Queensland

Parliamentary Debates
[Hansard]

Legislative Assembly

WEDNESDAY, 22 OCTOBER 1884

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY.

Wednesday, 22 *October*, 1884.

Drainage of Waste Lands Bill.—Question.—Petition.—Auditor-General's Preliminary Report.—Question without Notice.—British Protectorate at New Guinea.—Crown Lands Bill—committee.—Adjournment.

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

DRAINAGE OF WASTE LANDS BILL.

Mr. STEVENS, pursuant to notice given on the 31st July last, presented a Bill to provide for the drainage of certain lands in the colony of Queensland, and moved that it be read a first time.

Question put and passed.

On the motion of Mr. STEVENS, the Bill was ordered to be printed, and its second reading made an Order of the Day for Friday, 31st October.

QUESTION.

Mr. PALMER asked the Colonial Secretary—

1. Having regard to the amount of revenue received last year at Torres Straits, exceeding £10,000, and the number of qualified voters at Thursday Island and vicinity being now about ninety, is it his intention to include that part of the territory in either the Burke or Cook electorate ?

2. If not, in what way will the residents be likely to obtain representation ?

3. Has the survey defining the exact boundary between Queensland and South Australia been carried out yet at the northern end ?

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

1 and 2. The matter will receive consideration when the subject of revising the electoral boundaries is dealt with.

3. No advice as to the completion of the survey of the boundary between South Australia and Queensland has been received. All that is known is that the survey commenced at the southern extremity of the boundary.

PETITION.

Mr. HORWITZ presented a petition from Horace Charles Ransome, of Warwick, with reference to a decision given in the Supreme Court on the 8th of August last, and praying relief. He moved that the petition be read.

Question put and passed; and petition read.

The SPEAKER said: It is my duty to call the attention of the House to the document attached to the petition, because it is contrary to the 200th Standing Order, which reads as follows :—

"No letters, affidavits, or other documents may be attached to any petition."

There are several signatures of timber merchants and others attached to a document appended to the petition, and for that reason it is informal, and cannot be received.

AUDITOR-GENERAL'S PRELIMINARY REPORT.

The SPEAKER announced that he had received the following letter from the Auditor-General :—

"Audit Department, Queensland,
"Brisbane, 22nd October, 1884.

"SIR,—In pursuance of the provisions of the 47th section of the Audit Act of 1874 (38 Vic., No. 12), I do myself the honour to transmit herewith, for presentation to the Legislative Assembly, a preliminary report on the receipts and expenditure of the Consolidated Revenue and other public moneys, for the fifteen months ended the 30th September, 1884.

"I have the honour to be, sir,
"Your obedient servant,
"W. L. G. DREW,
"Auditor-General.

"The Honourable
"The Speaker of the Legislative Assembly."

On the motion of the COLONIAL TREASURER (Hon. J. R. Dickson), the paper was ordered to be printed.

FORMAL MOTIONS.

The following motions were agreed to :—

By Mr. NORTON—

That there be laid upon the table of the House, all reports and other papers connected with the use of the tramcars on the railway lines.

By Mr. BLACK—

That there be laid upon the table of the House, a Return showing the amount to the credit of Polynesians in the Government Savings Bank, showing the districts in which such moneys have been deposited, and the number of Polynesian depositors in each district; such return to be up to October 11th, if practicable.

QUESTION WITHOUT NOTICE.

Mr. STEVENSON said he would ask the Minister for Lands, without notice, when he expected to lay on the table the return with regard to runs in the Burke district which he moved for some time ago ?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS (Hon. C. B. Dutton) replied that he hoped to lay the return on the table next week.

BRITISH PROTECTORATE AT NEW GUINEA.

The HON. SIR T. MCILWRAITH said: Mr. Speaker,—Before the Orders of the Day are dealt with, I should like to invite the Premier to give us some information on a subject of very considerable importance, and on which the information before the public at the present time is very meagre. I refer to the annexation of New Guinea as attempted by the English Government. I do this all the more, because, from the information we have had in the newspapers, Queensland is, to a certain extent, connected with it — a semi-official notice in the *Brisbane Courier* stating that Mr. Chester, the Police Magistrate at Thursday Island, has been instructed to take part in what is called the ceremony of the annexation of New Guinea. Of course, I do not wish that this should lead to a debate on the way in which the English Government have responded to the efforts for annexation made by the colonies—that I leave for a future day—but I think the Queensland Government should give us all the information in their possession, so as to keep us thoroughly up in what they propose to do—at all events, as to how far they are committed in this matter. We have had some information with regard to the movements of the British fleet from Sydney during the last few days. By one statement, one of the ships was to have left on Sunday; and according to another it was to leave on Sunday with two others. These orders seem to have been countermanded; but one of Her Majesty's ships, the "Espiegle," left on Saturday, her destination being New Guinea. It was also stated that the "Nelson" was going there; but instead of that she is coming to Brisbane. The *Brisbane Courier* of Monday informed us that Mr. Chester had been wired instructions to represent Queensland at the ceremony. What I wish to know is whether such instructions have been sent to him, and also what information the Government have with regard to the movements of Her Majesty's ships besides that we have had in the Press. In what way are we connected with the movements of Her Majesty's ships in regard to the annexation of New Guinea? That is a matter of considerable importance to us; and for that reason I bring it forward, because it ought not to pass without some comment. From the movements of Her Majesty's ships, I notice a want of decision on the part of

the English Government with regard to their action in connection with New Guinea; and if the Government here can supplement the information we have already it will be of considerable importance to the country. At all events, we should like to know in what way we are connected with this expedition, and whether instructions have been given to Mr. Chester to join the "Espiegle" at Cooktown.

The PREMIER (Hon. S. W. Griffith) said: Mr. Speaker,—I will very willingly give the House all the information in the possession of the Government, though I am sorry to say it is very meagre. In respect to the movements of the fleet, I know no more than has appeared in the papers. I have myself noticed the apparent change of mind indicated by the movements of Her Majesty's ships, but I am not able to offer any explanation on the subject. I believe the Commodore himself intends to go on to New Guinea, and I believe he intends to visit Brisbane on the way.

The HON. SIR T. MCILWRAITH: What information is that?

The PREMIER: I have information to that effect. I believe that is so, but I am not sure even of that.

The HON. SIR T. MCILWRAITH: What you said was, that you had information that he was going on to New Guinea.

The PREMIER: Yes, I understand he is going to New Guinea, and will call at Brisbane on the way. I have seen a telegram—not addressed to me, but shown to me — which would lead to that inference. I understand he will go there, but what the ships will do there I do not know. At present I only conjecture that the "Nelson" will go to New Guinea. I understand that the "Espiegle," the "Raven," and the "Swinger" will be there; and I believe the "Harrier" is already in those waters. I have no official information on the subject. As to Mr. Chester, the Commodore requested that he might be instructed to proceed with the British ships of war to New Guinea to assist at the ceremony to take place there, whatever its nature may be. Instructions have been sent to him to come down to Cooktown, where he is expected to arrive by next Tuesday, and where some vessel will call to take him across to New Guinea. That is all I know about the matter. The Government very willingly placed Mr. Chester's services at the disposal of the Commodore to assist in the ceremony. I may add that I am sorry I do not know distinctly what are the boundaries of the territory in New Guinea over which the Imperial Government intend to exercise jurisdiction. It is difficult to get a good map of those parts. As far as I can understand, it does not extend eastward beyond the East Cape.

The HON. SIR T. MCILWRAITH: And no islands to the north of that?

The PREMIER: And nothing to the north of that. I may add that I received to-day a communication from the Agent-General, which I am at liberty to make use of—at least, to this extent. I infer from it that the action of the Imperial Government in New Guinea—what they have done, and what they have refrained from doing, so far—has been after consultation with the Foreign Powers of Europe.

The HON. SIR T. MCILWRAITH: What is that?

The PREMIER: From a telegram I have received from Mr. Garrick, I understand that the action taken so far, with respect to New Guinea, by the Imperial Government, has been taken after consultation with the Foreign Powers of Europe.

The HON. SIR T. MCILWRAITH: May I ask whether the presence of Mr. Chester on board one of Her Majesty's ships is at the request of anyone connected with Her Majesty's Government, or has it simply been the result of spontaneous instructions from the Queensland Government?

The PREMIER: I said that, at the request of the Commodore, Mr. Chester was instructed to come to Cooktown for the purpose of going across to New Guinea in one of the ships.

The HON. SIR T. MCILWRAITH: To join in the ceremony?

The PREMIER: Yes; and I should add that I understand the Commodore has received full instructions from Her Majesty's Government, and is their agent specially in the matter.

The HON. SIR T. MCILWRAITH: Will the hon. gentleman place on the table of the House the correspondence with the Commodore asking that Mr. Chester should be instructed to proceed to New Guinea?

The PREMIER: There is none directly.

The HON. SIR T. MCILWRAITH: None directly?

The PREMIER: None with me.

The HON. SIR T. MCILWRAITH: In what way was the communication made, then?

The PREMIER: In the usual way. The Commodore always communicates with the Governor.

The HON. SIR T. MCILWRAITH: But there is some official way in which the Governor communicates with the Premier. What has the Governor got to do with it?

Mr. MOREHEAD: He is only the figure-head.

The HON. SIR T. MCILWRAITH: I may ask, further, whether the sudden departure of Her Majesty's ship "Swinger," on Sunday last, had anything to do with the report in the papers about the German ship "Elizabeth" having started from Sydney on the previous Thursday, ostensibly to go to Apia, but, in the opinion of most people, her destination being New Guinea?

The PREMIER: I can give no information on that subject.

The HON. SIR T. MCILWRAITH: Is there any formal communication between the Governor of the colony and the Premier of the colony that can be given to this House, and that will justify the instructions given by the Government for Mr. Chester to attend on board one of Her Majesty's ships to go to New Guinea?

The PREMIER: There must have been a formal communication, but I do not remember what it was exactly. It can no doubt be produced, with the instructions given to Mr. Chester. I suppose they are in my office now.

The HON. SIR T. MCILWRAITH: Will they be laid on the table of the House?

The PREMIER: Yes, I will promise that.

The HON. SIR T. MCILWRAITH: My object in bringing the matter before the House is that I think it ought to be the subject of a discussion very soon, considering the action taken by the colonies and the very meagre reply given to our action by the Home Government. I think it is time we bestirred ourselves, and let the Home Government know, at all events, our opinion of what they have done in reply to our action. I hope the Government will appoint a day soon—not a day interrupted by a dreary discussion on the Land Bill, for the full discussion of this subject.

The PREMIER: I also think it is desirable that there should be a discussion on the matter soon, but I think it would be just as well to wait for further information. I have no doubt

that we shall get further information, and that very shortly ; and I am looking for it with great interest myself.

The HON. SIR T. McILWRAITH : I do not think that it is necessary for me to move the adjournment of the House, but I would like to finish what I have got to say on this subject. I think the matter is one of considerable importance, and one which should be discussed in this House soon. I believe the Government should take some steps to appoint a day for its discussion. I do not wish to hinder the Government by moving an adjournment on any day to discuss the matter ; but it is certainly one which is of so much importance that it should be thoroughly discussed at an early date. I have no doubt that the people of the colony will believe that we are neglecting the interests of the colony in not having it discussed. If we have not got any information at the present time further than what has appeared in the Press, I think that in itself is a sufficient reason why we should have it discussed. The grounds on which there ought to be a debate on this matter are that the English Government have so badly responded to what the colonies have done in their efforts at annexation ; and I believe that we should, at all events, let our opinions be known concerning this miserable attempt at annexation of the southern part of New Guinea. Such a proposition as to extend protection over the southern part of New Guinea is simply laughing at us ; and I believe we should let our opinions be known on the subject.

Mr. BLACK said : Mr. Speaker,—It is quite evident to me that this House ought to be placed in possession of much more information than we have got at present. It seems quite incredible to me that one of our police magistrates, Mr. Chester, should be sent to New Guinea at the order of the Commodore in New South Wales. I cannot understand the Premier allowing such a thing unless he knows what Mr. Chester is to do there. Here we have one of our public servants acting under the dictatorship of the Commodore in New South Wales, and being sent to New Guinea. Whatever his action may be there, surely this colony will be held responsible for it ! I cannot help thinking the Premier knows perfectly well what Mr. Chester has to do when he gets to New Guinea, because the Premier has full control of these matters, and I am sure he would never have allowed Mr. Chester to go without knowing what he was to do. This matter is exciting a great deal of attention in all the other colonies ; and the other colonies will certainly believe that the Premier of this colony knows perfectly well what is going to be done in New Guinea when he allows the Police Magistrate of Thursday Island to go over there on what might be a filli-bustering expedition, or perhaps an annexation expedition. The hon. gentleman should certainly give a fuller explanation to the House than he has yet done as to what was his object in allowing Mr. Chester to go to New Guinea.

The HON. SIR T. McILWRAITH said : May I ask the hon. the Premier whether, when His Excellency received the communication from the Commodore requesting that someone on behalf of Queensland should represent the colony at the ceremony in New Guinea, it was possible that, considering the time the application was made, the Commodore had heard of the result of the advice given by an official of the Queensland Government to the commander of Her Majesty's ship " Swinger " in New Guinea waters ?

The PREMIER : I do not know what the hon. member is referring to.

The HON. SIR T. McILWRAITH : Has the hon. member not been reading the newspapers lately ; and has he not seen the result of the advice given by the Police Magistrate at Cooktown to the commander of the "Swinger" ? I should think that ought to be sufficient to satisfy the Commodore that the less he has to do with Government officials the better. What I ask is, whether it is possible or likely, from the date of the Commodore's communication, that he knew of that advice and its results when he asked the Governor of this colony that Queensland might be represented by some authority aboard one of the ships ?

The PREMIER said : The Commodore did not request that the colony of Queensland might be represented. What he asked was that Mr. Chester, the Police Magistrate at Thursday Island, might be instructed to proceed to New Guinea with the fleet.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS on the Opposition Benches : What for ?

The PREMIER : To be of assistance. He has been to New Guinea two or three times ; he knows a great many of the chiefs, and I presume he could be of great assistance. The request was naturally acceded to by the Government. I cannot state exactly what was the Commodore's reason in asking for Mr. Chester's attendance.

The HON. SIR T. McILWRAITH : But it has been officially asked.

The PREMIER : It was officially asked by the Commodore through the Governor, and I gave instructions to Mr. Chester to go to Cooktown, as being the most certain and expedient way of meeting the men-of-war. As to the date on which the Commodore received information about other subjects, I know that he was made fully aware of the action of the "Swinger" on her New Guinea cruise, immediately after she returned here. The request for Mr. Chester's presence had nothing whatever to do with anything that took place in connection with the "Swinger's" cruise in New Guinea waters, nor can it be connected with it in any way, positively or negatively.

Mr. MOREHEAD said : Mr. Speaker,—To put myself in order, I shall conclude my remarks by moving the adjournment of the House. I do not think that the hon. the Premier has made himself quite clear now. Are we to understand from him that Mr. Chester is to go as master of ceremonies to introduce the Commodore to each of the chiefs ? The Premier himself has admitted that no application was made to him by the Commodore ; the application was made to someone else, and appears to have been passed on in an informal way to the Premier, who consented to a Government official being sent across to New Guinea with the Commodore. He does not know what he is going there for ; he is in absolute ignorance. Supposing the Premier had been asked that the hon. Minister for Works should accompany the Commodore, would he have consented ? Or even the Minister for Lands—who would make a toothsome meal for some of the inhabitants of New Guinea—would the Premier have allowed him to go ? Suppose the Commodore had asked for any Civil servant, or any member of the Government, or even yourself, Mr. Speaker, would the Premier be prepared to accede to this request ? I think, before acceding to the request—or, apparently, demand—made by the Commodore, who has no status so far as this House or this country is concerned, the Premier should have had a good and sufficient reason given. Now the hon. gentleman further said that he had received a telegram from the Agent-General, and he communicated a

portion of it to the House. He might have saved himself the the trouble of communicating that portion to the House, because he had already communicated it to the *Telegraph*. If anyone chooses to pick up this evening's *Telegraph* he will see exactly the same information which the Premier, in his great condescension, has given to the House :—

"From information received by the Government from the Hon. J. F. Garrick, it is understood that the limits fixed of the British protectorate in New Guinea have been defined after consulting the wishes of foreign Governments."

Now I think we ought to know a little more about that. There is evidently something in the telegram the hon. gentleman desires to conceal. Of course, if it deals with matters irrelevant to the question under discussion, I do not ask that it should be laid on the table of the House; but this House should have the fullest information on a subject which affects this colony more nearly than any other colony in the Australian group. I think the hon. the Premier either does not take much interest in this matter, or else he is held in check by a power which I shall not indicate, but which is well known, and which, I think, should not take such a prominent position in this colony as that power appears to do. I never yet met a Premier so subservient to a certain power as the present Premier is. I do hope the statement is correct—though I doubt it—that there has been formal communication between the Premier and the Governor with regard to this request of the Commodore.

The HON. SIR T. MCILWRAITH said : There is another very important piece of information given in the newspaper referred to by my hon. friend the member for Balonne. It appears just under the paragraph that has already been read, and is as follows :—

"Inquiries have been carefully made in reference to immigration to Queensland. These have resulted in the Hon. J. F. Garrick, as Agent-General, being informed that too many mechanics are arriving in Queensland by bounty ships. The Agent-General has, therefore, received instructions to moderate emigration—especially the class referred to—during the summer months, and to endeavour to despatch single men and women in equal proportions. Special efforts are to be made to secure young ploughmen for this colony."

I should like to know what the Government have been doing all this time. The fact that there were far too many mechanics, and far too few agricultural labourers, arriving in the colony has been known for months past. Indeed, that was the only reason the Government could give for bringing forward their German Coolie Bill, and it was the only reason why it was rushed so rapidly through the House. And yet it appears that instructions have only now been sent home to stop the number of mechanics, and otherwise regulate the immigration to this colony. Surely the Government have not been asleep all this time! Have they considered the effect of their own policy in introducing an immense number of mechanics into all parts of the colony, and especially in the North? We can all see the gigantic efforts that are being made to keep the mechanics at work by means of Government employment; and that seems to be the only resource now open to that class in the city of Brisbane. And yet, after all that has happened, it seems the Government have only now—for no doubt they gave the information to the *Telegraph* as soon as the letter was sent off—have only now instructed the Agent-General to ease off the flow of mechanics into the colony, and send instead more ploughmen and agricultural labourers. They seem to have been asleep since their Bill was passed. They do not seem to have taken into consideration the reason they gave for passing that extraordinary measure at that stage of the session. They will certainly be responsible for the influx into the colony for some months longer of those classes who are not wanted, for that need not have continued had they taken the ordinary precaution of telegraphing in time. It was known months ago by all men of sense that mechanics were coming out to the colony far in excess of our requirements, and that we were in want of ploughmen and agricultural labourers. But it seems the Government have only now awakened to that fact, and sent instructions to their Agent-General in London to alter it. It would be satisfactory to the colony to know when those instructions were sent ; and if any special instructions have been given I hope the Government will table the correspondence as soon as possible. We want to know what the Government mean—whether there has been any change in their policy—and especially what they mean by having delayed sending their instructions for so long.

The PREMIER : The hon. gentleman has found a mare's nest. If he had read the correspondence that has been laid upon the table of the House from time to time, he would have seen that similar instructions have been sent to the Agent-General more than once. Lately—a day or two ago—the Agent-General wired for further instructions as to immigration for next year, and in reply to him I informed him again that, notwithstanding previous instruction to the same effect, too many mechanics are still coming to the colony by bounty ships ; that he was to confine his attention, as far as possible, to despatching single men—especially ploughmen—and women ; and that he was to moderate the emigration arriving during the summer months, that being an undesirable time for many immigrants to arrive in the colony. With regard to single men—especially ploughmen—and women, that is really a repetition of instructions previously given ; and the reference to mechanics was a reminder that the instructions previously given had not been sufficiently attended to, and that they were still arriving in too large numbers. As hon. members know, it is very difficult, in case of bounty ships, to select emigrants ; that is done, to a certain extent, by the shipper. A great many changes have been made in the system of selection ; but, notwithstanding all the care that has been taken, we find that there are rather too many mechanics coming out. Therefore, the instructions are repeated ; that is all. There is no change in the policy of the Government—none whatever.

