Queensland

Parliamentary Debates
[Hansard]

Legislative Assembly

TUESDAY, 4 AUGUST 1885

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY.

Tuesday, 4 *August*, 1885.

Questions. — Appropriation Bill No. 1, 1885-6. — Seat declared Vacant.—Personal Explanation.—Motion for Adjournment. — Marsupials Destruction Act Continuation Bill—third reading. — Crown Lands Act of 1884 Amendment Bill—third reading.—Rabbit Bill—second reading.—Elections Bill—committee.—Adjournment.

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

QUESTIONS.

Mr. BAILEY asked the Minister for Mines—

Are Chinese prohibited from mining for tin with miners' licenses or rights on Crown lands which have been abandoned by Europeans for three years?

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

Chinese who are not naturalised cannot become the holders of mining licenses, and have therefore no legal right to mine for tin on any Crown lands, whether abandoned by Europeans for three years or otherwise.

Mr. NORTON asked the Minister for Mines—

1. Is it true, as stated in Press telegrams, that Mr. Jack, the Government Geological Surveyor, has gone direct from Gympie to Townsville?

2. When will Mr. Jack visit the Port Curtis and Rockhampton districts to inspect and report upon deep sinking on goldfields in those districts?

The MINISTER FOR MINES replied—

1. Yes; official matters requiring Mr. Jack's presence in Townsville for a short time.

2. As early as his other duties will permit, which will probably be in two or three weeks.

Mr. SCOTT asked the Minister for Works—

1. Is the contractor for the railway between Emerald and Springsure making fair progress with his work, taking into consideration the time the contract will expire?

2. When will the first section be opened for traffic?

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

1. The progress of the works on the Springsure Railway is not of so satisfactory a character as could be desired by the Government.

2. Therefore no date could be stated for opening any section of the line.

Mr. BAILEY (in the absence of Mr. Smyth) asked the Minister for Works—

When tenders are likely to be called for the construction of the railway line from Brisbane to Caboolture?—also, from Gympie towards Brisbane?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS replied—

The Government hope to be in a position to call for tenders next month.

A surveyor is now engaged in making additional trial surveys near Gympie; and until the route is definitely fixed and permanent surveys made, a date cannot be fixed for inviting tenders.

APPROPRIATION BILL No. 1, 1885-6.

The SPEAKER announced the receipt of a message from His Excellency the Governor, intimating that the Royal assent had been given to the Appropriation Bill No. 1, 1885-6.

SEAT DECLARED VACANT.

The SPEAKER said: I have to report to the House that by notice dated 27th day of July, signed by Alfred Down, Deputy Registrar of the Supreme Court, and published in the issue of the *Queensland Government Gazette* of 1st August instant, it was publicly intimated that Thomas Campbell, one of the members for the electoral district of Cook, was on the said 27th day of July adjudged insolvent. I have also received a letter from Thomas Campbell, one of the members for the electoral district of Cook, resigning his seat as a member of the Legislative Assembly. This letter, I may inform the House, only came into my hands five minutes ago.

The HON. SIR T. McILWRAITH: When is it dated?

The SPEAKER: 30th July, 1885.

The PREMIER: Sir,—On a previous occasion when an hon. member was adjudged insolvent—in 1880—a resignation was received by the Speaker, but subsequent to the date of notification of insolvency in the *Gazette*. On that occasion the present leader of the Opposition, then leading the Government, thought it proper to move that the seat be declared vacant by reason of the insolvency of the member, and that appears to me to be the proper course under the present circumstances—the resignation not having reached the Speaker until after the notification of insolvency was published in the *Gazette*. I therefore move—

That the seat of Thomas Campbell hath become and is now vacant, by reason of the insolvency of the said Thomas Campbell since his election and return to serve in this House as one of the members for the electoral district of Cook.

The HON. SIR T. McILWRAITH: There is no doubt that that is the proper course. It might be wrong in some cases; but was Mr. Campbell insolvent before the 30th July?

The SPEAKER: Yes.

The HON. SIR T. McILWRAITH: Then there is no doubt that this is the proper course to adopt.

Question put and passed.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION.

