties had arisen, the parties having then to go to auction. He had seen the working of that system when it was first inaugurated in 1876, and he had seen it since, and he must say that he thought the system of pitting one person against another was very demoralising.

The HON. SIR T. MCILWRAITH: Why do not you abolish auctioneers?

Mr. GROOM said the hon. gentleman asked why did they not abolish auctioneers? The ordinary system of auction-rooms was different altogether to the competition among persons going to select land. For example, a piece of land which anyone in the district in which it was situated would consider not worth more than 15s. an acre, was thrown open to selection. Three or four persons being anxious to get it, they all put in an application. An auction followed; and one man being pitted against another, in the excitement of the moment—as the Premier had remarked—the price was run up to £4 or £5 per acre. A few months ago there were four selections of 160 acres each, at Clifton, thrown open to selection at the Toowoomba Land Office. Three were taken up without any competition; for the other there were two applicants. The land was put up as homestead conditional purchases, the price being 10s. per acre, or 1s. an acre per year. The two persons who applied for the one selection ran the price up to 9s. per acre per annum. The unfortunate individual who got the land had to go and borrow £60 or £70 to enable him to pay the first year's rent, and since he had reckoned up the amount he would have to pay he had written to the Minister for Lands asking to be relieved of his bargain on the ground that he did not know what he was doing when he made it. He (Mr. Groom) again said that the auction system was demoralising. He knew that Mr. Hume, the Land Commissioner on the Darling Downs, who had had a great deal of experience, was of opinion that the tender system was the better one to adopt, as that gentleman had told him so himself. But that was before the Committee had decided to accept the principle of survey before selection. He (Mr. Groom) believed that under that system the applicants for any one piece of land would not be so numerous as under the existing arrangement, and that under those circumstances the lot system would answer very well. If a proclamation was issued in which the price of land open to selection was fixed at 3d. an acre per annum, why should any individual be asked to give more? They ought not to make a man pay an unreasonable price for his land. Under the system of survey before selection, there would be absolutely no cause for the close competition that had hitherto prevailed; and it would be much better, where there was more than one applicant for a selection, to draw lots for it. There would be plenty of land for all who required it if they kept the surveys well advanced in anticipation of settlement.

Mr. MOREHEAD said he should have thought that the hon. gentleman who had just spoken had more intelligence than to have indulged in such remarks as he had made on the auction system. The same remarks were applicable to all auction systems. For instance, he (Mr. Morehead) was blackmailed only the other day, because a piece of land he wanted to get was known to be of special value to him. Why did not the State step in to save him? Why was the principle not made to apply to town allotments, those sixteen-perch allotments

that the Government were so fond of? If it led to blackmailing in the case of the State it would certainly do so in the other case. The fair way of getting at the value of a thing was to sell it by auction; in nine cases out of ten the market value was obtained. The lot system was a system of organised swindling, and had been worked to perfection in Victoria and New South Wales. It was a system under which a man desiring to obtain a piece of land could put in a hundred applications for it, and get it. It was all very well to say that the selector could not transfer; the thing could be arranged beforehand. The system proposed by the hon. member for Darling Downs seemed to him to be the best of three bad systems, although, from the expressions of opinion they had heard, there was no chance of carrying it. He should certainly vote for it. He was certain that when the lot system came to be tried it would be found to be as great a failure, and would lead to as much improper holding of land—to use an expression of the Minister for Lands'—as any other system that had been tried.

Mr. KATES said the amendment would apply to selections applied for by two or more people. The hon. member for Toowoomba had pointed out that in some instances people had been compelled to pay £20 or £30 by way of blackmail to get rid of those superfluous applicants who only applied for land in order to extort money. As far as he understood the Premier, the hon. gentleman intended to provide that a bonus should be offered by persons willing to take up a selection, and that the person who gave the highest bonus should be the successful applicant. That was fair and reasonable. The rental would not be altered, and only the men who really wanted the land would offer a bonus. Blackmailing would thus be done away with, and the bonus would go into the Treasury instead of into the pockets of unprincipled blackmailers.

Mr. FERGUSON said the bonus system seemed a most unfair one. If there was to be any increase, let it be an increase of rent. He would prefer the lot system. With regard to the auction system, he might mention that only last week the Government sold a lot of land near Rockhampton by auction. The value put upon that land by the Government was £200 per acre, and it realised at auction over £1,000. If the auction system had been done away with, the first applicant would have been entitled to get that land for £200 an acre.