Mr. BLACK : I understand the Premier has given instructions that a larger number of ploughmen are to be introduced. I should like some information as to whether any other agricultural labourers are to be introduced by the Government as well. I ask, because I find that immigration to the northern ports of the colony has almost entirely ceased. Whereas twelve months ago a very large number of immigrants were being landed at those ports by the regular monthly mail steamers, it is now an exceptional case to find any agricultural labourers landed there. Ploughmen are, of course, a very necessary description of agricultural labour to be brought out ; but they do not form one-tenth of the agricultural labour which the Government ought to introduce, considering the check they have imposed on the introduction of coloured labour. If they wish to see the agricultural industry of the North carried on with any reasonable prospect of success, they should turn their attention to agricultural labourers generally—not especially to ploughmen. This is a matter which is looked upon with very great anxiety and attention—not only in the northern part of the colony

but throughout the whole of Australia—I mean what step the Government really intend to take to relieve the present extreme depression in the agricultural industry of Queensland. Of course, I am quite prepared to hear the Premier tell me that an Act has been passed which devolves upon those wishing to employ this description of labour the duty of getting it for themselves. But there is one point in connection with that which I do not think was sufficiently considered when that measure was passing through the House, and that is, that a scheme of such magnitude — a scheme requiring something like 4,000 or 5,000 immigrants annually to be brought to the colony, no matter from what part of the world they come—is entirely beyond the power of planters or agriculturists generally to organise and carry out. It is becoming every day more apparent to the people of Queensland that unless the Government take very much more energetic steps than they have taken hitherto—beyond passing the Immigration Act Amendment Bill—the agricultural industry of Queensland will become a thing of the past. That is a matter of very great importance, and I hope that before very long an opportunity will be given the House to consider it, entirely apart from the question of colour. It is a matter of such vast importance to the future of the colony that I trust hon. members on both sides will very seriously consider what are the best means to be adopted if Queensland is to remain an agricultural colony, and is to retain that amount of success as such which she has achieved in the past.

Mr. GRIMES said: I can hardly understand the hon. gentleman in the distinction he draws between agricultural labourers and ploughmen. I think most ploughmen are agricultural labourers, and I am sure that all agricultural labourers ought to be ploughmen. The idea of bringing out persons who are agricultural labourers and not ploughmen seems to me absurd. The hon. member must know that in England there are no men kept on farms especially for ploughing, and that there is one season of the year when there is no ploughing done, and labourers are required to do various other kinds of work on the farm.

Mr. JESSOP said: I was surprised to hear the hon. member for Oxley say that there is no difference between ploughmen and agricultural labourers. There is almost as much difference between a ploughman and a common agricultural labourer as there is between the farmer and the man who makes the plough. Ordinary farm labourers have to attend to the repairing of hedges and ditches, and to feed cattle and sheep, and do other kinds of work, but they are not employed in ploughing. Ploughmen, as a rule, hardly do anything else but plough. I do not agree with what has been said in reference to the introduction of mechanics. I maintain that there is not enough of that class of labour introduced. People west from Brisbane, and beyond Ipswich and Toowoomba, find it almost impossible to get a bricklayer, or carpenter, or other mechanics to do any work for less than 12s. or 15s. a day, and even at that price the supply of workmen is inadequate.

Mr. ALAND said: I was very glad to hear the last remark made by the hon. member for Dalby, because it has been so often charged against the Government during the session that wages are being reduced very much in the colony through the action of the Government. I am, therefore, pleased to find that wages are really going up to the tune of something like 12s. or 15s. a day. I do not know much about ploughmen myself, but I suppose they must be agricultural labourers. I think the hon. member for Mackay was rather too hard upon the Ministry in blaming them for the present depressed condition of the sugar industry. I cannot myself conceive why blame should be imputed to the Government in connection with this matter. I cannot see that they have had anything at all to do with the depression of the sugar industry. No action that they have taken has yet had time to produce any effect on that industry. I am rather disposed to think that the present condition is occasioned by a falling market; and if my information is correct the quantity of juice produced this season has not been anything equal to what it has been in former years. The small supply, and the depressed state of the market, are, I think, quite sufficient to cause the present depression in the sugar industry.

Mr. JORDAN said: I should like to say a few words in reference to the bounty system, or the bringing out of immigrants under the 17th clause of the Immigration Act. I think it is to be regretted that the selection of bounty immigrants is left entirely to the shipowners, as it appears to be.

The PREMIER: No.

Mr. JORDAN: Oh, not now? I am glad to hear that.

Mr. MOREHEAD: Ever since you left it has been altered.

Mr. JORDAN: Under that system the Government pay the sum of £10 towards the passage money. Some years ago we had assisted immigrants coming to the colony, and at that time the assisted passengers were all selected upon a careful system. We had certificates of character from the employer of the immigrant, and from his former employer, a magistrate, a clergyman, and from two respectable householders living in the same locality. That was always insisted upon, and the consequence was that the assisted passengers were the cream of the immigrants brought out at that time. The bounty system now in force has been a great success as far as numbers are concerned; but I think it would be better if a less number came out, and if they were carefully selected by our own officers.

Mr. ARCHER said: The hon. gentleman who has just spoken has taken it for granted that the previous Government did not select the immigrants introduced during their tenure of office, but I can assure him that passengers who came out under the 17th clause of the Act were as carefully selected as other immigrants. There was no lack of supervision. The hon. gentleman spoke disparagingly of the class of immigrants introduced by the late Government—I do not know on what ground; but I know that the Press of the country seemed to approve of the people brought out during their period of office. Mechanics came out as immigrants because there was a great demand for them, and a great many more ploughmen and labourers than during any similar period previously, because employment was plentiful. It is since the present Government came into power that the demand for labour has been smaller than hitherto. I will not say the Ministry are to blame for that; I believe it is partly owing to the drought that the demand is smaller than it was. Probably there are fewer objectionable characters brought out now than there were then; that is because the total number of immigrants is fewer; but the proportion of the whole is not smaller than it was formerly. I repeat that there has always been careful supervision. The hon. member for South Brisbane evidently runs away with the idea that anybody who does not agree with him in politics cannot be an honest man. The same supervision was, in fact, exercised by the late Administration as has

been exercised by the present Government. I do not see the slightest difference, as far as quality, physical fitness, and conduct are concerned, between those immigrants who came out, say eighteen months or two years ago, and those coming out now. The hon. gentleman always takes a chance of having a fling at the late Government, probably led away by the Minister for Lands, who looks upon his political opponents as dishonest men. Again I say that as much care was taken by the late as has been taken by the present Government in this matter, as is shown by the fact that the Premier has been obliged to call the Agent-General's attention to the fact that he has not attended sufficiently to instructions given previously.

Mr. JORDAN: In explanation of——

HONOURABLE MEMBERS on the Opposition Benches: Spoken, spoken!

Mr. ARCHER: I rise to a point of order.

Mr. JORDAN: May I explain? I ask permission of the House to explain. I intended no reflection on the late Government. I was under the impression that, up to the present time, they were being selected by the shipowners.

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN said: The hon. member for South Brisbane seems to me to be labouring under the delusion that the "lambs" selected under him, when he was agent for immigration, were the flower of the flock. It is quite a delusion.

Mr. JORDAN: I did not select the "lambs." The selection was taken out of my hands, and the hon. member knows that well enough. They were Government "lambs."

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN: The hon. gentleman has just told us that every immigrant at that time received a certificate of character from two respectable householders in the locality from which they came, and also from the clergyman of the parish. I think that is sufficient to stamp them as being the greatest loafers in the village. The people simply wanted to get rid of those gentlemen to whom they gave certificates. Many years ago I met several of what were then called "Jordan's lambs"; I had no expectation then of ever meeting the hon. gentleman in this House. I say I met several persons who came out while he was Agent-General, and the statement they made to me certainly did not bear out the statement made by the hon. gentleman just now. They were not selected at all. I met one in particular who told me that he had no notion of emigrating to Queensland on the very day he sailed—not even two hours before he sailed. He was picked up by the owners of the ship, who simply wanted to fill their vessel; and he came out here as a speculation. It might possibly have been a very good speculation for him. However, I think that hon. gentlemen are rather mistaken in thinking that labourers, because they are not called agricultural labourers, are not fit to work on farms. I think that almost any kind of labourer is a competent agricultural labourer if he only gets sufficient wages to induce him to take up agricultural work. It is simply because agricultural labourers are so poorly paid that the higher class of labourers, such as navvies and so forth, will not go to work on farms. They will not work for 7s. or 8s. a week and rations, when they can make 8s. a day at some other kind of labour. At the same time I believe that too many mechanics come out here when there is no employment for them. Any particular class of labour ought to be regulated according to the employment there is in the colony, and it ought not only to be the duty of the Government to call the attention of the Agent-General to the fact that there is a scarcity of a certain kind of labour, once in every six months or so, but they should watch the labour market and keep him informed as to the state of it, so that no mistakes might be made. The hon. member for Toowoomba (Mr. Aland) seemed gratified at the statement made by the hon. member for Dalby that mechanics could at the present time get 12s. a day, and assumed from that statement that wages are not being reduced. I can assure the hon. gentleman that, if he goes to some parts of the colony I could name, he will find that men are not being employed at any rate of wages—either 12s. or any other amount. I am afraid, therefore, the consolation he has taken to himself is of a very doubtful kind. There is a scarcity of employment, but whether the Government are to blame for that state of things, or whether other causes have brought it about, I am not going to say. Such is the fact, and I think that anyone who doubts that can scarcely use his senses as he ought to do. There is no doubt that there is a scarcity of employment compared with what there was two years ago. There are scores of men at the present time walking about idle in the North, who would be employed if business was only half as brisk as it was two years ago. Whether the men get 12s. a day, or whatever the wages may be, is a matter of indifference so long as they can get any employment at all. For the reason that there is no work to be had, many of our workmen—not only immigrants, but those who have been in the colony for some time—are going down south, where there is a greater demand for labour than there is here. I think, therefore, the Government would do well, as I have already said, to watch the labour market, and keep the Agent-General thoroughly informed from week to week; and the cost of a telegram would be nothing as compared with the benefit conferred upon the colony by keeping people away for whom there is absolutely no work. We can do no greater harm to the colony and the people who are here, than by bringing out men who can get no work. Now, I would like to know what the Government has done in the matter of keeping up the immigration lecturers? If they are in earnest in trying to bring out what they call agricultural labourers from England, Scotland, and Ireland—and if they have kept up the system of immigration lectureships in the country districts at home? Have the Government done that? I know that the former Government had several lecturers constantly employed throughout the country districts of both England and Scotland; and I am not quite certain whether the present Government have kept that system up.

The PREMIER: The late Government recalled them all before they left office.

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN: Perhaps that is so, but have the present Government reinstated them? It should not be enough to say that the late Government recalled the immigration lecturers, because it is only by keeping the agricultural labourers informed of the capacity of Queensland for the employment of such labour, and the advantages to be derived by coming here, that they will be induced to come. It is extremely hard to shift the agricultural labourers in England. They are like limpets sticking to a rock; and unless there is some means adopted to induce them to come out here they will not come. It must be borne in mind that nearly all the immigration companies in the United States have agents all through England and the continent of Europe, competing with the Australian colonies generally, and Queensland in particular; and unless Queensland is brought prominently before the labouring classes at home they will go to America. I think it would be much more

in the interests of the colony and the people themselves if the agricultural classes of England could be induced to come here instead of going to the United States. But, at all events, I would like the Government to bear these facts in mind: first, that the Agent-General should be kept informed of the state of the labour market; and secondly, that immigration lecturers should be appointed to induce the agricultural classes of England, Scotland, and Ireland to come here in preference to going to the States.

Mr. MOREHEAD said: When I moved the adjournment of the House I did not think the debate would take the turn it has taken, but the time has not been wasted. When the Immigration vote comes on of course it will be fully discussed, but I have got a word or two to say to the hon. member for South Brisbane, who, whenever the word "immigration" or anything dealing with it is used, rises in his place and pours a great deal of praise on his own back and censure upon those who have succeeded him in the office of immigration agent. He is continually in this House patting himself on the back for having brought out the best class of immigrants who ever came to the colony. Even within the last six months, a friend of mine, who was in the Burnett district at the time that these "lambs"—if I may call them so without offence—of Mr. Jordan's were introduced into the colony, described to me his experience with regard to them. He said they were a very bad lot; and, worse than that, they did not appreciate the services of the hon. member for South Brisbane. My friend described to me that there was a high hill between his station on the Burnett and the adjoining run, which these weary travellers had to pass over, not being able to get work, and having been induced to come out here under the belief that they would be able to pick up gold in the streets. On the top of this hill where they rested there was inscribed on a large tree these words—the spelling was not good but the sentiment apparently bore out the idea of the author admirably; —the inscription read thus:—"DAM JOR DAN." It is said there are "sermons in stones." Well, that was a sermon on a tree. With the permission of the House, I will withdraw the motion.

The PREMIER: No.

Mr. MACFARLANE said: I think the few remarks made by the hon. member for South Brisbane scarcely justify the hon. member for Balonne in thinking or saying that he blows his own trumpet in reference to the persons he has brought out here. The immigrants sent out by Mr. Jordan speak for themselves; and I have heard people who have been over twenty years in the colony say that they have seen no better class of immigrants than those sent out by that gentleman. And I think from the part I came from—Glasgow—some of the cream of society came out in consequence of Mr. Jordan's labours. I remember hearing him myself when he was in Glasgow, and I may say that what I heard him say then induced me to come to the colony. I thought that if only half of what he said in reference to Queensland were true I should be able to live, so I decided to come out. My hon. colleague was also induced to come out in the same way, so that we have the two members for Ipswich actually brought out by the labours of Mr. Jordan at home. Whether we are called "Jordan's lambs" or not I do not care; but I know that no better class of immigrants have been brought to the colony than those introduced under the *régime* of Mr. Jordan.

Mr. ANNEAR said: I shall be failing in my duty if I do not stand up on this occasion and say what I know of Mr. Jordan. I saw that gentleman in England twenty-three years ago, and the address I heard him deliver then induced me to come to this colony. I am quite sure that no class of men that ever came to Queensland have done more to raise themselves to a higher position and conduct themselves in a proper manner than the men introduced by Mr. Jordan from twenty-three to eighteen years ago. Mr. Jordan told the truth when he informed the working men at home that if they came out they would have to fight their way—perhaps more so than in the old country. One lecturer who was sent home is reported to have said that when the young women arrived in the colony they would find the squatters on the wharf ready to marry them; but I do not think their expectations have been realised in many cases. I did not rise, however, to refer chiefly to the question of immigration. I think the great question for which the adjournment was moved—which has occupied the minds of Australians for many months—should receive more consideration than it has up to the present time. I think the Government would have been very much to blame indeed had they not fallen in with the request of Commodore Erskine—that Mr. Chester should be allowed to accompany him to New Guinea. There is no doubt that when they get there Mr. Chester will recognise the chiefs he saw when he was there before; and he will then introduce the Commodore to them. He will say—"I came here before, but I was the wrong man; I had no business here. I thought I had a right to come, but I find that I was wrong. Allow me to introduce to you the Commodore, who is the legal representative of Her Majesty the Queen." No doubt that is what Mr. Chester will say when he gets to New Guinea. The question of annexation is a most important one; but it cannot be settled at once. We must wait till those gunboats arrive and are duly manned before we declare war against the British Empire; we are not in a position to do that yet. I wish to say one word now with reference to what fell from the hon. member for Dalby. I never knew an agricultural labourer in England who was not well able to plough. I have worked in places where scores and hundreds of them have been employed; but I never yet knew an agricultural labourer—one who was considered a real labourer—who was not a good ploughman.

Mr. FRASER said: Mr. Speaker,—I should not have risen had not some hon. members been rather hard on my hon. colleague. It is a commendable feature in any public man to have some enthusiasm, and we know that he is thoroughly enthusiastic in regard to immigration. I wish to allude particularly to some remarks made by the hon. member for Townsville, who described to us some of those characters who came out apparently under the auspices of my hon. colleague. It must be remembered, as my hon. colleague has often explained, that the immigrants alluded to were not selected by him at all. At the time they came out the selection was taken out of his hands and placed in the hands of the agents connected with the railway contractors; and that is how that particular class of people came out at the time my hon. colleague was immigration agent. The case alluded to by the hon. member for Balonne does not prove much. I remember very well about the same time crossing the river from South Brisbane in a ferry-boat with a party who had only been a short time in the colony. There was a good old lady in the boat, who said that if she had Mr. Jordan there the first thing she would do would be to drown him.

Mr. MOREHEAD: He won't drown.

Mr. FRASER: But I do not wish to stop there. I know that lady, and those connected with her. A considerable time afterwards I heard her speak of Mr. Jordan again, but this time she changed her tune considerably. She had acquired colonial experience, and had benefited by coming to the colony; and whenever she saw him would treat him kindly.

Mr. MOREHEAD: She may have been fascinated with him.

Mr. FRASER: If what the hon. member for Townsville said about lecturers be allowed to rest the impression may get abroad that the present Government are doing nothing at all with respect to reinstating them; but I understand that the most successful of them as regards procuring people connected with the agricultural industry in England—Mr. Randall—is at present making a tour of the colony, and informing himself of the requirements of the different industries of the colony prior to proceeding to England to procure labourers there. I do not know whether it is the intention of the Government to send a lecturer to Scotland; but if they have not entertained that idea hitherto I would press it strongly upon them, because I believe that at no time did there exist in that country more opportune circumstances for securing a most excellent and suitable class of immigrants. We know that in the Highlands there is much distress amongst the class known as "crofters," a capital class of men, than whom there is no better—a class fit for any agricultural labour whatever; and we know also that they are wending their way to Canada, a great many of their friends having preceded them. I am convinced that if the advantages of emigrating to Queensland were laid before them—advantages which, I maintain, are far superior to those which Canada holds out—we should secure a large number of a most desirable class of immigrants.

Question put and negatived.

CROWN LANDS BILL—COMMITTEE.

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

On clause 47, as follows:—

"If there are upon any land selected under this part of this Act any improvements, the selector shall pay the value of such improvements to the commissioner within sixty days from the date when the value thereof has been determined.

"Such value shall be that stated in the proclamation declaring the land open to selection, or, if no value was therein stated, shall be determined by agreement between the commissioner and the person entitled under the provisions of this Act to compensation for the improvements, and, in case of their not agreeing, the value shall be determined by the board in the manner hereinbefore provided."

Mr. MOREHEAD said the first portion of the clause said—

"If there are upon any land selected under this part of this Act any improvements, the selector shall pay the value of such improvements to the commissioner within sixty days from the date when the value thereof has been determined."

And then it went on to say——

The PREMIER: That has to be omitted.

Mr. MOREHEAD: That is to be omitted. Very well, then—

"Such value shall be that stated in the proclamation declaring the land open to selection, or if no value was therein stated, shall be determined by agreement between the commissioner and the person entitled under the provisions of this Act to compensation for the improvements, and, in case of their not agreeing, the value shall be determined by the board in the manner hereinbefore provided."

The PREMIER: That relates to unsurveyed land. It is proposed to be omitted.

Mr. MOREHEAD: What part is it to be put in?

The PREMIER: The printed amendment.

Mr. MOREHEAD: This clause has to be negatived then, I suppose?

The PREMIER: The first part has to be negatived

Mr. MOREHEAD said if the first part was wrong the second part was wrong.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS moved that all the words after the word "date" in the 3rd line be omitted, with the view of inserting the following words—"of the approval of the application."

Mr. DONALDSON: Why should sixty days be allowed?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS said the object of naming "sixty days" was that, in the case of unsurveyed land, considerable time would necessarily elapse before the survey was carried out, and therefore that period would give ample time to them to have the value of the improvements ascertained. The value would be ascertained before the land was open for selection.

Mr. DONALDSON: Why keep "sixty days" in the clause then?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS said there was no necessity to fix that period, and he would move presently that it be reduced to seven days.

The HON. SIR T. MCILWRAITH said he understood the amendment which the hon. member had moved was that all the words after the word "date" in the 3rd line be struck out. That was the amendment. What was the hon. member going to move an earlier amendment in regard to the sixty days for?

Mr. MOREHEAD: The hon. member will have to recommit the Bill.

The PREMIER said that no amendment had been put.

An HONOURABLE MEMBER: Yes.

The PREMIER said that no amendment had been put, because he stopped the Chairman when he was about to put the question. The hon. member for Balonne asked how the clause would read with the printed amendment, and his hon. friend the Minister for Lands informed him. Therefore when the Chairman was going to put the question he interjected that an earlier amendment was to be proposed.

The HON. SIR T. MCILWRAITH: Why do you not let the Minister for Lands go on with the business?

The PREMIER: Hon. gentlemen opposite do not wish the Committee to go on with business.

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN: You stopped him.