Mr. STEVENSON said: Mr. Speaker,—I wish to say a few words, which may perhaps be taken as a personal explanation, and if I go beyond that I shall move the adjournment of the House. I find that some remarks I made last week in reference to the Land Board have by some persons been construed into an attack on the members of the Land Board. The remarks I made had to do with a remark which fell from the Minister for Lands in regard to the board being beyond influence. I disputed that point, and said it was not beyond influence; and I alluded to a case as being one in which influence had been brought to bear to the extent that the board had given a decision entirely at variance with the report of the commissioner, the paid servant of the Government. That statement I do not intend to withdraw, because I look upon it as perfectly true; but how it could have been construed into an attack on the board, or that I meant for one moment that improper influence was brought to bear on them, I cannot understand. I say now that in that case outside influence, by way of evidence, was brought to bear to the extent that the decision of the board was entirely at variance with the report of the paid officer of the Government. That cannot be denied, and I still say that such is the case; but I deny that I made an attack on the Land Board. I say that the Land Board were very properly influenced to give the decision they gave, and a great wrong would have been done to the lessee of the run in question had they not given a decision utterly at variance with the report brought before them by the commissioner. I am satisfied that most people who heard me speak, however imperfectly I may have expressed myself, never dreamed that I was making an attack on the members of the board; and indeed nothing was further from my thoughts. I have known the members of the board too long and too favourably as honourable men, and the last thing I should think of would be to make an attack on them. At the time the Minister for Lands accused me of making an attack on the board I denied it, and I deny it now. I have only to say that I express my utmost regret that my remarks were made in such a way as to admit of the slightest possibility of their being construed into an attack, or in any way casting reflections on the Land Board.

MOTION FOR ADJOURNMENT.

Mr. HAMILTON said: Mr. Speaker,—I rise to move the adjournment of the House for the purpose of drawing attention to a matter connected with the timber question. On the 24th July last, when that question was being discussed, it was clearly shown that the Maryborough timber-getters were suffering from an unjust tax caused by the alteration of charges in the carriage of timber, from carriage by measurement to carriage by weight. It was shown that not only did the change result in increased charges for the carriage of timber at Maryborough and Bundaberg, but that they were the only two places in the colony where the charge was by weight. And Mr. Sheridan, the senior member for Maryborough, subsequent to that debate, informed gentlemen connected with the Maryborough trade that the Minister for Works had promised him, directly after the debate on the subject, that the present method of charging by weight would be altered to that in use in every other part of the colony. But no alteration has been made. I have seen communications since that time from persons in Maryborough complaining that they are still suffering under the unjust charges; but I am perfectly certain that if the Minister for Works promised Mr. Sheridan to make the alteration desired he will keep his word, and, as I think there must be some misunderstanding. I mention the matter now to bring it under the notice of the Minister for Works.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said: Mr. Speaker,—Since the matter was brought under my notice last week instructions have been given to revert to the old practice of carrying timber by measurement on the lines in question as well as on the other lines of the colony. I believe the change was caused by the fact that disputes were constantly arising between the sawmill-owners of Maryborough and Bundaberg and the railway authorities as to the measurement of their timber; that was the cause of weigh-bridges being erected. It appears, however, that weighing in lieu of measurement has added something to the price paid for freight, and, as I said before, instructions have been given in the meantime to revert to the same method of measurement as on other lines.

Mr. STEVENSON said: Mr. Speaker,—Taking advantage of the motion for adjournment, I beg to draw the Premier's attention again to the islanders returned by the s.s. "Victoria," and the account given by the special correspondent of the *Brisbane Courier*. As far as I can see, if there is to be any dependence placed on evidence, this is very independent evidence, and all the more reliable for that reason—not like that given before the Commission, which was entirely got up for the occasion. I believe the whole of the evidence given before the Commission was false, and that we have another source more

likely to get true evidence from than could be got by the Commission. It is pointed out by the special correspondent that the whole of the boys understood their agreements perfectly well, and knew that they were engaged for three years. There is one part of this article which I should like to read. After this boy had told him several things on his own account, the special correspondent goes on to say:—