Mr. MOREHEAD said the hon. member evidently did not quite understand what had been said by the hon. member for Darling Downs and the Premier. It was, that the rent should remain as fixed by the proclamation, but that the tender should include a premium for the lease, such premium to be paid in cash. In that case, if the land were forfeited there would be no extra rent to be paid by the incoming tenant; the penalty would have been paid by the man who over-estimated the value of the holding, and very properly so. Whereas, if a higher rent had been fixed by auction, the selector would make an appeal *ad misericordiam* to the Minister for Lands that he could not pay so high a rent for nine years, and would probably get it reduced.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS said that such a system would give an undue advantage to the man with the longest purse. If a man with money specially desired to secure some piece of land, he would put such a premium upon it as would completely bar men with smaller means from getting it. He did not see how that could be considered a fair system, and was certain it would not be found to work well. They wanted to give men an opportunity of obtaining land who had simply capital enough to make good use of the land, without exacting anything in the shape of a premium to enable them to secure it. The system would also give rise to a spirit of contention and antagonism, because intending selectors would know that they were liable to be outbid by men who were able to give a higher premium for the land than they themselves could afford.

Mr. FOXTON said that anyone who knew anything about selections was aware that the men with most money would buy the others out. If two or three men applied for the same selection it would ultimately fall to the man who had the most money, if he really wanted it. Ultimately, in that respect, the tender system was no worse than the lot system; but he certainly thought it had its disadvantages.

Mr. NELSON said he thought that the auction system was the best. There was no doubt that under the system proposed by the hon. member for Darling Downs persons would be led, in a spirit of competition, to give a higher price than it might be in their power to pay. Under the lot system a man would not be called upon to pay anything; and the man who got the land would be bound to stick to it or else forfeit his deposit.

Mr. BAILEY said he could corroborate the statement of the hon. member for Carnarvon, that it was possible that under the lot system the man with the most money would buy the others out. An instance of that came before his observation a few years ago, which he would relate. A certain portion of land was open as a timber selection; a certain person wished to take it up, and when he went down to apply for it he found that a timber firm had already applied and had put in some fifteen or sixteen applications in the names of employés. When it came to the lot business, they went to him and offered him £5 or £10 to keep out, saying they wanted it, and had arranged everything. The man refused the money and went for the land, but, being one amongst seventeen or eighteen, he lost. Even if the seventeen or eighteen had been *bonâ fide* selectors it would have been just as easy for one man to have bought them all out.

Mr. MOREHEAD said they would have to go a long way back to find the origin of the lot system. There was a certain Lot who went after some rich plains, under certain conditions, for a breach of which his wife was turned into a pillar of salt, which might have been an advantage to him. That, however, was no reason why they should not take the lot system in preference to that proposed by the hon. member for Darling Downs.

Mr. KELLETT said he could well remember that when the lot system of 1868 was in force, he had seen a dozen or more applications in for one piece of land. Then the system of auction was adopted in 1876, and he believed it had been proved that the auction system was the better. He agreed with the hon. member for Darling Downs that the tender system was better than the auction system; but under the lot system the big men and dummiers would have a great to do with it.

Mr. MIDGLEY said he thought that the difficulty would be met by making it imperative upon the man who put in an application to abide by it. If there was more than one applicant they must draw lots and abide by the result.

Mr. MOREHEAD said they should not introduce a game of chance into one of their Bills. Surely it would be better to settle those matters in some other way. They might just as well have a shake in the hat for it, as a *bonâ fide* man would probably be debarred from acquiring

that which he desired. They should not introduce a gambling element; if they did, the man who got the land would sell it to any man who was willing to give a higher price for it.

Mr. KATES said that the Minister for Lands stated that the man with the most money would get the land. It was pointed out by the hon. member for Stanley that the farmer who knew the value of land would be able to give more than the man with money, as it would not pay the latter to take up land unless he could make use of it. The farmer could make the best use of it, and could, therefore, give the best price for it.