Mr. MOREHEAD said if the Minister for Lands—instead of mumbling something which he supposed the Chairman understood, and which he supposed hon. members opposite understood from force of habit—when he was moving that the 47th clause as it stood should be accepted by the Committee—if he had told them what amendments he proposed to move it would have saved a great deal of trouble. If the hon. gentleman had said the 47th clause was to be amended, in consequence of a change of front on the part of the Government, or to agree with some previous amendment, there would have been no trouble whatever. But the hon. gentleman did not choose to do that, and therefore had brought trouble on his own head by his own blundering.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS said the objection to the time being fixed at sixty days was raised by the hon. member for Warrego, and he understood the hon. gentleman was going to

move an amendment on it. He had pointed out why sixty days was adopted, and that there was no necessity for going into the matter then, and that he had suggested seven days as the time to be allowed. However, he would move now that the word "sixty" be omitted, with a view to insert the word "seven."

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

The HON. SIR T. McILWRAITH said that was not the agreement come to last night, so far as he understood it. It was admitted at once that sixty days was necessary in order to give time for the completion of the survey, and to ascertain the nature of the improvements and for payment for them; but when they had adopted the principle of survey before selection that was done away with altogether, and then it followed that they should make that payment coincident with the other payment—that was, the amount to be paid down on application. They should do that for the reason that they ought not to give possession of the land to a man until he had paid that item. On application for the land the man had to pay the first year's rent and the survey fee, and at the same time he ought to pay up the value of the improvements. Why should seven days intervene between the two payments? It left the alternative of a lawsuit. The man had got possession, and the only way they could get the money for the value of the improvements was by a lawsuit; whereas, if it were made part of the first payment—that was, the amount of improvements that was actually decided on by the board—he would not get the selection until he paid it. The board decided the amount of improvements, and that was the principle on which they had always gone.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS said the commissioner might have approved of an application, but before it was confirmed and the selector could get his land it had to be confirmed by the board, and there was only an interval of seven days between the time of the commissioner receiving the application and accepting it conditionally. On the board confirming it, the selector would have to pay for improvements within seven days, and he would not get notice of confirmation until after the payment for improvements had been made, and need not necessarily get the license either. The selector had no control over the land until he had got his license.

The HON. SIR T. McILWRAITH said that what the Opposition wanted to know was, why they should set up a difficulty in the working of the Bill when it was not necessary. The selector had got to pay the first year's rent, the survey fee, and also the amount of improvements, and why should there intervene seven days between the payment of the first two items and the payment of the third item? There was no reason whatever for it, but there was reason against it. The selector ought to be made to pay the whole fee at the one time.

The PREMIER said there was no difficulty whatever introduced into the working of the Bill by the scheme proposed by the Government, but there would be a difficulty introduced into its working by the scheme proposed by the hon. member. Suppose there were two or more applicants for the same piece of land, why should they have to pay down cash value for the improvements? Surely it was time enough to make that payment when it was known who would get the land! If the hon. gentleman would pay a compliment to the Government by reading the amendments proposed consequent on the adoption of the principle of survey before selection, he would see what was proposed was this: that when the application was approved —of course the applicant got notice—it was proposed that he should pay the value of the improvements; and it was proposed by an amendment in the 49th clause, which his hon. colleague would move, that, when that was done, the applicant should get a license to occupy, and that was the commencement of his title. So that he would not get his title until he paid the money. No question of a lawsuit, or any such difficulty as had been suggested, could therefore arise.

The HON. SIR T. McILWRAITH said he did not contend for a moment that it would lead to the amount actually being paid, but it had a tendency to lead to disputes between the party selecting and the outgoing party that could be avoided by stating plainly that he should pay, along with the first year's rent and the survey fee, the value of the improvements. The hon. gentleman asked why should a lot of applicants be obliged to pay the value of the improvements in the first instance? He (Hon. Sir T. McIlwraith) would ask why should they be obliged to pay anything at all until they knew whether their applications were confirmed or not? That argument applied to the first year's rent and the survey fee quite as much as to the value of the improvements. There was no reason at all why the applicants should be obliged to pay for the improvements until his application was confirmed.

Mr. MOREHEAD said the arguments of the hon. the leader of the Opposition were unanswerable. At the present time a person taking up new country had to pay for the license, even though it might prove, on inquiry, that the land did not exist, in which case the money was refunded. He thought seven days was an absurdity. The two things should be concurrent, and if the application was refused the money should be refunded. As the hon. the leader of the Opposition had pointed out, that was the system that already prevailed in regard to dealing with Crown lands and in other matters connected with Government business. The money should be tendered for the value of the improvements at the same time as the rent and survey fees, and if it were found that the application could not stand the money could be refunded.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS said the hon. gentleman no doubt thought his proposal the best, and the Government thought theirs the best. That was what it amounted to. As the hon. the Premier had pointed out, if there were half-a-dozen applicants for one piece of land upon which there were £1,000 worth of improvements, why should each of those men be required to pay down £1,000?

The HON. SIR T. McILWRAITH: Why should they pay the rent or survey fee?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: Because it was proof of their *bona fides;* but to require them to pay down a large sum of money like that was scarcely fair. As it was proposed to amend the clause, no injustice could be done to the owner of the improvements; he was secure, because no person could acquire any legal claim until they had paid the value of the improvements. In that way the owner of the improvements was sufficiently protected, and the Government were sufficiently protected by requiring payment of the first year's rent and survey fee.

Mr. MOREHEAD said: After all, the hon. gentleman's contention amounted to very little. He had sunk his sixty days; swallowed that at a gulp, and altered it to seven. Then, when asked to put the clause upon something like a proper footing, he said it would be a great injustice that applicants should be called upon to pay a large sum of money, perhaps £1,000. What

would the interest of that be for seven days? If the hon. gentleman strained at a gnat he would swallow a camel.

Mr. DONALDSON said his reason for asking the question he did respecting the retention of the sixty days was because he did not see any amendment of that period in the printed list of amendments. He could quite understand that in the original form of the Bill that provision would be necessary in order to ascertain the improvements on the land; but as they had decided that survey should be before selection, that difficulty had been remedied, as the improvements could be easily ascertained before the land was thrown open to selection. With regard to reducing the time to seven days, he thought it was a very reasonable amendment, because in many cases selectors might have to make arrangements before they could put down a large sum of money. He was, therefore, perfectly satisfied that the period should be reduced to seven days.

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN said if there was any reason for protecting the applicant at all, and enabling him to keep his money in his pocket for seven days, he thought there was still greater reason for enabling him to keep it until his application was confirmed. That was the time when he should be called upon to pay for the improvements, instead of seven days after his application was received. He did not suppose that the application could be confirmed within seven days after it was sent in, and he did not know why seven days should be taken any more than sixty, or sixty more than any other number. It might be three months before the application was confirmed; because there was no rule requiring the board to reject or approve of an application within a certain time. They were expected to do so within a reasonable time; and when the application was confirmed was the time the money should be paid for the improvements.

The HON. B. B. MORETON said he quite agreed with the hon. member for Townsville, that the time for the payment of the improvements should be on the confirmation of the application to select. He rose, however, chiefly for the purpose of asking the Minister for Lands if it would not be advisable to insert after the word "improvements" the words "as stated in the proclamation declaring the land open for selection," so as to fix the actual improvements that had to be paid for.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS said he did not think any other interpretation could be put upon the clause than that of the value of the improvements stated in the proclamation, and he therefore did not think the addition of the words suggested necessary.

Mr. JESSOP said he quite agreed with what had fallen from the hon. member for Townsville. It was quite possible that upon some occasions disagreements would arise as to the value of the improvements. The valuation in some cases might be considered excessive. He took it that the commissioner or surveyor would send in a report of the improvements on the land, and that that report would be adopted and given in the proclamation.

Mr. DONALDSON: No; it is done before that.

The PREMIER: The value of the improvements will be stated in the proclamation.

Mr. JESSOP said he would give a case in point. Supposing a piece of land was surveyed, and the surveyor estimated the improvements at £1,000, it was then proclaimed in the *Gazette*, and thrown open to selection. But the selector might not think that the improvements were of the value of £1,000, and he would appeal to the board to have them valued. He therefore thought it would be much better that the selector should not be called upon to pay for the improvements until the application was approved of.

Mr. JORDAN said that if the amendment was carried by which seven days would be substituted for sixty, the clause would read, according to the amendment which had been circulated amongst hon. members, to the effect that the value of the improvements should be paid within seven days from the approval of the application. One hon. gentleman opposite had suggested that the payment should be made on the approval of the application; and the amendment would make it within seven days of the approval.

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN said he did not see why there should be any obstacle, as the land was all to be surveyed before any selection took place. The amount of improvements should be known to the board and settled before the land was thrown open for selection at all; and if any applicant applied for the land the Government officer knew the value of the improvements, and the man would only have to pay down his first year's rent, and survey fee and improvements, and there would be nothing more required. The selection should be confirmed there and then, and the man would have possession, unless there were two applicants. In any case, the money should be paid down upon application.

Mr. JESSOP said he could see that a great deal of trouble would spring out of that. The land might be surveyed and the valuation put upon it two years before it was applied for. Who, then, was to dispute the valuation? The same trouble crept up in the case of Mr. Higson's land at Clermont, and in a case, which he brought before the House, of some land at Chinchilla. The land might be surveyed to-day, and a valuation put upon it by a surveyor, and it would be there until it was selected. If a selector considered the valuation was unfair he could appeal to the board. If the clause read "within seven days after the proclamation by the board" it would give time to apply and have a valuation made, so that the selector would have a fair chance.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS said he wished to withdraw his amendment, with a view of proposing another one. The present one provided that the value of the improvements should be paid to the commissioner. He thought it desirable that the land agent should be the person to receive those payments.

Amendment, by leave, withdrawn.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS moved that the word "commissioner" in the 46th line be omitted, with a view of inserting the words "land agent."

Question—That the words proposed to be omitted stand part of the question—put and negatived.

Mr. MOREHEAD said he should like to have a legal opinion from the Premier upon this point: The clause said, "If there are upon any land selected." Did not that show that it had passed from the Crown to the selector—would not that interpretation be put upon it?

The PREMIER: I do not think so.

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN said that, after all, the approval of the board or the commissioner did not matter very much, seeing that they had adopted the principle of survey before selection. The selections would all be surveyed, and the amount of rent and the survey fees would be contained in the proclamation. The value of the improvements would also be in the proclamation, and

why should any man who wished to take possession of a selection wait for the approval of the board? In speaking the other night, he mentioned the system which prevailed in America. There was no proof required there; a man went to the land agent and found out the blocks which were open to selection. He put his finger upon one and said "I want this." He then paid his money and there was an end of it. There was no proof to commissioners or boards, and why should there be here, under a similar system? What did the board require proof of—was it the status or the moral character of the applicant? If he paid his money why should he wait? He would like the Minister for Lands to answer that.

Mr. MOREHEAD: It is all specified in the proclamation.

The PREMIER said in those cases the approval of the board would almost be a matter of course, as at present was the approval of the Minister. It must be remembered that the right of selection was not open to everybody, under the Bill. It was limited in many ways: married women, for instance; persons under eighteen; any person who turned out to be an agent for anybody else; or any person who was the holder of a run in the same district under Part III. He could mention other cases. There might be men who had several other selections which they did not tell the commissioner about, and which might not be discovered until after the commissioner had granted the application. Other cases would suggest themselves; but all those matters would be discovered by the board, who would have to ascertain whether the applicant was competent to hold it or whether he was disqualified. It was necessary that there should be some power of revision before the lease was issued.

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN said the applicant took the land at his own risk, and there was an end to all those objections. If the applicant was under eighteen years it was an illegal selection, and it was forfeited at once. If a man had a selection elsewhere, and obtained another, it would be forfeited. The man selected at his own risk, and why, therefore, should that approval by the board be allowed to stand as an impediment to *bonâ fide* selectors, simply for the purpose of finding out the men who were not *bonâ fide* selectors? It was really preventing men from going upon the land at once.

Mr. MOREHEAD said that surely the Premier could not be serious in the objection he had raised against the argument of the hon. member for Townsville. If he were, he had better provide some system of advertising all applicants under the Bill, so that the board might be quite certain there was no one applying who was not entitled to do so. Surely the argument of the hon. member for Townsville was a good one! There was no getting outside it. If a man improperly took up a portion of land he suffered for it; he would very soon be found out. But if a man were not to get a piece of land until he could prove to the satisfaction of the board or the commissioner that he was entitled to it, there would be no settlement in the colony at all. It might take months to satisfy the board. Taking the question raised by the Premier himself—if the commissioner chose to raise that issue it might take months for an applicant to prove that he was really entitled to take up the land; whereas, on the other hand, as was pointed out by the hon. member for Townsville, if he took up land, and it was found he was in no way entitled to it, he would lose all he had put into it, and would be dispossessed.

The PREMIER said that it would be much better to make the inquiries first, than make them after the man had been in possession for some time, and then find out that he was wrongly so. It might cause a delay of a few days.

Mr. MOREHEAD: It will stop settlement.

The PREMIER said it would not. How much did the delay of getting the Minister's approval, as at present, stop settlement? The delay could not be more than a month in any case, probably less. The commissioner might make a mistake and grant an application wrongly, or an attempt might be made to defraud him; all those cases had been fully discussed before, and he hoped hon. members would find it inconvenient to discuss them again. They were discussed fully at that time, and all those reasons were given then.

Mr. MOREHEAD said that, supposing John Smith applied for a piece of land, according to the Premier it would be much better that he should not be put in possession until it was determined by the board that he was entitled to it; much better, in fact, that a little delay should take place than that afterwards he should be dispossessed of the land. But what machinery did the hon. gentleman propose for the purpose of getting at the fact that John Smith was entitled to apply? Did he propose to advertise that all the John Smiths should send in applications before a certain day, and that, failing that, the land should be given to the first John Smith? The hon. gentleman would, he hoped, see that the objection that had been taken was a very serious one.

The PREMIER said he would give another illustration. Supposing children of twelve or thirteen went in to select. That had been done under the present law; children of those ages had made declarations that they were over eighteen. The commissioner said, "I do not believe you are eighteen." "Oh yes, I am!" was the reply. "Then you had better give evidence of it." Some evidence was produced, and then the matter was decided. Under the present Bill the fraud would be discovered at once, instead of being allowed to go on for two or three years. Those things had already happened in the colony.

The HON. SIR T. MCILWRAITH said he remembered two or three cases of that kind, and he would like to know what there was in the Bill to prevent it. In the present case the fraud would be attempted before making a declaration, and it would be stopped by the board or land agent; so that the illustration of the Premier was not a case in point at all. There was a good deal in the contention of the hon. member for Townsville, though there was much to be said on both sides. It was quite evident that the Government had not given consideration to the effect that the principle of survey before selection would have on the Act. When the Committee discussed that question, it was admitted on all sides that the work and the responsibility of the commissioner and of the local boards proposed by the Opposition side would be caused to a considerable extent by the fact that there was free selection before survey. If it had been anticipated that a change would be made by introducing survey before selection, he believed that a different turn would have been given to the question. Any man who looked into the Bill would see that a great deal of the work of the commissioner was taken away by survey before selection. Although he (Hon. Sir T. McIlwraith) did not see how they were to do away with the commissioners altogether, yet the work had been so simplified and arranged that either the districts would have to be made bigger, or else simpler machinery provided. The Government, however, did not seem to have taken that

into consideration; they simply met the contention of the hon. member for Townsville by saying that the same machinery was necessary. He believed that three-fourths of the work had been taken away by the new principle, and therefore the machinery should be reduced.

Mr. SCOTT said he wished to point out that the difference between the clause proposed by the Government and the proposal of the hon. member for Townsville was that, in the former, the clause dealt with everyone, and that every applicant would suffer more or less by the delay; whereas if the proposal of the hon. member for Townsville were carried it would only meet a very few isolated cases. He thought, therefore, it would be very much better to do away with the clause altogether, and let those who broke the law suffer for it.

Mr. JORDAN said that he understood the hon. member for Townsville to move that confirmation by the board should be dispensed with. Under the 22nd, now the 24th clause, no decision of a commissioner would be final unless and until it had been confirmed by the board. That referred to the power of the commissioner to deal with the applications for land. To do away with the confirmation by the board before the Committee would be utterly inconsistent with the clause already passed.

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN said that the whole of the machinery for the approval of the board and the commissioner was adopted before survey before selection was passed; otherwise it would not, he was quite satisfied, have been in the Bill. The Premier had quite forgotten that. There was really no necessity for the machinery, and if the hon. gentleman considered the matter more seriously he would see it in that light.

Mr. JESSOP said he thought the question was very simple. Under the present law certain land was thrown open for selection on certain dates. Applications were sent in to the land agent, and the commissioner either granted or rejected them as the case might be. If he found that an applicant was not of proper age he refused his application; and if that was discovered afterwards, then the land was forfeited. He thought it would be about the same under the present Bill; if persons put in applications, those applications would be dealt with by the commissioner at the monthly meeting. But what he wanted to arrive at was, how the valuations were to be made. If the Minister for Lands would consent to the insertion of a clause providing that if a lessee considered the valuation unfair he might appeal to the board for a revaluation to be made, it would be a benefit to everybody; the selector would not have to pay an exorbitant amount for improvements, while the lessee would be protected from receiving too little for his property. They could not do that very well without giving a certain time. Under the present Act, when an application was received and approved by the commissioner, the applicant could go and take possession of the land and utilise it until the confirmation would come from the board. By making the payment for the value of improvements due after a certain number of days they would give the commissioner time, if the valuation was not correct, to revalue it.

Mr. FERGUSON said the hon. member seemed to forget that there was a change in the Bill. The hon. member forgot that the land had now to be surveyed before anyone could apply for it. He wished to know now, from the Minister for Lands, whether the whole of the conditions of the application would have to be fulfilled before the application was confirmed. He knew some young men in the colony whose parents were in England, and before they could prove their age they would have to send home to their parents for the registers of their birth. If they wanted to select land they would be kept in suspense until they proved all the conditions required. All obstacles in the way of immediate settlement upon the land should be removed. If an applicant applied for land, and it was found out afterwards that he had not complied with the conditions—and that could be very soon found out—he would have to suffer for it by the forfeiture of his selection.

Mr. NORTON said that there was something wrong about the clause. The commissioner might, of course, satisfy himself in some cases that the applicant was entitled to take up land; but it would be impossible for him to satisfy himself upon that point in all cases. The applicant might try to satisfy the commissioner that he was entitled to take up land, and the commissioner might try to satisfy himself, but it would still be impossible that in all cases the commissioner could arrive at an absolute conclusion on the point. The applicant might try to deceive the commissioner, or he might be perfectly honest and sincere, and yet be a stranger from another district, and the commissioner could not be sure that he was entitled to select; and if the applicant took up the land he would do so at the risk of having it forfeited. Again, the commissioner might feel sure that an applicant was entitled to select, and his application might be confirmed by the board, and after all, if it was afterwards found that the land was illegally taken up, it was bound to be forfeited. Men coming into the colony and going into a district to take up land would be anxious to go on to it as soon as possible. They did not want to have the confirmation of their application delayed. They did not want to have to go to a place and then wait a month or more to have their application confirmed. If the land was surveyed and thrown open to selection, and the value of the improvements upon it proclaimed, the applicant might go upon it the next day, and if afterwards it was found that his application was illegal he would be liable to be turned off as soon as that was found out. He thought there was a real objection in the delay of the confirmation. If a man attempted to take up land by fraud, he did see how he could possibly be found out until afterwards. In some cases the commissioner might be right, but he could not be right in all.

The PREMIER said he did not know whether it was intentional on the part of some hon. members, but somehow a discussion was always being got up on the Bill upon something which was not before the Committee at all at the time. The subject under discussion now was when the improvements were to be paid for.

Mr. NORTON said that was quite true, but it had been suggested that the clause was not wanted at all.

The PREMIER: It must be wanted. The improvements must be paid for some time.

Mr. MOREHEAD said he would like to see a little more energy thrown into the debate by the other side to help to get the Bill through a little quicker. To some of the members on the other side it did not appear to be a matter of very great consequence. The Premier had the whole of the work on his own shoulders, and the Minister for Lands hardly deigned to explain the amendments — if he understood them — which he was continuously bringing in on his own clauses. The Premier and the Minister for Lands had only themselves to blame for the delay. They could hardly extract any information from them, and they hardly condescended to answer the arguments brought forward on the Opposition side of the Committee. The hon.

member talked about their being absurd and laughable; they were very nearly making the Government absurd and laughable last night when they only escaped defeat, in a division, by the skin of their teeth. He hoped the Premier would put a little more life into the debate, and let them understand that he at all events was in earnest about the Bill. A large number of members on the other side did not appear to care two straws whether the Bill became law or not.

