Queensland

Parliamentary Debates
[Hansard]

Legislative Assembly

THURSDAY, 30 OCTOBER 1884

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY.

Thursday, 30 *October*, 1884.

Question.—Crown Lands Bill—committee.—Printing Committee.—Adjournment.

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

QUESTION.

The HON. B. B. MORETON asked the Minister for Works—

Under what arrangement or agreement with the different proprietors thereof did the Government construct the sidings or branch lines to the following places, namely:—

1. To Yengarie Sugar Refinery from the Maryborough and Gympie Railway?
2. To Wilson, Hart, and Company's sawmill, Maryborough, from the Wharf Extension?
3. To the Smelting Works, Mount Perry, from the Mount Perry Railway Station?

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

1. On condition that Messrs. Cran and Company forwarded, by rail, all goods, coal, and produce consigned to and from them, and that they conveyed to the Government free from any claim for compensation, all the land required for the branch.
2. On condition that Messrs. Wilson, Hart, and Company paid cost of the siding.
3. On condition that the Mount Perry Mine owners should pay the cost of siding outside the railway boundaries.

CROWN LANDS BILL—COMMITTEE.

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

The MINISTER FOR LANDS (Hon. C. B. Dutton) said he proposed to insert a new clause after clause 68, as passed, to provide for homestead settlement. The new clause differed somewhat from the form of the homestead clauses in the present Act, but contained many of the advantages supposed to attach to the present homestead clauses, though in some respects it dealt more favourably with the selector than they did. The new clause provided that upon payment of a sum which, together with the rent already paid, would make up half-a-crown an acre, together with the deed and assurance fees, the selector, having fulfilled the conditions stated, would be entitled to a deed of grant of the land in fee-simple. There was only one disadvantage to the homestead selector, and that was that he had no right of priority over other selectors; but that could not be considered of great moment when the advantages he otherwise had were considered. Under the new clause the time in which he was allowed to complete his payments was extended by two years. The 2nd subsection, as would be seen, contained a very important and liberal provision, and would be found of great advantage in many cases where a selector having a wife and a number of children might die intestate. The clause enabled the widow to tender the proof of fulfilment of conditions and make the payments; and she was to be entitled, after all the conditions were fulfilled, to the deed of grant of the land in fee-simple. The clause must be considered more liberal than the present homestead clause in many respects. He therefore moved that the following new clause be inserted to follow clause 68, as passed:—

With respect to agricultural farms, the area whereof does not exceed one hundred and sixty acres, the following provisions shall have effect:—

1. If at any time before the expiration of seven years from the commencement of the term of the lease the lessee proves to the commissioner in open court that the condition of occupation hereinbefore prescribed has been performed for the period of five years next preceding the tendering of such proof either—
   (*a*) By the continuous and *bona fide* residence on the holding of the original lessee himself, or,
   (*b*) In case of the death of the original lessee before he has so resided for five years, by the continuous and *bona fide* residence of such lessee on the holding for a portion of that period, and by the continuous and *bona fide* residence on the holding for the remainder of the period of some person beneficially interested in the holding under the will, or as one of the next of kin, of the original lessee—

   and that a sum at the rate of ten shillings per acre has been expended in substantial and permanent improvements on the land, the lessee, upon payment at the Treasury, or other place appointed by the Governor in Council, of a sum which together with the rent already paid will make up the sum of two shillings and sixpence per acre, together with the prescribed fee and assurance fee, shall be entitled to a deed of grant of the land in fee-simple:
2. Provided that if the original lessee dies before the expiration of seven years from the commencement of the term of the lease and before making such proof as aforesaid, intestate, and leaving a widow, the widow may tender such proof to the commissioner, and, upon making such proof and such payments as aforesaid, she shall be entitled to have a deed of grant of the land in fee-simple issued to her, and shall hold the land upon the same trusts as if she had been duly appointed administrator of the land of the deceased lessee.
3. The provisions of this section shall not apply to any holding acquired by any person who has acquired a homestead selection under the Crown Lands Alienation Act of 1876, or any of the Acts thereby repealed.
4. No person shall take advantage of the provisions of this section in respect of more than one holding of which he is the original lessee.
5. The provisions of this section shall not be applicable in respect of any holding which has been mortgaged or sub-let.

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN said he was extremely glad to find that the hon. Minister for Lands was gradually acquiring common sense upon the Land question. Nothing could give greater proof of the crude nature of the Bill when laid upon the table of the House, than the recantation the Minister for Lands had just now made of his statements when moving the second reading of the Bill. He was glad, and he thought the Committee were equally pleased, that that was so. He hoped the hon. gentleman would continue to improve in the same direction, and that by-and-by they would be able to improve his hon. colleague the Minister for Works, who, he believed, looked upon the homestead clauses of the Act of 1876 as being most iniquitous. In congratulating the Minister for Lands upon his complete change of ideas upon the homestead clauses, he might add that he should have been glad if the hon. gentleman had gone a little further. He had always thought that the homestead clauses of the Act of 1876 did not go far enough; they only allowed 160 acres to be taken up by a man, who had to reside upon his selection for five years before he could make a homestead of it. They knew that in many places it would be very difficult for a man to get 80 acres of good agricultural land out of a selection of 160 acres. He therefore thought it would be advisable if they doubled the acreage proposed to be allowed. He did not think the country would lose anything by it, and he was quite certain that the homestead selector would gain by the increase, as then he might get 80 acres of good agricultural land on his holding, and the balance which was of an inferior quality could be utilised for grazing stock. He believed the Minister for Lands desired settlement, although he was of opinion that the hon. gentleman was very much mistaken in his ideas in framing that Bill. No better encouragement would be given to settlement than by making the provision he (Hon. J. M. Macrossan) now suggested. A selector could not expect to become an exceedingly rich man with 320 acres; he would simply be able to live comfortably on that area, and probably leave something behind him for his children. He did not intend to propose an amendment if the Minister for Lands would take the matter up; but if the hon. gentleman declined to do so, then he would move that 320 be substituted for 160.

Mr. BLACK said he quite endorsed the remarks made by the hon. member for Townsville. He considered that 160 acres were insufficient for a man to make a profitable use of the land. In a country like this, where a selector had so many vicissitudes of climate to contend against, and where he had very likely to combine grazing with agriculture in order to utilise the land with a reasonable amount of success, it was a mistake for that Committee or

for anyone to believe that 160 acres was sufficient to enable him to make a reasonable living. In that opinion he (Mr. Black) was not singular. It was an opinion which many members of that Committee who had had experience in different districts of the colony would endorse, and which was held by the Minister for Lands himself. The hon. gentleman knew perfectly well that 160 acres was not enough for a homestead selector to make a living on, and he (Mr. Black) thought it was a gross act of inconsistency on the part of the Minister to introduce that new clause after enunciating the views he did on the second reading of the Bill. In order that there might be no mistake as to the opinions held by the hon. gentleman, who was supposed to be the framer and father of the Bill, he would read the remarks that he made as reported in *Hansard* of August 6. On that occasion some hon. members in the House were under the impression that 160 acres might possibly be enough for a homestead selection, and they took exception to the homstead provisions not being included in the Bill. The reason the Minister for Lands then gave for not including the homestead clauses in the measure was that the area allowed by them was utterly insufficient for a man to make a living on. Hon. members on the Opposition side of the House advocated the retention of the homestead clauses, and this was how the hon. gentleman expressed himself on the subject :—

"If I thought those gentlemen could have believed it"—

That was, that the homestead selector could make a living on 160 acres—

"I should have pitied their ignorance; but I believe they knew perfectly well that limiting a man to 160 acres as a homestead would be the most effectual way of debarring a man from the successful occupation of the land; and that letting him get it at half-a crown an acre was the surest mea s of having it turned over to the large freeholders, by a process they only too well understand."

He (Mr. Black) would ask why, after that very decided expression of opinion on the subject, and his very long experience in the colony, the hon. gentleman had introduced in the new clause now submitted to the Committee the very thing which he condemned on the second reading of the Bill. He (Mr. Black) believed the hon. gentleman was right in his first expression of opinion, and he now asked him whether he would go back to the principles which he then enunciated, and which he (Mr. Black) endorsed, and whether he would increase the area from 160 to 320 acres, in accordance with the suggestion of the hon. member for Townsville? If that were done they would simply give the homestead selector a reasonable chance of success in settling on the agricultural lands of the colony.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS said the reason why he would have liked to have seen the homestead clauses left out of the Bill—and he made no secret of the fact that he would like to see them omitted—was because he considered that in many parts of the country the area allowed was not sufficient for a man to make a fair living on, and that to say that a homestead selector should be allowed to go all over the country and take property of every other selector was simply tempting a man to take up land in back country where there was no possibility of making a living; and that, in his opinion, was a grievous wrong. But the general wish or desire on both sides of the House, and all over the country, seemed to be that the homestead clauses should be retained. Those clauses appeared to be specially valued. He, however, had not changed his opinion in the least as to the amount of land upon which a man could make a fair living, but his remarks on the occasion referred to by the hon. member for Mackay referred to the whole country, and not to special parts of it. They knew perfectly well that in many places a man might make a living on 50 acres under special circumstances—in a specially favoured locality, where the land was near a market, and a navigable river afforded the means of transit for the produce of the land. But, as he said before, to tempt men to select land in places where they could not possibly make a living was doing a grievous wrong. If homestead selection was confined to certain favourable localities, he could quite understand that men might do well on a small holding, and he had no objection to people settling on an area of 160 acres in districts where the land was good and the facilities for working it were of a kind that would ensure success to a man with a fair knowledge of his business. The new clause he had proposed would encourage that sort of settlement. Why should the area be doubled, or trebled, or converted into whatever quantity the hon. gentleman contended for? He certainly could see no reason, or justice, or fairness in it at all. He conceded what he had done as an advantage and privilege, and he did not desire to curtail that privilege in the case of those men who had been already in possession of it; but he had the greatest possible objection to the extension of the privilege to a greater length than before existed, especially considering the great facilities and opportunities for settlement to men of the smallest means which were contained already in the Bill.

Mr. DONALDSON said he wished to make a brief reference to the last paragraph of the last clause passed on the previous evening. It was quite possible that under that clause a man might take up 960 acres of land with the desire of making it into a freehold, and that he might die after living on it five or six years, or any period less than the ten years which it was compulsory for him to reside before he acquired the right of freehold. He (Mr. Donaldson) believed a child of tender years who would be the beneficial owner of the land, and not being able to comply with the conditions of residence, would be debarred from ever acquiring the freehold of it. Again, the original owner might leave his property to someone residing out of the colony, such as an aged parent in the old country, and in such case it might not be convenient for that person to come to this country in order to comply with the condition of residence. It would be very hard, seeing that all the conditions had been completed as long as the man lived, and the balance of time not being completed by one who was beneficially interested in the selection, that person should be debarred from acquiring the freehold. He had suggested last night an amendment in the clause, and the remarks made by the Premier gave him the impression that he (Mr. Donaldson) was then wrong. He had, however, read the clause again, and was now under the impression that his original interpretation of the clause was right. He trusted, therefore, that if the Bill was recommitted the clause he referred to would receive further consideration.

The PREMIER said he would say a word upon the point the hon. gentleman had adverted to, although, the clause having been passed, the discussion was irregular. He confessed he did not see why, if a man who had acquired land died and left it to somebody else, that person should have any greater facilities for acquiring the freehold of the land than any other person.

Mr. DONALDSON: I mentioned the case of a child.

The PREMIER said in that case, if a man left his property to his family, the privileges would still continue. If the home was kept upon the land after his death the children would reap the same advantages as himself. It was not intended to give land to persons who could not use it; but in the case mentioned the land would belong to the family all the same. The clause was inserted to meet a special case, and it was not intended to give any peculiar facilities to other persons for acquiring freeholds simply because a man died. The person who acquired land by the death of another was not deserving of greater consideration than the man who acquired it by purchase.

Mr. CHUBB said the difficulty referred to seemed to lie in the meaning of the word "continuous." Of course "continuous" meant nothing but continuous, but suppose the case of a widower with a boy five years old. When the father died that boy would probably be sent to school, and there would be no person beneficially interested in occupation of the land. There was, therefore, a good deal in what the hon. member said, and he could understand a case in which that event would occur. A man with a family of young children could leave the land to them, but when they were sent to school there would be nobody to perform the conditions of residence, and the children would lose the land.

The HON. SIR T. MCILWRAITH said, under ordinary circumstances, the hon. member for Warrego would have been told by the Premier that a clause which had been passed could not be re-discussed, and the fact of the hon. gentleman answering the hon. member for Warrego only showed how glad he was to get away from the real point at issue—namely, the reasons which induced the Government to go back to the homestead clauses. The absurd inconsistency of the Minister for Lands was not a matter of any great importance to the Committee, so far as he individually was concerned; but it was very important when they considered that the Bill was in the hands of the Government, and that, according to the way in which it was passed, so it would be administered for a certain time at all events. The gross inconsistency of the hon. gentleman who had introduced the amendment was shown by reading a few passages from *Hansard* which preceded that read by the hon. member for Mackay. The Minister for Lands said:—

> "Instead of the country being held in the hands of a few men, whom one can almost count on one's fingers, we shall have thousands of men holding and prospering on their small holdings, instead of being shut in upon areas of 160 or 640 acres, but men who can get space enough to live upon and prosper upon, as they have not been able to do heretofore. I can only conceive the purpose of some hon. gentlemen in this House, who must have known that 160 acres was not enough for a man to live and rear a family upon. Some may, from ignorance of the interior, have thought it was enough; but there were many who knew better, and who can only have affected to believe it because it secured to them the possession of their leaseholds or freeholds without interference."

Now, that gentleman had not only given them his opinion that 160 acres was only enough for a man to starve on, but he blamed hon. members who had combated that opinion, and he impugned the motives of hon. members when they upheld their opinions against his in the House. His recantation amounted to this: He said, in the opinion of hon. members, 160 acres was a good homestead for a man, and, therefore, he had brought in the clause; and he brought it in saying that he expressed the opinion of both sides of the House in his desire not to curtail the privileges that homestead selectors had before; but he would not give them any further privileges. But the clause the hon. gentleman had brought forward now was very far from giving to the homestead selectors the privileges they held before. He (Sir T. McIlwraith) differed with the hon. gentleman as to the effect the homestead clauses had had on the settlement of the country. In some cases he believed they had worked to the detriment of the State; but those cases were few compared with the innumerable instances where the homestead man had settled on the country under the privileges of the Act of 1876. It had been a good Act all through, and although the Minister for Lands did not like to see the land go at 2s. 6d when other men were willing to pay £1 per acre—although previous Ministers had grumbled at that—still a far-seeing Minister would come to the conclusion that after all it was a good thing, because it encouraged men to settle down in the country. What the hon. gentleman gave in place of the homestead clauses, they had before—the privilege that a man coming to the colony could get a homestead for himself. Wherever land was thrown open to selection any man had the privilege of selecting a homestead for himself. Wherever land was proclaimed open for selection, he could mark out a homestead and sit down on it, and he had to pay 2s. 6d. an acre in five yearly instalments. What was it they had got from the hon. gentleman now? The hon. gentleman had perfectly forgotten the effect of the amendments that had been made in the Bill. He had perfectly forgotten that the character of the Bill had been considerably altered, especially by having survey before selection, which was completely ignored in that clause. Now, here was what the homestead selector was to get instead of the privileges he had before, and that explanation was to be viewed in the light of the assertion made by the Minister for Lands that he had no desire to curtail the privileges that the homestead selector had had up to the present. Hitherto, the homestead selector could go anywhere where land was proclaimed open for selection; but now, to whom was the privilege of selecting a homestead confined? To the men whose holdings were actually 160 acres or less. Let hon. members couple that with the fact that it was the Government of the day who had the privilege of limiting the area that each was to hold. What effect would that have? In the first place, any Ministry would have the power of actually and completely taking away the right of homestead selection. They had simply to make the minimum holding surveyed, 161 acres, and the whole of that clause was gone—completely gone—because it did not apply to the 320 or 640 acre lots, but only to holdings of 160 acres or less. That was a curtailment of privileges with a vengeance. The homesteader would be completely at the mercy of the Government; he would be confined in future to conditions which the Minister for Lands had informed the Committee must be limited to the 160-acre lots. A man who had 640 acres would only be able to select and make a freehold or leasehold to the extent of 160 acres. That was supposed to be a privilege given in the Bill. Why, it was making a fool of the land legislation of the colony. It was making a fool of what the homestead selector actually believed he would obtain from the Bill, and completely ignoring public opinion as expressed in the Press. That opinion was certainly that the homestead clauses had resulted in the settlement of the people on the land. There had been some evils in connection with them, but they had been more than counterbalanced by the good, and there was no reason why that good should not continue. But the people of the colony were beginning to be frightened at the fact that they were not to select wherever land was thrown open for selection.

In order to give the homestead selector the privilege he had hitherto had, or something equal to it, they must give him the right that any man had in any part of the colony. He did not see why a homestead selector should be confined to a piece of land about which the Government or the board said, "This is an agricultural area." He would give every man the right of selecting at Roma, Surat, Tambo, or Blackall, or wherever he might choose to go. Why should they frighten away the people in that way? The effect of the Bill would be to cut up the pastoral districts, and the homestead clauses would be quite excluded. In the next place, why should not the homesteader have the right to make a homestead out of the area which he might hold? Supposing he took up a 640-acre block that was surveyed by the Government, then he should be entitled to have his 160 acres out of that counted as a homestead. It was only by making those two concessions that the homesteader would be placed in the position he was now in. There was no question that the Minister for Lands was far behind the opinion of the country on that subject. By the extraordinary way in which he was contriving by that clause to lock up the land, people everywhere were getting frightened. They could not get a freehold under £1 an acre and a ten years' residence; and the result of that would be that there would be very little land taken up. If that was considered a great advantage by the Minister for Lands, he (Sir T. McIlwraith) did not consider it was so, and he was equally certain that the country would not see the advantage, nor would the Treasurer see the advantage when he came, in future years if he was in the same position—or, at all events, other Treasurers—to look at the vacant Treasury owing to the operation of the Act. Besides that, they were actually doing away with the principal inducements to immigrants to come to the colony, by cutting down the homestead clauses. Of course, he was quite sure the Premier, from what he had said on previous occasions, would go to work very cautiously in altering the laws in such a way as not to allow the evils that had accrued to the State from the operation of the present law. Just let hon. members consider in what way the homestead clauses had worked, and what had been done under them. There was evidence that they had led to settlement—that there had been legitimate settlement under those clauses, and that the evils that had resulted from them were rare. No doubt there had been some evils by homesteaders making homesteads out of land that they knew was going to be selected under other clauses. Some of the homestead men, especially in the neighbourhood of land thrown open for selection, and in small country towns, had used their local knowledge to obtain selections larger than they ought to have had, and had been perfectly willing to get over the conditions of occupation as best they could—thus approaching as near to dummying as ever they possibly could. That was a disadvantage; it was a disadvantage and a loss to the people of the colony; but those who did that were so few that such cases were scarcely worth considering. It had never been a system. Such a thing could only be done by a few individuals who had the local knowledge, and it had resulted in very little harm to the State. There had been *bonâ fide* settlement under the clauses, and yet they had the Minister for Lands daring to say that they were not justified in having homestead clauses, such as the country had enjoyed under the Act of 1876. Not only that, but the Ministry in power at the time, or the board, could completely wipe out homestead selection by simply making the areas over 160 acres. Should such power as that be left to the board? Why should the privilege be limited in the way proposed? It had not only been thus curtailed, but it had been confined entirely to the agricultural districts. The effect of the clause would be to curtail the privileges of the homestead selector a hundredfold. He hoped the Government would see their mistake, and, instead of that half-hearted acknowledgment of what the homestead selectors had done for the colony, retrace their steps, and give them those privileges they enjoyed under the present law.