Mr. BLACK said there would be a great deal more dummying under the tender system than under the lot system. So far as he could understand, if there were two applications for the same land, the rent and survey fees would have been already paid; and they would have to draw lots, and whoever got it would have to stick to it. If the tendering system were to come in, it would be known who the competitors were. It was probable that a man who was anxious to dummy would put in five or six applications. He would know whom he had to buy off, and there was nothing to prevent them getting their rent and survey fee returned, and the one individual would get the selection. There would be more dummying under that system, because the individual would know exactly who he was competing with. He could find that out at the land court when the land agent read out the applications for the same land. There was nothing to prevent a man of means buying out those five or six or inducing them to withdraw. He did not consider that the small selector would have the least chance.

Mr. KELLETT said he did not think there would be much dummying under the Bill, whether they adopted the lot, tender, or auction system. It must be remembered that a man, when he obtained land by lot, could only take up one selection in that district. If he wished for a certain piece of land and was prepared to give an extra price for it, why should he be debarred from getting it? It would be a benefit to the State, and the land would go to the person to whom it would be of the greatest value. He believed that there would be very little dummying, especially in the farming districts; in fact, he did not believe there would be any at all.

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

AYES, 25.

Messrs. Miles, Griffith, Dutton, Rutledge, Dickson, Sheridan, Nelson, Brookes, Aland, Higson, Isambert, Jordan, White, T. Campbell, Midgley, Lalor, Buckland, Annear, Mellor, Jessop, Black, Grimes, Donaldson, Moreton, and Macfarlane.

NOES, 13.

Sir T. McIlwraith, Messrs. Norton, Archer, Morehead, Lissner, Kates, Kellett, Foote, Foxton, Salkeld, Palmer, Ferguson, and Bailey.

Question resolved in the affirmative.

Clause, as amended, put and passed.

On clause 42, as follows:—

"No person shall on the same day lodge more than one application for the same land, and if any person on the same day lodges two or more applications, comprising in all or part the same land, they shall all be rejected."

The PREMIER said that as the clause stood it contained a quite unnecessary repetition. He would therefore move the omission of all the words from the beginning of the clause to the word "and" inclusive.

The HON. SIR T. McILWRAITH asked what object a man would have in putting in more than one application?

The PREMIER said it would be done for the sake of getting two chances in the lot.

Mr. MOREHEAD said he agreed with the leader of the Opposition. The clause seemed an absurdity. Did the Minister for Lands suppose that, if a person wanted to put in a lot of applications, he would put them in in his own name?

The PREMIER: It has been done.

Mr. MOREHEAD: Then this was a warning to men who contemplated sending in more than one application to send them in in the name of someone else. It told an applicant that if he wanted to get in two applications he must put them in in the name of Brown and Jones. That, of course, made the clause a little clearer.

Mr. BLACK said he noticed that an agent was prevented from acting for more than one person? According to the Bill an attorney was prevented from representing more than one client; why was that?

The HON. SIR T. McILWRAITH said he would like to know what would happen if two applicants named John Smith sent in applications?

Mr. MOREHEAD: They draw lots.

The HON. SIR T. McILWRAITH said it was evident from the form of application that there must be some mistake. If a man wanted to get a double chance he applied in another name. If that was the evil, why not strike at it in a different way? The clause provided against things that would never happen.

Mr. NORTON said the clause must be a mistake. He did not think anyone would put in two applications in the same name.

The PREMIER: They used to do so under the Act of 1868.

Mr. NORTON said it was not likely that one man would put in two applications under the same name for the same land.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS said if there were three applicants for one piece of land, and one man chose to put in six applications in his own name, he would have three chances to one against the other two applicants. If a man could only put in one application, then there would be no unfairness. No one could transfer a license, as he had pointed out before; so that the man who drew the land would have to occupy it, unless he chose to run the risk of supplying his dummy with money to work the selection, and of being told at the end of three years that he had no claim. That was too great a risk for any man to run, and he thought they need have little fear of fraud being perpetrated by such means.

Mr. BLACK said he would ask the Minister for Lands what clause in the Bill provided that a licensee should not get his lease under three years?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS said it took three years to perform the conditions. The licensee had to perform his conditions, and get a certificate of having performed them, before he got his lease.

Mr. KELLETT said he had never heard at any time that half-a-dozen applications for land were put in in the same name. Supposing that that was done, he took it for granted that the land agent, when he found half-a-dozen Thomas Browns, would ask who they were, and if they were not forthcoming he would strike all but one out.

Mr. NORTON said he hoped the clause would be withdrawn. It was plain that no one would put in more than one application in the same name. At the same time he would again point out that an agent putting in applications for more than one man would have them all struck out. That part of the clause would require remedying.