The HON. SIR T. MCILWRAITH said he was struck by the remark which the hon. Premier had made just now, to the effect that when a certain clause was proposed a discussion arose about something else. He had himself remarked the extraordinary way in which the debate was allowed to deviate from the subject under discussion, but hon. members would talk about what they liked in Committee. They always did that, and it required some force from the other side—from the Minister in charge of the Bill—to direct the discussion into the channel in which it should go, and bring back hon. members to the subject under discussion. The hon. member could not accuse members on the Opposition side, any more than members on his own side, of wandering away from the subject, because members on the Government side had followed exactly in the same way and talked upon any subject started in the debate. It was particularly the duty of the Government to bring back the Committee to the actual point at issue, and try and force by their speeches—in which, of course, argument should appear—their views through the Committee. Instead of that they had got a lazy Minister for Lands, who sat still and never said anything until something provoked him to be angry, and then he rose and spurted out something or other. To enable the Bill to go through smoothly, hon. members of the Government should endeavour to understand the objections brought against it, and endeavour to meet those objections. He had done more himself, upon that clause, to bring both sides of the Committee to an agreement than either the Minister for Lands or the Premier. He could not understand why they wandered away from the subject under discussion at all, and he attributed their having done so entirely to the want of force and energy on the part of the Ministry in keeping members to the subject.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS said that, no matter how carefully a Bill was framed, anyone could critically find fault with it, and say that if so-and-so were to happen something would go wrong. What else had the hon. member been doing but that? He now wanted to know why the commissioner should not at once hand over the land to the selector. He had been told over and over again why the Government thought that should not be done. They did not desire to delegate so much power to the commissioner: they wished to leave that power in the hands of the board.

The HON. SIR T. MCILWRAITH: I rise to tell the hon. member that I made use of no such argument, nor of any words which would imply it. The hon. member is talking simple nonsense.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS said he did not know what was the exact point raised by the hon. member, except where he chose to remark upon his (the Minister for Lands') inattention or inability to carry out his duty. He confessed that, while he had the hon. the Premier to deal with matters he did not quite understand, he was quite prepared to leave them to him. He was always prepared to give way to a better man than himself. The hon. leader of the Opposition claimed to have done more towards putting the Bill as far forward as it was now than any other member on either side.

The HON. SIR T. MCILWRAITH: I said nothing of the sort.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS said he must have misunderstood the hon. member. The question now before the Committee was whether the commissioner or the land agent was to receive payment. If the hon. member did not object to the land agent being substituted for the commissioner, he should allow the amendment to go, and deal with the rest afterwards.

Mr. MOREHEAD said he thought the political Rip van Winkle, who was at present Minister for Lands, and who appeared to have awakened from a thirty years' sleep to take his place in that Chamber, should not put in the mouths of hon. gentlemen opposite him words they never made use of. He quite agreed with the hon. member in thinking that he did not understand the Bill. The only portion of the Bill the hon. member ever did understand had been eliminated, and he had now to fall back on the real father of the Bill—the Premier—to elucidate it. He was very glad they had wrung from the hon. member an admission of weakness. It was gratifying to learn that after all the hon. member was only human. It would be better if he would continue slumbering, and let the Premier attend to the Bill. It ought to be in the hands of someone who understood it, and the hon. member had confessed that he did not understand it. The hon. member would no doubt be much more comfortable sleeping than legislating, and it would certainly be better for the colony.

Mr. ALAND said that, if the Minister for Lands occasionally misunderstood hon. members opposite, he was continually being misunderstood by them. He did not think the hon. Minister for Lands said that he did not understand the Land Bill. What the hon. member said, or rather what he meant——

Mr. MOREHEAD: Oh! An interpretation clause.

Mr. ALAND: What the Minister for Lands said was that he was quite willing to give way to a better man than himself, meaning that he was willing to allow the Premier to deal with the hon. gentlemen opposite when they constantly misinterpreted the clauses of the Bill.

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

The MINISTER FOR LANDS moved the omission of the word "sixty," with the view of inserting the word "seven."

Mr. MOREHEAD asked why they should make it seven days? He thought the argument of the hon. leader of the Opposition, that the payments should be concurrent, was worthy of an answer by the Government. He did not wish to obstruct the amendment if the majority of the Committee were in favour of seven days. It was a considerable coming down on the part of the hon. Minister for Lands.

Amendment agreed to.

The PREMIER said he wished to refer to a suggestion made by the hon. member for Townsville which seemed worthy of consideration. He had raised the question whether the money for the improvements should be paid within seven days of the date of the commissioner's approval, or within seven days of the confirmation by the board. As the land was not actually available to the selector until after the confirmation by the board, the matter might be worth considering.

In answer to Mr. JESSOP,

The PREMIER said it had been pointed out many times that the value of any improvements on land declared open for selection would be stated in the proclamation. A man would know before he went to purchase a piece of land exactly what he had to pay. If he did not like to pay it, he could let the lot alone.

On the motion of the MINISTER FOR LANDS, the words "when the value thereof has been determined" were omitted, and the words "of the approval of the application" substituted.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS moved that the 2nd paragraph of the clause be omitted.

Amendment put and passed.

Mr. MOREHEAD said there seemed to be something remarkable about the number seven. In the words of the poet, "We are seven." Then there were seven days in the week, seven churches, seven golden candlesticks, seven devils, seven Ministers, and seven members of the Elections and Qualifications Committee; and yet not one of them afforded a good and sufficient reason why the number seven should have been inserted in the clause.

Clause, as amended, passed.

On clause 48, as follows :—

"No person shall at the same time, either in his own right or as a trustee for any other person, except as hereinafter provided, hold in the same district two or more farms of the same class, the aggregate area of which is greater than the maximum area of land for the time being permitted to be selected as a farm of that class in that district."

The MINISTER FOR LANDS moved that the following new paragraph be added to the clause :—

Nor shall any person at the same time, either in his own right or as a trustee for some other person, except as hereinafter provided, hold in the colony two or more agricultural farms, the aggregate area of which is greater than nine hundred and sixty acres, or two or more grazing farms, the aggregate area of which is greater than twenty thousand acres.

The HON. SIR T. MCILWRAITH said that, under the clause as introduced, a selector might take up 960 acres in every agricultural district of the colony and 20,000 acres in every pastoral district of the colony. Surely, in introducing so important an amendment, the Minister for Lands should have some explanation to offer to the Committee! They always expected reasons to be given for amendments; and the amendment just proposed introduced one of the greatest changes that had taken place in the Bill.

The PREMIER said the hon. member knew perfectly well the reasons for the change, because the amendment had been notified for the last two or three months. The error which it amended was pointed out on the second reading of the Bill, and was admitted by the Government; and that had been known to the Committee for two or three months. The hon. member wanted to know why an amendment of that kind was proposed. The Government were not ashamed, when they found they had made a mistake, to admit it, and they gave the earliest notification of their intention to correct it. That was the reason why.

The HON. SIR T. MCILWRAITH said he heard for the first time that the Government had made an error. He knew the Government had made a gross mistake, and had tried to force it on the Opposition, and when they found the Opposition would not stand it, and were determined to carry an amendment similar to the one now proposed, the Government came down with their own amendment. The hon. gentleman would lead the Committee to suppose that it was actually only a clerical error, whereas it was a deliberate part of the policy of the Minister for Lands. That amendment marked the effect the Opposition had had on the Bill. When the Bill was brought in, it contained one of the most gigantic schemes for dummying that had ever been introduced in any of the colonies. The Opposition had gradually eliminated that element from it. He objected to the Minister for Lands trying to sneak in an amendment of that sort without saying a word about it. No doubt it was a most important amendment; and if the Minister for Lands had changed his policy he ought to say so, and tell the Committee his reasons. He (Hon. Sir T. McIlwraith) claimed for the Opposition the credit of having kept the country from being handed over to the pastoral lessees——

The PREMIER: Oh, oh!

Mr. MOREHEAD: Hear, hear!

The HON. SIR T. MCILWRAITH: In the way in which it was intended by the Government. They did not know the kind of man they had as Minister for Lands, nor the kind of man they had as Premier. The Government had sold themselves, body and soul, to their Minister for Lands; but they were very tired of him now. The present clause was one of those which showed the kind of stuff the Opposition were made of. The Minister for Lands thought he would be able to get through any kind of Bill for the squatters — thought he was going to play a splendid game, pleasing his squatter friends while deluding the men who sat alongside him; and he believed the hon. gentleman was assisted to a great extent in that by the Premier. But they had found out that the Opposition had done their duty as an Opposition. Exactly what he predicted last year had happened. He predicted that the present Government would have a Minister for Lands who would try in every possible way to serve the squatters—that they would pay back the debt they owed the squatters for turning out the late Government. The present Minister for Lands was actually put in to pay back that debt, and he had brought in the Bill before the Committee; but the Opposition had exposed the true state of affairs. No wonder the Minister for Lands had not a word to say when he proposed an amendment of that sort, and no wonder the Premier told the Committee that the leader of the Opposition knew perfectly well why the Minister for Lands said nothing upon it. He (Hon. Sir T. McIlwraith) knew the reason perfectly well, but he thought it was his duty, as leader of the Opposition, to insist that he should tell those reasons to the Committee. But the Minister for Lands was not man enough to state them, or he would do so. The hon. gentleman had tried to pass a Bill by which a squatter, in every district in the colony——. He was sorry the tea-hour had arrived, for it compelled him to break off in the middle of a sentence.

The PREMIER said the hon. gentleman had not observed in the speech he made just now the old proverb that "self-praise is no recommendation."

Mr. MOREHEAD: Why does not the Minister for Lands think about that?

The PREMIER said the leader of the Opposition would have the country believe that he was the great opponent of land monopoly; that his struggles throughout the session, and throughout the discussions on that Bill, had been to prevent land monopoly—to prevent the aggregation of large areas of land into a few hands. Surely the hon. gentleman did not expect the country to believe him when he posed as the champion of anti-land-monopoly! The memory of the country was not so short. The people remembered perfectly

well, not only what took place during the last two years' tenure of office of the late Government, but also the struggles of hon. members on the Opposition side when the Committee were dealing with an earlier part of the Bill to secure more favourable terms than were proposed by the Government to be given to the pastoral lessee. Yet the hon. gentleman wanted the country to believe that he was the person who wished to check land monopoly. He (the Premier) was quite sure the hon. gentleman would get all the credit he deserved from the country for any amendments made in the Bill by the Opposition. He did not think the hon. gentleman would get more credit than he deserved. The necessity for the particular amendment under consideration was admitted by the Government at an early stage. If it was any satisfaction to the hon gentleman to know it, he (the Premier) would tell him that the suggestion came, not from the Opposition, but from the Government side of the Committee.

The HON. SIR T. McILWRAITH said he did not know how the Premier could say that the suggestion came from the Government side of the Committee, or how he could establish the statement that at an early stage of the Land Bill the proposition to alter clause 48, as was now proposed, was admitted by the Government. He (Hon. Sir T. McIlwraith) was not present at the second reading of the Bill; but he could point out that the hon. gentleman who then led the Opposition took exception to the clause in the same terms that he (Hon. Sir T. McIlwraith) had done that evening. He could point out, also, that several members on his own side, before he spoke, took the same objection to the clause. He could point out, also, that he, the first time he spoke on the Bill, spoke very strongly on the clause; pointing out the great concession that was being granted, and that it would have the result of the lands of the colony being dummied.. And he could point out, further, that it was only at a very late stage of the Bill that the Government became alive to the fact that there was not the slightest chance of the clause, as proposed by them, actually passing. Why, it was only after the Bill had been in committee for some considerable time—unfortunately, there was no date given on the amendments as put before the Committee, but it could be very easily ascertained by the Colonial Secretary from the Printing Office when the new clause was actually proposed and printed; but he remembered distinctly that it was not proposed until they had been in committee for some considerable time. The Government heard all the arguments on the second reading, and then, when the Bill got into committee, and a number of clauses had been debated, they came down with several amendments, among which the one now under discussion figured—he could not say prominently, because no attention whatever was drawn to it by members on the other side. Since he spoke before dinner, more than one hon. member opposite had claimed that they themselves had objected to the clause as it originally stood. He did not deny them all the credit they deserved for that, and he admitted that objections were taken from the other side of the Committee, but that did not at all detract from what he had said—that the amendment was forced on the Government by the action of the Opposition, and that it was never admitted until the Bill had been for some considerable time in committee. Now, the very construction of the clause showed that the Government had no intention whatever of granting the condition imposed in the amendment, because the clause in the original Bill said:—

"No person shall at the same time, either in his own right or as a trustee for any other person, except as hereinafter provided, hold in the same district two or more farms of the same class, the aggregate area of which is greater than the maximum area of land for the time being permitted to be selected as a farm of that class in that district."

And then the amendment went on to say that neither should they hold more than the ultimate maximum in any agricultural or pastoral areas in any of the districts. That was clearly an amendment brought about by the discussion on the second reading, and, as he had said before, was suggested after much progress had been made. In fact, they had got up to the 12th clause before the amendments were brought down at all. He did not know whether, under the present clause, they would be able to discuss the point, but a discussion certainly would arise as to whether 960 acres was really a sufficient area to be selected, and subject to become freehold in the different districts in the colony. A great many members thought the amount of 960 acres too little. But there was an amendment they ought to have before they went on to the discussion of the clause, and he would suggest that the Government ought to intimate what they proposed as an amendment on the subject that was brought up for discussion the other night. They had introduced a perfectly new element—namely, survey before selection—into the Bill, under which the Government or the board would have to survey the land before throwing it open. Well, it was quite possible, as pointed out by him the other night, that a man might exercise the right of selecting half-a-dozen surveyed allotments, but, according to the Bill as it stood at present, he could perform the residence condition only on one. Say a man took up a 100-acre selection. Under the Bill as it stood his right of making any portion freehold was confined to that 100 acres on which he actually resided. Now, he understood the Premier to promise the other night that he would submit an amendment to meet a difficulty of that kind. The Government had not yet introduced an amendment to meet such a case, and a statement of the Minister for Lands as to the intentions of the Government upon that subject would facilitate the business of the Committee. He did not see how they could intelligently discuss the clause before them until they had that information. He hoped the Minister for Lands understood him. At all events, whether he did or not, he would give him an opportunity of explaining.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS said the hon. gentleman wanted to know whether, in the event of a man taking up one selection not of the maximum quantity, and other selections being added to it up to or within the maximum quantity, he would be allowed to make a freehold of more than the one selection. There was no intention on the part of the Bill to allow that. The selection a man took up and resided upon he would be enabled to make a freehold of, but the others he would not. He would only hold the remainder under the leasing conditions of the Bill. That was the intention of the Bill and the intention of the Government.

The HON. SIR T. McILWRAITH: You do not intend to alter that?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: No. In the speech the hon. gentleman made before tea it was very evident that the clause under discussion had the effect of letting loose all his pent-up bitterness towards the Bill, and towards himself (the Minister for Lands) in particular, and the amendment seemed to have especially excited his ire, because it added to the difficulty that any person would find in evading the restrictions imposed by the Bill. He could not understand the animosity of the hon. gentleman in any other light than that.

The hon. gentleman wanted to know why, instead of allowing people to take up 20,000 acres in any district of the colony, they had been restricted to one district. His own opinion was that it would not have mattered seriously whether it was allowed or not, inasmuch as it did not give any additional facilities for dummying—which was the reason the hon. gentleman assigned for objecting to the change—because if a man attempted to dummy he could carry out his schemes in one district as effectually as in another. However, the Government had determined that it would be better to restrict the selector to a 20,000-acre holding in one district of the colony instead of in each district. He had always maintained that if a man made proper use of 20,000 acres—if he utilised the land in the way intended by the Bill—he would do no harm even if he held 20,000 acres in every district in the colony; but he was satisfied, at the same time, that if a man profitably invested the money required to work a 20,000-acre selection he must necessarily confine himself to one holding. That any portion of the Bill had been framed, conceived, or advised by him in the interest of the squatters, he left the genuine squatters to answer for themselves. If the squatters thought it was framed in their interests, and not in the general interests of the country, all that he could say was that the squatters were very ungrateful, as there was no man who had been more abused by them than he had been. There were some squatters—not genuine squatters—who desired to convert their squattages into large freeholds. Those were the men who detested and abominated the Bill, and everyone who had anything to do with it; but the true squatter had always recognised his true position. And no man in the country, who would compare his action since he had taken a part in politics, in reference to the land laws of the colony and the squatting class, with the action of the leader of the Opposition and his Government for the last three or four years they held office, would ever come to any other conclusion than the one he had always maintained was due to him—that he had acted in the interests of the country generally, and not in the interest of the class to which he belonged; and no word he had ever uttered could lead to the conclusion that he had ever favoured the squatters as a class. But that he respected and admired the genuine squatter, he would admit under any circumstances. There was no class he admired more; but when they came to the men the hon. gentleman opposite had allowed to obtain in the country—by a perversion of the law, he maintained—70,000 acres or 80,000 acres of land in one block, he left the country to judge whether that hon. gentleman acted in the true interests of the country or whether he (Mr. Dutton) did. Then there was the action of the hon. gentleman in regard to the sale of lands. Enormous tracts of country in many districts were sold to the leaseholders—not to the genuine squatter, but to the men who desired to turn leaseholds into freeholds. The hon. gentleman maintained that previous Governments had done the same thing; but a comparison would show that while previous Governments obtained from 15s. to 30s. an acre, the hon. gentleman's Government obtained only 10s. an acre, ostensibly, at auction. Which party, he would ask, had worked the land laws for the benefit of those who wished to acquire large estates? The hon. gentleman continually posed as the opponent of all attempts to acquire large estates; but what had he done to prevent the acquisition of large freeholds? He freely admitted that previous Governments made a mistake in selling so much land at auction; but that mistake was nothing when compared with the action of the late Government in selling, for 10s. an acre, land for which £1 an acre had been previously paid, as was proved by official records. There could be no doubt, in the minds of members of the Committee who looked at the matter in an impartial light, that the real difficulty—the real animosity to the Bill and to that clause especially—was the very effective restriction which the amendment proposed that night interposed between those who desired to acquire land improperly and those who were willing to take it up in accordance with the provisions of the Bill. He maintained that the measure would check dummying, and that no man would take the risk dummying would entail under its provisions.