"I told him he was close to his island and he would be landed there in the morning whether he spoke the truth or he told me a lie, for that would make no difference now. He had seen the other boys landed and had nothing to be afraid of. I asked him if he remembered the labour schooner coming to his place, and he replied that he did. I then asked him how long the captain had told him he would have to stay in Queensland. He replied three years; and in answer to a further question said he understood how long that meant. On asking him how many moons there were in a year, he said, "All the same yam," and held up all his fingers. I next asked how it was, if he had been engaged for three years, he told the Commissioners that he had only been engaged for three months, and he said that Cago, the missionary boy (one of the interpreters), had gone among them on the plantation and told the boys that they were to say three months, and that then they would all be sent back to their islands with plenty of trade. He also told me, in reply to questions, that the other boys from his island understood well that they were to go for three years, and mentioned especially Cockroach and Dixon, who can both speak English. This boy had a fair knowledge of English before the schooner came to his island, and said he had been engaged in the bêche-de-mer fishery and had been to Cooktown. The above, though divested of its pigeon-English and made intelligible, is a true and faithful report of the brief conversation I held with Sandfly, who had no motive to tell me anything that was untrue. I subsequently, in company with another representative of the Press, spoke to two or three other boys, who each had the same tale of missionary boys coming among them and instructing or advising them what to say."

There is also a letter in this morning's *Courier*, from Mr. Cowley, in reference to the matter, corroborating what the special correspondent of the *Courier* says. In the face of all this, the sooner we hear something from the Premier and have the reports he spoke of the other day the better it will be for all concerned.

The PREMIER said: Mr. Speaker,—The hon. gentleman may be said to be a victim to hasty generalisation. The Commission examined 500 witnesses, made a careful investigation into each case, and weighed all the evidence. In the case of the particular boy Sandfly, they heard two versions given by him and they came to the conclusion that the second version he gave was the true one. I myself believe it was. That is a matter of opinion. They were the best judges; they saw the demeanour of the witnesses and they saw what they reported they saw—that when the boy was giving evidence for the first time signs were being made to him from outside, and while other boys were giving evidence he was making signs to them. They had all these things before them, and came to the conclusion that the second version given by this boy was the true one. It appears now that this same person, somewhere near New Guinea, made a statement to the reporter of the *Courier* consistent with his first statement, whereupon the hon. member infers that all the evidence given before the Commission was false and got up for a purpose. Surely the hon. member must see the absurdity of drawing such an inference from such premises! One man made three different statements, therefore the hon. member infers that the evidence of 500 boys was not reliable. Well, I do not draw that inference. It is, of course, a matter of opinion, but I agree with the conclusion come to by the Commissioners, and think the second version given by this boy was the true one.

Mr. STEVENSON: He twice made the statement I have read just now.

The PREMIER: I dare say he did; and he may have made the other statement three times; but I do not place any reliance upon his statements. The Commissioners were the best judges of the facts, and they came to the conclusion that his second statement was correct; and I agree with them. In questions of this kind, where we have not an opportunity of examining the witnesses ourselves, and drawing our own conclusions, we must make the best of the materials we have upon which to form a conclusion. In this case, competent persons were appointed as commissioners, to take evidence and report. They have done so, and I believe their conclusions are well founded. This particular boy, to whom the hon. member has referred, may or may not have lied, and the particular occasion upon which he lied does not matter very much. The Commissioners state that they did not place any reliance upon his evidence, nor is their report based upon the evidence he gave. I do not think there is anything in the attack of the *Courier* except that I consider it an unfair attack upon gentlemen who only did their duty.

The HON. SIR T. McILWRAITH: May I ask the Premier when the report of the Commissioners will be placed upon the table of the House?

The PREMIER: I cannot say whether it will be placed on the table to-morrow, but I know that the greater part of it was in print on Saturday, though there were still some papers not printed.

The HON. SIR T. McILWRAITH said: The Premier has made a great mistake in going into details before he gave us the information we have asked for. I myself announced that I would refrain from entering upon a discussion on this matter until we got that information and until I was in a position to do so. I think the hon. gentleman has gone a long way out of his way to answer the hon. member for Normanby, and I can tell him that the debate will take a very much wider view of the matter than the contention that because one witness is discredited therefore the 500 examined should also be discredited. The debate will take a very much wider basis than that. The fact is, the hon. member has tried to snatch a small victory by answering some of the comments of the hon. member for Normanby before the House is in possession of the information asked for.

The PREMIER: The hon. member has misunderstood me. I did not refer to any papers not on the table of the House. What I referred to was the evidence and report of the Commissioners which was laid upon the table on the first sitting day of the House.

The HON. SIR T. McILWRAITH: May I ask what reports will be laid on the table? The hon. member did not answer my question the other day. What information are we waiting for now?

The PREMIER: The reports being printed are the report of Mr. Chester and that of the surgeon of the ship.

Mr. MOREHEAD: May I ask the hon. gentleman if those are the only reports he is going to lay on the table?

The PREMIER: Not if I get any more.