Mr. MIDGLEY said the two things to be remedied were that an agent should be allowed to apply on behalf of more than one person, and that the last line of the clause should be left out. He would suggest that some such amendment as the following would meet the difficulty:—"If more than one application for the same land be made by or on behalf of the same person on the same day, they shall be rejected."

The PREMIER said that, as the alteration relating to survey before selection would require an applicant to apply for a particular lot, the clause was of no particular importance and might be left out. He begged to withdraw his amendment.

Amendment, by leave, withdrawn.

Clause put and negatived.

On clause 43, as follows:—

"Every selection applied for must, before the application is lodged, be marked at the starting point of the description by a marked tree or post at least three feet out of the ground and six inches in diameter, and such mark or post must be maintained until the boundaries of the land have been surveyed.

"A statement that the marking has been duly effected must accompany the application."

The MINISTER FOR LANDS said he proposed to negative the clause.

The HON. SIR T. McILWRAITH said the hon. member ought to have learned by now that he should give reasons for what he proposed to do. They were not a flock of sheep to obey his dictates; and they were not going to strike out a clause simply because he proposed to do so.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS said the clause dealt with a matter which had been altered by an amendment in a previous part of the Bill, requiring survey before selection. As the clause was a provision with regard to selection before survey it was not necessary. He also proposed to negative clauses 44 and 45.

The HON. SIR T. McILWRAITH asked whether provision was made in any other part of the Bill for a selection being marked in the way described by the clause?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS said that new clause 40, which had already been passed, provided:—

"Before any land is so proclaimed open for 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."

Clause put and negatived.

On clause 44, as follows:—

"Subject to such general regulations concerning surveys, roads, or the prevention of a monopoly of permanent water, or otherwise, as may be made under this Act, land settled before survey and having frontage to a main watercourse, or in the case of land in an agricultural area, to a main road, shall not have a greater breadth or frontage thereto than two-thirds of the depth.

"In agricultural areas, the boundaries not having frontage to roads or natural features must be rectangular and be directed to the cardinal points, unless any other general bearings are adopted for that portion of country."

The MINISTER FOR LANDS said the clause would be necessary with selection before survey, because the selector might otherwise take up land in such a way as to make the surrounding land valueless. But since they had decided on having survey before selection, that objection would be met by giving the necessary directions to the surveyors of the department.

The HON. SIR T. McILWRAITH said there was no reason why the clause should go out. It should remain as information prescribed by Parliament to the Government, and to the surveyors themselves.

The PREMIER said that if it was the wish of the Committee there was no objection to the clause being retained. But it was not necessary, and without it the Bill would be complete.

Mr. NORTON said he thought the clause ought to remain in the Bill.

The PREMIER said the clause was framed before the principle of survey before selection was adopted, but with an amendment the clause might be retained. He moved the omission of of the words "selected before survey and."

Mr. KELLETT said he believed in the clause with the exception of the latter portion of it. The clause said certain rules should be followed in the survey of the land, but the latter portion said, "unless any other general bearings are adopted for that portion of country." If that provision was left in it would upset the whole of the first part of the clause.

Amendment agreed to.

Mr. JORDAN said the latter part of the clause required alteration. It provided that "in agricultural areas the boundaries not having frontage to roads or natural features must be rectangular." As they had adopted survey before selection, he imagined the roads would be laid out according to the natural features of the country, and consequently in many cases the surveys could not be rectangular, but there would be blocks of various shapes. He moved the omission of the 2nd paragraph of the clause.

Amendment agreed to; and clause, as amended, put and passed.

Clause 45 put and negatived.

Clause 46 passed with a consequential amendment.

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

NATIVE LABOURERS PROTECTION BILL.

The SPEAKER announced the receipt of the following message from the Legislative Council:—

"The Legislative Council, having had under consideration the Legislative Assembly's message of date 14th October, relative to the amendments made by the Legislative Council in the Native Labourers Protection Bill, beg now to intimate that they do not insist on their amendment in clause 7, but propose to amend the clause by the substitution of the word 'twenty' for the word 'fifty' in the last line thereof; do not insist on the omission of clause 8, but agree to its retention with the following amendment—namely, the substitution of the words 'five-and-twenty,' for the words 'one hundred' in line 8; and do not insist on their amendment in clause 9."

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

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