Mr. MOREHEAD said he was glad the leader of the Opposition had galvanised the Minister for Lands into life. He hoped it would not be temporary, but that the hon. gentleman would often address the Committee in the happy style in which he had just delivered himself. But it appeared that he was not at all unlike the fly on the wheel of the buggy, which, as the wheel went round, said, "What a dust I make!" He seemed to think he was running the whole concern. It was a sort of new revelation the hon. gentleman had made. He said that the leader of the Opposition had poured out all his pent-up bitterness on the head of the Minister for Lands; but he (Mr. Morehead) thought that all the pent-up bitterness had been poured out on the heads of hon. gentlemen on the Opposition side by the Minister for Lands. Up to the present time they had not shown that disbelief in human honesty which had been shown by the Minister for Lands, who had gone from Dan to Beersheba, and found the country barren — there was not one honest man, save the exponent of his own particular religion. The hon. gentleman, and the Premier also, had stated that the amendment was the outcome of suggestions made by hon. gentlemen on that side. That might or might not be true; but, at any rate, the suggestion came from the Opposition side. It was pointed out by the Minister for Lands on the second reading that the clause as it stood would enable people to take up 20,000 acres in every district of the colony, except on the lessee's own run. He also pointed out that three trustees, holding a joint trust, would be entitled to take up 20,000 acres each. Now he had the pleasure and the privilege of replying to the hon. the Minister for Lands, and he would again point out that if the clause passed as it stood in the Bill at the present time it would give such a power of dummying to the pastoral tenant as had no existence in any land legislation of the colonies. He not only said that inside the House, but he had said it outside the House. He had said it over and over again before that Committee that the Bill, as it stood, was the best dummying Bill for squatters that ever was introduced into that House, or into any other House; and he maintained that opinion still, notwithstanding the modifications introduced by the Minister for Lands—modifications compelled by the action of the Opposition side of the Committee. He would ask the Premier to point to any speech made by any hon. member who supported the Government, which set up that contention. Let the hon. the Premier look through the record of all the speeches made on the second reading of the Bill or subsequent debates on the Bill, and if he showed him any speech in which any of those hon. members pointed out the results in regard to dummying that would accrue from the passing of the clause as it originally stood, then he would admit he was wrong. He would

make one honourable exception in the case of, he thought, Mr. Kates, the hon. member for Darling Downs, who did point it out; but with that single exception it had never been pointed out by one hon. member supporting the Government, that the Bill as it stood would have been the greatest dummying measure that ever was introduced into that House. He thought they might go a little further. Surely, having regard to what had taken place in the past—having regard to the fact that large areas of land had been dummied, or were alleged to have been dummied, the Government should have had that point clearly before them as one of the main points they had to avoid in any legislation they were to bring into that House. Therefore they could only suppose that the Government did that either by design or gross carelessness. They could not plead ignorance. He defied the Premier to plead ignorance—steeped up to the neck as he was in those dummying cases that took place under the Act of 1868—of the effect of the clause as drafted into the Bill now; and that the amendment had been brought upon him by the action of the Opposition—and their action only—with the exception of the hon. member for Darling Downs (Mr. Kates). He thought that the hon. the Premier therefore was entitled to state fully and clearly the reason that had led him—because he held him to be the father of the Bill, the hon. the Minister for Lands having abandoned his bantling and handed it over to the tender mercies of the Premier—to explain fully what had led him to make that great alteration in policy in the construction of that Bill. And he would ask the hon. gentleman, further, whether he thought that even that alteration would prevent the land being taken up in the way that he had stated it was likely to be taken up under the existing law. It might be more difficult. It might be a little more difficult, but it could not be very much more difficult. The lands would be taken up. It would simply mean employing, he took it, a few more individuals than it would be necessary to employ under the existing law. And the Minister for Lands told them—as he had told them, not only that night, but on many other occasions—that he would abandon or cause to be abandoned all declarations, all forms of oath, almost every obligation that was necessitated under existing Land Acts. The hon. gentleman had done what he (Mr. Morehead) had said before in that Committee—made dummying simple to men of easiest honour, and had actually removed those objections which had in many cases prevented the land being illegally taken up. He now told the Minister for Lands that, even if the clause passed in the modified form it was proposed to pass it, it would lead to the people surrendering their rights to the lands to the squatters for the next thirty years. He did not know what the hon. gentleman just said, as the hon. gentleman mumbled. He did not hear what he said, but if he would speak loud enough he would answer him. He said that even passing it now in that modified form they were putting an implement into the hands of the squatter or pastoral tenant that if he chose to make use of he could certainly use to his own advantage, and possibly to the great detriment of the State. The hon. the Minister for Lands had also said a great deal about what he was pleased to term the genuine squatter. Perhaps the hon. gentleman would put something into the interpretation clause as to what he considered was a genuine squatter, and what was not a genuine squatter. They should certainly have some interpretation on that point. The hon. gentleman had said he was a friend of the genuine squatter. What was a genuine squatter? Was he a man who sold a run outside for a large price, and cleared to what was a miserable country on the side of a creek; and having derived every possible benefit that he could derive from the outside holding, then said those men holding good country should suffer for it; or was the genuine squatter the man who went out into the interior and developed that country, and spent hundreds of thousands of pounds for the benefit of not only himself, but of the community? Let them have an interpretation from the Minister for Lands as to what his description of a genuine squatter was. The interpretation of the hon. gentleman might be right, or his might be right. He held the man benefited the State most who used to the best advantage the country which he rented from the State. He should like to hear from the Minister for Lands what he conceived to be a genuine squatter, and what he (Mr. Morehead) supposed was the false one—the one who was not a genuine squatter. If the hon. gentleman held himself up to be a genuine squatter, all he could say was that that was not the reputation he was held in by those who followed the same occupation as himself.

The PREMIER said he was very sorry the hon. gentleman who last sat down had so poor an opinion of the respectability of the class whom he especially represented in that House.

Mr. MOREHEAD: I represent no class.

The PREMIER: According to the hon. member, the squatter intended, as soon as the Bill was passed, to make use of it to defraud the country to the greatest possible extent.

Mr. MOREHEAD: I say it can be done.

The PREMIER: The hon. gentleman said they will do it.

Mr. MOREHEAD said they would do nothing of the sort. He rose to correct the hon. the Premier. He said that in the Bill the same power would be given to the squatter, if he so elected, without limitation, to dummy the lands as under the present law.

The PREMIER said he hoped the squatters were not so bad as the hon. member seemed to think they were; but if they were, they could defy them to dummy under the Bill. He did not see that the question of dummying had anything to do with the clause. As hon. members opposite had fired off their rocket, and had pointed out how deeply the country was indebted to them by requiring the amendment to be introduced, surely they might be pleased to accept it! On the contrary, they desired to take credit for introducing it and yet to prevent its passing. They could not do both. What had dummying to do with it at all? Surely the question of dummying could come in under the conditions that were laid down in the Bill to prevent the land being taken up in the interest of other persons than the nominal holders, but it could not come in there. The clause was intended to prevent monopoly, as the Minister for Lands pointed out. He was quite aware that hon. members opposite talked a great deal about dummying, and the facilities for dummying. The hon. member said that the amendments introduced at the instance of the Opposition had done a great deal towards preventing it. No single amendment had been introduced or suggested up to the present time by the Opposition to prevent dummying. He thought they might consider now what was to be the maximum—whether 20,000 acres for the whole colony for one person for grazing farms, and as to whether 960 acres was sufficient for agricultural farms. No one but the hon. member for Mulgrave had suggested that a larger area ought to be given.

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN said he was not going to discuss the question whether the amendments proposed by the Government had been forced upon them by the Opposition or not. It was a matter of the utmost indifference from what side amendments emanated, so long as they were good amendments. But he had observed that if amendments did emanate from the Opposition side, whether they were good or bad, they were certain to be rejected, because, as the hon. gentleman stated, he suspected anything coming from that side. Therefore, all hon. members on that side could do was to state their opinions, and let the Government bring in amendments if they agreed with the opinions expressed. That had, in fact, been done. He knew that he had found fault with the large quantity of land that might be taken up by one man in grazing farms all over the colony, and expressed his opinion that he should be restricted to one district. Whether his finding fault with it had had any effect upon the Government or not he did not know. The hon. gentleman said that the Opposition not only wished to take credit for introducing the amendment, but they wanted to prevent it from passing. Now, who had prevented the amendment from passing? When he (Hon. J. M. Macrossan) entered the Chamber after tea, he heard the Minister for Lands addressing the Committee in such a style that if the late Opposition had been present they would certainly have kept the discussion going for three hours afterwards. The hon. gentleman went back to the old story about the late Government giving away so much land to the squatters, and it was just as well to bring him to book at once upon that point. He had challenged the hon. gentleman several times before in the House to prove his statements, but he had never attempted to do so. Now, he (Hon. J. M. Macrossan) moved the other day for a return of the number of acres given away under the pre-emptive clause—54 of the Act of 1869—and what did it prove? He had just run the figures up roughly since the hon. gentleman had spoken, and it proved quite the reverse of what he had stated and had been continually stating in the House. He found by that return that the total number of acres taken up under the pre-emptive clause of the Act of 1869 amounted to 750,080 acres. He was not going to enter into the matter now so fully as he should have done had he had more time to examine into it, but he would take the greatest number of acres of pre-emptions for which executive approval had been given by the last two Governments—the Government of which he was a member for four years and more, and the Government of which the present Premier was a member for nearly five years—and what did he find? That the number of acres given away by the Government of which the hon. the Premier was a member was actually more than two for every one given by the last Government. So what did the hon. gentleman's statement come to? He ought certainly to correct his imagination, and keep it more in harness and under control than to allow it to run riot as he did whenever he was talking about land. Taking the selections on page 4 of the return, the executive approval of which was given by the Government of which the present Sir Arthur Palmer was Premier—the whole of the pre-emptions on that and the following page, and ten on the next page, were approved of by the Government that came into office in January, 1874, the number of acres amounting to 491,520; while the number of acres given by the last Government was 215,040—more than two to one being given by the previous Government. Let the hon. gentleman correct his imagination and keep to facts. If he did so he would very likely be able to pass the Bill a great deal more quickly than he had done. He allowed himself almost every other night to get into a passion about something said on the Opposition side, and immediately he did so he flew off at a tangent and repeated his old statements about members on the Opposition side acquiring lands, or helping their friends to do so. If anyone had helped their friends in that way, it was certainly hon. gentlemen opposite. The figures he had quoted did not bear upon the question of sales by auction at all. If the hon. gentleman furnished a return of sales by auction, he would find that the difference between those sales made by the two Governments of which he had spoken was more than three to one. So that there was not a scintilla of truth in his statement; and instead of the hon. gentleman at the head of the Government getting up and lecturing the Opposition, and saying that they did not want to pass the amendment, he ought to turn round and lecture his own colleague, the Minister for Lands, or pull him by the coat-tails in order to make him sit down, when he was making such statements.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS said the hon. member for Townsville had avoided the statement he had made altogether. He had not attempted to compare the quantity of land that had been alienated, either by pre-emption or by auction; but he pointed out that the land sold by auction by Governments preceding the late Government ranged in price from 15s. to 30s. per acre, the average being about 22s. 6d.; while the land sold by auction by the late Government averaged about 11s. per acre. Another objection he made was as to the method of treating the pre-emptives — allowing squatters to consolidate their pre-emptions contrary to law.

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN: Not contrary to law.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: Most decidedly contrary to law, where the country was outside the railway reserves. Within the railway reserves it was perfectly legal and proper, but outside it was illegal. No reasonable interpretation of the law could enable them to do it. Then again the hon. gentleman had omitted 300,000 acres which the late Government had put through, so far as they were able to do so, before leaving office. Probably, had they been three months longer in office, they would have succeeded in putting them through altogether; but the present Government came in and managed to block the proceedings, and saved the country so much land. Many portions of it were so situated as to be of the greatest importance in regard to anything like future settlement.

Mr. SALKELD said he understood the hon. leader of the Opposition to say that no member on the Government side of the House had expressed an opinion with regard to limiting the maximum area to be held by one person to 20,000 acres, within the whole colony, instead of in each district; and the hon. member for Balonne had also stated that no Government supporter had alluded to it, except the hon. member for Darling Downs, Mr. Kates. The hon. member for Balonne often made statements that could very easily be shown to be incorrect, but generally they were allowed to pass without notice. He had only to say that hon. members on that side of the House did, on the second reading of the Bill, point out that very thing. He did so himself, and so did his hon. colleague the senior member for Ipswich, the hon. member for Oxley, and other hon. members. He did not wish in any way to detract from hon. gentlemen on the other side of the House, and was very glad to

hear them call attention to the matter; but, before the second reading of the Bill came on, he himself spoke to members of the Government, and stated that he was very much opposed to allowing selectors to take the maximum area in each district, and that the maximum should be made to apply to the whole colony, the same as under the existing land law. He thought, when the hon. member for Balonne made a statement like that, he ought to be a little more careful. There were the records in *Hansard* to go by. Since the leader of the Opposition had referred to it, he had looked up the report of what he said on the second reading, and found that he made use of the expression that a couple of hundred individuals under that clause could go and make a clear sweep of the best lands in the district proclaimed, and take up the maximum in every district. He was glad to see that the Government had considered the matter, and had brought in a clause which satisfied him entirely in that direction. As hon. gentlemen had pointed out, they ought to be very glad to see it and assist to have it passed into law.

Mr. MOREHEAD said he would correct the hon. gentleman who had just sat down. There was no doubt that hon. gentleman might have fiddled upon the same string as he (Mr. Morehead) did; but he found the string. He spoke after the Minister for Lands, and found it out. It was all very well that the hon. gentleman should repeat it after having read it, and re-echo what had fallen from the other side of the Committee.

The HON. SIR T. MCILWRAITH said it was not the first time, or the second, or the third time that the Minister for Lands had given rise to a debate by making the accusation against the Opposition that while they were in power they were the means of aggregating large estates in the hands of the pastoral lessees of the colony. It had been denied over and over again long before the hon. gentleman had a seat in the House, and the same charges had been proved to be untrue. The facts were fresh in the memories of everyone who was a member at the time, but the hon. gentleman was always harping upon the same string, and constantly referred to it after it had been disproved. He could not get away from the question that he brought in the other night, about the big estate that was made at Cullin-la-ringo. If it were a great fault on the part of the Government to give the pastoral men there an opportunity of acquiring, by auction, such an amount as he said—and it was exaggerated—of 70,000 acres, surely the previous Government, who gave them greater facilities at a far lower price, could not be otherwise than blamable! The hon. gentleman forgot that 15,000 acres of that 70,000 acres were granted by the previous Government two years before the present Opposition went into office, at the upset price of 10s. per acre. That land was a great deal better than anything that the late Government sold by auction. The hon. gentleman forgot that altogether, and if he would quote the debate fairly he would see the defence that was made at the time. At that time the finances of the colony were very much depressed, and the policy, as enunciated from the other side of the House by the present Premier, was that they should improve the finances by taxing the people of the colony. The then Government refused to do that; and to tide over the difficulties they got rid of a certain amount of land. They got over the bad times, and good times came, and the then Government proved that they had been right all through, and had made a right position for the colony. It was due to the energy shown by the Government in taking advantage of their position, and refusing to listen to improving that position by taxing the people, that they recovered the financial position they had lost by the extravagance of the previous Government. Those were the facts which were to be seen in *Hansard* in the discussions which had taken place repeatedly. The hon. gentleman had repeatedly made the charge that the late Government had persistently and consistently pursued the policy of granting the pre-emptives to a great extent, and of selling land by auction wherever they possibly could. Those facts had been disproved most thoroughly by the statistics quoted by his hon. friend the hon. member for Townsville. He had nothing more to say on that point. The hon. gentleman said, "Oh! that is all right enough," but he added, "Look at the better price we got for the land we sold; we actually got 22s. for the land we sold, whereas the late Government only got 10s." He did not think the price obtained for the land altered the case at all. If it was wrong to permit the aggregation of large estates, he did not think the price had much to do with it; in both cases they got the best price they could obtain under the auction system. They sold in favourable times when there was any amount of money to be had; whereas his Government sold at an unfavourable time, when the Treasury actually required money and could not do without it. He was placed at a disadvantage. Of course they must understand he was not referring to the large prices received under the Railway Reserves Act. That was an Act of which the Premier had expressed his regret at having had anything to do with, more than once; so that there was little merit to claim on account of passing it. The merit, however, claimed by the Minister for Lands was that they received a larger price. If they received such a large price for the land in that district, what possible justification could the then Government have had for granting consolidated pre-emptives all through that district, in which they included railway reserves at 10s. per acre? They sold hundreds of thousands of acres at that price, adjoining land that had been sold up to 30s. per acre. That was a fact that the hon. gentleman could see by consulting the return they had had placed before them. The Minister for Lands had referred to his having found vent for his pent-up bitterness upon the clause, and the ground upon which he said so was this: that he accused him of having been an exponent of the opinions of men who were dummiers of the lands of the colony, and who wished to aggregate large estates, and who, in fact, were the root of all evils connected with the acquisition of land in the colony. He was satisfied that the hon. gentleman attributed that position to him from ignorance of his political career. It did not hurt him, but it showed the recklessness of the hon. gentleman's statements. He would illustrate what the hon. gentleman said. The clause as it stood, gave every selector a right to select up to the maximum amount in every district of the colony. The Opposition protested against that; and by united action, no doubt assisted by some members on the Government side—he knew Mr. Kates went against it, and so did others, whom he did not remember—they forced the Government to give notice in a quiet way, of an amendment which was brought forward to-night. What did the Minister for Lands say? He said that, having brought in an amendment which he (Hon. Sir T. McIlwraith) did not suggest, as he was not here, but which he spoke in favour of the first time he had an opportunity of expressing an opinion on the Land Bill, his animosity towards him (the Minister for Lands) was because he had actually, in bringing

forward that amendment, put a restriction upon dummying that he did not want. Of course the hon. gentleman was quite willing to hold that opinion of him; but he (Hon. Sir T. McIlwraith) appealed to what he had said all through. He had consistently opposed the monopoly of land to the extent granted in clause 48. He had advocated the principle embodied in the amendment, and his great objection to the Minister for Lands passing it through quietly was that he wanted to do so without giving credit where credit was due. Had the hon. gentleman given his reasons for his change of mind, there was no doubt that the Committee would have come to a conclusion sooner than they did. To assume that he (Hon. Sir T. McIlwraith) was bitter against the hon. gentleman personally, because he had brought forward an amendment of which he disapproved, was contrary to fact. He had approved of the principle of the amendment right through, and not one single word that he had said on the Bill could be quoted as being contrary to that amendment; so that that reason was a very absurd one to allege against him. The hon. gentleman said that there was personal animosity and bitterness against him. Hon. members on the other side of the Committee saw that perfectly well, because the hon. gentleman never rose without attributing the worst possible motives to hon. members on the Opposition side as a class, as an Opposition, and as individuals. His speech that night was a hash-up of a number of charges that had been argued out in that House years ago; they were re-hashed during the general election, and the hon. gentleman brought them up in the discussion on the present Bill. As long as the hon. gentleman was so indiscreet as to bring up things of that sort, how could he expect to be treated in any other way than he was treated by the Opposition? The hon. gentleman did himself credit in thinking that he had excited animosity. There was no personal animosity to him on the Opposition side; but there was a great deal of animosity to him as regarded the mode in which he conducted the Government business. His business was to explain every matter before the Committee—to make matters so intelligible to the members of the Committee that they could be passed through easily. Instead of that, whenever he could he established a "raw," and he had done as much of that that night as on any previous occasion. Hon. members could not possibly ask a question, such as they were entitled to ask for the furtherance of business, with the hope of getting a proper reply. Last night he (Hon. Sir T. McIlwraith) asked a question, being actually in ignorance of a certain matter. He knew that a certain clause had been passed, and he wanted to know where it had been put in. He asked the Minister for Lands, who gave a reply that was perfectly insulting, throwing a book on the table as if he (Hon. Sir T. McIlwraith) had been trying to insult him. The hon. member did not understand the kind of amenities that ought to exist between members of Parliament in the House. He ought to give every possible explanation. If he could not carry all the clauses of the Bill in his mind, was it likely that every member of the Opposition could do so? The hon. gentleman had consistently declined to give information; and he had done that so often that the conclusion had been forced on hon. members that he had not the information to give. The members of the Opposition had treated him accordingly.

The PREMIER said he had only one or two observations to make, but not in answer to the speech of the hon. gentleman. He thought a very large number of hon. members and a large proportion of the public had lost interest in these historical dissertations. Some of them referred to almost the ancient history of the colony.

Mr. MOREHEAD: The Minister for Lands raised them.

The PREMIER said that another observation he had to make was that every man's reputation could take care of itself. The hon. member for Mulgrave had established a reputation, and it could take care of itself. The third observation was that he thought the Committee and the country were tired of those continual discussions on the Minister for Lands. It would be much better if the Committee got on with the Bill.

Mr. MOREHEAD: If you take charge of it.

The HON. SIR T. McILWRAITH said that if the hon. gentleman thought the country had lost interest in the charges against the Opposition, he should have said so to the Minister for Lands; that would be a great deal better than telling it to the Committee. Every word the hon. gentleman had said applied to the Minister for Lands. That hon. gentleman kept bringing up lies—lies that had been renewed in the House over and over again, and which the members o the Opposition were determined they would refute every time they were brought forward. If the Premier would tell the Minister for Lands that, hon. members would believe in his sincerity. The Premier had tried to pay him (Hon. Sir. T. McIlwraith) a compliment by saying that his reputation could take care of itself. He (Hon. Sir T. McIlwraith) knew that, but he did not know that he owed much of his reputation to the hon. member. If he had not been thoroughly satisfied that he could take care of his reputation, he would not be in the position he was in that day. The hon. gentleman had taken every means, both fair and foul, to damage his (Hon. Sir T. McIlwraith's) reputation, and he thought he stood as high in the colony as the hon. gentleman.

Mr. MACDONALD-PATERSON said that some remarks had fallen from the Minister for Lands, to the effect that a selector, or a freeholder, taking up 300 or 400 acres, would be debarred from acquiring any further freehold. He was very sorry to notice such a grave retrogression on that point since last week.