Mr. MOREHEAD: The hon. member says, "Not if I get any more." Does that mean to say if any more are volunteered that we shall get them?

The PREMIER: Those are all I can call for.

Mr. MOREHEAD: All you can afford to ask for?

The PREMIER: No; those are all I can call for.

Mr. MOREHEAD: I supposed the hon. member was speaking the truth and said, "Those are all I can afford to ask for." We cannot expect much if those are to be the only reports put upon the table of the House—the reports of two men who are, so to speak, upon their trial—after the charges made outside the House about the management of that expedition. The House should get something more, and I hope the hon. gentleman will see his way to get a report from Captain Waun and also reports from the representatives of the *Courier* and the *Sydney Morning Herald*, though their reports do not appear to go square with the hon. gentleman's opinion. We should have a full report of the proceedings, from the initiation of the expedition to the landing of the islanders. I have no desire to precipitate the debate upon this matter, which will be fully discussed hereafter, and I will therefore refrain from making any more remarks at present; but I trust the Government will afford the earliest opportunity for discussing the question in its entirety.

The HON. SIR T. MCILWRAITH: The Premier will no doubt remember that he intimated to the House that Mr. Chester was instructed to put himself under Mr. Romilly; and I hope that something more will be put upon the table than the two reports the hon. gentleman has mentioned.

The PREMIER: Of course, all the instructions given will be supplied.

The HON. SIR T. MCILWRAITH: Yes, but in addition to them we want more than that. The Queensland Government representative was supposed to be under the orders of Mr. Romilly, and we ought undoubtedly to have a report from Mr. Romilly, otherwise he should not have been appointed to do work for the Queensland Government. We expect something from Mr. Romilly, in whatever way the Government obtain it. That is their business.

Question—That this House do now adjourn—put and negatived.

MARSUPIALS DESTRUCTION ACT CONTINUATION BILL—THIRD READING.

On the motion of the PREMIER, this Bill was read a third time, passed, and ordered to be transmitted to the Legislative Council for their concurrence, by message in the usual form.

CROWN LANDS ACT OF 1884 AMENDMENT BILL—THIRD READING.

On this Order of the Day being called on,

The PREMIER, in moving that it be postponed until the following day, said: I may state that the reason of this motion is that, on consideration of the clause relating to homesteads, it appears that there is still an ambiguity which may be conveniently removed, and it is desirable that hon. members should see the amendment in print. It will be circulated to-morrow.

The HON. SIR T. MCILWRAITH said: Mr. Speaker,—Let me congratulate the Government on having come at last to a right consideration of the position of the homestead selector in this colony. The hon. member says he is deferring this in order that he may frame an amendment to get rid of some ambiguity. If I am rightly informed, that amendment is to give the homestead selector his old right under the Act of 1868. So far from that being a correction of an oversight, the hon. the Premier, the Minister for Lands, and the Minister for Works protested in the stoutest way, last year, against the selector being given such a privilege. There was a long debate, and the Minister for Lands insisted on giving the homestead selector not 160 acres, but just so much as the Minister chose to instruct the surveyor to put in the block. That was how it was left last year; there was no oversight.

Mr. MOREHEAD said: Mr. Speaker,—I regret to see that there appears to be no Minister on the other side except the Premier. If the Minister for Lands has given up the Bill he should give up his billet too. I think it is only due to us in this House, after we have seen the Minister for Lands' fantastic efforts at legislation, that we should have seen him eat humble pie. I am bitterly disappointed that he should do it by an agent, and still more disappointed that that agent should be the Premier.

Mr. BAILEY said: Mr. Speaker,—I will take advantage of this motion to ask the Minister for Works if a satisfactory arrangement has been come to by him with the timber-getters?

The SPEAKER: The hon. member must confine himself to the question of the postponement of this Order of the Day.

Question put and passed.

RABBIT BILL—SECOND READING.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS said: This is a Bill to provide against a danger not yet existing within our boundaries. We have a Rabbit Act, but it is practically inoperative, as it has never been administered in such a way as to provide the safeguards it was intended to secure. No doubt it is a matter of surprise to many that we have not yet had this pest in our colony, for many attempts have been made to introduce it. The rabbits have been kept without let or hindrance all over the colony, and many have been let loose. This Bill is to prevent the possibility of any mischief arising from this source in the future. It is very short, and I think its provisions will be sufficiently effective if they are promptly acted upon. I beg to move the second reading of the Bill.