The PREMIER said that the hon. gentleman seemed very angry with the Minister for Lands for his action in respect to homestead selections. That appeared to be the principal part of the hon. gentleman's speech, judging from its tone. Now that they had done with the Minister for Lands in connection with the clause, he supposed it would be sufficient if, for the remainder of the time, they discussed the clause. It was a very singular thing to notice the inconsistency of the hon. members on the other side of the Committee. The hon. member for Townsville, the other day, when he wanted to answer the Minister for Lands, quoted statistics to prove that all successful farms were under 160 acres. The proposition the hon. gentleman then wanted to prove was that it was found by experience that farming, to be successful, must be carried on on farms whose area was less than 160 acres. To-day the hon. gentleman wanted to prove the contrary proposition; so to-day he gave them an opposite argument. The hon. the leader of the Opposition then got up, and the principal part of his speech was that there must be selection before survey. After having cordially supported the change in the proposition of the Government—that there should be survey before selection—the hon. gentleman made a long speech saying that small selectors should have the privilege of selecting before survey all over the colony. How could they have survey before selection, and selection before survey? He had no doubt that the hon. member would like to so alter the Bill as to make it perfectly unworkable, and would advocate any alteration if he could succeed in producing that result. If they were to have survey before selection they must necessarily leave it to the Government to provide suitable land for settlement. That was pointed out before the Committee adopted that view. It was pointed out that it would be in the power of the Government to prevent selection in the case of homestead men, as in the case of any other selectors. They could have the land so divided by roads that no one could get more than a square mile anywhere. All those powers were conferred on the Government by the system of survey before selection. But if they were going to have the principle of selection before survey, they would thereby allow a homestead man to go to any part of the colony and do what he liked. Half-a-dozen homestead men might spoil the whole survey by selecting a little bit here and there, and taking the water rights on the resumed area of a run, or on any specially suitable place for storing water. That was what the hon. gentleman contended for. He thought that was one of the evils of homestead selection. The principle of allowing the man who became a *bonâ fide* farmer to get the land on the easiest possible terms was a good one, but the abuse of the system was to pick out the eyes of the country, and they would do so to a much greater extent if they were allowed to do so in a grazing area. Surely, if they had selection before survey in areas of 160 acres, it would have the effect of preventing the greater part of the land being used for any purpose of settlement except its present

purpose. If the hon. member was driving at that, his argument would be consistent, as tending to the object he had in view throughout. The hon. gentleman did not believe in the Bill; he did not want to see the settlement proposed by the Bill, and would support any amendment that would have the effect of defeating the measure. The hon. member said the privileges given by the Bill were not equal to those given in the existing Act. In what respect were they not equal? Under the Bill the homestead selector would not be allowed to pick out the best of the land altogether and spoil the surveys of all the surrounding country. It was not the genuine friends of settlement who would desire to give privileges of that kind. In what other respect did it differ? The area was the same; the price was the same. The only difference was that the terms were easier; that was the only difference.

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN: More than that.

The PREMIER: The price was the same; the area was the same; and the terms were easier.

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN: More than that.

The PREMIER: At least they might be easier. At any rate the selector would not have to pay more than 2s. 6d. on the whole period; and he had got the advantage—he might dispose of it. The homestead selector took it up; he made his bargain; he could do nothing but either hold it five years or lose it altogether; he could not sell it. It was proposed by the clause that the man should have a lease like anyone else; and it would be optional after seven years to convert it into freehold if he had lived on it; or he could sell it; he was not obliged to forfeit it. It was a great additional privilege given to him. He thought the changes that were made by the clause, compared with the present Act, were made equally in the interest of the country and of selectors. The provisions were, as nearly as possible, the same—taking away one privilege, that had been abused, from the selector, and conceding the additional privilege he had pointed out. Not a single word had been said till that afternoon, publicly, suggesting for a moment that the clause did not carry out what was desired, because it was as nearly analogous to the homestead system as was compatible with the general scheme of the Bill. In regard to the suggestion to increase the area, it was desirable to make concessions to secure *bonâ fide* occupation, but they could not afford to throw away their land for nothing. If they were getting close settlement they were not throwing their land away for nothing. They were getting actual occupiers on the land, and nobody, he thought, would object now to give them the same privilege as had been given hitherto. What was proposed now was to give them a greater privilege than had been given—than had been asked for. They began in 1868 with 80 acres. In 1872 an Act was passed which extended the area to 320 acres, but on the condition of living on the land five years, and paying the full price. In 1876 the area of 80 acres was again reverted to for homesteads, and a provision analogous to that in the Act of 1872 was introduced in respect to farms in a homestead area, and personal residence was compulsory. In 1879 the area was again extended to 160 acres, and it had never been suggested that a larger area should practically be given away for 2s. 6d. an acre. It must be borne in mind that land given away at that price would be probably worth more than £1 an acre. He quite agreed that in many parts of the colony even 320 acres would not be enough. They had provided that the Government could not reduce the maximum of grazing areas below 2,560 acres. Where homestead settlement was likely to be practicable in those parts, there was no reason why the Government should not survey small blocks and throw them open for selection. In other parts of the colony—and certainly in those places where homestead settlement could be carried out for close settlement of persons actually engaged in farming—an area of 160 acres had always been considered most suitable. They had been told in one breath there was nothing so successful as farms of 160 acres, and in the next breath that the area was altogether insufficient. Hon. members did not seem to be consistent in the same speech. He had pointed out that the privileges given by the clause were really quite as great as the privileges given under the present law. It was a perfectly fair exchange. With a slight modification of detail, it was exactly the same. The principle the hon. member advocated would be utterly inconsistent with survey before selection.

The HON. SIR T. MCILWRAITH said that, if the hon. gentleman would leave out of his speeches all those portions in which he imputed bad motives to his opponents, and in which he misconstrued, misquoted, and affected to misunderstand them, his speeches would be very much shorter, and it would lead to a better understanding of the debates. The hon. gentleman commenced by saying that he (Sir T. McIlwraith), after having warmly advocated survey before selection, had turned round and advocated that there should be homestead selection before survey through all parts of the colony. The hon. gentleman was wrong in both respects. In the first place, he (Sir T. McIlwraith) had never warmly supported survey before selection. He did not remember having expressed an opinion on the subject. The hon. gentleman was wrong there.

The PREMIER: I did not use any such expression.

The HON. SIR T. MCILWRAITH: The hon. gentleman said I warmly supported it.

The PREMIER: Whether I said so or not, I think so.

The HON. SIR T. MCILWRAITH said he did not warmly support it; he did not remember having expressed an opinion on the subject in the House. In the next place he did not advocate, now, free selection of homesteads all over the colony, and he had taken very good care to explain why it was not necessary with the Bill as it stood at the present time. What he did advocate was, to widen the area over which homesteaders should exercise their privilege consistently with the Bill, as it stood now with the survey before selection clauses; and he had explained how that could be done by giving to every holder of a grazing farm or of a pastoral farm the right to take up a homestead. Under the Bill as it stood now, the objections raised by the hon. member would not stand for a moment; because the Government would have the privilege of laying out the selections before they were taken up, and could see that there was no monopoly of water by any particular selection. It was something astonishing to him—perhaps he should not say it was astonishing, because he had seen it so often in the House—that the hon. gentleman, with his lawyer's expertness, should have picked up all the ideas of the most outrageously anti-progressive Land Minister they had had in the House, and should advocate them with all the arguments which had been used in the old days against settlement. He was ready to bring up all those old arguments now, when they were wanted to defend a colleague who was putting back the colony in the matter of land legislation. What he (Sir T. McIlwraith) said amounted to this: The

Minister for Lands said he was willing that the homesteaders should have the privileges they had had hitherto. He (Sir T. McIlwraith) said that under the clause as proposed they would have nothing like the same privileges. Whereas they had hitherto had the privilege of selecting anywhere up to 160 acres, that was now confined to agricultural farms which had been laid out by the Government, and which might be 160 acres or less. The clause did not allow them to go over the same ground nor into the same district. Unless concessions of that sort were granted, it was quite absurd to talk about having given the same privileges. He believed himself that the price of £1 per acre for land was too high for the colony. It was too high, considering the competition they had in other colonies, with easy access to market by means of railway; and it was a great deal too high considering the competition they had with other parts of the world, and especially America. The colony could only be a prosperous colony if it were an inhabited colony, and they ought never to lose sight of that in their legislation. They ought to legislate so as to encourage people to come and settle on the lands. So far as they had gone up to the present, their legislation was worse than the land legislation of 1866, and would have a tendency to block settlement; and the object of his remarks on the clause, as proposed by the Minister for Lands, was to try and check that tendency. He wished to see the land as free as possible, consistent with *bonâ fide* settlement; and he believed that object could be attained by extending the principle of homestead selection, which might easily be done quite consistently with the Bill as passed up to the present time.

The PREMIER said he did not think he was generally very obtuse, but he confessed he could not follow the hon. gentleman's arguments. Taking his last speech with his former one, he could not make them fit in with one another at all. In his last speech the hon. gentleman said he did not ask that the homestead selector should take up his selection wherever he liked, while his first speech appeared to have been all on that point. What the hon. gentleman wanted now was that any grazing farmer should be allowed to take up a pre-emptive of 160 acres on his farm.

The HON. SIR T. McILWRAITH: I said, more than that.

The PREMIER: Perhaps it was more. If a man were allowed to pre-empt that, why should he not pre-empt two square miles? The Government did not propose that the right of pre-emption should be given to any selector under the Bill, except on the conditions stated. The hon. gentleman had not attempted to explain how he was going to extend the privilege all over the colony, and yet have survey before selection. He did not remember using the expression that the hon. member warmly supported the principle of survey before selection; but he certainly was under the impression—and he believed most members of the Committee were under the same impression—that the hon. gentleman and his friends on that side had cordially and warmly supported that principle. They had accepted it, at any rate, without a word of protest, and if any of them spoke on the subject at all they spoke in favour of it. Whether he had used the expression or not, he certainly had thought, and still thought, that the hon. gentleman, up to the present time, had been a warm supporter of the principle of survey before selection; and ever since that principle was introduced into the Bill, the Bill had been framed on those lines.

Mr. JORDAN said he had always been a strong advocate—he had been called an enthusiastic advocate—of farming, in opposition to the idea that it could not possibly be made successful in the Australian colonies. He had always felt from the beginning, while admitting that Australia was essentially a pastoral country, that a great portion of the country was suitable for agricultural purposes; but in the interests of the working man—the real *bonâ fide* farmer who would till the soil with his own hands—he did not think that large areas were desirable. He said so, especially, because he had now been enabled by observation to verify theories which he held twenty-five years ago, and which he advocated in the first session of the Queensland Parliament. Since that time he had lived for six years in one of the most successful agricultural districts in the colony—namely, the Logan—and he always observed that the men who were really successful in tilling the soil were the small farmers—men who contented themselves with a reasonable quantity of land, from 40 acres up to, say, 160 acres; whereas a great number of persons resident in that district who had been ambitious enough to take up large quantities of land were almost invariably unsuccessful. He thought the homestead selection provided for by the Bill was something like the old system, and was quite equal to it. He believed the amendment introduced by the hon. Minister for Lands would encourage the particular kind of farming which could be carried on by the real working men. It was often the poorest men in the land who, feeling conscious of the power in their arms of clearing the forest, tilling the soil, and wringing a livelihood out of the ground, and having the heart and energy to settle on the land—it was often that class who made agriculture a success. Those men were the poorest men almost—men who had very little capital. He had often said that the successful men in Australia who had achieved success, especially as settlers on the land, even including those engaged in pastoral occupation, were chiefly those who came to the country with little or no money. The men who brought out a little fortune very easily lost it, but the men who came without two sixpences to rub together, by persevering labour and energy, had been successful in the colony. That was especially true in reference to those who had turned their attention to agriculture. On those grounds he did not fall in with the views advocated by the hon. member for Townsville. He believed that hon. member was as thoroughly in earnest as he himself was—that he believed in settlement by an agricultural class—but he thought the hon. member made a mistake when he considered he was serving the interests of the farming class by advocating the extension of the area of homesteads to 320 acres. If one portion of the country were surveyed into 320-acre blocks, and another into 160-acre blocks, and settled on by agriculturists, they would find that the 160-acre men would be the successful men; and on that ground he would adhere to the 160 acres. If he understood the hon. member for Mulgrave aright, that hon. gentleman was of opinion that the homesteader should be any man who had taken up a grazing or an agricultural area in any part of the country.

The HON. SIR T. McILWRAITH: When a man has taken up 960 acres, he should be allowed to select 160 acres of that area as a homestead.

Mr. JORDAN: The hon. gentleman would give a man the privileges of a homesteader on that 160 acres. But what was that but selection before survey? If it was not that it was very much like it. After getting 960 acres, a man would be able to convert 160 acres of that area—whatever part he liked—into a homestead. He objected to that altogether, and he could not conceive how such a provision could be consistent with the clauses of the Bill already passed.

The HON. SIR T. MCILWRAITH said that if the hon. gentleman considered the date on which the clause was printed and circulated he would see what an absurd speech he had just made. He said that to give a man the privilege of making a 160-acre homestead out of 960 acres would be allowing free selection before survey, which was a privilege he ought not to have. But the clause was circulated by the Government as their own amendment on the Land Bill before survey before selection was agreed to, if not before it was contemplated; and it was meant to give the right of selecting homesteads over the whole of the agricultural areas of the colony. So that it not only gave a man the right to select the best part of his own farm, but the very best part of any agricultural area.

The PREMIER said the clause was certainly circulated before the principle of survey before selection was adopted; but as its language was exactly applicable to the altered principle, no change was made. Did the hon. gentleman think the Government had not carefully considered the clause since the amendment to which he had referred was made? The only difference was that before the principle of survey before selection was adopted any selector would be able to take his pick wherever he chose, whereas, now, the land had to be surveyed before it could be taken up.

The HON. SIR T. MCILWRAITH: What is the difference?

The PREMIER said they could not have the two principles together, as the hon. gentleman knew very well. They could not have both survey before selection, and selection before survey; and the Committee had unanimously agreed to have survey before selection. The principle they had adopted gave great power to the Government, but any Government that attempted to abuse that power would very soon be called to order by Parliament.

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN said that if he held the opinions entertained by the hon. member for South Brisbane he certainly should not support the Bill. The hon. member said that the smaller the area the more successful was the selector. He did not know what particular area the hon. gentleman considered the best—it might be 5, 10, or 12 acres—but the Bill enabled a man to take up 960 acres. Therefore, according to the argument of the hon. member, the Bill must be encouraging men to ruin themselves. But it was hardly worth while to argue on the success of small farms, as opposed to large farms. Everybody knew that they paid under certain conditions and in certain places; and everybody knew also that farms ten times the size, which paid in certain places, would not pay in other places under other conditions. Farming must be regulated according to the conditions of the country—the soil, climate, and other matters—so that it was preposterous to argue about small and large farms, which were simply relative terms. The leader of the Government had made two or three slight mistakes in the little speeches he had made on the clause. He accused the hon. member for Mulgrave of having warmly supported survey before selection; he then narrowed it down to the Opposition side having warmly supported it; and then he said that they did not protest against the principle. That, certainly, was refining down what he said—it was almost like the "three black crows." The fact of the matter was that he (Hon. J. M. Macrossan) was the only member on his side who supported survey before selection. He believed in the principle now; but surely his side of the Committee were not responsible for opinions to which he gave expression! If one side were held responsible for the opinions expressed by any one member, some strange things could be fathered on the Government side. If the Premier took the trouble to look at *Hansard* he would find that he was the only member on the Opposition side who supported survey before selection. The Government seemed very anxious to accept the principle, the only protest coming from the Minister for Lands, who thought he could not find surveyors enough. He believed that hon. gentleman was now convinced that he would be able to find enough surveyors, and that he would be able to place a sufficient quantity of surveyed land in the market for selectors. In speaking to the clause, he did not think he was inconsistent, as the leader of the Government seemed to think, in advocating 320-acre homesteads, even though he had quoted statistics to prove that small farmers were successful in many parts of the world. He was quite prepared to quote the same statistics again; and he believed that small farmers had been successful in Queensland. But it had been in certain places, and under certain conditions. Small farms had been successful at Rosewood, Fassifern, and other places; but if the same men were placed on far larger areas in other parts of the colony they would not be nearly so successful. Everything depended upon circumstances, and he wanted the circumstances to be broadened—not narrowed down to 160 acres. He wanted power to be inserted in the Bill by which men, in some places and under certain circumstances, might be able to take up 320 acres; and there were hon. members on the other side, he thought, who were of his opinion in that matter. As to the argument that the colony could not afford to throw away its land, that was all nonsense. They would not be throwing away the land if they gave it for nothing to men who would actually live upon it and cultivate it. That would be far better than getting what the Government in which the present Premier was Attorney-General used to call a "sufficient price"—a thing with which he (Hon. J. M. Macrossan) never agreed, because the only real "sufficient price" was cultivation. It must not be forgotten that they were in competition with a country which gave the same number of acres—160—for nothing. Some hon. members talked as if the Land Bill would encourage immigration from Europe, but he (Hon. J. M. Macrossan) failed to see where the encouragement came in, when a man could go across the Atlantic from Europe in ten days, take up 160 acres of land, and get the title-deeds of it for nothing after having lived upon that land for five years. The people of that country did not believe they were throwing away their land; they knew far better than that; and had American statesmen, eighty years ago, given less encouragement to persons to take up homesteads, the population of that country now, instead of being nearly 60,000,000, would probably have been not more than 20,000,000 or 25,000,000. He had no sympathy with people who talked about giving away the land for nothing. Better give it away, he said, and have it settled. He would like to hear from the Minister for Lands whether he was willing to accept an extension of the area to 320 acres. He did not want the honour and glory of proposing an amendment of that kind, especially as it was far more likely to be successful if moved by some hon. member on the other side. The Government looked at anything coming from the Opposition with an eye of suspicion, as if no "good thing" could come "out of Nazareth." Look at the northern part of the colony, and ask what a man could do with 160 acres, especially where there were no markets, as there were in the South. Most of the good land on the coast had already been selected,

The PREMIER: No.