The HON. SIR T. McILWRAITH said that the Minister for Lands had made a serious statement in the House that night — one that differed very materially from what the Premier said last night. It had been pointed out that on each of the selections the condition of residence must be complied with; and that the Government, acting on the principle of survey before selection, could survey blocks in any agricultural district, as small or as large—not exceeding the maximum area—as they chose. It was also pointed out that if one selector, having selected a certain number of blocks—say six, but which in the aggregate did not amount to the maximum area he was entitled to select in that district—performed the condition of residence on only one block, the right of acquiring a freehold was confined to that one block. He (Hon. Sir T. McIlwraith) did not think that such a limitation was contemplated by the Committee. He had understood the Premier to say that that would be provided for; and certainly it was a matter that must be provided for. The Minister for Lands distinctly said that such a provision should be made. He had also said distinctly that the only block on which the right of freehold would be given was the block on which the selector resided. Supposing the land for some reason or other was surveyed by the orders of the board or of the Government into 160-acre blocks, and one man took up four of those lots—that was, 640 acres. The reason for surveying the land into blocks as small as 160 acres might not be because the Government or the board considered that area

sufficient for the particular district; but it might be that purely local reasons guided the Government or the board in deciding upon surveying the land into small blocks; but whatever the reasons might be for the survey of the land into small blocks of 160 acres, if a man took up four of them, in all 640 acres, and only resided personally on one of them and provided bailiffs for the other three, his right of acquiring the freehold—according to the answer given by the Minister for Lands—would only apply to the block of 160 acres upon which he had fulfilled the condition of personal residence. Surely it was not contemplated by the Government to limit the right of acquiring freehold to that extent! Under the Bill as it stood the selector could not possibly acquire the freehold of more than the one block of 160 acres. He might increase his selection by taking up the difference between 640 and 960 acres—the maximum—in other districts or in that district, but he could not possibly increase his right of acquiring freehold beyond that 160 acres. Surely that was not what was contemplated by the Bill! Nor did he think it was contemplated by the Bill that, if a selector took up those blocks contiguous to one another and performed the condition of residence on one of them, it was not to save him from the expense of providing bailiffs for the other three. Yet there was no provision dealing with that in the Bill. He was not going to move an amendment upon the clause, and perhaps the discussion of it then was somewhat irregular; yet he thought it necessary to bring the matter before the Government. The Premier admitted that it was the law, and that if the Government surveyed the land into 160-acre blocks, and one man took up four of them contiguous to each other, he would have to provide three bailiffs and reside on one himself, and in the end he could only acquire the right of freehold for the block upon which he resided himself. That certainly was not contemplated by the Bill. They had had an answer direct from the Minister for Lands, and he asked the reconsideration of the Government upon that point. The Minister for Lands had laid it down very dogmatically; but surely it could never have been the intention of the Bill that the Government should actually have the power to limit the amount of land that could be acquired as freehold to the selection upon which a man personally resided, no matter how small the area might be, and no matter how many blocks of that area he had selected. The spirit of the Bill was to grant the maximum agricultural area allowed in a particular district, and yet here the Government could step in and, by surveying the blocks small enough, without limiting the power of selection, limit the power of acquiring freehold to the selection upon which a man actually resided; and that selection could be limited in size by the action of the Government or the board. Such a thing was distinctly against his idea of what was fair; and he asked the Government to reconsider it. That, surely, was not the proposition they intended to bring before the Committee! He thought it well to draw attention to the matter now; and the Government would have plenty of time, before they got to the clause, to consider and bring forward amendments dealing with it.

The PREMIER said it was quite true the question was discussed the other day slightly. He did not then express any definite opinions upon the subject. It was a matter for future consideration, and the time had not yet arrived for a discussion on the subject, which would really arise when they came to the clauses dealing with the acquisition of freeholds. The discussion was irregular at the present time, but he would fall nto the irregularity himself for a few minutes.

The HON. SIR T. McILWRAITH: It may help to forward the Bill.

The PREMIER said it might help to forward the Bill, and it was from that point of view that he would say a few words on the subject now. When the principle of the Bill was selection before survey the idea was that it should be left entirely to the selector to say how much land he would take, up to the maximum. Supposing the maximum to be 960 acres, it was left open to the selector to say whether he would take the maximum area of 960 acres or a lesser area. If he took up the maximum area in one selection and resided on it for ten years, he acquired the right of freehold over that area, and if he took up a smaller area and fulfilled the conditions, he acquired the right of freehold over the smaller area. A considerable change had occurred in the Bill consequent upon their adoption of the principle of survey before selection, so that the Government, as pointed out by the hon. member, might now divide the lands, so that although the maximum of 960 acres might still be taken up, the blocks might not be more than 160 acres in extent. In his opinion, it was not at all inconsistent with the principle of the Bill—in fact, it was the same principle—to allow a man taking up four blocks of 160 acres- in all, 640 acres—the same privileges in the acquisition of freehold as he would have had if he took up the 640 acres in one block under the principle of selection before survey. He thought there was nothing inconsistent with the principle of the Bill in adopting that now.

The HON. SIR T. McILWRAITH: Not the slightest.

The PREMIER said if he took up a selection in one block, or in fifteen blocks of a smaller area, he saw nothing inconsistent with the principle of the Bill in allowing him to acquire the freehold of the land, if the blocks were contiguous. Nor was that in any way different from what his hon. colleague the Minister for Lands had said just now. As he (the Premier) understood, the question asked was this: 960 acres being the maximum all over the colony, suppose a man had selections in different districts, which, in the aggregate, did not exceed the maximum, and resided only on one, should they give him the right to acquire the freehold of all? That was what he understood the question to be; and after a short conversation with his hon. colleague, he advised him to say "No" distinctly in answer to that question.

The HON. SIR T. McILWRAITH: That was not the question at all.

The PREMIER said that was what he understood the question to be, and there was no doubt a misunderstanding on the subject. There were one or two other matters occurred to him in connection with the point raised. The case of a man selecting several blocks contiguous to each other was one case. There was another case—say, of a selector, who did not care to take up more than 160 acres at first, and who at some future period might desire to take up another. Of course, that man would not be in the same position as the man who originally took up an equalarea. There was another case which would have to receive consideration, and that was whether residence on one block should count as residence on another block, which might be fifty miles away. A further case was that of a man who took up up agricultural selections in different districts, and, of course, it could not be suggested or expected that residence on one block in such a case as that would be equivalent to residence on the others. In the case of a man taking up contiguous blocks, residence on one might well be considered as equivalent to residence on all; and

they might arrange that by allowing him to consolidate the blocks, or by simply declaring that residence on the one block would be sufficient. There was the middle case he had pointed out, upon which there might possibly be a difference of opinion. That was the case of a man taking up selections which, though at a considerable distance from each other, were still in the same district. He mentioned the matter now so that when they came to the clause they would be able to consider the matter from all points of view, as the Government would do in the meantime, and they then might be able to give effect to the principles of the Bill, and at the same time carry out the necessary alterations consequent upon the adoption of the principle of survey before selection.

Mr. JORDAN said he thought it only fair that in the agricultural reserves, where very small selections might be surveyed by the Government, a person should be allowed to take up the maximum area of 960 acres, and that so long as the blocks taken up were contiguous, residence on one should be deemed sufficient for the whole. He did not think it mattered whether they took up the full quantity at first, or whether they subsequently added to their first selection; in any case he thought residence on any of the smaller pieces as surveyed ought to be considered sufficient up to the maximum. But when they were not contiguous he did not think that privilege should be allowed.

Mr. STEVENS said he could not agree with the last speaker. Suppose the case of a man whose means would not allow him at first to take up more than 160 acres. In the course of a year or two he might be able to take up another piece, but, meanwhile, perhaps, the land all round him had been taken up. It would thus be impossible for him to get a contiguous selection, and it would be very hard that he should be debarred from making the second selection a freehold.

Mr. JORDAN said he had omitted to say one thing—that was, that he did not think it would be advisable to let the system he had suggested be applied to the smaller selections which it was proposed to provide for, and which were to take the place of homesteads. The annual payments for those lands would be, he supposed, 3d. an acre at first, and those payments would be made available at the end of five or seven years for the purchase of the freehold; while the full amount to be paid was only 2s. 6d. an acre. Now, those small homesteads—as he would call them, to distinguish them from the other selections—would very likely be some of the very best lands in the colony, and the advantages offered to persons taking them up would be very great indeed. The intention of that arrangement, he thought, was to create the greatest facilities for the poorest class of agriculturists. Hon. members on the other side had contended—and he had fully agreed with them—that they should have something equivalent to the old homesteads; and those would be about the same thing. They would be for the accommodation of the poorest class disposed to settle on the land as farmers—a class who, as experience had shown, made the very best use of the land—such, for instance, as the Germans. He thought it would be desirable to limit the quantity of land which might be taken up in such cases to 160 acres; that persons should not be allowed to take up a number of them, but confine themselves to one.

Mr. NORTON said that there was one point which seemed an important one to him. It was provided that no person, either in his own right or as trustee for any person, should hold more than the maximum area in any district. In many cases a man became trustee under a will, and then, if he himself held as much land as he could hold in his own right, he would either have to dispose of the land left to him as trustee, or of his own.

The PREMIER said it was expressly provided to the contrary in the 56th clause.

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

On clause 49, as follows:—

"When the land comprised in any application to select has been surveyed, and the application has been confirmed by the board, the applicant shall be entitled to receive from the commissioner a license to occupy the land comprised in it, according to the boundaries as defined by the survey.

"Such license shall not be transferable.

"If upon the survey it appears that, by reason of a prior application or any other reason, the applicant cannot obtain the whole of the land applied for, he may abandon the application and demand back the deposit of the first year's rent and the survey fee.

"If for any other reason he wishes not to proceed with the application, he may demand and receive back the deposit of the first year's rent less twenty per centum thereof, but shall not receive back the survey fee."

The MINISTER FOR LANDS moved the omission of the whole of the 1st paragraph, with the view of inserting the following:—

When the application has been confirmed by the board, and the applicant has paid the value of the improvements (if any), he shall be entitled to receive from the commissioner a license to occupy the land.

The HON. B. B. MORETON said there seemed to be an inconsistency between the amendment and clause 47 as amended. In that clause it was provided that the price of the improvements should be paid to the land agent within seven days from the date of the approval of the application. In the present case it said "when the application had been confirmed by the board."

The PREMIER said that there was no inconsistency, although, perhaps, it would be better to make a transposition, putting the payment first and the confirmation afterwards. The seven days within which the value of the improvements was to be paid would probably expire before the date of confirmation. He would move the alteration of the amendment, so as to read—

When the applicant has paid the value of the improvements (if any), and the application has been confirmed by the board—

and so on.

Amendment agreed to.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS moved that the last two paragraphs of the clause be omitted.

Amendment agreed to; and clause, as amended, passed

On clause 50, as follows:—

"Upon the issue of a license the selector may enter upon the land and take possession thereof for the purpose of making improvements thereon, but shall not be entitled to impound any stock of the last authorised occupier thereof found thereon until he shall have enclosed the land with a good and substantial fence."

Mr. KATES said the clause, as it stood, was very unsatisfactory, and very obnoxious and unjust to grazing farmers in particular. They were inviting people to settle upon the land, and yet they were compelling them to submit to class legislation of the worst description. They were compelling those selectors to submit to have their grass eaten up by the stock of the pastoral lessee—sitting silent and without power to resent it—while, at the same time, if the stock of the selector happened to step over the boundary of his selection the pastoral lessee had a right to send it to the pound. And it must be borne in mind that all that was after the pastoral lessee had obtained an indefeasible lease over half his run for fifteen years, compensation for all his improvements, and a grazing

right over the resumed portion of his run at a rent not one-fifth so large as the grazing farmer had to pay. Both classes ought to be put on the same footing. If the clause passed as it stood the selector would have, in self-defence, to fence in his selection at once. It would have to be a good substantial fence, and on a farm of 20,000 acres would cost not less than £1,700; and besides that, he would have to erect his house, form his yard, and provide himself with water. They ought to protect the grazing farmer against being imposed upon by the pastoral lessee. His idea was to give both parties equal rights, and then they could settle matters between themselves in a friendly way. If one party had a power that was denied to the other, that party might become tyrannical. He thought hon. members on both sides would agree with him that the clause required amendment. He should not, at that stage, move an amendment, because he hoped the Minister for Lands would devise some means to rectify the great mistake he had made in connection with the clause. If that was not done, and done in such a way as to meet with his approval, he should move an amendment later on.

Mr. KELLETT said, in alluding to the remarks made by the last speaker, he must say that the alleged grievance was a bugbear he had heard of for many years past. He had the interests of selectors as much at heart as the hon. member for Darling Downs, and knew very well the feeling that existed on that matter some years ago. At the time to which he referred the selectors' cattle were impounded by the squatter, who did not then understand that he should be dispossessed of his land by the selector; but that was very far past now. He had lived in a district where there were a considerable number of selectors, and had not heard for many years the complaint or grievance mentioned by the hon. member for Darling Downs. The squatter had found that it was not to his advantage to in any way harass the selector, and now acknowledged that the latter was entitled to take up his land. The consequence was that the grievance complained of no longer existed. But he would go further than that, and show—he would not call it an absurdity, but the incorrectness of the whole thing. It was proposed in that Bill to give a grazing right to the lessee over the resumed portion of his run until the time came when it would all be resumed portion by portion. What would be the result if the clause were amended in the way suggested? Why, one or two men could take up 1,000 or 2,000 acres on the resumed part of the run, and then turn out their stock, and spread them all over the land over which the lessee held a grazing right, and for which he had to pay a rental to the State! The consequence of that would be that nobody would pay for the grazing right, and indeed nobody could expect it, for the place would be a common, on which the selector who paid nothing for the privilege would have as much right to depasture his stock as the pastoral lessee.

Mr. KATES: Let the lessee impound them.

Mr. KELLETT said the hon. member for Darling Downs interjected "Let the lessee impound them." Of course, he should have that power. If a man holding a grazing right could not impound, the land would be of no use to him. That was the only safeguard he had to prevent selectors encroaching too much on his holding. But the squatter did not mind a few beasts running on his land if they did no damage. It was only when a man put on three, four, or five times as much stock that he exercised his privilege; then the pastoralist said to the selector, "You have too many stock on here, and if you do not take them away I shall have them impounded." But if, as the hon. member for Darling Downs desired, the same power was given to selectors, what would be the consequence? He (Mr. Kellett) had known selections taken up near a cattle-camp, and they all knew it was only necessary to crack a whip to bring a number of cattle together. The selector might impound the cattle running at that camp, or say to the squatter that unless he gave him a certain sum of money he would adopt that course. If the lessee was not given the power to impound on the land over which he held a grazing right, so that he might protect himself, no one would pay a shilling for a grazing right. And no man, except a Darling Downs man, or someone who had never been off the plains, and had never seen sheep and cattle shepherded, would promulgate such a proposal as that now put before the Committee. He was satisfied that the farmers had got over the bugbear which he was discussing, except, perhaps, two or three men with bad livers or bad digestion, who might live alongside the member for Darling Downs. Certainly, no man of common sense, who knew anything about the subject, would ever promulgate such a scheme. The clause as it stood would be satisfactory to the country.

Mr. KATES said the hon. gentleman who had just sat down had told them that there might be some cattle-duffers near a cattle-camp who would drive the stock to the pound.

Mr. KELLETT: I never mentioned such a word as "cattle-duffers."

Mr. KATES said the hon. gentleman would make all selectors suffer because there happened to be one or two dishonest men settled on the resumed portion of a run. If a man did anything against the law he should be punished; but other people should not be made to suffer for his wrong-doing. He (Mr. Kates) spoke from a sense of justice and fair play. Why should the squatter, who was the stronger party, have a privilege that was denied to the selector? To place one in a better position than the other in respect of that impounding question would be to give cause for ill-feeling between neighbours. Just imagine a selector sitting at the door of his cottage waiting the arrival of his stock, and congratulating himself on the good supply of grass on his land, and at the same time his neighbour sending over a flock of 10,000 or 20,000 sheep, and eating him out. What was he to do in such a case? As the clause now stood, he would have no right to interfere, because his land was not fenced.

Mr. KELLETT: He should stop them from coming on the land.

Mr. KATES said he could not stop them unless the land was fenced; because the clause enacted that a selector "shall not be entitled to impound any stock of the last authorised occupier thereof, found thereon, until he shall have enclosed the land with a good substantial fence." He thought the selector should have equal rights with the pastoral tenant; both should be placed on the same footing. He thought, as he said before, that if the clause were amended in the way he suggested, the squatter and selector would come to some arrangement between themselves, but if one had a power which the other had not there would be no arrangement of any kind. On the face of it the clause was unfair and unjust. The hon. member for Stanley said he had heard no complaints lately in the settled districts. He (Mr. Kates) had heard a good many. But the restriction imposed by the clause would not be felt so much in the settled districts as in the unsettled districts, because in the former all the farmers had their land fenced already. What was the use of extending the time for fencing a

grazing area from two to five years as proposed in an amendment circulated by the Government, when the first thing a selector would have to do in order to protect his grass from the stock of the squatter would be to fence his holding?

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN said he did not know what the Government intended to say on that question. He thought the squatters, who appeared to be very jealous of each other's rights, were not likely to be very considerate towards selectors. He did not see why a grazing selector occupying a selection of 20,000 acres should not have the same right to impound from his land as the squatters who occupied it before him would have to impound the selector's stock. The grazing farmer paid the Government for the grass, and ought to be protected in the same way as the squatter who occupied the land before him was protected.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS said he had not the slightest doubt that the hon. member for Darling Downs brought forward his amendment with the best intention, but it evidently was the outcome of not understanding the circumstances under which a pastoralist carried on his business. The principle advocated by the hon. gentleman might be very good in the abstract, but he had entirely lost sight of the probable results of its adoption. For instance, a leaseholder, or pastoral tenant, or squatter, as he was termed now, leased, say, 300 square miles of country. Probably that was all fenced; in many cases the whole run would be fenced. Under that Bill one-half or 150 square miles would be resumed and thrown open to selection. A block, say, of 60,000 acres was taken and surveyed into lots of from 5,000 to 20,000 acres, and perhaps one block of 5,000 acres would be selected in a paddock in which several thousand sheep were running. The selector went and applied for a 5,000-acre selection. It was granted, and he was allowed to go upon it and put on his improvements. There was nothing to prevent that man taking any number of sheep he liked and putting them in a paddock belonging to the pastoral lessee close by. He could absolutely dispossess the squatter of that paddock, and of his grazing rights in it. On the other hand the squatter's stock might go over the selector's land, and if he attempted to impound the selector's stock the selector retaliated upon him, and the result of that would be that the grazier would have to take the whole of his stock out of his paddock, and abandon it to the selector. But that was not the worst. Suppose the case of a man travelling with a large flock of sheep. He found a piece of land open to selection; he might make application for it, and by paying his rent and survey fee he obtained a place to feed his sheep cheaply on for six months, and was in the same position as the ordinary selector, as far as being able to run the squatter off the land was concerned. The grazier would have no protection whatever, and his only course was to take his stock out of his paddock, and then retaliate on the selector by hunting and hounding him whenever his stock came over the proper boundary. Then they would arrive at a state of bitterness, animosity, and contention that nothing could equal. The same state of things would be brought about as had existed in New South Wales, where class had been pitted against class, and a state of things brought about which, socially, was the most deplorable that could be conceived. Under the Bill as it stood they asked the squatter to surrender a portion of his run, and they offered certain securities that he should not be dispossessed of the land through one or two selectors taking up selections upon it. If they did not provide security, in effect they would be depriving the present lessee of half his run at one swoop, and turning him loose upon the country, giving him no place to put his stock on, but leaving them to feed upon the roadside. Let there be no misunderstanding about that. The squatter could not fight the selector. The selector had the pull over the grazier, who must abandon his resumed portion once the selector went upon it. How would the present lessee regard the ordinary selector under such circumstances? He would look upon him as his bitterest and most uncompromising enemy, and give him no quarter whenever he could get at him. The object of the Bill was to introduce the selector to dispossess the present holders of the land with as little friction as possible, and without creating any bad feeling; and the only way in which that could be done was to say that the selector should have no absolute right to the land he had selected until he had fenced it in. If he was in that position, the position would be a good one, because he could make no real use of his land until he had fenced it in, especially for grazing purposes. It was not desirable that they should cause friction or anything like bitterness or animosity between two classes engaged in the same industry. An amendment of the kind suggested would inflict a cruel and irretrievable blow upon the pastoral interest, while really proving no absolute benefit to the class they were desirous of calling into existence. He hoped the members of the Committee would consider the matter very seriously, because, without any desire to unnecessarily protect the ordinary leaseholders, he thought the rights of that class should be protected. It was the interest of every man in the country, whether squatter, selector, or anybody else, to protect in their entirety the undoubted rights of the grazing class; because it could be plainly seen that nothing but mischief could result from the adoption of such an amendment as that which had been suggested.

Mr. KATES said the Minister for Lands had told them the selector had no right to his land until it was fenced in.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: That is the principle of the Bill.