Mr. GROOM: Hear, hear!

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN: Most of the good land that was fit for agriculture, on easy terms, had been selected. That was the case as far north as Cooktown.

The PREMIER: No.

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN said he had had better opportunities of becoming acquainted with the facts than the hon. gentleman, as he had not only seen the towns, but had travelled on the main roads as well. Where would the hon. gentleman get land at present in the Burdekin Delta, in the Cairns district, on the Mossman, or on the Daintree? The best and the most accessible of that land had been taken up. Such being the case, it would be unfair to the people in the northern portion of the colony to confine them to the same area—160 acres—as in the South. He would be willing to accept an amendment giving the Government power to proclaim certain areas within which 160 acres would be the maximum, and other areas within which 320 acres would be the maximum, leaving it to the Government and their officers to decide where a man might expect to make a living from the smaller acreage. There were plenty of such spots in the country—plenty of spots where a man could make a living off 40 acres, or even less—as Chinamen, near Brisbane, did off 5 or 6 acres. But those were exceptional patches of soil, and could not be taken into calculation. If the Minister for Lands was willing to accept the amendment he had suggested, he should support him; if not, he should propose the amendment himself.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS said that whether a man could get a living off 160 acres or not depended upon a great many conditions, but generally speaking that area was large enough for that purpose, if well watered or near a market. In taking up a homestead those were the first things a man took into consideration. If a man took up 320 acres in the back country, he would be in just as miserable a position as if he had taken up only 160 acres, except that the grazing area would be larger. There was ample land in the North, and in many of the southern parts of the colony, where a man might settle upon 160 acres with a certain prospect of success. It was quite true that a large proportion of the best lands in the best localities in the North had been taken up in areas of from 640 to 5,120 acres, and on which there would be no settlement for years to come—not, perhaps, until they were cut up and sold to smaller holders. But that was the fault of past legislation and administration—chiefly administration—because there should have been some knowledge of the character and quality of those lands before they were allowed to be made away with. Indeed, to allow those rich lands to be alienated on the terms they were seemed to be absolutely a crime of the worst kind, and one which he did not wish to see repeated. There was one case in which 15,000 acres of rich sugar land had been taken up in one lot. The land was certainly taken up in the names of three people, but all the lots adjoined, and it was well known to be in the possession of one man. That was a thing the Government desired to stop. As to the question whether 160 acres were sufficient, there were very few agriculturists possessing that number of acres who were able to utilise more than half of it in cultivation. To increase the area to 320 acres, so that people could take up back country, would be perfectly futile; 320 acres would be of no more use there than 160. It might be something that a man could put up a home and live upon, if he were engaged at day work or contract work; but to think of making a living out of the land itself was an absurdity, unless it was situated near some large centre of population, such as Charters Towers, or other large inland towns. Men might be able to live upon small areas in such localities; and there was nothing in the Bill to prevent the Government from putting up the land in such areas as to suit the wants of the people. They could set aside areas to be dealt with under the homestead clauses, near townships in the interior, where 160 acres would be of use. He could quite conceive that 160 acres would be of use to a man carrying on the business of a carrier, or who occupied a portion of his time in shearing, and at other times took contracts for dam-making, fencing, and so on. He could make a home, and keep a few milkers and working horses; and 160 acres would be sufficient to meet the wants of people of that class. The hon. gentleman also said that the Government were more inclined to accept suggestions from their own side than from the other. He (the Minister for Lands) thought it was only natural that they should do so, because the views of members on their own side were much more likely to be in accord with their own than the views of hon. members opposite. The hon. gentleman had asked him if he were inclined to accept an amendment increasing the area to 320 acres, and in reply he had to say, distinctly and definitely, that he was not, because he held that 160 acres were sufficient for the purpose intended. If there were no other means of acquiring land than under the clause, there would be something in the hon. gentleman's contention; but the provisions of the Bill for obtaining land in any part of the country—whether agricultural or pastoral—were so easy that he did not even suppose that the clause would be availed of to any great extent, except in special localities; and in regard to those the Government would be prepared to meet the demand as fast as it arose.

Mr. GROOM said he had always been a warm supporter of the homestead clauses from the time of their first introduction in the Land Act of 1868. He was also a very strong supporter of the amended homestead clauses, which were brought in by the gentleman who was Minister for Lands at the time, the Hon. J. Malbon Thompson, in 1872, when it was found necessary from the practical working of the Act of 1868 to increase the area to 320 acres; and it was done in this way:—An immigrant arriving in the colony, and having what was called "a selection order," could select 120 acres of agricultural land, or 320 acres, comprising both agricultural and pastoral land, on the following conditions: That he paid for ten years for the agricultural land 1s. 6d. per acre per annum, and for the pastoral land 9d. per acre per annum, that being the full price fixed by the Act of 1868. Under that Act there could be no doubt that a very considerable amount of settlement took place in different portions of the colony, because men were able to select agricultural and pastoral land combined. He knew himself some of the best homestead farmers in the colony who were induced to settle under the provisions of that Act; and consequently, when, in 1876, it was proposed to sweep those clauses away, and to introduce the 80-acre system, he gave the proposal his most strenuous opposition. He was one of those who thought that no very great harm could arise if, under certain conditions, the area of 160 acres was increased, in certain portions of the colony, to 320 acres; because there was no doubt that they had a great variety of climate to deal with. He knew some portions of the colony where if a man had even 40 acres of land he ought to do exceedingly well. There were other places where a man with 80 acres could do very well

indeed; and other places where if a man had 160 acres he would have almost a fortune in his hands. Again, there were other places—he could go so far as to say, within 100 miles of Brisbane—where a man with 320 acres, who did not wish to go in for agricultural but for pastoral occupation, would find it as much as he could do to make a living. He took it that the object of homestead clauses was to attract population to the shores of the colony. He believed that that was the primary object of the Legislature in 1868, and had been from that time to the present. Bearing in mind that that was their object, let them look at what was being done elsewhere for the same purpose. They knew that there had been for many years past a steady and continuous stream of the very best farming population from Great Britain, and also from the continent of Europe, into America, and on a smaller scale into Canada. The question then naturally suggested itself—what facilities were there for immigration to those places? Well, he held in his hand a book, a copy of which was given to every immigrant immediately he landed on the shores of America, in New York, and he there found that not only was the immigrant invited to go to America and settle down upon its splendid land, but he had a homestead given to him for nothing—simply on the condition of residing continuously upon it for five years. In Canada equal facilities were offered. There the head of the family was not only made a free present of 160 acres of land, but he might pre-empt 200 acres more, and after a certain residence he got that land at a dollar per acre. So that the facilities for inducing emigrants to go to both America and Canada were infinitely superior to anything that was offered by any of the Australian colonies. Then they must bear in mind that the voyage to those countries was comparatively short; and if a man found that things were not so pleasing as he anticipated it would be very easy for him to earn sufficient money to take him back to his own country. But the case was very different with an immigrant coming to Australia. He had to break up his home, and come 16,000 miles, and, no matter whether things were as he anticipated or not, he must remain. Looking at the matter from that point of view, he could not see that the Government would be committing any breach, or at all overstepping the bounds of discretion, if, as the hon. member for Townsville had suggested, they extended the homestead area in certain districts to 320 acres; because, although 160 acres might be sufficient in some cases, it would be perfectly inadequate in others. When he mentioned the other day that, from what he had seen during his travels up north, he believed a large proportion of the agricultural land there had been already selected, the hon. the leader of the Opposition was kind enough to say "No," but he was glad to find that he was now borne out by the hon. member for Townsville.

An HONOURABLE MEMBER: The leader of the Government, not the leader of the Opposition.

Mr. GROOM: No; the leader of the Opposition said so, and it is recorded in *Hansard*.

The HON. SIR T. McILWRAITH When?

Mr. GROOM said that, when speaking upon a similar question to the one now under discussion, he said that a large portion of the best agricultural lands of the colony had been already selected, and was in the hands of large proprietors. The hon. member for Mulgrave then said "No," but he was glad to find that the hon. member for Townsville had that afternoon borne out what he had previously said. That was one of the reasons why he thought it would be quite competent for the Ministry to extend the homestead selections in certain portions of the colony to 320 acres, in place of 160; because selectors could not get 160 acres of really good agricultural land—they must take a considerable portion of inferior land to make up the 160 acres. He knew that homestead selection had done good. With regard to the remarks which fell from the Minister for Lands on the second reading of the Bill, he would go so far as to say that he knew himself of certain cases where homesteads were taken up under very improper circumstances. He knew cases in which the proprietor of a station had used a number of his hands to take up 320 acres each—used them as dummies. He knew of others who had taken up 160 acres, and put upon those homesteads the most primitive improvements—a hut that a blackfellow would scarcely live in, which barely complied with the provisions of the Act—and for no other purpose than to secure the homestead and sell it to the first person who was prepared to buy it. He agreed with the hon. member for Mulgrave, in saying that they had had a considerable amount of good settlement under the homestead clauses of the Act of 1876, and he thought it was within the province of the Government to extend that settlement by fixing the area in certain districts even as low as 80 acres, and extending it to 320 acres in other districts where they could not get sufficient agricultural land to satisfy the homestead selector, and where he would have to take in a large proportion of pastoral land. There was an omission in that homestead clause, and it was this: In the Land Act of 1868, after very careful consideration, there was inserted—and he thought the hon. member for Townsville would correct him if he was wrong—but he believed what was inserted was a fac-simile of what was in the American Act:—

> "No lands acquired under the foregoing provisions shall, in any event, become liable to the satisfaction of any debt or debts contracted prior to the issuing of the Crown grant thereof."

That provision had been in all their statutes up to the present time; but it was not inserted in the homestead clauses of the present Bill, nor had any explanation been given as to why it was left out. A petition had been sent in requesting the repeal of that clause, upon the ground that it opened the door to a very great amount of fraud. A homestead selector might go to a storekeeper and run up a heavy account and refuse to pay it, and then the storekeeper or the merchant, as the case might be, when he tried to recover judgment, would find that he could do nothing until the Crown grant was issued to him, and, in the meantime, as soon as the selector had secured his certificate, it was competent for him to sell the land, and in that way evade his creditors. He did not think cases of that kind were numerous; not enough so to justify the abolition of the principle; and therefore there was no reason why it should not be re-inserted. Perhaps the Minister for Lands would be able to inform the Committee why that particular provision was left out. He had been a strong supporter of every facility being given by the Government in extending homestead selection to the most extreme boundary. Looking at the great distance of Australia from the mother-country—over 15,000 miles—and the enormous advantages which were offered, not only by the United States Government, but also by the numerous land-grant companies, who almost gave away land, they ought to endeavour to offer equal facilities to try and bring people to this colony, even if they gave them the land for nothing. Considering the variety of climate and that in some cases, owing to drought, the wheat crops might be a total failure, the

160-acre homestead man might be utterly ruined, and he thought there would be nothing contrary to the provisions of the Bill if a clause were drafted providing that in certain districts the area might be extended for pastoral homesteads to 320 acres. He could not see that any great hardship would accrue, or that it would be inconsistent with the provisions of the Bill.

Mr. NORTON said he quite agreed with what had been said by the hon. gentleman who had just spoken, that a very desirable settlement had taken place in the colony under the homestead clauses. In some cases the settlement had not been desirable; but taking it all through the colony, in all districts, it had been such that every district had been benefited by it. He agreed with what had been said of the desirability in some cases of allowing a greater area than 160 acres to be taken up under the clause which had been proposed. It was quite evident, he was sure, to anyone who was acquainted with the different parts of the colony that an area of 160 acres would be almost useless in some cases. He did not see why that kind of settlement should not be encouraged by allowing a selector to take up a larger area. But before that particular question was gone into, he thought it desirable to say a few words on the clause generally. The Premier contended, when he spoke a short time ago, that a settler taking up land under this Bill, by the clause now proposed, would have almost all the advantages of a settler under the present Act. He must have overlooked some points contained in the amendment which was now before the Committee. In the first place, under the existing Act, a selector took up a homestead selection, as required in the 43rd clause:—

"Every homestead selector shall continuously and *bonâ fide* reside on the land during the whole of the said term of five years."

Of course, if a strict interpretation were put upon that provision, a selector would be bound to reside upon the land during the whole of that time; but a wider interpretation had been put upon it, which allowed the residence of the family to mean the residence which was required by the Act. He knew persons who had not resided continuously upon the land; but they had made their homes there, and their families had lived there while they had been away for months, employed either as carriers or shearers, or as bushmen, and such like. They had had all the advantages of having a home for their families without being bound down to live continuously on that selection during the whole term of their probation. There was no such provision under the Bill. According to the amendment the selector must personally reside.

The PREMIER: It is the same language.

Mr. NORTON said that was a mistake. The clause said:—

"By the continuous and *bona fide* residence on the holding of the original lessee himself."

When such terms as those were used, it was impossible to interpret it to mean anyone but the original lessee. If the same phraseology had been used in the present Act, the wider interpretation he had referred to could not have been put upon it. Under the clause before them it was absolutely impossible to interpret it to mean anything other than the form there used—it absolutely applied to the holder of the land himself; so that a carrier who wished to carry on his ordinary work, which sometimes took him away for months from his own home, would not be entitled to the privileges which other men would have in taking up land under the Bill. He pointed that out, because he thought it necessary, if the Minister for Lands desired that carriers should have the advantages they ought to have under a clause of that kind, to amend that particular subsection of the clause in order that it might not apply to the man himself only but to his family, in the event of their residing on the selection in his absence. Again, there was a provision made in the clause that, in the event of the death of the original lessee, the condition of occupation might be performed by other members of his family; but it appeared to him that, if the lessee made a will before he had the opportunity of getting the land as a freehold, the family could not get the advantage of it. There was a provision made that in the event of his dying intestate, and the condition of occupation being performed by the rest of his family, if he had a widow, she might "tender such proof to the commissioner, and, upon making such proof and such payments as aforesaid" she should be entitled to the deed of grant of the land. But it was only the widow—no other member of the family could fulfil the conditions required of the original selector and be entitled to the deed of grant; so that if a man was a widower and had a family, though they might fulfil all the conditions required of himself, they would not be entitled to the deed of grant under the clause as it now stood. Only one person could be so entitled, and that was the widow, in the event of there being one, and then only if the selector died intestate. There was no provision made for the selection going to anyone named in a will made by the original lessee. Under the present Act there was such a provision made, not only in the event of the original lessee having made a will, but if there was no will left, by which the property would go to the next of kin of the original lessee, whoever the person might be. Clause 45 of the Act of 1876 provided that—

"In the case of the death of a homestead selector after his application, and before the expiration of the time limited for making proof of the performance of conditions, all his right, title, and interest in the said land shall pass to the persons following; that is to say,—

1. If the selector have made a will to the persons to whom the same shall thereby be given;
2. If the selector died intestate, to his widow (if any) for her own use; and if he leave no widow, then to his personal representatives for the benefit of all his children (if any) in equal shares; and if he leave no children, then for the benefit of his next of kin, according to the statutes for the distribution of personal estate.

And the person to whom such right, title, or interest shall pass under the provisions of this section may, at any time within two years after the death of the selector, and without being liable in the meantime to the performance of any conditions other than the payment of the annual instalments, sell the said land for the benefit of the persons beneficially entitled thereto."

So that under the present Act, if a selector died, and payments were made by his heirs, whoever they might be, then they would get the benefit of the land, in the same way as if he had fulfilled all the conditions himself, and applied for the deed of grant. It appeared to him to be the effect of the clause now proposed, that, in the first place, the selector himself must, personally, continuously reside on his selection for the whole of the term; and in the second place, only in the event of his dying intestate could his widow, and no other person, be placed in a position by which she might acquire the land.

The PREMIER said the hon. gentleman asked why, in the case of a man making a will and dying, the persons interested under the will should not become entitled to the land by residing on it and fulfilling the conditions. There was no reason whatever why they should not become entitled to the land. The clause was drawn up

expressly with that view. That was provided for in the clause, if the hon. gentleman would only read it.

Mr. NORTON: Where?

The PREMIER said the hon. gentleman would find it provided for in subsection 1 (*b*) which said:—

"In case of the death of the original lessee before he has so resided for five years, by the continuous and *bonâ fide* residence of such lessee on the holding for a portion of that period, and by the continuous and *bonâ fide* residence on the holding for the remainder of the period of some person beneficially interested in the holding under the will, or as one of the next of kin, of the original lessee."

That provided for the cases whether a man died without a will or with a will. If he died with a will the land could be acquired by the person under the will. The hon. gentleman raised another point on the subsection (*a*)—

"By the continuous and *bonâ fide* residence on the holding of the original lessee himself."

He did not know that there was any difference between that and the language of the present homestead clauses. He thought the same language was used in both. The fact of a man being a carrier, and being away while his wife resided on the selection, did not make him any the less a *bonâ fide* resident. A man might be separated from his wife occasionally and still be held to be a resident on the selection—his home was there. He might go to England for six months, and still be a *bonâ fide* resident—it did not make the selection any the less his home; but if he really made his home somewhere else that would be something quite different. Another hon. gentleman had asked why the provision stating that lands acquired by the homestead selector should not become liable for the satisfaction of any debt incurred by him, was not inserted in the clause. He could never see any advantage in exempting any class in the community from the liability to pay their debts. He had seen many cases in which men had taken advantage of the clause, and refused to pay their debts. It was a monstrous thing for the State to give a man property worth £160 or more, and tell him that it was not to be liable for the satisfaction of his debts, and he need not pay them unless he liked. He saw no reason why that system should be perpetuated. He had never known any instances of it having done any good, and he had known many instances in which it had done a great deal of harm.