Mr. KATES said, if that were so, then there would be very few selectors indeed under the Bill. The hon. gentleman had also said that the selector might turn all his sheep upon the grazier's run; but suppose the selector was prepared to keep his flock of sheep within the boundaries of his selection, it ought to be distinctly provided that he should not be imposed upon by the pastoral lessee with a large flock of sheep or herd of cattle. The selector did not wish to trespass on the grazier; he wished to remain within his own boundary, but he should be protected from imposition if he did so. If the selector's stock went on the pastoral lessee's land, the pastoral lessee had the right to impound, but he claimed the same right for the selector.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS said the hon. gentleman did not recognise the fact that, in many districts, the present pastoral tenant's sheep were running loose in the paddocks. They were not shepherded. If they were, it would be easy enough to keep the sheep off the selections; but they were running quite loose. Therefore it was utterly impossible to control the sheep, and if the selector encroached upon the grazier's ground the only thing for the grazier to do was to remove his stock and abandon his paddock to the selector. He must do that absolutely and entirely, for he could never hold his own against the selector.

Mr. HORWITZ said, after the explanation of the Minister for Lands, it seemed to him that the Bill was made expressly for the squatters,

and not for the selectors. That was his opinion of it. He thought if the squatter had the right of impounding the selector's sheep the selector should have the same privilege. It was proposed to give to strangers coming here the right of taking up 5,000 acres of land, which had to be fenced within four or five years; but if the selector had no security until he had fenced his land they need not expect much settlement. He was quite satisfied that selectors could not spend £3,000 or £4,000 at once in fencing their selections, and he hoped the hon. member for Darling Downs would move his amendment. They would then see who were the friends of the selectors. When the Bill was introduced he fancied that it was intended to promote settlement on the Darling Downs and other places, but his opinion now was that it would have no such effect.

The PREMIER said that some hon. members seemed to have lost sight of some important bearings of the question. One would suppose from what they said that some diabolical innovation was being proposed now for the first time; but the fact was that it had been law for many years, not only in Queensland, but also in the other colonies. A clause containing exactly the same words was inserted in the Act passed in 1876; but he had never heard of any difficulty having arisen from that provision. It must be borne in mind that the Bill was intended to encourage settlement, and that there was not likely to be any actual real settlement while the land was unfenced. He did not think that large grazing areas of unfenced land would be any improvement on the present system. Where there were two classes of occupiers, side by side, it seemed hard to give one the right to impound and refuse that right to the other; but they must consider the condition of the things with which they dealt. The former occupier had his land taken away—with the exception of being allowed to run stock on it at a small rental—and it was therefore quite impossible for him to protect himself by fencing. He could do so on the leased half, but he could not possibly do so on the resumed half, because by the time his fence was erected a selector might come and take up the land on the other side. And what would be the value of the resumed part of a run to a squatter if any man could impound his stock from the middle of the run? A man might take up a selection and put nothing on it but a man to impound his neighbour's stock—he might even take a cattle camp. That was not an imaginary case, but a thing that had been done over and over again in New South Wales, where it had been found absolutely necessary to adopt the system now proposed to be embodied in the Bill. A man who was not prepared to work his selection by shepherding his stock and driving his neighbour's stock off would not be much of a selector after all; he would not be much better than the present occupier as regarded putting the land to its best use, which was the object of the Bill. He was aware that there were weighty arguments on both sides; but when the matter was previously discussed a large majority were of opinion that the system then adopted was the best, and that opinion had been borne out by experience. The more it was considered the more reasonable and desirable it would appear to be.

Mr. BEATTIE said he differed from the hon. member for Darling Downs in the opinion that his amendment would place both squatter and selector on an equal footing. The selector would have a lease for thirty years, but the squatter would have no lease, but only a grazing right over the resumed portion of his run, which could be taken up by selectors at any time. The squatter could not fence in the resumed portion, and it would be unfair to allow the selector to impound stock from the land for which the squatter paid rent. The squatter paid for his grazing right and he ought to be protected, but it would be impossible for him to protect himself by any other means than those provided in the clause. He did not think, from what he had read of the manner in which stations out west were conducted, that the squatters were such cormorants as the hon. member (Mr. Kates) would have the Committee believe, and he could see no harm in the clause. The Bill was a very different measure from the Acts already in force. It gave selectors the power to lease blocks of 20,000 acres for thirty years; and he thought the clause a very fair one. It would do no injury either to one class or to the other; and it was only reasonable that the squatter should have the right to graze his stock over the land for which he paid rent.

Mr. DONALDSON said if the amendment of the hon. member for Darling Downs was passed it would have a most disastrous effect. He was not going into any long speech about it, but he wished to refer to the experience of other colonies. Ever since 1862, in Victoria, the selectors had not had the right of impounding; yet in that colony the influence of the selectors was very strong. In fact no amendment in the Land Act that would be beneficial to them had been demanded from the Legislature of that colony by the selectors. In the various Land Acts which had been passed since that time, the same clause had been continued from time to time, that they should not have the right of impounding, and there had never been a demand made by the selectors that they should have that right. In New South Wales they had had the right of impounding, and in many cases, he was sorry to say, they used it to a great extent—he did not mean the selectors generally, but persons who had gone on to the land for the purpose of blackmailing the pastoral lessee, or of getting land adjacent to the roads where they were able to take advantage of travelling stock going on their land. Those men were able to make a larger sum out of blackmailing than they were able to make out of land otherwise. They never had any intention of cultivating or improving the land. So great had been the cry against that class of persons that he noticed by the Land Act which had just passed in New South Wales, that the clause relating to impounding had been amended, and they had not even the right of impounding there now. He was certain, from the number of selectors in New South Wales, and the strong pressure they could bring to bear on Parliament there, that if it had been the general desire to insert a clause in the Land Bill to allow impounding, they could have carried the proposition with great ease. But there never was, from one end of that colony to the other, one protest made against the abolition of the right of impounding. As the hon. the Premier had pointed out, it was not a new thing which was proposed in the Bill before the Committee, nor had they heard of many abuses in this colony—at least he had not, and he supposed hon. members had not heard of them either. If the selectors were not in a position to fence their grazing farms they were not in a position to make the best use of them. They all knew that land which was shepherded did not carry nearly as much stock as it would if it were fenced. Therefore it was desirable that they should fence in their land so as to get the full advantage of it. The position of the squatter was frequently that he had enclosed runs; in fact, nearly all stations on which sheep ran were enclosed; and it was quite possible that a man might take one selection in the middle of a paddock, and if he had the

right to impound, and chose to exercise it, he could make that land perfectly useless. However, that subject had been dealt with by the Minister for Lands. He wished to point out that, in other colonies where selectors had been strong enough — where they had had considerable experience in the matter — they had not asked from the Legislature ever since 1862, in Victoria, and under the last Act in New South Wales, to have the right of impounding. He trusted the clause would pass as proposed by the Government, and he would not have the slightest fear that they would hear of any of the abuses foreshadowed by the hon. members for Warwick and Darling Downs.

Mr. SALKELD said he was very sorry to see the stand which the Opposition had taken in the matter. As the clause now stood it would be possible for the pastoral tenant of any resumed half of runs to impound the stock of any selector that happened to trespass either outside the grazing or agricultural farm; but the squatter could graze his sheep right over the selector's land—to his very door. The selector could not impound the trespassing stock—he could only turn them off his land. The interest of the pastoral tenant only was being considered. They did not look at the other side of the question. If it was an injustice and hardship to the pastoral tenant that the selector's cattle or sheep should run over his land, it was equally a hardship to the selector for the squatter's sheep to run over his land. The squatter was not bound to fence his run; but the selector was to be allowed five years to fence an agricultural farm, and three years a grazing farm. The hon. member for Warrego, he thought, had said that if a grazing selection was not fenced in a man could not work it properly, and could not make the best use of it. Let them look practically at how the thing worked out. If a man took up 20,000, or say 10,000 acres, he did not wait until he had fenced it in before he put on it all the buildings and improvements necessary to utilise the land. His rent commenced immediately, and so he put up a house, and took up sheep and horses with him to put on the land. It might be three years before he could fence the selection, and all that time he would have no security. The moment his sheep went over the boundary the squatter could impound them. The clause was one of the most one-sided things that could be passed. At the time the Land Act of 1876 was passed, there was very great dissatisfaction among the selectors in regard to the question of impounding, but they were not powerful enough to get the clause altered. The squatters were too influential and powerful in the House to allow the possibility of the selectors getting it altered and getting redress, and so they had to put up with it. Since then, in many districts, the land had been thrown up by squatters for selection, and most of it had been taken up without grazing rights. The selectors who were now taking up the lands were doing it where the squatters had not any rights—in many of the scrubs, and in many other places. He admitted that many of the squatters would not impound their neighbour's cattle or sheep. He knew many squatters who were inclined to be friendly to the selectors, and found it to their interest and far more pleasant to be so. But they had not to consider what any individual squatters might do; they had to consider the power they placed in their hands. He was quite aware of the evil that had existed in New South Wales, where men had gone—he did not know the names they termed them—on to a squatter's run to be a sort of annoyance to him. He had no sympathy with those adventurers, and he was sure the hon. member for Warrego had none. He said that, instead of opposing the amendment, the Government should have devised some principle that would have made the measure less one-sided than it was. He was disappointed that they had not done so. It appeared to him that no one was considered in the matter but the squatter. They found, in regard to the renewed leases of squatters' runs, the Government had adopted an amendment to reduce the minimum from twenty to ten square miles—just one-half.

The PREMIER: No change at all has been made except in the amended Bill.

Mr. SALKELD: That is the lease clause.

The PREMIER: In the renewed half of leases.

Mr. SALKELD: In the renewed halves of the leases.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: There is no alteration in the resumed halves.

Mr. SALKELD said he referred to the renewed leases—that the squatter who got his lease renewed had his rent reduced from 20s. to 10s.—just one-half. Then, next to the squatter came the grazing selector, who had got his rent reduced from 1½d. to ¾d. He was surprised at the action of the Government in the matter; and if he had known that they would agree to an amendment of that kind he should not have consented to fixing 3d. per acre as the minimum for agricultural land. As it was the squatters were more considered in the Bill than any other class in the community—that was if the clause passed as it stood. Under the Bill a selector of 900 acres had five years to fence it in, put up his house, and make his improvements. He could not do that all at once; it was impossible that he could do it right off the reel. If selectors who had taken up land in the past had had to fence it in before they turned it to account, there would have been very little real *bonâ fide* settlement in the colony at the present time.

The PREMIER: They are not obliged to do so.

Mr. SALKELD: It would be most unjust to allow the squatter to run his sheep and cattle all over the selector's land, and yet, if the selector's milch cow, or his saddle horse, or his draught horse wandered over the boundary line, it was to be impounded at once. He knew there would be cases where squatters, by acting up to their rights in that way, would actually block settlement on their runs altogether.

The PREMIER: It is the present law.

Mr. STEVENS: Why is it not done now?

Mr. SALKELD said there were many places in the colony where the squatters' rights had ceased altogether—where the land had been thrown open to selection, and they had abandoned their runs and gone somewhere else. A great deal of the best land of the colony was in scrubs which were of no use to the squatter. He would suggest that the Government should adopt some plan of this kind: To limit the power of the pastoral lessee to impounding in cases of wilful trespass—to driving or shepherding stock on his run. There would be some sense in that. Then allow both parties to have the same right, or allow neither to have it; so that both would have fair play. With regard to the argument of the hon. member for Fortitude Valley that the pastoral tenant paid for the right to the grass, what did he pay? A mere nominal figure, while the selector paid 3d. per acre. He hoped the Government would see their way to some arrangement such as he had suggested. He should not care a rap for the Bill if it passed with the clause as it stood. He would prefer to go on under the present law; and if the Government would only give them a good electoral law, to prevent the

maladministration of the land laws, it would do more good than the Bill, if the clause under discussion remained in its present form.

Mr. GROOM said the law now in force in the colony was to the effect that no one who had selected land under the Acts of 1868 or 1876 could impound unless his selection was enclosed with a secure fence. That was the law at present, and it had given very general dissatisfaction amongst selectors. So much so that at one of several public meetings held in the district he represented, in relation to the Bill, a copy of the resolutions arrived at was sent to himself and his hon. colleague, requesting them to give the clause now under discussion their most strenuous opposition, and for this reason : The settlement of the country under the Act of 1868 was large in certain places. It was only a person of considerable means who could take up land to a large extent. Under the Act of 1876, where homestead selections were confined to 80 acres, settlement was small, and complaints with regard to impounding had not been very numerous. But they were now called upon to deal with a different set of circumstances altogether. They were now giving opportunities for taking up grazing farms of 20,000 acres, and agricultural farms of 960 acres; and his experience of gentlemen engaged in pastoral pursuits was, that they endeavoured to keep as much stock as possible on the resumed halves of the runs until the land was taken from them for public purposes; so that when people went there for the purposes of settlement they found the grass eaten down to the very roots, and no stock could live upon it. He therefore agreed with his hon. colleagues in the representation of the Darling Downs in saying that, from their knowledge of that part of country, if the clause was passed in its entirety, they would get very few selectors to go out into the grazing areas, but that they would confine themselves to where they were. It was all very well to say that there were no squatters who would resort to anything in the way of oppression, by impounding selectors' stock; but he would point out that they had to anticipate circumstances which would arise by the altered process of settlement, brought about by the passing of the Bill before them. At present they had no 20,000-acre farms, and did not allow smaller selectors to go to the extent proposed by the Bill, and it was necessary, therefore, to prepare for circumstances which would ultimately arise. He had known squatters on the Darling Downs—ancient ones, he was happy to say—or, at any rate, he hoped that no such individuals were in existence at the present day—who had actually boasted that they had paid the whole of the expenses of their stations by impounding the cattle of selectors in their neighbourhood.

The PREMIER : There are no driving fees now.

Mr. GROOM said he was quite aware that the law had been altered since, and he hoped there were very few squatters of that class now living. But he had heard that boast made ; and the hatred they bore to selectors, and the oppressive manner in which they could act towards them, had been very clearly shown on the Darling Downs during the twenty-five years of his experience there. He hoped there were no squatters living at the present time who would resort to oppression of that kind ; but at the same time there was this danger in connection with the clause :—Assuming the selection to be on a grazing area, if the selector's sheep trespassed outside the boundaries of the selection they were liable to be immediately placed in the pound ; while, on the other hand, if the squatter's sheep came right up to the selector's house, if the land were not enclosed, he had no power whatever to put them away. That, he considered, was most unjust.

An HONOURABLE MEMBER : Hunt them off.

Mr. GROOM : The selector would have to be continually hunting them off. Every selector had not the means of fencing in his land at once. He observed that the period named within which fencing should be done was extended to five years, which, he thought, was a step in the right direction. But they all knew that the fencing-in of a selection was a very expensive item, more especially if the selection was in a scrub where wallabies were plentiful. In that case, the expense was almost quadrupled on the selector, who had to defend himself and his grass. If the hon. member for Darling Downs pressed his amendment, he (Mr. Groom) should be compelled to vote for it, because upon that particular question he was giving utterance to the views of his constituents, who had requested him to oppose the clause. He contended that there should be equal justice meted out to both parties. If the pastoral lessee, on the resumed half of the run, had no power to impound, of course he did not see why the selector should have power to do so. Both parties should be placed upon an equal footing.

Mr. FOXTON said the matter had so far been discussed from one point of view only ; that was as between a grazier under the present system and a selector who would select upon his run. The wording of the clause said that the selector should not be entitled to impound any stock "of the last authorised occupier" of his selection ; and therefore, if the selection were a forfeited one, the selector would be unable to impound the stock of the man who immediately preceded him in that selection. It seemed to him that it was quite possible that this case might happen :—A man might take up a selection, pay one year's rent, and absolutely refuse to pay any more. He could continue to occupy the land with his stock, and any man who took up that forfeited selection afterwards would be unable to impound the stock upon it, simply for the reason that—as the clause read—the first selector was "the last authorised occupier" of the land. It seemed to him that the matter was worthy of consideration. It certainly appeared to him that advantage might be taken of it for the purpose of taking up a selection and securing the grass right for ever without paying any more rent for it. He might add that under clause 59, which provided for dealing with forfeited selections, they might be thrown open in the usual way, and the second selector, according to his contention, would be unable to impound the first selector's cattle.

Mr. MACFARLANE said the matter under dispute was one that he very clearly foresaw upon the second reading of the Bill, and he then suggested to the Government that it would be far better to resume the whole of the farms in the settled districts and portion them out in small areas. He was still of the same opinion, as he believed that the system of having the runs divided would lead to any amount of bickering and ill-will between the small graziers and squatters. The Government had the power of preventing those quarrels, and bringing peace into a district in which there might otherwise be a great deal of trouble. It was a difficult matter, and the Government were placed in a very peculiar position. They wished to do justice to the squatters and to other classes; but he could assure them that there was a feeling that they were not dealing out in that Bill even-handed justice to all classes. Of course he

represented a town district; but he was in the centre of an agricultural district; and although he had not been requested, as the hon. member for Toowoomba had been, to vote for the amendment, so as to give equal rights, yet if the hon. member for Darling Downs put his amendment to the vote he should consider it his duty to vote for it.

Mr. KATES said the reason why he did not move the amendment was that he thought the Government might devise some means of meeting the difficulty; but, finding that they did not intend to do so, he should move that all the words in the clause after the word "thereon," in the 26th line, be omitted.

The PREMIER said that, before the amendment was put, he should ask the hon. gentleman to confine his amendment to the words in the 3rd line of the clause, because if all the words were ordered to stand there would be no possibility of some verbal amendments which were required being made afterwards. It was the usual thing to do. It would raise the question, and not prevent any verbal amendments being made subsequently.

Mr. KATES said he would accept the suggestion of the hon. the Premier, and would alter his motion so as to make it apply only to the words in that line.

Question—That all the words in line 26, after the word "thereon," be omitted—put.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS said several hon. gentlemen had spoken who did not seem to have recognised the fact that the present holders of those lands were men with existing rights; and that the men who were coming in would come in on certain conditions. There was a very clear distinction between the two, apart from the matter of terms. Where were the hon. gentlemen oppposite—the hon. member for Balonne, for instance—who was usually very talkative on almost every clause that was brought forward? The leader of the Opposition, and the hon. member for Blackall, and the hon. member for Port Curtis, had they not a solitary word to say upon the question? Where was their courage; had they not even the courage of their convictions to say whether they approved or whether they did not? Every clause that had been brought forward before that they had either denounced or approved of in most violent terms, and monopolised the whole of the discussion on a question; and now that one of the most important clauses of the Bill was before them—one which affected the interest of all, whether selectors or squatters—they had not the smallest word to say. The leader of the Opposition had sneaked out of the Committee, which was most miserable, contemptible conduct. He (the Minister for Lands) had the courage of his opinions when he knew he was going in the right course. No matter what the opinions of any members in the Committee might be, he would stick to his own convictions. There was the hon. member for Balonne sitting there like a mummy without saying a word. He spoke loud enough on other questions; but he had not courage enough to tackle the present one. What had become of the leader of the Opposition that he dared not say a word about it? The hon. member for Blackall slunk off without saying a word; but when he (the Minister for Lands) reached such a contemptible state of cowardice as that he should walk out of the Committee for good; he would not sneak out to the smoking-room and avoid a question that he thought was a ticklish one.

Mr. MOREHEAD: Cock-a-doodle-doo! The hon. gentleman had come out in quite a new rôle. He thought when he had got no opposition to fight that he was in a grand position, and could get up like a gas-bag, to be pricked only to tumble down again. He really did not know what the hon. gentleman wanted from the Opposition. He objected to their disagreeing, and now he objected to their agreeing. What did he want? He (Mr. Morehead) quite agreed with the clause as accepted by the Government, so far as he was individually concerned; and why on earth should he get up and make a fuss about it? Was there no pleasing the hon. gentleman? He talked the other night about hon. members treading on the tail of his coat, and now he complained that nobody would tread on it. There seemed to be no pleasing the hon. gentleman. What did he want? The Premier had managed to get the Committee into a tolerably good frame of mind; but the Minister for Lands would not submit to that, although he had been told by the Premier that really the amendment which was suggested by him would deal with the question. That would not satisfy the Minister for Lands. He wanted to waste time; and how did he do it? He got up and said that the leader of the Opposition sneaked away. He (Mr. Morehead) did not know that the leader of the Opposition had sneaked away; but if he had, he supposed it was because he was tired of the monotony of the business. He (Mr. Morehead) had been intensely interested in seeing hon. members opposite worry one another; it was quite a new sensation, and he had enjoyed it. If it was not dog eating dog, it was dog biting dog; hon. members opposite had been biting the calves of the hon. gentleman—that was, if he had any. If he (Mr. Morehead) could do by deputy what he wanted to do, he was quite satisfied. He was perfectly satisfied, too, that the Minister for Lands should be annoyed and bothered, more especially as he (Mr. Dutton) was in the right. The whole thing was a rare anomaly. He really thought the hon. gentleman had got a little badgering from his own side; and if he wanted any from the Opposition side he had only to say so. He had only to express a desire to that effect, and hon. members were quite able to touch him on that "raw" that had been already established. He (Mr. Morehead) wanted to give the hon. gentleman a little rest and repose; and he was sure the Premier wanted to do so also; but the hon. gentleman would not have it.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: Let us hear something about the clause.