Mr. NORTON said he thought the hon. member hardly followed him in what he said with regard to the question of the will. The condition of residence might be performed by the original lessee himself, or, in the event of his death, continuous residence might be performed by his next of kin; but there was only one person who could secure the title-deed, and that person was the widow, if the original lessee left a widow.

The PREMIER: No.

Mr. NORTON: Yes; that certainly was shown to be the case in subsection 2.

The PREMIER: If he dies intestate.

Mr. NORTON said it was provided, if the original lessee died intestate, that the widow could secure the freehold, but nobody else. No other member of the family could do so, because there was no provision made for securing the freehold to anyone but the original lessee himself, except in the event of his dying intestate, and then his widow, if he had one, might secure it. Those were the only provisions made.

The PREMIER said the title given under the Bill was a leasehold, and the ordinary principles of law came in. It was not necessary that the ordinary principles of the law about succession should be inserted in a Bill dealing with the land, except where certain exceptions were made. There was one exception in the clause, and that was to save the widow expense. Upon the death of the original lessee the lease went to his executors, if he made a will. If the original lessee made a will the residence could be performed by the persons beneficially interested under the will, and at the expiration of five years the executor could convert it into a freehold upon the payment of half-a-crown an acre. That was the case of a man dying and leaving a will. In the case of a selector who made no will, if nothing was provided otherwise under the Bill, the lease would pass to the Curator of Intestate Estates. In such a case the widow, who was the person entitled to administer, would have to go to the expense of applying to the Supreme Court for letters of administration if she wished to secure possession of the selection; but the 2nd subsection provided that she could get the land without going to that expense. That was all it provided. A special exemption of that kind could not be made a general provision applying to other persons besides the widow, because then it would be necessary to find out who was entitled to the land, and that was a matter for the Supreme Court.

Mr. NORTON said he could quite understand the explanation of the hon. gentleman in reference to a case in which the original lessee died intestate; but he thought subsection (*a*), which provided that there must be continuous *bonâ fide* residence on the holding of the original lessee, would have to be amended in order to allow residence by the family of a selector to be taken into consideration. As the clause stood, it was imperative that residence should be performed by the lessee himself, and that certainly was not the phraseology of the Act of 1876.

The PREMIER said the phraseology was exactly the same as that in clause 53. The latter provided that occupation on every selection "shall be by the continuous and *bonâ fide* residence on the land of the lessee himself, or by some other person who is the actual *bonâ fide* manager or agent of the lessee." But in the clause now before the Committee they wanted to draw the distinction that residence by bailiff should not be allowed. Similar words were used in the Act of 1876 in respect to personal residence on a selection.

Mr. JORDAN said that, as the hon. member for Townsville was now in his place, he would make a few remarks in reference to the hon. gentleman's observation on his contention respecting 160-acre homesteads. He (Mr. Jordan) was a great believer in agriculture in the hands of *bonâ fide* farmers — men with a small capital—the cottier class. He thought the hon. gentleman went with him there, because he had said in that Chamber that such men were most successful in America. But because he (Mr. Jordan) held that view it did not follow that he did not believe in the other principles of the Bill which made arrangements for occupation of other parts of the country by capitalists. That was one of the grand features of the Bill. Instead of having the country occupied by what were called "squatters," who were generally men with large capital and holding vast areas, it was proposed to give security of tenure to them for one-half of their runs if they gave up the other half, and on the latter to settle small pastoralists. In reference to the statement of the hon. member for Mulgrave—that, if he (Mr. Jordan) had read the amendments and considered that they were brought on before the Committee had affirmed the principle of survey before selection, he would have

seen the absurdity of his arguments—he would say that those amendments seemed to fit in exactly with the principle of survey before selection, inasmuch as those holdings would be selected as suitable especially for agricultural occupation or the tillage of the soil. That was one of the grand arguments in favour of survey before selection. In the Act of 1860, the Legislature affirmed that principle. Instead of allowing persons to go and select their own little farms anywhere as they did in New South Wales, it was insisted that there should be survey before selection, and agricultural reserves were chosen by the Government in suitable localities near to large towns or on navigable rivers, so that not only should a farmer be able to secure good land, but he would also have facilities for carrying his produce to market. If that law had been honestly administered it would have been a great success. It was then maintained by some that it was no use to encourage agriculture in this country, because that was only to encourage men to settle down on runs, and annoy the squatter, and steal his cattle. He contended that, now that the Committee had affirmed the principle of survey before selection, and those amendments were brought in, they were adopting a system very much like that in the Act of 1860. He believed in giving the land to *bonâ fide* agricultural farmers, but not that it should be given to men who had no money, in large quantities, who would only ruin themselves by attempting to utilise it. The Bill was partly intended to provide a revenue from the land. It had been maintained that they must borrow if they were to carry out public works, though some persons said the colony could not borrow any longer. Now the framers of the Bill seemed to recognise the idea that they could turn their vast public estate to a revenue account; that by granting the squatters certain advantages and security of tenure the State could get from them a fair rental; and that a large amount of pastoral occupation by small capitalists, who would pay a larger rental still, would be induced. The Bill also made provision for men with a smaller amount of capital who would combine grazing with agriculture, and pay a larger rent; and besides that, provision was made for poor men, who had no money at all, by giving them 160 acres of land, for that was practically what it amounted to. Now, if the contention of the hon. member for Townsville, that homestead selections should be 320 acres instead of 160, were correct, then to be consistent they should apply the homestead principle to 960-acre agricultural farms, which gave the selector the right to convert the whole of his farm into a freehold at half-a-crown an acre.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS on the Opposition Benches: No.

Mr. JORDAN said he repeated that, to be consistent, they must do that. If the contention of the hon. member for Townsville were correct, there was no reason why the homestead principle should not be applied to the 960-acre farms, and even to the small pastoral squattages of 20,000 acres. They must also make provision for converting those large holdings into freeholds, and then what would become of the leasing principle of the Bill?

Mr. KATES said he really did not see how anyone could find fault with the homestead clauses of the Bill. They were the very best clauses in it, because they would encourage *bonâ fide* settlement. What land would they give those people? They would give them the very best—the pick of the land.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: No, no!

Mr. KATES said it was supposed to be the pick of the land. He had no doubt the Minister for Lands would pick out the best portions, and if he did not he would not do his duty. They ought to get the best of the land, and it would cost them comparatively nothing, because 160 acres would only amount to £20 for the whole farm. He was sure the clause proposed would be received in the southern portion of the colony, at all events, with the greatest satisfaction. He knew that most of the best producers had been the homestead men. Even during the present year he found that the greater portion of the wheat came from the homestead selections; and he also found that the men with 160 acres, if they applied themselves well and intelligently to the cultivation of their land, produced a good deal more from it than from 640 acres. He spoke from experience. He knew the homestead clauses had proved a great success, and he should like to see them continued. He did not know anything about the northern portion of the colony, and it might be that 160 acres would not be enough up there; but in the southern portion of the colony he really believed the clause would be of great use. If the Government chose to allow the people in the northern portion of the colony 320 acres, he should offer no objection.

Mr. ALAND said he remembered, when contesting the election in the year 1878, that there was a great outcry in the electorate which he now represented against the Douglas Act of 1876, and the cry was against the 80-acre gibber-men. He did not know whether he lost his election through it; but he maintained that the Act of 1876 was a good Act; and he also maintained that if the State gave away 80 acres of land to a man it had done a very liberal thing. He did not know whether it was his advocacy of that which cost him his election; but, at all events, he did not win his election at that time. However, he had not altered his opinion very much on the subject since. He still held that the Act of 1876 was a good Act, and that it provided for all sorts and conditions of men. The man of small means could take up the quantity of land he wanted, and the man of larger means could select a larger quantity of land, by paying more for it. The same principle appeared to him to go through the present Bill, and he thought if they extended the homestead clauses to 320 acres they would bring it pretty near to the 960 acres, and that would be really placing too great an advantage in the hands of the smaller men. Now, it had been said that there was no good agricultural land left in the colony. Well, if that was the case, then he certainly thought the acreage should be increased, but he could not believe that the colony had really arrived at that state yet. The country could hardly be advertising itself as a place for persons to emigrate to, if there was no acreage of agricultural land left, and he thought the statement could not be altogether a correct one. He must say there was a great deal in the contention which had been set up that there was a difference between the various parts of the colony. He knew of his own knowledge, as had been stated by the member for Darling Downs, that the most successful men round about Toowoomba—the hon. member, of course, referred to Warwick and Allora—but around Toowoomba the men who had had the small freeholds had been most prosperous. They had expended all their energies upon their homesteads, and had made the ground bring forth abundantly. Now if there was any quantity of good agricultural land in any district in the colony, then he thought that that land should be set apart by the board—or whoever it was who would administer the Act—surveyed, and cut into 160-acre homesteads. He thought n doing that they certainly did a very liberal

thing, but if it should be seen that in some portions of the colony there were not areas of land sufficient to meet the requirements of agriculture, then he should have no objection to the area being extended to 320 acres, although he thought they then went rather far towards those men who would have to pay £1 an acre for 960 acres.

Mr. ARCHER said he was rather astonished to hear what had fallen from the hon. member for Darling Downs (Mr. Kates). If he was still so innocent as to believe that any Ministry would pick out the best parts of the colony for homestead selection, then he had learned nothing by listening to what had taken place before in the House. The fact was that homestead selections had been proclaimed in broken ranges, utterly unfit for cultivation, and he did not believe the present Minister would be any better than any former Minister, although he thought so himself. He did not believe it was in the power of any Minister to control the matter. The Minister was guided by other eyes than his own. He could not go all over the country, picking out fine bits of land, and proclaiming them open for homestead selection. Formerly, whether the land was good or bad, the homestead area was proclaimed. In some of the areas there was good land; and cases had been mentioned by the hon. members for the Darling Downs, where the people had been prosperous; but in other homestead areas he defied anything but a bandicoot to live on more than 5 acres of it. There were only a few parts of the country that he was acquainted with—unless men went far away from the coast and into the interior—where it was possible to get large areas of really good land in one solid piece. There might be still a few parts of the Darling Downs unselected and in the hands of the Government, but he did not think there was much land that had not an owner. There might be some places where 160 acres of really good agricultural land could be obtained in a block, but they were very few indeed. Such a thing as 160 acres of really good agricultural land anywhere near the coast it was almost impossible to get. If hon. members brought their ideas about the value of the land on the Darling Downs to bear on other parts of Queensland, as they would insist upon doing, they would simply settle people on the land to ruin themselves. Those people in a great many of the settled districts had probably got pieces of land which, after survey, might contain 10 or 20 acres fit for cultivation, the rest being medium pastoral land. If they put a number of those unfortunate men on 160 acres each, perhaps only 5 or 6 acres in each block would be fit for cultivation. Formerly, in parts of the country such as the Darling Downs, a selector might make a lucky grab and get a selection the whole of which was good land; but that would now be prevented by survey before selection, under which the area of good land would probably be limited, and that limited area would be cut off with the worst portion of the block, or if there was any grazing land contiguous to it that would have to be included in the 160 acres. He carried the Minister for Lands with him when he said that in the Central district a man wanted at least 320 acres, and that in that area there would not be more than 10 acres fit for cultivation, and that, if the rest was fit for grazing, that was all that was to be got from it. What he complained of was that hon. members were persuaded that 40 or 50 acres were quite enough for a man to get a living out of. He knew that, while a limited quantity of land in the East and West Moreton districts had been settled upon, there was abundance of land on which a man could make a living by agriculture; but if hon. members would only go north they would find that there the quantity of land for cultivation was limited, and that a man could only have the chance of making a living if he was allowed to take up 320 acres. He knew it was perfectly useless expressing those views in that Committee, because the majority of hon. members who were in favour of homestead selection represented the southern part of the colony; the strength of the followers of the Government representing the Darling Downs or districts near there—parts which were not reproduced in the Central and Northern districts—and they always measured everything by the kind of country in which they lived. It might be a fact that, in the South, small areas of 20, 30, or 50 acres were enough for a man to live on; but hon. members should not, therefore, compel those who were living under different circumstances to accept the same area. If they did they would be simply wanting people to come to the colony under false pretences. No man could get 160 acres of good agricultural land in one lot in the Central district, and, therefore, he should be allowed to take up 320 acres.

The PREMIER said it was quite refreshing to see the new-born zeal of hon. members on the other side. They thought they were going to make a great point against the Government because the homestead clauses were not included in the Bill; they thought they were going to score a great point on that; but they had not scored a point at all. Still they wanted to score something out of the homestead clauses, and so they started a new idea and said, "The Government want to limit the poor man to 160 acres; that is no use to him; we want to give him 320 acres." Who wanted to limit the poor man to 160 acres? There was nothing in the Bill to that effect. In the Bill as it stood there was nothing limiting a man to less than 320 acres. There was nothing in the Bill to prevent a man who had a selection of 160 acres from taking up another selection of 160 acres adjoining it. If the maximum was 960 acres he could take up six 160-acres as selections adjoining. The only thing was that if he did he would have to pay more than 2s. 6d. an acre for them. A man might take up as many selections as he liked, within legal limits, but it was proposed to sell only 160 acres at the extremely liberal price of 2s. 6d. an acre. Under the present law a homestead selector could take up 160 acres, but could not take up any other selection. The present proposal was very much more liberal.

Mr. ARCHER said the hon. gentleman had spoken about new-born zeal, but he had not said a single word in reply to the argument he (Mr. Archer) had submitted. That argument was, that while in the South there was really valuable agricultural land where small areas were sufficient, there was not such land in other parts of the colony. They might travel miles and miles in the North before they got 160 acres of good agricultural land in one block. To hold out, therefore, as an inducement to immigrants, that they could get 160 acres of good land at a low price as a homestead, was holding out what was a fraud. He knew, and the Minister for Lands knew as well as he, that if a man tried to get a living out of 160 acres in the North he would very soon come to grief. The Premier, he would repeat, had not taken the slightest notice of the argument he had used—simply contenting himself by saying that a man could not get more than 160 acres at 2s. 6d. an acre. That quantity of good agricultural land in the South was worth more than 500 acres in the North. He had understood, from what the Premier said in reply to him, that there was no limitation, but that a homestead selector under the Bill could take up his homestead, and then, under the other

leasing clauses of the Bill, could take up surrounding land—as far as he understood him—to the amount that was allowed to him.

The PREMIER: Yes.

Mr. ARCHER: That he held the one as a homestead, and that he held the other as a selector under the agricultural clauses of the Bill. He should like to know from the Premier whether that was so?

The PREMIER said that a homestead selector who wished to take advantage of the clause was in exactly the same position as any other lessee under the Bill. If his selection was not over 160 acres he had certain privileges given to him; but he had no other privileges taken away from him. Of course, in country supposed to be suited for homestead settlement, the land would be to a great extent surveyed in blocks of 160 acres. There would probably be a great number of blocks of this kind, and the selector could take up two, three, or four blocks up to the maximum area, and would be the lessee of them. Under the two following clauses, residence on one block would be taken as residence on all. In that respect all selectors were alike; though the selector of a block not exceeding 160 acres had the special privilege of being able to acquire the freehold after five years' residence. But there was nothing to prevent him occupying other blocks adjoining, up to the maximum area; so that, in point of fact, these provisions were much more liberal to what they might call the homestead selector than the existing law, under which he was confined to his one area. Under the Bill he could take up other selections adjoining, or even in other parts of the colony, provided the total did not exceed the maximum admissible. He had exactly the same privileges as any other selector under the Bill, with the additional one that he could acquire the fee-simple of one 160-acre block by five years' residence, the erection of certain improvements, and the payment of 2s. 6d. an acre.

The HON. SIR T. MCILWRAITH said he certainly did not read the clause as the hon. member interpreted it; and he was sure the hon. member for South Brisbane (Mr. Jordan) did not read it in that way, because that hon. member had contended very strongly against his suggestion that every selector should have the right to select 160 acres out of his lease. The homestead privilege was confined, by the first part of the clause, to agricultural farms, the area whereof did not exceed 160 acres. According to the definitions, a farm was "a holding under the Act," and a holding was "the land held by any lessee"; so that, substituting that interpretation in the clause, it would read, "With respect to the whole amount held by a lessee, the area whereof does not exceed 160 acres," and so on. He did not see how they could escape the interpretation that the privilege of the homestead selector was confined to the man whose whole lease did not comprise more than 160 acres. The interpretation given by the Premier was not in accordance with the wording of the clause.

The PREMIER said his interpretation was exactly in accordance with the wording of the Bill. "Lessee" meant the holder of a lease under the provisions of the Act; "holding" meant the land held by any lessee; but surely a man might have four or five holdings. They had carefully provided in other parts of the Bill, and in the clauses immediately following, for the case of the same lessee having different holdings. Each piece of land he held was a holding.

The HON. SIR T. MCILWRAITH: Not by the interpretation clause. It is "the land held by any lessee."

The PREMIER said that in that case, if a man had a selection in the Moreton district, another on the Darling Downs, another on the Peak Downs, and a grazing farm in the district of Mitchell, it would all be one holding. That would be absurd. The homestead privilege was simply given to holders of agricultural farms of limited area. Any man who had an agricultural farm not exceeding 160 acres had that privilege, in addition to those conferred on him by other parts of the Bill.

The HON. SIR T. MCILWRAITH said that, if that were the correct interpretation of the clause, why should a man who had taken up his 960 acres in six 160-acre blocks have the privilege of securing the fee-simple of one of those blocks, while the man who took up the whole 960 acres in one block had no privilege at all? It ought to be the other way; because the inference to be drawn from the fact of the Government having surveyed certain land in 160-acre blocks would be that that land was of so much better quality than that surveyed in 960-acre blocks.

The PREMIER: Exactly.

The HON. SIR T. MCILWRAITH: Why should the privilege be denied to the man taking it all in one lot?

The PREMIER said it was because the object of the homestead clauses was to encourage personal settlement on land specially adapted to cultivation; and land of that kind would probably be—it certainly ought to be—surveyed in blocks not exceeding 160 acres. But the maximum could not be reduced by the Government below 320 acres. They gave a special privilege to the man who took up 160 acres; if he chose to take up more than that of the land specially adapted to agriculture, and exclude somebody else who wanted to take it, let him have the remainder of the 320 acres the same as any other person. They gave him a special privilege for a special area of land supposed to be specially adapted for agriculture. In the case of land surveyed in 960-acre blocks, it might be assumed that it was not land adapted to homestead selection. The object of homestead selection was not to encourage the getting rid of the public land at too small a price, but to encourage personal occupation of the land; and they were prepared to surrender the price to attain that end.