Mr. MOREHEAD said that the Minister for Lands had attacked the hon. member for Balonne, and the hon. member for Balonne was now replying to him. The hon. member for Balonne was perfectly pleased with the row which was going on on the other side; and he was quite sure that the other side were perfectly pleased with the hon. member for Balonne; in fact, they were the salt of his existence; they made life pleasant. It would be a one-sided affair if one side continued merely to oppose the other; but there was a flank movement, such as he himself had initiated at one time during his political career, which showed that there was spirit on the other side. He was glad indeed to find that there was vitality there; that the dry bones had life in them yet, and that hon. members were not tied hand and foot to the chariot wheels of the Premier. He supported the Government on that clause because it was one of the few parts of the Bill on which they were right. If the hon. gentleman wished to hear some other hon. member on the Opposition side, he (Mr. Morehead) would send down to the smoking-room.

Mr. ALAND said he was delighted to hear that the hon. member really believed in one clause of the Bill. He regretted that he had not heard the clause discussed and thus had the

privilege of hearing both sides of the question. He intended to support the amendment of the hon. member for Darling Downs. He did so because——

Mr. MOREHEAD: Don't give your reasons.

Mr. ALAND said that perhaps his reasons would not be good ones, but such as they were he would give the Committee the benefit of them. One was that he had been requested by a large section of his constituents to do so; and when his own feelings were in accord with that request, he had great pleasure in doing what they wished. The Minister for Lands had just talked about the existing rights of the pastoral lessees. He (Mr. Aland) did not know exactly where those existing rights came in. If the lessees had existing rights, by all means let them stick to them. But he did not think they had any. If the pastoral lessee had power to impound the selector's cattle, then the selector had equal power to impound the pastoral lessee's cattle. But he would rather see all impoundings done away with. He was quite sure that the squatter and the selector would then very soon come to terms. He might give an instance which came under his notice when Mayor of Toowoomba. It was, if he mistook not, when the commonage belonging to Toowoomba was handed over to the corporation. That commonage was surrounded by the Helidon run. At the first there was constant squabbling between the owner of the run and the corporation ranger; but in a very little time they came to terms, and the corporation heard nothing more about impounding. And thus he believed that terms would be come to between the squatter and the selector which would suit both parties. Under the old state of things—when the squatter was allowed to impound the selector's cattle, and the selector had no remedy—on one station in the vicinity of the Darling Downs there was a selector who used to have to put up with a neighbouring squatter running his sheep on the selector's land, and he had no power to prevent it. But if the unfortunate selector's bullocks or sheep got on to the squatter's run they were impounded. He hoped the Government would give way on the matter. It was not very much that that side of the Committee had asked the Government to give way upon; and he was sure that the Bill would not be acceptable to the class which that side mainly represented if impounding was allowed.

Mr. NORTON said he wished to say a few words with regard to what had fallen from the Minister for Lands. He did not think the hon. gentleman could really have been under the impression that hon. members on the Opposition side were afraid to express their opinions on the clause, although he spoke in such an excited state that it was difficult to understand what he did mean. It was true that they were quiet about it. Just a few minutes before he had been writing at the table, and when he went to his seat he remarked to the hon. member for Balonne how remarkable it was that they had had the opportunity of sitting quiet all the evening and allowing the discussion to be on the other side. The reason why they had not spoken was simply because the discussion took place among members on the Government side. He was quite willing to express his opinion with regard to the clause; he did not agree with it, not on the grounds that had been advanced on the other side, but because it did not allow the selector to put any stock on his run until it was fenced in. That was how the clause stood now. Why should not a man who took up 5,000 acres of land be allowed to shepherd his sheep on it?

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: So he can.

Mr. NORTON said he could not. He was allowed under the clause to go on the selection for the purpose of carrying out his improvements, and that was all. He did not think it was intended that he should not be allowed to take stock on to his selection; but, as the clause stood, he got simply a license to go upon the land for the purpose of making his improvements. That was a very objectionable feature in the clause, and required alteration. He thought that no selector should be allowed to impound any stock of the last occupier of the land until his land was enclosed with a substantial fence, unless in the case of a wilful trespass. He admitted there was a great deal of force in the arguments of hon. members who opposed the clause, because there appeared to be something of unfairness about it. They knew that in New South Wales there had been for years past any amount of litigation—litigation costing thousands of pounds, and even in some individual cases costing thousands of pounds before some of those impounding cases were settled, simply because men who had no intention of stocking the country themselves went on to the squatters' runs and took up a cattle-camp on the side of a waterhole, and the lessee could not keep them off, and then when the lessee's stock came around they were impounded. He thought the clause should be altered in order to express the right which the selector should have to occupy his own selection with his own stock, and that he should also have the right to impound the stock of the original holder of the country when they were purposely driven upon his selection.

The PREMIER said the hon. member who had just spoken had contributed very valuable information to the debate. He was very glad that the Minister for Lands' speech just now had had the effect of bringing him out.

Mr. NORTON: He did not draw me.

The PREMIER said he had noticed the words "for the purpose of making improvements thereon" earlier in the evening, and he intended to call his hon. colleague's attention to those words. He thought they ought to be omitted, because as the clause stood it might suggest that a man had no right to put stock on his selection. He would suggest to the hon. member for Darling Downs that he might withdraw his amendment for the present to permit of those words being omitted. He would suggest also—and it might possibly remove what was considered the unfairness of the clause—that it should be amended so as to give the selector power to impound in cases of wilful trespass. The difficulty was that it was impossible to prevent stock running on the resumed half of a run from occasionally trespassing on a selection. It was physically impossible, and if impounding were permitted the result would be that the resumed half would become useless. But it also raised another question which he intended to have referred to before it went to a division, and that was the financial aspect of the question. It was a very serious question. At least one-third of the area of all the runs in the schedule area would be in the position of being resumed land paying the present rents, and, if they were to be rendered useless, the State would be at a loss to the amount of those rents every year. The loss would amount to much more than £20,000 if the resumed portions of the runs were rendered useless.

Mr. MOREHEAD: Worse than useless, because the place would be covered with noxious weeds.

The PREMIER said the country would be covered with noxious weeds. It was a very serious matter, and involved more than the

rights of the selectors or of the squatters. It involved the interests of the country, and it also involved, to a great extent, goodwill and good-feeling amongst the inhabitants of the country. As had been pointed out, there had been enormous litigation in New South Wales on that very subject, and there had been more actions brought in New South Wales for illegally impounding in one year than they had had in this colony since it was started, and than he trusted they would ever have. He hoped the suggestion he had to make would meet the views of most members of the Committee—that was, to let the selector have power to impound in cases of wilful trespass. If a man deliberately grazed his stock over a selection for the purpose of eating the selector out, his stock should be impounded. No one had any sympathy with a man who would try to eat the selector out. In the meantime, he would ask the hon. member for Darling Downs to withdraw his amendment for the present, in order that he might propose the amendment he had mentioned.

Mr. KATES said that, in order to enable the hon. gentleman to amend a previous part of the clause, he would withdraw his amendment for the present.

Amendment, by leave, withdrawn.

The PREMIER moved that the words "for the purpose of making improvements thereon," after the word "thereof" in the 2nd line of the clause, be omitted.

The HON. SIR T. MCILWRAITH asked if the Premier's attention had been drawn to a similar clause passed in the New South Wales Act. The clause he referred to was passed in the New South Wales Act with the approval of the whole House, and was as follows :—

"No person occupying land under conditional purchase, or conditional or homestead lease, shall be entitled to bring an action for trespass other than a wilful trespass, on such land, or to impound any animal in respect thereof, until he shall have fenced such land, pursuant to the provisions of this Act."

The hon. member would see if that would meet his views on the subject.

Amendment agreed to.

Mr. KATES moved that the words "but shall not be entitled to impound any stock," after the word "thereon" in the 3rd line of the clause, be omitted.

Mr. SALKELD said he was very glad to see the hon. member for Port Curtis taking such a liberal view, though he had not gone so far as he would have liked to have seen him go. As for giving the selector power to impound for wilful trespass, it would be very hard to prove wilful trespass. Any man might drive his stock along the border of his holding, and his stock might straggle over the border. Would that be wilful trespass? Again, there was nothing to prevent the selector's stock being impounded directly they crossed over the border. It had been said that the selector had no right to the grass until he had fenced it; and certainly the clause in its original shape looked as if that were the intention of the Bill. However, they had got rid of that, through the instrumentality of the hon. member for Port Curtis, and he hoped that hon. member would help them to get some more concessions. He did not think they would get any themselves from the Government. He felt persuaded that, if the clause passed as it stood, the inhabitants of the farming or settled districts would not thank the Government for it. There might be something in it if a clause were introduced providing that neither squatter nor selector should have the right to impound, except for wilful trespass, but he did not think the present concession was at all enough.

The PREMIER said he did not think the hon. member was justified in any way in saying that the Government made no concession which was not extorted by the Opposition. The Government had a most anxious desire to do justice to all parties—to the country, the pastoral tenant, and the selector—and had listened anxiously to the discussion, in the hope that some mode might be found of dealing justly with them all. He certainly admitted that there was an apparent injustice, but it had been clearly pointed out that some provision of the kind proposed in the Bill was absolutely necessary in order to avoid the numberless evils which would otherwise follow. The hon. member for Port Curtis had made a suggestion which he (the Premier) had been on the point of making, and since then the hon. leader of the Opposition had pointed out that the same suggestion had been adopted in New South Wales. The Government were disposed to make any amendment in the Bill which would render it more useful to the country.

Mr. BLACK said it seemed to him that the amendment proposed by the hon. member for Darling Downs would be likely to embarrass the Government to a very much greater extent than anything which had ever emanated from the Opposition side of the Committee. He entirely agreed with the clause as it stood in the Bill; and he thought any hon. gentleman who had had any experience in squatting in the colony, and in the general working of previous Land Acts, would know perfectly well that the clause was a good and perfectly sound one. If the Government were going to allow any concession, such as that proposed by the hon. member for Darling Downs, they had better at once abandon the whole of the resumed portion of the runs as commons. That was what it virtually amounted to. He could not imagine that the pastoral lessee would pay any rent for the resumed portion of the run unless he had the positive right of grazing over it, until it was absolutely required for settlement. There was no minimum area laid down for grazing areas, and there was nothing to prevent, say, a dairy farmer from taking up 320 acres in a grazing area. For that he paid the magnificent sum—calculating at three-farthings per acre—of £1 per annum. There was nothing to prevent him turning that 320 acres into a perfect trap to impound the Crown lessee's stock. No one understanding squatting pursuits would advocate the resumed portions of the runs being turned into commons. They were the greatest nuisance to the country; no one seemed to have a proper right to them. Travelling stock would simply go and sit down on them, and there would be no grass, either for the selector or the Crown lessee. He believed in the clause just as it stood in the Bill, and if any embarrassment on it was coming to the Government, it did not come from that side of the Committee.

Mr. KATES said he had not moved his amendment with any hostile feeling towards the Government, but because he was fully convinced that if the clause were passed as printed there would be no settlement on the grazing areas. According to the Minister for Lands, the grass right did not commence until the selector had fenced in his land; and that implied immediate fencing. He found that the people outside were not satisfied with the two years' time allowed for fencing; they wanted five years, and the Government were going to meet them by allowing three years for grazing farms, and five years for agricultural farms. Immediate fencing, as he had already pointed out, would fall heavily upon a selector, in addition to all the other improvements necessary on entering upon the occupation

of a farm; and to compel immediate fencing would be an act of great injustice. It was all very well to talk about wilful trespass, but who was to prove wilful trespass? The clause as it stood meant neither more nor less than immediate fencing, and to that he objected.

Mr. KELLETT said the hon. member for Darling Downs was riding his hobby that night, but he would give him the credit of believing what he said. The old saying was true, that "Where ignorance is bliss, 'tis folly to be wise," and it was simply in that light that the hon. member was arguing. By the clause as it stood there was no necessity for immediate fencing. The one or two flocks on a grazing farm could be shepherded in the same way as the squatters had had to do until the last few years. When squatters took cattle out to new country they had to shepherd them. He had known cases where they had had to shepherd them closely for six months at a stretch, then shift them to a fresh place, and again closely shepherd them for another twelve months. The selector could shepherd his cattle or sheep, and need not fence until it suited his convenience to do so. As to the junior member for Ipswich (Mr. Salkeld), although but a new member, he had come out in quite a new light, pitching into the Premier and the Minister for Lands, and saying that their own supporters were not likely to get any concessions from the Government. If the hon. member had not been a very young member he would not have talked in that way of things he knew nothing about. Whatever the Government might do towards members on the other side, he would give them the credit of believing that they would do anything in their power for their own supporters. It was a good rule that the less said by a new member the better, especially when speaking on matters he knew nothing about.

The PREMIER said the general question referred to by the leader of the Opposition could be better dealt with later on. The amendment to the present clause, suggested by the hon. member for Port Curtis, was a good one, and he would put it into shape and move it at the proper time.

Mr. SALKELD said that, although a young member, he claimed the right to express his opinions on matters that might be brought forward. The subject now before the Committee was one about which he was by no means ignorant, and he claimed the right to assert that no concession would have been granted by the Government but for the hon. member for Port Curtis.

Mr. KATES said the hon. member for Stanley (Mr. Kellett) evidently did not understand the question. That hon. member said a selector could shepherd his stock until it suited him to fence in his land. That was exactly what he (Mr. Kates) wanted to enable him to do, and which he could not do under the clause as it stood; and he wanted the pastoral lessee to do the same. He was sorry he could not accept the amendment which the Premier intended to propose, because he believed it would prevent settlement.

Mr. ALAND asked whether there were any impounding conditions under the Act of 1868? He was under the impression that both the selector and the pastoral lessee were placed on the same footing.

Mr. ARCHER: The squatter could impound under that Act, but not the selector.

Mr. ALAND said he had been under the impression that both parties had equal rights under that Act—that there was a sort of freetrade in impounding. But it seemed that was not the case, and yet he had never heard of any lawsuits or disagreements arising from it between the pastoral lessee and the selector.

Mr. KATES said if the Premier would so frame his suggested amendment as to make it also unlawful for the pastoral tenant to impound the selector's stock, except in case of wilful trespass, that would be even-handed justice, but in its present form it was altogether in favour of the squatter.

Mr. ISAMBERT said there was no doubt that the question under discussion was a very difficult one, and they ought not to allow the clause to pass into law until the matter was settled upon an equitable basis. What was right for the squatter should be right for the selector. They should not trust to the good-nature of the squatter; some of them, no doubt, might be trusted, but there were others among them who could not be trusted, and who, by impounding settlers' stock, would cause a great deal of annoyance. It must also be admitted that there were many selectors who would take advantage of the good-nature of squatters, and abuse any privileges of grazing allowed them; that, in fact, they would overstock the unoccupied land. The question was, therefore, surrounded with considerable difficulty. He thought, however, they might be able to arrange it satisfactorily by fixing a limit to the amount of stock a selector should be permitted to depasture on his lands. If, for instance, it was accepted that four acres were sufficient for one sheep, they should be limited to one sheep for every eight acres. If that number was exceeded, then he would be overstocking his selection; but if the proportion were observed, then when his sheep trespassed on the squatter's land there would be grass left on his selection which could be used by the pastoral tenant. In that way a kind of mutuality would be established. At any rate the selector should be placed on the same footing as the squatter with regard to impounding. He had heard many of his constituents express the opinion that if the selector was not allowed to impound, neither should that power be given to the squatter, and *vice versâ;* and he agreed with them.

The PREMIER said a question was asked just now as to what was the law with regard to impounding under the Act of 1868. That Act allowed either the selector or pastoral tenant to impound with this restriction, that the pastoral tenant was not permitted to impound any stock within a-quarter of a mile of the selector's boundary. The present law was exactly the same as the clause introduced by the Government.

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

AYES, 26.

Sir T. McIlwraith, Messrs. Rutledge, Griffith, Miles, Dutton, Dickson, Sheridan, Brookes, Palmer, Stevens, Kellett, Morehead, Moreton, Norton, Donaldson, Jordan, Archer, Lalor, Jessop, Mellor, Bailey, Lissner, Smyth, Ferguson, Black, and Annear.

NOES, 9.

Messrs. Groom, Aland, Buckland, Isambert, Salkeld, Kates, Foxton, Horwitz, and Macfarlane.

Question resolved in the affirmative.

The PREMIER said he would move the amendment which he had read just now—namely, that all the words after "authorised" be omitted, with the view of inserting the following:—

Pastoral tenant found trespassing on any part of the land not enclosed with a good and substantial fence, except in case of wilful trespass,

The clause would then read thus:—

"Upon the issue of a license the selector may enter upon the land and take possession thereof for the purpose of making improvements thereon, but shall not be entitled to impound any stock of the last authorised pastoral tenant found trespassing on any part of the land not enclosed with a good and substantial fence except in case of wilful trespass."

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

Mr. ISAMBERT asked if the amendment also applied to squatters?

The PREMIER said that could not be dealt with in that clause. They were dealing now with selectors.

Mr. ALAND asked if the Premier would tell the Committee if he intended to frame a clause to meet the difficulty?

Mr. SALKELD said, after the amendment of the Premier had been proposed, he intended to propose an amendment applying the same rule to the pastoral tenant.

The PREMIER: That will come in a later part of the Bill—Part X.

Mr. ALAND said he would like the assurance of the Premier that the matter referred to by the hon. member for Ipswich would receive attention.

The PREMIER said he could not give an answer at the present moment. The question deserved a great deal of consideration. It might be desirable to introduce an amendment in the direction indicated, but not exactly as had been proposed. However, they had plenty of time to consider the matter before they came to Part X. The provisions of the Act of 1868 indicated the direction in which reciprocity might be established.

Mr. BLACK said he would ask the Minister for Lands what the meaning of wilful trespass was?

The PREMIER said whether a trespass was wilful or not was a question of fact, and it was impossible to give an exact definition. There could be no difficulty in ascertaining whether a trespass was accidental or wilful. If stock, for instance, strayed through an open fence, that would be accidental trespass; but if a sliprail were to be taken down, the cattle being driven up to the opening, and the owner then turning his back upon them, that would be wilful trespass. The term was very well known.

Mr. MOREHEAD said they had had from the Minister for Lands that night a very good exemplification of what wilful trespass was. The Opposition were perfectly calm and contented when the hon. gentleman abused them for not speaking. That was certainly wilful trespass. The hon. member for Mackay was away in the smoking-room at the time, or he would not have needed to ask the question.

Mr. ISAMBERT said it was a question whether it would not be desirable to recommit the Bill to insert the amendment proposed by the hon. member for Warwick.

Question put and negatived.

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

Clause, as amended, put.

Mr. KELLETT said he should like to apologise to the member for Ipswich for what he had said some little time ago. He had not wished to offend the hon. member in any way. That was very far from being his intention. The reference he had made to ignorance shown by the hon. member was not to his general ignorance, but to his ignorance of the special subject under discussion.

Mr. MOREHEAD: That is too thin.

Clause, as amended, put and passed.

Clause 51—"Rent to be paid during license"—put and passed.

The House resumed; the CHAIRMAN reported progress, and obtained leave to sit again to-morrow.

ADJOURNMENT.

The PREMIER said: I beg to move that this House do now adjourn. The business for to-morrow will be the consideration in committee of the Legislative Council's message with reference to the Native Labourers Protection Bill; and then the Crown Lands Bill.

The HON. SIR T. MCILWRAITH: Would it not be possible for the Government to put into our hands, from week to week at all events, the Land Bill with the amendments made up to date? It would be of great assistance to hon. members.

The PREMIER: The Government propose to do so. We do not think it worth while to do it from day to day, but we propose to have it done from week to week. I hope, however, that it will not have to be done many more weeks.

Question put and passed.

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