The HON. SIR T. MCILWRAITH asked why they could not allow the selector to judge for himself whether any portion of his 960 acres would suit him for a homestead? Why should the Government step in and say "This is not land adapted for a homestead at all"? If he thought that 160 acres of it was quite sufficient for him, why should they say that because the quality of that land was not good enough they would not allow him to have a homestead selection at all? The proper way to deal with the matter was the way he had suggested—to allow every selector in a farming district the right of having 160 acres out of his selection as a homestead. They could not get over the anomaly of granting the homestead privilege to a man because he selected land which, in the opinion of the Government, was good enough to be a homestead, while denying it in the case of land which the selector thought good enough for a homestead, but which the Government had surveyed into bigger blocks. He did not think there was any reason at all why they should not give the privilege of homestead selection to every one who took up land in a farming district.

The PREMIER said the hon. gentleman wished to give every selector the privilege of pre-emption to the extent of 160 acres on his

selection; but he did not think it was desirable to do so. He assumed that each block would be surveyed in the way the country could be best utilised—that the water, the slopes, and the grass would be taken into consideration—and it was not desirable to allow the selector to pre-empt one part at 2s. 6d. an acre, and exclude from profitable use all the remainder.

The HON. SIR T. MCILWRAITH said the privilege was given where the land was good; and he did not see why it should be refused where the land was bad. The argument of the hon. gentleman was not a good one, except as a general argument against free selection. There was no danger to be dreaded from the fact of a homesteader being allowed to select one part of his selection, because limitations could be imposed to prevent him from taking up any part without which the remainder would be useless. Every farmer should have the benefit of the homestead clause in respect to any selection he took up under the Bill. From the admission of the Government, it was a right thing where the land was good. Why, then, should the privilege be denied where the land was worse, if the selector thought it good enough for a homestead?

Mr. BLACK said it seemed to him, from the arguments of the Premier and the leader of the Opposition, that there was something extremely inconsistent in the clause as it was worded. If he understood it aright, the homestead selector was allowed to take up 160 acres as a homestead; he was also allowed to take up 320 acres under other conditions. But if the two joined one another, the two together amounting to 480 acres, he would not be allowed to make one of them a homestead.

The PREMIER: Why not?

Mr. BLACK said that was one of the disadvantages, which were becoming more and more apparent, arising from the innovation of the Government in respect to survey before selection. In taking up land which he did want, a man would be compelled to also take up land which was unsuitable for his purpose. He thought he was right in saying that one of the great recommendations to agricultural settlers in the existing land law was the fact that he was able to take up land according to his requirements. Surely a man knew better than the Government could dictate to him, what sort of land he wanted! Under that provision, an enormous amount of solid, honest settlement had taken place, the selector knowing that he might travel over the length and breadth of the colony and select exactly what he wanted from the land open to selection. If the land he chose turned out unsuitable, it was his own loss, and the responsibility rested with himself. Another advantage connected with that provision was that the moment the application was accepted by the commissioner the selector could go to work on his selection. Of course he was liable to a slight readjustment of his boundaries; but, practically speaking, there was no delay in getting on his land. After paying the deposit money, the survey fee, and the year's rent, in the majority of cases the selector could, if he chose, settle on the land and begin profitable work within a week of the acceptance of his application. The Government talked about the Bill under consideration being very much more liberal than the existing land law; but he took exception to that opinion, more especially after the adoption of the innovation of survey before selection. He could not imagine anything that would militate more against settlement than that new condition. When the new Bill came into force the lessee would have six months in which to surrender the half of his holding, and during that time the Government could simply do nothing—they could not even subdivide the runs, for it was not likely that the lessees would surrender their holdings a single day before they were compelled by law. The Government would have to get a large staff of surveyors. Under the old Act the selector took up the land he wanted, paid his deposit money, together with the survey fee, so that the Government were nothing out of pocket on account of surveys; but it would be totally different under the conditions now proposed. The selector must have a certain amount of choice in regard to the land open to selection, and the Government would be compelled to survey six times the amount which would be selected; and the lands in the different districts of the colony would have to be surveyed simultaneously. Selectors in the southern part of the colony would not go to the North to select; and the people in the North could not be expected to come to the southern portion of the colony to select, so that each district would require its own area of surveys to be made; and, so far as he could see, from twelve to eighteen months must necessarily elapse before the lessee under the new Act would be able to get to work on his holding. The Bill was not at all liberal in its conditions. He failed to see why the selector who took up 960 acres should not be allowed to enjoy the benefit of the homestead clause just the same as the man who began by taking up 160 acres, and afterwards took up more. The Bill was not liberal to the *bonâ fide* settler, whom it would hamper by delays. If he found that he could get land on equally favourable conditions in the other colonies he would go there, and Queensland would lose. Agriculture had taken a firm hold in the colony; and there was no reason why, under liberal legislation, it should not in course of time become one of the leading agricultural colonies of Australia; but he did not think the Bill was likely to encourage people from home or from the other colonies to settle on the land, or to induce the farmers already in Queensland to extend their operations in the way they would have done under the provisions of the old Act. He would recommend the Committee to seriously entertain the suggestion of the leader of the Opposition, that every selector should be placed on an equal footing as far as the homestead clause was concerned. Although, in the first instance, he had advocated the suggestion of the hon. member for Townsville that the area should be increased to 320 acres, yet, since the Premier had explained that the homestead selector would be allowed to select the additional amount between 160 acres, as homestead, and 960 acres, the maximum allowed, he was quite prepared to support the suggestion of the leader of the Opposition; and he believed that if the Minister for Lands would accept that suggestion both sides of the Committee would be reconciled to the proposed change. Every selector in the colony should be placed on an equal footing, and be allowed to take up 160 acres as homestead.

Mr. JORDAN said he was glad they had at last arrived at a conclusion, and that they at last saw their way to reconciling all differences. Hon. members on the other side would accept the Bill now, and it could be finished off in about a week. But what did the suggestion that was to bring about the reconciliation mean? It meant that a man who had selected 960 acres should have a right to take up 160 acres of that—perhaps the whole of a river frontage—as a homestead, at 2s. 6d. an acre. Hon. members on the opposite side were like children sitting in the market place, and saying to their fellows, "We have piped unto you, and ye did not dance; we have mourned with you, and ye have not wept." They had been trying to

please those hon. gentlemen in every possible way, and had supported amendments in the Bill exactly carrying out their ideas as expressed in their eloquent speeches on the second reading; and yet they were not satisfied. At last, however, they were informed that there was a common platform, and no doubt the Minister for Lands would gladly avail himself of it, and then they might get through the Bill in a few days.

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN said that, as soon as the Premier had finished "nursing that baby," he wanted to ask him for some information. There were two things to which that hon. gentleman seemed to devote his time in the Chamber. The hon. gentleman devoted a couple of hours every day to correcting his speeches; and as at most other times he seemed to be reading the *Telegraph*, it led him (Hon. J. M. Macrossan) to believe that the hon. gentleman wrote the *Telegraph*, and was correcting it also.

The PREMIER: A very good guess! What is it you want to know?

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN said the hon. gentleman had told the Committee that a homesteader, to use a common term, after taking up 160 acres, would have the privilege of leasing the balance of 960 acres, or whatever the maximum might be. The maximum area, where a homestead selection of 160 acres could be taken up, would be only 320 acres. Was it absolutely certain by the clause that the homesteader could take up 320 acres?

The PREMIER: Yes.

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN: After having taken up the homestead, would he be able to acquire the freehold of the other 160 acres?

The PREMIER: Yes; after ten years' residence.

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN: Then I am perfectly satisfied.

The HON. SIR T. MCILWRAITH said there was another point that had not been met. He had said all along that it was in the power of the Government, by refraining from surveying in any particular district any block lower than 160 acres, to prevent homestead selection altogether in that district. If the Government surveyed the land in 180-acre blocks, no homestead selection could take place in that district; indeed, anything above 160 acres would take away the privilege. Why should not the homesteader be allowed to have his homestead in any farming district? The hon. member for South Brisbane thought it a sufficient objection to his suggestion that a man might take up the whole of a river frontage. But a clause could easily be inserted to prevent that, and to restrain a man from spoiling the rest of the selection; but a man ought to have the privilege of acquiring a homestead, the same as was granted to any man who selected a block that had been surveyed into 160 acres or less. He was arguing on the broad principle that every man who selected a farm was entitled to a homestead of 160 acres or more, no matter in what sized blocks the land might be surveyed.

The PREMIER said that what the hon. gentleman had pointed out was one effect of the principle of survey before selection. It could also be said that the Government might proclaim all the richest agricultural land in the colony as grazing areas, with a maximum of 20,000 acres; but any Government that did so would soon cease to be a Government, and probably for a very long time—if not for ever. If any Government conducted itself in such an insane manner it would be speedily ejected from office. The principle of the thing was to entrust the Government with the responsibility of providing suitable blocks for selection all over the colony, and that involved the idea that the Government might be trusted to carry it out honestly. If any Government did not carry out the principle honestly, and did not provide settlement for all classes of persons, they would be ignominiously ejected from office, probably never to return.

Mr. BLACK asked the Premier if he understood him aright that, in the case of a homesteader taking up an additional 160 acres, he would be able to obtain the freehold of the whole 320 acres at the end of ten years?

The PREMIER: Yes.

Mr. BLACK said he was under the impression that personal residence was an absolute condition of freehold, and a man could not reside on his homestead, and fulfil the condition of personal residence on the adjoining block at the same time, unless it was intended that the consolidation clause should apply to adjoining selections, one of which was homestead and the other leasehold.

The PREMIER said the hon. gentleman had fallen into confusion in supposing that there was a difference between a lease given to a farmer who took up 160 acres, and a lease given to any other lessee. But there was no difference; he would hold under exactly the same conditions as others, except that he would have the additional privilege afforded by the clause; he would have all the other privileges, and this one in addition: if he took up two adjoining selections, residence on one would be taken as residence on both; so that if a man had two selections of 160 acres, and resided on one, that would be equivalent to residence on both.

Mr. BLACK said an intelligent selector would begin by taking up a homestead, and then he would wish to add to it. There was nothing to prevent him from doing that.

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN: If the land was surveyed in 960-acre blocks, could any person take up 160 acres as a homestead in that block?

The PREMIER: No.

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN: It must be a block surveyed as 160 acres?

The PREMIER: Yes.

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN: Then he supposed that the 960-acre blocks would be invariably surveyed in one piece; that they would not be surveyed in the same way as the blocks he had spoken of were surveyed in America. There they were surveyed in square-mile blocks, and afterwards subdivided into 160-acre blocks; and a man could take up a homestead in any part of the country he liked. What he wished to know was, would the land for homesteaders be surveyed into 160-acre blocks, and would it always be in areas of which 320 acres would be the maximum? Because, if it was surveyed in 160-acre blocks, and the maximum area in the district was 960 acres, according to what the Premier had said, a homesteader would be able to take up the balance of the 960 acres. Was that so?

An HONOURABLE MEMBER: Yes.

The PREMIER said it would depend upon how the land was surveyed. He could not state exactly how it would be surveyed. They had got some valuable information about surveying from Canada lately, and they had evidently a good deal to learn on that subject. The surveys would, of course, depend very much upon the character and circumstances of the country. If the land was good it would probably be surveyed in 160-acre blocks, but in other cases it might not be desirable to make the blocks so small.

Mr. BLACK said, as a matter of fact the Government would be compelled to survey homestead selections in every district of the colony. The hon. the Premier just now said that, in the event of a Government doing anything that was unpopular or irregular, they would be turned out of office.

The PREMIER: Insane, I said.

Mr. BLACK: Well, insane. If they did not survey homesteads in every agricultural district of the colony, they would be considered as doing something very insane indeed.

The PREMIER: I think so, too.

Mr. BLACK: He hoped they would survey them, and that they would be surveyed in blocks of different sizes in different districts—some 960 acres, others 300 and 160.

The PREMIER: Of course they will.

Mr. BLACK: As he understood the clause, if there were a number of 160-acre blocks, a man would be able to take up six of them, or 960 acres; that would make one homestead. Would it not be far better to overcome the difficulty by telling a man plainly at once what he could take up—whether, if he took up 320 acres he must make one-half of it a homestead, or, if he took up 640 acres, he must make 160 acres of it a homestead? He was sure that any intelligent man must see that that was what would be done; and why did not the Government deal with the difficulty at once, instead of fancying they were making provisions to prevent people from taking up homesteads, when they were actually pointing out how it could be done, and how it would be done?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS said that in surveying land those portions best suited for small settlers would be set apart for that special purpose and object, and in parts of the country where land was not suited for selection of that kind the area might be made 320, or 400, or 640 acres. It would depend entirely upon the character of the country to be dealt with—whether it would be set apart for settlement by small selectors or not. If the maximum area in any district were 960 acres, it would probably be surveyed in blocks of 320 acres.

Mr. BLACK said he assumed that where land was particularly good, and suited for close settlement, it would be surveyed in 160-acre blocks. The hon. gentleman had already explained that there was nothing to prevent a man from taking up six of those blocks.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: Yes, there is.

Mr. BLACK said there was nothing in the Bill to prevent it. If it were surveyed in 160-acre blocks, and the maximum was 320 acres, any man could take up two of those blocks.

Mr. GROOM said the selector might take up two blocks if there were no competition; but the probability was that it would be impossible for any man to take up six of those blocks, because the number of applicants would be so great that he would stand a very good chance of not getting more than one. That had been the rule, at all events hitherto. In fact, in some cases there had been five or six applicants for one homestead; and he ventured to say, from what he knew of agricultural land in many districts of the colony, that where it was surveyed in 160-acre blocks they would not have one man taking up five or six blocks, but probably they would have five or six applicants for one allotment. At any rate, he hoped that would be the case with regard to agricultural lands.

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN: I doubt it very much.

Mr. GROOM: Well, he hoped it would be the case. If they were going to have anything like a large influx of population, in the shape of immigrants coming to the colony, they could not suppose that one immigrant would be able to take up six of those blocks, and that a great many others who came out in the same ship would not be able to take up any. He believed a great deal of family settlement would take place under the clause. He might say in passing that, in the earlier part of the evening, he supported the hon. member for Townsville in what he considered a very wise suggestion with regard to extending the area for homesteads; but after the explanation given by the hon. the Premier as to the area that selectors could take up, he was quite satisfied, and believed that the clause would work well.

Mr. NORTON said that, in order to make the phraseology of the clause the same as in the present Act, he moved that the word "himself" after the word "lessee," at the end of paragraph (*a*), be omitted. As the clause read, it would absolutely bind the man himself to reside on his selection.

Mr. ALAND: So he ought.

Mr. NORTON said the hon. member might think he ought; but, suppose a carrier took up a selection, and was away for months, how was he to perform continual residence there? He knew perfectly well that it was really his residence, but there was no reason why the word "himself" should be inserted. Under the present Act continual residence was necessary; but it did not confine that residence to himself personally; his family could perform it. He might be away for six or twelve months; so long as his family were there. He contended that so long as the word "himself" was in the clause they ran the risk of exposing the Bill, when it became an Act, to a construction which would bind the man himself to live upon it.

The PREMIER said he had pointed out that afternoon the inconvenience of using different language in the same Bill to express the same idea. In the 53rd clause the condition of occupation was required to be performed by the continuous and *bonâ fide* residence on the land of the lessee himself or some other person as his servant. In the present case it meant the lessee and not his servant. It was desirable that exactly the same language should be used. Residence was not analogous to being confined in a gaol. If a man were sentenced to be imprisoned for five years he was kept there for five years; but a man need not always be inside a fence to reside in a place. He might go to England and back, and still be a resident here.

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN said that if that were the interpretation the board put upon it it would be right enough.

The PREMIER: It is the interpretation that has always been put upon it.

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN said he could quite understand the case of a carrier who took up a homestead selection being away for six months. He should be very sorry if the word "himself" would confine that man to his selection.

Mr. BEATTIE said he would point out that there was nothing very singular in the clause, because under the Electoral Act the same word was used. The qualification of an elector was that he must be a resident for six months in a district. Suppose a man lived in Brisbane and went away to sea for five months; his home was in Brisbane, his family were in Brisbane, and he could come back and exercise the right of a voter. He presumed it would be the same in the case of homestead selectors.

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN said he thought the hon. gentleman's comparison was very unfortunate, because he had known men to be knocked off the electoral roll. He himself was knocked off through being a member of Parliament, because he did not reside six months at Charters Towers in the first and second years of his experience as a member of Parliament.

The PREMIER: That was a mistake.

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN said that showed the interpretation that might be put upon the clause.

Mr. BEATTIE: It shows the ignorance of the returning officer.

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN said it was done by the police magistrate.

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

New clause passed as printed.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS moved that the following new clause follow the new clause last passed:—

If the same person is the lessee of two or more farms which are contiguous, or are only separated by a road or roads, or a creek, the condition of occupation may be performed by the residence of the lessee or another person, being his manager or agent, as hereinbefore prescribed, upon one of such farms; and such residence shall be equivalent to the residence of the lessee or that person upon each of such farms, and shall confer on the lessee, in respect of each farm, the same rights as his own residence, or the residence of that person, as the case may be, would have conferred.

Question put and passed.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS, in moving the following new clause to follow the last new clause, as passed:—

If a lessee acquires an agricultural farm in fee-simple and continues to reside thereon, such residence shall, so long as he is the owner thereof in fee-simple, continue to confer on him the same rights and privileges as are by the last preceding section declared with respect to other farms held by him, in the same manner and to the same extent as if the farm so acquired in fee-simple were still a holding under this part of this Act—

said it was to provide for those cases in districts where, for instance, 960 acres was the maximum quantity to be taken up by one person; and if it should be divided into three lots of 320 acres, any selector who might have taken up 320 acres and made it a freehold under the Bill might be enabled to take up, say, two other lots of 320 acres each; and the performance of residence on the one he occupied as a freehold would suffice for residence on the two other lots which were contiguous. He moved that the new clause stand part of the Bill.

Clause put and passed.

On clause 69, as follows:—

"The Governor in Council, on the recommendation of the board, may by proclamation declare any country lands which are entirely or extensively overgrown by scrub of the kinds known as brigalow, gidya, mallee, sandalwood, bendee, oak, and wattle, or any of them, to be scrub lands for the purposes of this Act, and thereupon the same may be dealt with in the manner prescribed in this part of this Act."

Mr. DONALDSON said he noticed that the proclamation might refer to any country lands overgrown by scrub; but he presumed it would not apply to the unresumed portions of runs.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: No.

Mr. NORTON said he would point out that the definitions of the trees mentioned in the clause did not give any idea or conception of what was intended to be meant by them. For instance, take the words "wattle" and "oak." There were a dozen kinds of oak around Brisbane, and he supposed there were twenty or thirty kinds of wattle, and many of them were the most useful trees in the country, as their bark was used for tanning. The Minister for Lands had evidently not looked up his botany, and had not obtained the assistance of Mr. Bailey, the Government Botanist, in drafting the clause. There were two or three kinds of timber commonly called oak, but they were not oak at all. They were no more oaks than they were apple-trees, and they might just as well be called one name as the other. It would be a great mistake to pass a clause like that without defining what those words meant. The great difficulty was about wattle. In many instances in the other colonies wattle-trees were carefully cultivated because they were such valuable trees, and many of those valuable wattle-trees would be found in their scrubs. The Minister for Lands shook his head, but he (Mr. Norton) knew that the black wattle was sometimes met with in their scrubs, and was often called hickory. In some parts of New South Wales, £3 a ton more was paid for the bark of the black wattle than for other wattle-bark. In Armidale the tanners paid £5 a ton for the ordinary bark—green wattle, silver-leaved wattle, and other sorts; but they paid £8 a ton for black wattle bark. That was three years ago, and he did not know what they paid now. He was quite sure the words used in the clause did not define what the hon. member intended them to define.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS said the names given to those scrub timber trees he knew were not the proper scientific or botanical names for them, but he still thought there would be no difficulty in distinguishing them. They were the names they were generally known by, and he did not think that any bushman would have any doubt as to what was an oak or a wattle-tree. There was no doubt the wattle they had here was of very little value for tanning. It was nothing like as good as the wattle growing in Victoria and Tasmania. There was none of that kind of wattle here.

Mr. NORTON: Oh, yes! there is.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS said he had never seen any, and he did not know anybody who had seen any.

Mr. NORTON: I have.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS said that if there was any of it here it was in such small quantities as to be scarcely worth consideration. That valuable tanning wattle could no doubt be grown well if brought up here and cultivated, and he dared say it would pay well to do that; but the wattle that in Queensland covered a great quantity of grazing land, particularly in the central districts, was utterly useless, and encumbered the land and prevented it being put to some useful purpose. There were many districts in which oak-trees covered a large area of country, and were extending year by year, and getting so thick that it would not pay to ring-bark them for the purpose of reclaiming the land for grazing. With regard to brigalow, he had known many instances in which a large piece of land had been completely cleared of that tree by ringbarking alone, by men who understood how and when to do it; and the land converted into a magnificent grazing paddock. The other kinds of timber dealt with in the clause were of no value. Gidya was certainly valueless. Bendee was almost useless, as cattle only fed upon it occasionally, when it was very young.

Mr. NORTON: Do they not feed on gidya?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS said they did not; that tree was perfectly useless; neither sheep nor cattle would touch it. Then, as to

sandalwood, that never grew very thick, certainly; but, wherever it was found, not a blade of grass could be seen for eight or ten yards around the tree. Land was, however, perhaps more easily reclaimed from sandalwood scrub than any other. If a number of persons could be induced to take up scrub land under that clause, and turn the land to grazing purposes, that would be a gain to the country. It had been done in the neighbouring colonies with the greatest success, mallee scrub land having been reclaimed in many cases. The term "mallee" had been introduced into the clause though there was very little of that kind of timber in Queensland. Some of what was called mallee in New South Wales was really eucalyptus. There was some very good land on the Upper Dawson, completely covered by small saplings which might be termed mallee.

Mr. NORTON: That is not mallee.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS said it was mallee. The difference between gum-saplings and mallee was not very great; at all events they belonged to the same family.

Mr. NORTON said the speech of the hon. gentleman proved the very thing he had been contending for. The hon. gentleman spoke of what he called forest oak. Now, forest oak was not only not a bad tree, but it was really a very useful tree. But forest oak was not the oak the hon. gentleman designed to destroy; it was a scrub oak he sought to eradicate. If the Minister for Lands could succeed in getting rid of the vast scrubs of brigalow such as existed beyond Dalby and on the Central line, he would do a great deal of good. Brigalow scrubs were to be found on some of the best agricultural land they had in the colony.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Where?

Mr. NORTON said he would tell the hon. gentleman where. Had the hon. gentleman ever been to Meringandan? He (Mr. Norton) had seen brigalow there, and he had seen brigalow scrub about Rosewood; and yet such land as that was to be included in that part of the Bill.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: There is some brigalow at Rosewood, but it is not brigalow scrub proper.

Mr. NORTON asked, what the hon. gentleman meant by brigalow scrub proper? He (Mr. Norton) understood brigalow scrub proper to be scrub which was chiefly brigalow.

Mr. FOOTE: But Rosewood is not that.

Mr. NORTON said the Minister for Lands must know that a scrub which consisted chiefly of brigalow was a brigalow scrub. There was a good deal of that kind of scrub on the country over the range towards Gowrie, and they could see thousands of acres of such land under cultivation at the present time. There was no better soil for cultivation than those brigalow scrub lands; yet it was proposed to include them in that part of the Bill.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS said the hon. gentleman might have seen brigalow scrub growing on agricultural lands. He (the Minister for Lands) had not. But he would point out that it rested with the Governor in Council to declare what land should be proclaimed as scrub land under the provisions of that clause, and no doubt judgment would be exercised in dealing with any brigalow scrub land that might be found fit for cultivation, and it would not be dealt with under that part of the Bill. But he thought there was very little land growing brigalow that was fit for cultivation, either in Queensland or New South Wales. He had seen a great deal of such country in both colonies, but did not remember having seen a piece of really good agricultural land on which brigalow scrub was growing. They would find scrub on agricultural land all over Queensland in which brigalow trees might be found, but that did not by any means justify them calling it brigalow scrub in any sense of the term. He had seen small patches of brigalow outside Rosewood before the land was occupied, and had seen occasional trees in the scrub, but not enough to warrant it being called a brigalow scrub.

Mr. NORTON said he did not intend to detain the Committee any longer. The hon. Minister for Lands had the responsibility of the clause, and he had not. He had done what he could to point out difficulties likely to arise, but in reply to the Minister he could say that he knew for a fact that, in the Rosewood Scrub, there were patches of brigalow scrub that could be seen in passing along the railway line; yet the hon. gentleman said he had never seen it. He had pointed out the effect of the clause, and the hon. member might now take the responsibility.

Mr. BLACK said he did not think it was ever intended that the clause should apply to agricultural lands at all. He imagined it would only apply to grazing lands, but he would like to ask the Minister for Lands whether survey before selection was going to apply to scrub lands—whether they would be surveyed before being thrown open to selection. If so, the Minister himself would have the discretionary power of classifying them before they were selected, and of saying whether they would come under the definition of scrub lands.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS said scrub districts would be proclaimed, but not necessarily surveyed, before selection.

Mr. BLACK said he would point out that there was another clause in the Bill which would necessitate the lands being surveyed. The clause said:—

"Such applications shall be made and dealt with in the same manner as applications to select land under Part IV. of this Act, except that no deposit on account of rent need be made with the application."

And Part IV. said that all lands should be surveyed before selection.

The PREMIER said that was so; but the part of the Bill dealing with applications did not say anything about survey.

Mr. PALMER said he was inclined to take exception to the statement of some hon. members that those scrubs lands, when cleared, were only useful for grazing purposes. There was not the slightest doubt that, when the land was once cleared, it would take as much trouble to keep it clear afterwards as to clear it in the first instance. The lands could never be used as grazing lands. They could only be used for agriculture, and the constant occupation would keep down the young growth of scrub. From the way in which some hon. members had spoken, one would imagine that clearing scrub lands was the nicest occupation out, and that it was mere play to keep the land free of undergrowth. He scarcely thought that scrub lands could be cleared under £5 an acre, and possibly £10 an acre in some cases. Under that part of the Bill it would be a very good provision to make the persons who cleared the land a present of it, instead of providing that after thirty years' occupation it should revert to the Crown without any compensation for improvements in the shape of clearing, or fencing, or anything else. He was certain that the amount of time and money expended on the scrub lands would only be fairly repaid by the property being made over in fee-simple to the occupier, and if no such

provision was made not many people would come within that part of the Act. There was no doubt the rent of a peppercorn was alluring to look at, but when the lessee took into consideration the consequences that would ensue upon taking up scrub lands he would find that a peppercorn rent was quite sufficient.

The PREMIER: Would you make it less than that?

Mr. PALMER said he did not think it would be too great a concession to make the land into a freehold. The Minister for Lands said that brigalow did not grow on good land. He must take exception to that, because he had seen it growing on the best lands in the colony. He had seen it around Rosewood, and that was an evidence of very deep, rich soil. In fact, he had always understood that the Rosewood Scrub was comprised of brigalow. The point he wanted to make was, that the idea of some hon. members seemed to be that everyone would rush to take up agricultural land, as if no other occupation in the colony was as good as farming; but he thought better returns were to be had out of any other kind of labour than agriculture, and for that reason they should offer every possible facility to men to settle on the land. If the occupants of scrub land went to the expense of fencing, and stumping, and improving generally, every facility should be put in their way, and they should be made a present of the land for their trouble.

Mr. J. CAMPBELL said he held a different opinion from the hon. member for Burke in reference to the price of scrub lands, and also as to the good results of clearing them. He had some cleared scrub land, and he could assure the Committee that it carried as much stock now as open forest country or some of the plains. As to the price the hon. member put down for clearing, that was absurd. His land on the back plains of the Downs was partly covered with black oak, which hon. gentlemen called forest oak and dogwood, and he had cleared it for 12s. an acre. He had done that, and could ringbark all the timber for 2s. 6d. an acre.

Mr. PALMER: Brigalow scrub?

Mr. J. CAMPBELL: No; oak and dogwood; but he would go with the hon. member when he said that brigalow scrubs were good. There were many scrubs of that kind which would turn out first-class agricultural land.

Mr. ARCHER said he did not think many people would come under the clause. He knew a good deal of the country that the hon. member alluded to between Toowoomba and Roma, and Rockhampton and the Comet, but no one would take up those lands on the conditions laid down in the Bill. He would not take them up if they were made a present to him so long as he could go outside and get land already cleared and at a much lower rate than scrub lands could be obtained for. The hon. gentleman who last spoke said he had cleared scrub land for 12s. an acre; but that was not what he (Mr. Archer) called scrub. He could put the hon. gentleman on brigalow scrub, and, if he cleared it at £12 an acre, he would earn his money very well indeed. He did not think those provisions would induce anyone to take up land at that rent for the purpose of clearing it.

Mr. J. CAMPBELL said the scrub he had referred to was dogwood, which he had pulled up with horses and a chain.

Question put and passed.

On clause 70, as follows:—

"Scrub lands shall be classified as follows, that is to say:—

The First Class—consisting of land overgrown by scrub to the extent of one-third part of its area;

The Second Class—consisting of land overgrown by scrub to the extent of one-half of its area;

The Third Class—consisting of land overgrown by scrub to the extent of two-third parts of its area;

The Fourth Class—consisting of land entirely overgrown by scrub."

Mr. MACFARLANE said that to classify the scrub land in that way would lead to a good deal of confusion, and perhaps evasion. People would try to get that land on which they would have the least to do and for which they would have the least to pay. By the Bill, first-class land would have to be fenced in five years; second-class in ten years; third-class in fourteen years; and the fourth-class in fifteen years. If they were going to give an advantage in one way, they were going to take it away in another. Looking at the clause as a whole, he thought it would be just as well if there was only one class of land. Of course, it would not be fair that the heavily timbered land should be charged as much as the light-timbered; but it was not likely that much of any class would be taken up, and he thought it would be taken up much faster if there was only one class. The light-timbered land would, of course, be taken up first, and there would be a chance of getting it cleared. With regard to the time for fencing, he thought that five years was not sufficient. It would be better to provide that the land should be all one class; that if it was fenced within ten years it should be held for nothing; that for the second ten years the rent should be ½d., and for the third ten years 1d. per acre. That would simplify the provisions very much.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS said he would point out that there was a great deal of difference in the value of scrub land. Some of it was very light and very quickly cleared, while other kinds required a good deal of work. He did not see, therefore, that they should not make a distinction between them. The rents fixed were fairly proportioned to the amount of work to be done on the different classes of land. In any case the rent was very small. As had been pointed out by the hon. member for Aubigny, there was some land on which a man with a pair of horses and a chain could pull out a good deal of scrub. That was the most effective way he knew of to clear wattle scrub.

Mr. NORTON: It will grow again.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS said that if it did the process could be repeated; after the first year there would be a heavy crop of grass, and if that was set fire to it would be a most effective way of destroying scrub.

Question put and passed.

On clause 71, as follows:—

"Any person may make application to the commissioner to become the lessee of any portion of scrub lands not exceeding 10,000 acres.

"Such applications shall be made and dealt with in the same manner as applications to select land under Part IV. of this Act, except that no deposit on account of rent need be made with the application.

"The commissioner, in dealing with the application, shall determine to which of the classes hereinbefore defined the land belongs."

Mr. DONALDSON said he thought the area should be increased to 20,000 acres. That might be an inducement to some men to take up land.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS said he had no objection to the area being increased to 20,000 acres. Of course power would be left to the Governor in Council to fix the quantity by proclamation.

Mr. JORDAN said the Committee were somewhat in the dark as to the value of the scrub lands proposed in that part of the Bill. It had been said by the hon. member for Aubigny—and

the information was valuable, because that hon. member knew something practically from personal experience—that it cost him about 12s. an acre to clear scrub land.

Mr. ARCHER: What he referred to would not be counted scrub land at all.

Mr. JORDAN: Mallee scrub, brigalow scrub, and other kinds of scrub. They had some evidence given before a commission in New South Wales about the mallee scrub in that colony which would apply to the mallee scrub in this colony. One man who took up 1,700 acres said that 1,100 acres was covered with mallee. That man gave a description of the process of clearing, and said it cost him 8s. 6d. to 15s. an acre to clear the scrub.

Mr. BLACK: How much?

Mr. JORDAN: From 8s. 6d. to 15s.

Mr. BLACK: For clearing mallee?

Mr. JORDAN: By a rapid process apparently. He hoped hon. gentlemen would not laugh at him too much, because, as he was so modest he might stop. He would read the following extract from the commissioners' report:—

"The following letter was received from a selector settled on the Burrawang Run, near the junction of the Edward River with the Wookool. His statements of fact have been verified by competent and independent authority, and his views on the disposition of the public lands seem to be those of his class, energetic and industrious selectors:—

"'Out of the 1,700 acres which myself and family first selected, about 1,100 acres were covered by dense mallee and other scrubs. There was no grass whatever on the land, which was the haunt of wild horses and marsupials, which only feed by night. In the space of three years I converted this wilderness into the prettiest home on the Edward River, and I challenge competition and inspection.'"

The selector gave the process of clearing, and set down the price at from 8s. 6d. to 15s. an acre, and then proceeded to state the result of all that labour as follows:—

"During the first year all kinds of salsolaceous plants came up mixed with grass. Afterwards the salt plants succumbed to stocking, and then the grasses grew so luxuriantly that my sheep would not face them, and I was compelled to eat them down with cattle. The representative of a Melbourne wool firm, who visited my farm during my absence with fat sheep in Victoria, asked what kind of English grasses I had sown, and he would hardly credit that what he saw was the natural production of and indigenous to the soil. The neighbouring Crown lessee purchased fat sheep from me to feed his shearers last shearing. The final result is that I have surmounted all the difficulties strewn in my path during my early settlement, as well as the havoc which bad seasons and drought have worked upon others, which have affected me very lightly."

Now they proposed to give 10,000 acres of those mallee scrub lands and of other scrub lands away for a mere nothing, and he was afraid they were going to be a little too liberal. He took a very great interest in the matter. Some time ago, as he was travelling from Toowoomba to Roma, he passed through hundreds of acres of scrub. He asked some questions, and was told that that scrub was rapidly spreading over a large portion of that district and rendering it useless. So he was very glad to see those provisions in regard to scrub lands when he read the Bill through, especially as he thought they might be applied to that particular locality, and might render large portions of land useful. Yet, at the same time, after reading that undoubted evidence which he had read to the Committee, he thought they were going to be too liberal in giving away 10,000 acres. He would propose that, instead of increasing the area to 20,000 acres, they should reduce it to 5,000 acres; and then very easily—and he thought, successfully—they could try the experiment of clearing it. He believed that if they did so those lands would be entered by really working practical men belonging to that class who would make a success; whereas, if they allowed persons to take up 10,000 acres for nothing, they would be taken up by capitalists, and they would have a large quantity of valuable land absorbed, and it would be found that they had given it away.

Mr. BLACK said the hon. gentleman need not be at all afraid. It was not likely that capitalists would take up country of that sort, but only new chums, who did not know what they were going to do. The hon. gentleman said that the paper he had read from was undoubted evidence, but he (Mr. Black) thought it was nothing of the sort. He happened to be very familar with the part of the country referred to; and if any man told him that a selector was able to clear 1,100 acres in three years, at a cost of 8s. 6d. to 15s. an acre, he would not believe him if he would swear it. He knew that country perfectly well, and if that selector did succeed in clearing the scrub, it was not dense mallee scrub; and he doubted the truth of his statement *in toto*.

Mr. ARCHER: So do I.

Mr. BLACK: If that selector had done that, thousands and thousands of acres of similar land—all dense mallee—would have been cleared. He knew the Wookool country well. He had lived there for years, and knew the particular locality referred to there. He knew the statement was untrue and exaggerated. He believed the hon. gentleman was perfectly sincere in quoting his evidence, and he believed that he was taken in by it. He would ask any practical squatter whether it was feasible that he could eradicate the scrub at that cost? Near the South Australian border a great deal of mallee country had been cleared, and yielded acres of magnificent wheat crops; but it had not been done at the cost put down by that selector; and they had not get cheap labour there. He did not care very much about the whole of those clauses about scrub lands. He did not think the proposition was likely to be very effective. If the Government thought it would, by making an experiment, let them do it by all means; but he would at once point out a very great danger that was likely to result from it. In the Leichhardt and Mackenzie districts, if they let the land at a peppercorn rent, no rent would be paid at all till ten years, and it would be very hard for the Government to enforce the conditions. Away there, free from all supervision, the scrub would become a regular haunt for cattle-duffers, who would go on the middle of the resumed run without depositing a single sixpence of rent. There were waterholes in those scrubs for cattle. He did not think it would lead to the scrub being cleared. The cattle-duffers would have a few head of cattle of their own, and they would simply "duff" the cattle of the Crown lessee adjoining. He noticed that the clause said, "any person may make application to the commissioner," and he would like to know whether the Crown lessee would be allowed to take up. If that were so, he should have no objection to the clause. Would the lessee of a 20,000-acre grazing farm be allowed to take it up?

The PREMIER: There is no restriction. Any person can.

Mr. BLACK: Notwithstanding that he already holds 20,000 acres, the maximum he can hold under the previous clause?

The PREMIER: Certainly.

Mr. DONALDSON: Even allow a squatter?

Mr. JORDAN said he would not inflict a description of the process on hon. gentlemen, as it was rather long. He might say that it was

certainly not he who had been taken in, but, if anyone, the commissioners, Messrs. Morris and Rankin. It was those gentlemen who said, "This is undoubted evidence, and has been verified by competent authorities."

Mr. JESSOP said he knew one of the scrubs which had been referred to by the hon. member for South Brisbane. It was 100 miles long, and he did not know how wide; but he would not take the whole lot for nothing. As for clearing scrub at the rate mentioned, it was a great mistake. He was sure that box country could not be cleared under £2 an acre, and the land the hon. member had alluded to could not be cleared under £10 or £12 an acre.

Mr. KATES said he hoped hon. members would not be led away by the hon. member for South Brisbane, and suppose that they could clear a scrub for 12s. 6d. an acre. The whole thing, to his mind, was a hoax. He had paid as much as £2 an acre for clearing forest land, and he would never believe that scrub could be cleared for less than £3 or £4 an acre.

Mr. JORDAN said that if it were a hoax it was perpetrated by the commissioners, Messrs. Rankin and Morris; and the gentleman who gave that evidence gave particulars showing exactly how it was done.

Mr. MACFARLANE said that he did not see why the statement should be a hoax. Land completely covered by scrub was easier to clear than land partly covered by forest. Two or three big stumps in an acre of forest land would take the whole of the 8s. 6d.

Amendment agreed to.

On the motion of the PREMIER, the clause was further amended by the addition to the 1st subsection of the words "or such lesser area as may be declared by the proclamation," and the insertion after the words "except that," in the 2nd subsection, of the words "it need not be a surveyed lot, and that."

Clause, as amended, put and passed.

On clause 72, as follows:—

"When the land comprised in an application for a lease of scrub lands has been surveyed, and the commissioner's approval has been confirmed by the board, the applicant shall be entitled to a lease of the land from Her Majesty, under and subject to the conditions following, that is to say:—

1. The term of the lease shall be thirty years, computed from the first day of July or first day of December nearest to the date of the confirmation.
2. The annual rent reserved under the lease shall be as follows:—
   (*a*) In the case of scrub lands of the first class, a peppercorn for the first five years, one halfpenny per acre for the next succeeding ten years, and one penny per acre for the remaining fifteen years;
   (*b*) In the case of scrub lands of the second class, a peppercorn for the first ten years, one halfpenny per acre for the next succeeding ten years, and one penny per acre for the remaining ten years;
   (*c*) In the case of scrub lands of the third class, a peppercorn for the first fourteen years, one halfpenny per acre for the next succeeding eight years, and one penny per acre for the remaining eight years;
   (*d*) In the case of scrub lands of the fourth class, a peppercorn for the first fifteen years, and one halfpenny per acre for the remaining fifteen years.
3. If at any time, during the period of the lease during which the lessee pays a peppercorn rent, it is proved to the satisfaction of the commissioner that the lessee has failed in any year to destroy, by ringbarking or otherwise, a portion of the scrub upon his holding bearing the same proportion to the whole of the scrub as one year bears to the whole number of years in that period, until the whole has been destroyed, the Governor in Council, on the recommendation of the board, may declare the lease absolutely forfeited and vacated, and thereupon the land comprised therein shall revert to Her Majesty.
4. During the period of the lease during which the lessee pays a peppercorn rent he shall enclose the whole of the holding with a good and substantial fence, and in default thereof the Governor in Council, on the recommendation of the board, may declare the lease absolutely forfeited and vacated, and thereupon the land comprised therein shall revert to Her Majesty,
5. The rent shall be payable at the Treasury in Brisbane, or other place appointed by the Governor in Council, on or before the thirtieth day of September in each year.
6. If default is made by the lessee in payment of rent, the lease shall be forfeited, but the lessee may defeat the forfeiture on payment of the full rent within ninety days from the date hereinbefore appointed for payment thereof, with the addition of a sum by way of penalty calculated as follows, that is to say—if the rent is paid within thirty days five per centum is to be added, if the rent is paid within sixty days ten per centum is to be added, and if the rent is paid after sixty days fifteen per centum is to be added; but unless the whole of the rent together with such penalty is paid within ninety days from the appointed day, the lease shall be absolutely forfeited."

Mr. DONALDSON said there should be some provision in regard to impounding, as suggested by the hon. member for Mackay. In some cases the scrubs might be occupied by cattle-duffers, and such a provision was necessary.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS said it was his intention to propose an amendment which would meet the objection.

Mr. ARCHER said the clause provided that a man who held a 10,000-acre selection must clear or ringbark 300 acres, and that one who held 20,000 acres must clear 700 acres a year. He never knew cattle-duffers to do anything but duff cattle. If they did the ringbarking required by the clause they would not be cattle-duffers; so that he did not think any amendment would be necessary.

The COLONIAL TREASURER said he had an amendment to propose similar to that made in the 26th clause. He moved that after the word "rent" in paragraph 5 the following words be added—"shall be payable in respect of the year ending on the 30th day of June and."

Amendment put and passed.

Mr. NORTON suggested that the Colonial Treasurer might increase the revenue by putting a high duty on peppercorns.

The COLONIAL TREASURER said he might possibly take the suggestion into consideration at some future time. In the meantime he moved that the word "that" be substituted for "each" in paragraph 5.

Amendment put and passed.

Clause, as amended, put and passed.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS moved the following new clause, to follow clause 72:—

The lessee shall not be entitled to impound any stock found trespassing on any part of his holding which is not fenced with a good and substantial fence, except in the case of wilful trespass.

Mr. PALMER said that any stock trespassing on those lands might fairly be described as stock that were not able to take care of themselves; and the sooner they were impounded the better.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS said the hon. member overlooked the fact that, on first-class scrub land, only a third or a fourth of it might be scrub, and the remainder might be fairly good grazing land. It was only fair, therefore, to provide for the impounding of trespassing stock.

New clause, as read, put and passed.

On clause 73, as follows :—

"The Minister may grant licenses to occupy, from year to year, any Crown lands not subject to a right of depasturing under Part III. of this Act. Such licenses shall be granted under and subject to the following provisions and conditions, that is to say :—

1. The land shall be declared open to such occupation by notice in the *Gazette*, specifying the areas to be occupied and the rent per square mile, which shall be determined by the board ;
2. One month's notice at least shall be given in the *Gazette* before the land shall be so open ;
3. Applications for licenses must be made to the commissioner ;
4. The first applicant shall be entitled to the license, and if two or more applications are made at the same time the priority shall be decided by lot in the prescribed manner ;
5. Every such license shall expire on the thirty-first day of December of the year in which it is granted, unless renewed, as hereinafter provided ;
6. That amount specified by the notice shall be the annual rent, until increased as hereinafter provided, and shall be paid at the time of application. If that time is after the thirtieth day of June, one-half of the annual rent only will be payable ;
7. The license may be renewed for another year, and so on from year to year, upon payment on or before the thirtieth day of September, at the Treasury in Brisbane, or other place appointed by the Governor in Council in that behalf, of the next year's rent ;
8. The land comprised in the license shall, if so proclaimed, be open to selection under the provisions of Part IV. of this Act ;
9. If the land is so proclaimed open to selection, the rent payable in respect thereof shall be reduced by one-third ;
10. The Minister, on the recommendation of the board, may, at any time before the first day of September in any year, give notice to the licensee that the next year's rent will be increased by an amount not exceeding twenty-five per centum of the rent then fixed, and the rent shall be increased accordingly ;
11. The license shall be determinable at the end of any year by six months' notice previously given by the Minister to the licensee ;
12. If, in the opinion of the board, any licensee is injuriously using the land comprised in the license by overstocking the same, the board may require him to reduce the number of his stock thereon to such an extent as the board may think fit, and if the licensee fails to comply with such requisition within six months after receipt thereof the license shall be determined."

Mr. PALMER said that, without wishing to give the Minister for Lands any unnecessary trouble, he should like to know what lands were comprehended by the clause. His impression was that the clause provided for occupation in what were known as the unsettled districts of the colony, as far as the western borders. Was that impression correct ?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS replied that the clause applied to land in the settled districts. Lands unleased, to which no one had any claim or title, would be let by yearly license, renewable from year to year, on payment of such rent as might be fixed by the board.

Mr. NORTON said the clause appeared to him to apply not to the settled districts merely, but to all districts. It would be advisable to have a satisfactory explanation on that point.

Mr. PALMER said he had received a telegram from a person of great experience, who was anxious to take up land in the settled districts in the Gulf country. The telegram stated that there were about 20,000 square miles of land in the settled districts there, out of which not more than 160 square miles had been applied for under the Settled Districts Pastoral Leases Act of 1882 ; which afforded convincing proof that the rental of 40s. per square mile was too high. There was no doubt, as that person stated, that if the rental were reduced to a minimum of 10s. per square mile the greater part of that country would be taken up for stock pasturage ; and the Treasury might just as well be receiving that rental, instead of the land lying idle as it had been for a great number of years. He would like to have the assurance of the Minister for Lands that the clause would meet that case. No minimum rental was fixed. The present rental of the land in question was 40s. per square mile, and it was prohibitive.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS said the hon. member's information about the land within the settled district on the Gulf was quite correct, and the price was certainly prohibitive. In cases of that kind the board would assess such rent as they might deem the land to be worth. They would determine the rent, he presumed, at such a sum as to make it worth a man's while to use the land, if it could be used. The object was to bring all available land in the colony into use.

Mr. NORTON said he would like to know whether the clause applied to the whole colony or not ?

The PREMIER : It applies to the whole colony.

The HON. B. B. MORETON : To lands outside the schedule ?

The PREMIER : Yes.

Clause put and passed.

On clause 74, as follows :—

"The Governor in Council may cause any town or suburban lands to be offered for unconditional sale by public auction, and may cause maps of such lands to be prepared, which maps shall show and specify the counties, parishes, or towns in which the lands are situated, and all reserves intended to be made in accordance with the provisions of this Act, and the boundaries and areas of the lands intended to be sold, and shall also show the lengths and bearings of all boundary lines comprised therein, and such maps shall be deposited as public maps in the office of the Surveyor-General."

Mr. ARCHER said he was very much surprised that after all the discussion that had taken place the Government had not reconsidered their determination to sell town and suburban lands by auction, and brought in some amendment to prevent large areas of those lands being sold simply for the purpose of benefiting land speculators. It was very surprising indeed that lands which had proved in other countries most suited for leasing should here be proposed to be sold by auction, instead of being dealt with under the leasing principle of the Bill. However, of course, the Government had a compact majority to support them in the disposal of land for the benefit of speculators. If he had believed in the theories of the hon. Minister for Lands, he should certainly have applied the leasing system to the lands which were of the greatest value to the country, and prevented large sales of town and suburban lands from being made merely to benefit a few speculators. However, he had not the slightest doubt that the clause would be carried, although it was in entire contradiction to the spirit of everything that had fallen from the Minister for Lands, and from the other side of the Committee.

The PREMIER said he was very glad to hear that the hon. gentleman had become a convert to the leasing system.

Mr. ARCHER : I said nothing of the sort ; I said that if I believed in the theories of the Minister for Lands I should certainly apply that principle to those lands.

The PREMIER said he begged the hon. gentleman's pardon. He thought that he was discussing the clause of the Bill and not the Minister for Lands. He should be very glad, if in the course of two or three years public opinion should have advanced sufficiently far

to allow of the leasing principle being applied to town and suburban lands. He had little doubt that it would do so; but at the present time public opinion had not advanced sufficiently far in that direction. He believed the business of the Government was to lead public opinion. If they ran away too far in advance of it they might find themselves left out in the cold altogether. That was not the function of a Government. It was no use saying that the Bill was not consistent. It made a great step in the right direction. He believed the result would be that before very long the leasing system would be applied to all the lands of the colony.

The HON. SIR T. MCILWRAITH said that if it had been the sincere desire of the Government to make the leasing system a success, surely they, as prudent men, would have commenced its operation where it would have shown its results most speedily for the good of the country. They had seen the operation of the present system in all the towns of the colony, and especially in the southern portion of it; they had seen the fever there had been for some time past in land speculation about Brisbane, and how the unearned increment had gone into the hands of a few speculators. If the Government had wished to get the sympathies of the people with them, it was perfectly easy at the present time to make some arrangement by which those lands should be only leased instead of being sold, but for one objection, and that was the objection of the Treasury. The Government felt that they would require to find something in order to keep up the revenue; and that, to save themselves from having to resort to taxation, they would have to get a certain amount of money from the lands. But he contended that they should have got it from the lands in the way least oppressive to the people of the country. Who were the men who were adding the unearned increment to the lands of the colony—whether they were country lands, suburban lands, or town lands? There was not a man engaged in any industry in the colony—whether pastoral, agricultural, or mining—who might not claim to have, by his own labour, given to the land the actual increase in its value. The agriculturist gave almost the whole of the additional value to the land by his own labour. He, by his operations, made the land fitted to receive a larger population, so that he was, directly, the real author of the increased value. And yet those were the very lands that the Government pounced down upon, and said that all the unearned increment arising from that man's labour should go almost entirely to the State, because the State stepped in every five years and said, "You must render up to us the yearly increase of the value of your land." That was where the principle of the Bill was wrong. Take the suburban lands. What was the cause of the increase in the value of land in Brisbane and its suburbs? It was not on account of anything the people of Brisbane had done. It was not the big warehouses or buildings that gave increased value to the land, but the increase in population and in the productiveness of different parts of the colony. Settlement took place in the interior, and the men who were actually producers out there, and who were being taxed by the Bill, had been adding to the value of land in Brisbane; while the people of Brisbane themselves, as a rule, had nothing whatever to do with it, or, at all events, very little to do with it. Yet those were the men who, without giving any value to the land, were, by the Bill, to get it at the upset price at auction; while the men who had been toiling in the outside districts for the purpose—or rather with the effect—of increasing its value, were the very men who had to yield up the unearned increment year after year to the State. It was as clear as possible that the Government had commenced at the wrong end. The lands which were being gobbled up at the present time in and around the cities and towns of the colony were the places where the Government ought to have commenced to apply the leasing principle. To say that those lands could not have been leased was an absurdity. They could have been leased just as well as any other land that was dealt with by the Bill, and in fact a good deal easier, because they could be surveyed and defined with much greater accuracy, and in much shorter time, than the larger blocks dealt with by the Bill. It would have been a very easy process, therefore, to have commenced in that way. Popular opinion was perfectly ripe for an experiment of that sort. Had the Government dealt with the land in the cities and towns of the colony, and their suburbs, in that way, he believed that public opinion would have certainly justified them in trying the experiment. But they were trying the experiment in a way which he believed would interfere very much with the settlement of the people in the country. Had the experiment been a failure in regard to town and suburban lands, the only effect would have been that people would not have bought them, and no great harm would have been done, because it would only have prevented people from speculating in regard to the ultimate price that those lands would reach. He believed that people ought not to be encouraged to speculate in that way, but that they should be limited as much as possible. At present there was no reason to sell city and suburban lands, except that it was the only way by which the Treasury could be satisfied for the deficit that no doubt would be caused by the decrease of revenue from the other parts of the colony. He repeated that the Government had commenced at the wrong end, and contended that they had been utterly inconsistent in trying to impose the leasing principle upon the country. They had succeeded in imposing it only in those parts of the colony where it would work worst, and do most harm to settlement. They had not the courage to apply it to places where it would restrict injurious speculation, do no possible harm, and save to the State at some future time the vast increase of value that would be given to the lands in the towns of the colony by the general production of the people in the interior. Legitimately, some portion of that profit belonged to the State, but by the method laid down by the Government, that was to be thrown over to the people who speculated largely in land and left it until the industry of other people added considerably to its value. He considered that the Government had shown utter inconsistency in the Bill; that they had carried the leasing principle so far as to apply it in the very worst way, and not in the way in which it might have been a success, and have saved the coffers of the State a large amount of profit that should ultimately be there—that was, in the increased value given to town and suburban lands by the general industry of the people, and not by the industry of the owners.

The PREMIER said it would be more satisfactory if they could tell whether those were the opinions of the hon. member, or only the views he thought the Government ought to have enunciated. He did not make that quite clear. He (the Premier) held that some day those views would be adopted by the colony at large; but not during the present session.

Mr. NORTON said he was sorry that the hon. Treasurer had gone out, because he was sure his knowledge in connection with the sale of town and country lands would have been very useful under the circumstances. He would have been able to show the great advantage that the State derived from the sale of those lands. The Minister for Lands would perhaps remember a speech he once made in which he told the gentlemen he was addressing that the townspeople existed through the country people —that they were simply the go-between between the country people and others who bought their goods. He would point out that the leasing system was not a new system. A great deal of land in the neighbourhood of Brisbane was let on building leases for a term of years, and the system pleased the man who let it and the man who leased it. It was not only here, but the principle had been applied more extensively in other places. In Sydney they found, near South Head, an enormous belt of private lands known as the Cooper Estate. Five or six years ago that land had nothing like its present value, and small lots of thirty-three perches fetched £9 per annum on a ninety-nine years' lease. That leasing system was adopted by private individuals, and seemed to be collecting a very large revenue; therefore he maintained, as he always had maintained, that, if the system were to be applied at all, it should be initiated as the leader of the Opposition had just suggested. If they had begun at the other end, as it were, and applied the leasing system to town and suburban lands, the Treasurer would have worn a much more smiling face than he did, and would have been so anxious to secure the rents of scrub lands. Under that system they would, no doubt, have received a revenue from the land which they would not get now. He did not wish to continue the discussion; but he simply made the remarks now because it was an appropriate time to make them. He took the opportunity of entering his protest against the adoption of the system as applied in its present form, by which it squeezed every penny out of the unfortunate people who lived in the country for the benefit, as the Minister for Lands said, of the people who lived in towns.

Mr. PALMER said he did not wish to take up the time of the Committee; but when the Premier stated that he hoped that within the next two or three years' time the leasing principle would be accepted by the people of the colony, he would refer him to an opinion that was expressed in the Legislative Assembly of New South Wales while he was down there. It was on the occasion of the advent of Mr. Luscombe, the member for Northumberland, into the House, after he had scarcely been there twenty-four hours. He was a convert to Mr. Henry George's theory, and proposed an amendment to the effect that the time had come when the leasing principle should be applied to all lands in the colony. When it was put to the vote the only person who supported him was the erratic member for Mudgee, Mr. Taylor. There were forty-eight votes against it and two in favour of it. That was the opinion of the Legislative Assembly in Sydney.

Clause put and passed.

On clause 75, as follows :—

"All such lands shall be distinguished as town or suburban lots, according to their respective positions, and shall be offered as nearly as may be in areas according to the following scale:

Town lands in allotments of from one rood to one acre;

Suburban lands within one mile from town lands in lots of from one acre to forty acres;

Suburban lands over one mile from town lands in lots of from five acres to eighty acres."

Mr. JORDAN said he thought the areas mentioned in the clause were unnecessarily large. He agreed to some extent with the hon. member for Mulgrave that they ought to have begun at the other end. If they had done so they would very soon have included the whole of the colony. The effect of the resolution moved by the erratic member for Mudgee, Mr. Taylor, showed what the fate of the Government would have been had they begun at the other end. It reminded him of Judge Haliburton's "Sam Slick," where a man was standing at the wrong end of a gun which kicked, he said, so much, that he was hurt more than the bird. He thought the areas were too large, and it would be very much safer to reduce them. He moved that in line 26 the word "five" be substituted for the word "forty.'

The MINISTER FOR LANDS said he thought that would be an improvement, as he was inclined to think the areas were too large. He thought five acres would be enough.

Amendment agreed to.

The clause was further amended, on the motion of Mr. JORDAN, by the substitution of the words "one acre" for "five acres," and the word "ten" for the word "eighty" in the last line of the clause.

Mr. PALMER asked if the Minister for Lands would inform the Committee as to how far suburban lands were supposed to extend from a town

Mr. NORTON: Two miles.

Mr. PALMER said the clause spoke of "suburban lands over one mile from town lands." That might mean twenty miles from town lands.

Mr. NORTON: No; it is defined in clause 4 —interpretation clause.

Clause, as amended, put and passed.

Clause 76—"Proclamation of land for sale"—passed as printed.

On clause 77, as follows :—

"The upset price shall not be less than—

Eight pounds per acre for town lands, and

One pound per acre for suburban lands.

Provided that the upset price may be fixed at any larger sum."

Mr. DONALDSON said, with regard to the price of £1 per acre for suburban lands, he wished to point out to the Committee that the lowest price now at which a selector could buy land was £1 per acre, and in addition he had to make a number of improvements and comply with a condition of a certain number of years' residence. Under that clause it was quite possible for the Minister to sell land at a short distance from a town at £1 an acre; and if the Colonial Treasurer wished to replenish the exchequer it would be more advisable for him to double the price of that land. He (Mr. Donaldson) would rather see it made £3 an acre for suburban lands, and he did not think that would be too high. He did not intend to move an amendment upon the clause, but he hoped his suggestion would meet with the approval of the Minister for Lands.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS said he certainly thought that £1 per acre would be sufficient for suburban lands, but it was not to be understood that all suburban lands would be offered at that price. There might be cases where it would be considered very hard to put up suburban land, near small insignificant inland towns and townships, at more than £1 an acre.

Mr. FOOTE: It is a discretionary power.

Mr. DONALDSON: Yes; but it may be abused.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS said he thought the Government might be trusted to exercise their discretion in a matter of that sort. They would take care that the best price was obtained for the land, whether town or suburban.

Mr. HIGSON said he did not see that it mattered much whether the land was put up at 10s. or £1 an acre when sold by public auction, as it would always fetch its price. He knew that land had been put up at North Rockhampton the other day at £2 an acre, and had brought £600 an acre.

Mr. ALAND said that might be so, but sometimes the land did not fetch the price it was put up at. For instance, he knew of a town not far from Toowoomba, called Cambooya, and there there were a number of unsold town lots at £8 an acre. He did not know why such a price was put upon them, but if a price such as £1 or £2 an acre was put on them they might be bought up.

The HON. SIR T. MCILWRAITH: Town land?

Mr. ALAND said it was called a town, and that was all one could say of it.

Mr. PALMER said that, when the Minister for Lands stated that the price might be quite high enough in the case of insignificant towns inland, he might remind him that what was only a village to-day in Queensland might be a thriving and prosperous town before twelve months were passed. There was no fixing what was a village or town as some parts of the colony were progressing.

Mr. JORDAN said he thought there ought to be some distinction between the price of suburban lands, even though they were to be sold at auction, and the minimum price a selector had to pay to get his selection converted into a freehold. Suburban land ought to have a higher value than any agricultural land. It looked somewhat inconsistent to fix the upset price of suburban land at £1 per acre. Perhaps the Minister for Lands would accept an amendment increasing the price to £2.

The PREMIER said townships might exist in places where there was no agricultural land taken up, and £1 per acre would probably be sufficient in such cases; moreover it must be remembered that it would be ten years before the selector could buy the land for £1 per acre. There might also be townships among grazing farms where the land was not worth more than £1 an acre. No harm could ensue from leaving the upset price at the figure fixed in the clause, as the land would bring its value when sold at auction.

Mr. DONALDSON said it very frequently happened in small towns in the colony that land which was originally sold at a low price increased in value very rapidly, That was where the "unearned increment" came in. He would certainly like to see the upset price raised, and would move that the word "one" be omitted, with the view of inserting the word "two."

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

Clauses 78 to 81, inclusive, passed as printed.

On clause 82, as follows:—

"The Governor in Council may by the proclamation direct that the value of any improvements on any lot shall be paid to the owner or occupant of such improvements at the time of the sale, and in such case it shall be sufficient that the purchaser, instead of paying the value of the improvements to the land agent, produce to the land agent a receipt in full for such value signed by such owner or occupant."

Mr. NORTON said he thought there ought to be some modification in the clause to prevent any allowance being made to persons for improvements that had been made after the land had been surveyed. There had been some difficulty in that matter already, and it would be well to provide that improvements put up after the land had been surveyed should not be allowed under any circumstances.

The PREMIER said he presumed that what the hon. gentleman meant was improvements put up after the proclamation. The land might be surveyed and not put up for ten years afterwards. For instance, land had been surveyed at Bulwer, on Moreton Island, years ago, and the pegs could not be found now.

Mr. ARCHER; Those are exceptional cases.

The PREMIER: I believe that there are other places where a survey has been made and nobody knows where the land is now.

Mr. NORTON said persons might be allowed to remove improvements made after the land had been surveyed, but they should not be paid for them.

The PREMIER said it was desirable that some provision of the kind should be made. It was never intended that by erecting improvements on a piece of land the occupant should get an unfair advantage. The intention was that the improvements should not be taken from the occupant without compensation. Possibly, in the case he had suggested, a re-survey would have to be made before the land was sold. Possibly the case would be met by inserting after the word "lot," on the 18th line of the clause, the words "which were made before the land was surveyed." He moved that amendment.

Amendment agreed to; and clause put and passed.

Clause 83—"Proclamation of sale may notify land not bid for open to selection"—was agreed to, with a verbal amendment.

On clause 84—"Powers to grant in case o escheat, etc."—

Mr. CHUBB said an amendment was wanted on the 4th line. After the word "escheat" t he word "forfeiture" should be inserted.

The PREMIER said he would point out that escheat was for want of heir. The object of giving notice was that someone might come in and prove a title to the land. In the case of forfeiture that did not happen.

Clause put and passed.

Clause 85—"Application for closing unnecessary roads"—put and passed.

On clause 86—"Consequent alienation or license"—

On the motion of the PREMIER, the words "and assurance fee" were inserted in the 8th line after "deed fee."

Clause, as amended, put and passed.

On clause 87, as follows:—

"Upon application made within twelve months after the proclamation in the *Gazette* of the first sale of any town land situated within any new city, town, village, or reserve, upon which improvements are situated, the Governor in Council may sell and grant the allotment or allotments containing such improvements to the owner of such improvements without competition at the fair value thereof in an unimproved state, not being less than twice the minimum upset price as defined by this Act."

The PREMIER said that cases of the kind that would come under the Bill might be dealt with under clause 82, or under the clause before the Committee. There had been such a provision in the Land Acts for a great number of years. The Government might do as therein provided, or they might put the land up to auction. The course now proposed was followed when there was any special reason for it.

The HON. B. B. MORETON said he thought that the improvements should have been put there before the proclamation. The application was to be made within twelve months after the proclamation, and improvements might be made during that period.

The PREMIER moved that the words "which were made before the date of the proclamation" be inserted in the 40th line after "situated." Cases had occurred, as at Herberton, where people could get no title to their land when they first settled. They squatted down on the land, and remained there. Probably the resources of the Survey Department were not equal to surveying the land fast enough in such new and rising townships, and some months elapsed before the proclamation was made. In the case of Hughenden, it was not long since there was a sale of land by auction; but it did not cover all that was wanted, and people found considerable difficulty in being obliged to squat on the land. Difficulties might arise in new places which increased very fast, and where surveys were not made as fast as they were wanted.

Mr. NORTON said he thought the clause might apply to new towns. It was only there that circumstances were likely to arise that would need such a provision.

The PREMIER said the only cases in which it would arise were new mining townships and others like them. On reconsideration, he begged to withdraw the amendment.

Amendment, by leave, withdrawn; and clause passed as printed.

Clause 88—"Sales without competition in special cases"—passed as printed.

Clause 89—"Power to purchase or exchange"—put.

Mr. NORTON said that the 2nd paragraph provided that the power to purchase or exchange land was not to apply to country towns, except in acquiring land to be dedicated as a public road. He thought cases might arise where land might be wanted for reserves.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: Let them do without it.

Mr. NORTON said it was easy to say let them do without the land. It simply gave the right to exchange land for a public road. A case was likely to arise where land would be wanted for a watering-place.

Clause passed as printed.

On clause 90, as follows:—

"The Governor in Council may grant leases of any portion of land, not exceeding five acres, to any person for the erection of wharves, store-houses, slips for building or repairing vessels, baths, works for supplying water or gas to any town, market gardens, or any special purpose of a like kind: Provided that the term of lease shall not in any case exceed twenty-one years, and that it shall be a condition that such lease may at any time be cancelled on giving six months' notice, and payment of the value of the improvements, and that the annual rent shall in no case be less than one pound per acre."

Mr. CHUBB said it was not advisable to limit the amount to 5 acres. Under the present law he thought it was 5 acres, and he had some recollection of a case in which that area was found to be inconvenient. He had forgotten the circumstances of the case. There was no reason why they should not make it 7 or 10 acres.

The HON. SIR T. MCILWRAITH said the clause in the present Act had been always made useful by violating it. All the leases that had been granted under the present Act had been granted for over five years. One case was the meat-works at Bowen. The leases were almost all over five years. If that was very necessary then, from the limitations to purchasing land, now it was much more necessary. There were a great many special industries that might be started if the Government gave to the individuals the lease of the land for a certain time. Five acres was not a sufficient quantity of land for most big industries. He thought that the 5 acres ought to be increased to 25 acres, and the time also ought to be extended beyond twenty-one years. Twenty-one years was too little time to put up the permanent kind of improvements that the clause contemplated. For instance, the Bowen meat-works were put up at an expense of £30,000 under the present law, because they could not get any better terms; still, at the same time, they were put up on the good faith that the Government would extend the lease at the end of the term. The time ought to be as great as they gave in agricultural farms—thirty years—and the limitation that they should be able to cancel the lease on six months' notice he did not think was a right condition. He knew it was a condition that stopped many people from putting up works. He remembered one case, a smelting works, that possibly would not have been put up on the Burrum River if the Government could resume at any time by giving six months' notice. He thought they should give a definite lease for twenty-one years. Hon. members must understand that that kind of lease would be only for some permanent purpose, such as putting up smelting works, or meat-preserving works. He thought that the time should be thirty years, that the amount of acreage should be at least 25 acres, and that the six months' notice should be done away with. The rent was not an object in a case of that kind.

Mr. NORTON said he would point out that the proposal to grant a lease for market gardens ought to be omitted from the clause. Surely a man who wanted to start a market garden could do so without aid from the country. The words "market gardens" must have been intended for "public gardens." Was the Minister for Lands going to alter the area of the lease?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: No.

Mr. NORTON said if there was no other amendment to be proposed before that, he would move the omission of the words "market gardens."

The MINISTER FOR LANDS said that the reason why market gardens had been included in the clause was because leases had been illegally given under a similar clause in the present Act to Chinamen. There was no power under that clause to grant leases for market gardens, though leases had been granted in numbers of cases. Market gardens were very valuable things. The Chinamen supplied many towns up north with vegetables, and for that reason the leases had been granted to them. He thought it would be desirable that they should be continued, and consequently the words "market gardens" were included for other purposes. He thought 5 acres was quite an ample area. If 25 acres were to be granted, the whole of the wharf frontage on a river might be given to one person.

Mr. ARCHER: He could run back.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS said the lessee would not run back unless he wanted the land for building on. A wharf was not of very great value if it was run back to a great distance. Its value was chiefly for its frontage, so long as it had got sufficient land at the back for buildings, receiving sheds, and things of that kind. He fancied 5 acres was ample for any purpose of the kind. Wharves and warehouses on the banks of rivers would not require more than 5 acres.

The HON. SIR T. MCILWRAITH said the Bowen meat-works would never have been started

if they had been limited to 5 acres. The land would not have contained all the works. He remembered several instances of the kind which occurred in his time. Hon. members must remember that it was in the discretion of the Minister to grant the lease, and he would not be such a fool as to give 25 acres for a wharf site. There were many cases where new industries might be started on the coast if the Minister had only power to grant a lease. The clause in the present Act was intended to give a lease, but it did not. As a matter of fact, the leases in the Land Office at the present time were illegal, because they had granted a greater amount than 5 acres. He would move that the word "twenty" be put before the word "five."

Mr. JORDAN said there was a proviso in the clause that the lease might be cancelled on giving six months' notice. That was a sufficient argument why they should increase the area. If they retained the market gardens, the hon. member for Townsville might regard it as class legislation in favour of the Chinese; but he thought the value of the cabbages would redeem it from that charge. They all wanted to eat them, and were much obliged to the Chinese for cultivating them.

The PREMIER said that if they were to give so much power to the Minister it should only be exercised on the recommendation of the board as a safeguard against monopoly. There was no other clause in the Bill under which the Minister had the power of leasing without competition a large area of land, which perhaps would be of the greatest value. He proposed to insert after the words "Governor in Council" the words "upon the recommendation of the board." He would point out that the purposes mentioned there did not by any means include the purposes the hon. gentleman had been speaking of.

The HON. SIR T. MCILWRAITH: They ought to do so. Still it has been used for those purposes.

The PREMIER: I think we had better leave out "of a like kind."

Amendment agreed to.

The HON. SIR T. MCILWRAITH moved that the word "twenty" be inserted before the words "five acres."

Amendment agreed to.

Mr. NORTON said that, while admitting the advantage of having cabbages, even if they were only grown by Chinamen, he felt sure that if the Chinamen wanted ground they would always find a way to get it; and therefore he did not think it was necessary to make a special provision in the Bill to enable them to get a lease of land for the purpose. He accordingly moved that the words "market gardens" be omitted.

The PREMIER: What possible objection can there be to their being in?

Mr. NORTON said he saw no reason why they should be in. He was fond of Chinamen himself, but he did not see why special provision should be made for their benefit

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

On the motion of the PREMIER, the words "or any other special purpose" were substituted for the words "or any special purpose of a like kind."

The HON. SIR T. MCILWRAITH moved the omission of the words "twenty-one" with the view of inserting the word "thirty."

The PREMIER said that, as several alterations had to be made, it might be more convenient to make them all in one. The provision about cancellation on six months' notice should be out, and the rent should be determined by the board. The compensation would then come under the general compensation clause. A lease under the clause would be a holding under the definition clause, and on the termination of the lease there would be compensation for improvements. He thought the following amendment would meet the case:—

The lease shall be for such term not exceeding thirty years, and upon such conditions as shall be determined by the board. The annual rent for each successive period of five years shall be determined by the board, but shall not in any case be less than £1 per acre.

The HON. SIR T. MCILWRAITH said they might as well wipe out the clause as pass such an amendment. Who would spend £20,000 or £30,000 on wharves or storehouses if the board had absolute power to fix the rent from time to time?

The PREMIER said it was a common condition in leases that the rent should be increased at certain periods.

The HON. SIR T. MCILWRAITH said he did not object to that, provided that the conditions were fixed. It was not likely that a man would spend £20,000 or £30,000 on any work contemplated by the clause if the rent to be charged at any period of the lease were left to the board.

The PREMIER said that £1 an acre might have been a fair rent twenty years ago for the land on which the Brisbane Gas Company's works stood; but it would not be a fair rent now. The rent must be fixed by the board under certain conditions. Those conditions might be determined beforehand if the lessee wished; and everything might be fixed in the lease.

The HON. SIR T. MCILWRAITH said he would not object to the amendment if it provided that the lessee and the board should agree as to the terms of the lease before the commencement of the lease.

The PREMIER moved that the following words be substituted for the proviso:—

The lease shall be for such term not exceeding thirty years, and upon such conditions as to rent and otherwise as shall be determined by the board: Provided that the annual rent shall not at any time be less than £1 per acre.

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

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

PRINTING COMMITTEE.

Mr. FRASER, on behalf of the Speaker, as Chairman, brought up the seventh report of the Printing Committee, and moved that it be printed.

Question put and passed.

ADJOURNMENT.

The PREMIER, in moving that the House do now adjourn, said the Government proposed to resume the discussion on the Land Bill on Tuesday next, but before that time the further amendments to be proposed by the Government would be printed and circulated amongst hon. members. The only amendments at present contemplated were in the 100th clause, relating to compensation on resumption, so as to clear up doubts that had been expressed on the subject; allowing ringbarking timber to count as improvements, when it was done with the permission of the commissioner first obtained; and the revision of the clause relating to timber regulations. The revised schedule would also be ready, and the corrections marked on the map, not later than Tuesday, and sooner, if possible.

The HON. SIR T. MCILWRAITH: It is not intended to take any public business to-morrow?

The PREMIER: No.

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