The HON. SIR T. MCILWRAITH said: Mr. Speaker,—I was very much astonished to see this Bill introduced into the other Chamber, and I am still more astonished to hear it introduced here by such a speech as we have just heard. Has the hon. member considered what the danger is that threatens the colony of Queensland from this pest, and does he think this Bill touches it in the slightest degree? The Act in force at present provides very much what this provides. The danger does not arise from tame rabbits being brought into the colony; it arises from the spreading millions in the other colonies, and to attack that danger requires very different provisions from those in this Bill. It requires that money should be provided; and a Bill should have been introduced dealing with the evil as one to be radically exterminated. This Bill provides that tame rabbits are not to be introduced. That was provided against sufficiently by the present Act, which prohibits the keeping of rabbits except in such a manner that they cannot get away. It gives us leave to destroy straying rabbits. In our present temper we would destroy them without an Act of Parliament. Then another clause makes turning rabbits loose an offence against the provisions of the Bill, and the succeeding clause describes the persons who are authorised to destroy rabbits. A subsequent provision specifies the penalties for offences against the Bill. The measure does not come near the evil which is threatening the colony. The Government, as the landlord of the colony, ought to make provision against the danger that is threatening our estate—against the rabbits which

are coming up in millions—and they can only make that provision in one way: by keeping the rabbits out by physical means, which means will cost money. What is the use of discussing a Bill of this sort? If we legislate about tame rabbits, that will not prevent rabbits coming from the other colonies and crossing the border in millions. There are, I am told, three or four islands on the coast where rabbits have been spreading to an extraordinary extent. It is quite possible that a person, for mischief, might carry some of those rabbits across to the mainland. This Bill does not touch a case like that, except in a very circuitous way perhaps. No provision is made to prevent those rabbits crossing their island boundary to the mainland. The objection to this Bill is that it should have been introduced in this House, because it should provide for the appropriation of money for the purpose of preventing the rabbits coming into the colony. Unless that is done the Bill might as well be thrown into the waste-paper basket.

The PREMIER said: Mr. Speaker,—Of course no one supposes that this Bill will be a complete measure for dealing with the rabbit question. No one can suppose that. Nor do I suppose that anybody thinks it is, but it is as much as this House can do in the way of legislation at the present time. What else is wanted is administration or rather legislation in another sense by granting money. That is a matter of which the Government are perfectly aware. The Government have for some time past been making careful inquiry as to the progress of rabbits in New South Wales, and during the last few weeks they have received various information. I received information yesterday or the day before in respect to one route by which they are expected to come—between the Paroo and the Darling—showing that they are very much further from our border than is generally understood, the nearest place where they are being a station called Dunlop, about 100 miles from Queensland; and not more than twelve rabbits have been seen there altogether. They have also been seen a little north of Cobar, which is eighty miles south of Bourke. Mr. Davy, who is at present employed by this Government in searching through that country, and seeing exactly where the rabbits are and the course they are going, has written a letter, which I received this morning, stating that they have just passed Cobar, which is the extreme north-western limit of their progress. Another route by which it is said we may anticipate immediate danger is by the Bulloo and Cooper's Creek. So far as I have ascertained, the rabbits are not any where near Cooper's Creek, in South Australia—not within some hundreds of miles. These are matters to which the Government have addressed themselves, and they will be prepared at an early date to ask for the appropriation of as much money as may be necessary for the purpose of doing all that is required. In the meantime, there are rabbits in the colony, and while they are here we ought to have power to destroy them. Suppose rabbits are discovered suddenly over our border, they should be destroyed. Then how is that to be done? In New South Wales they have a complicated system of requiring the local authorities in some places to destroy the rabbits in their districts; and in other colonies pastoral tenants are required to destroy any rabbits found on their own property. Suppose we make a law here, compelling the pastoral tenant to destroy rabbits, and he does not, what then? You can punish him, but that will not prevent the rabbits spreading in the colony. The only effectual way of dealing with rabbits, when they come into the colony in small numbers, is to make provision for the Government to destroy them. On consideration it has appeared to the Government that it would be premature to introduce a scheme requiring the pastoral tenants or local authorities to kill the rabbits. Therefore, it is proposed at present to give the Government absolute authority to kill every rabbit coming into the colony, and to pay any person authorised by them for that purpose. No provision is made in this measure with reference to the expenses that may be incurred. We have left that question for further consideration. We are certainly not in a position to say that, in the event of rabbits appearing on any part of a run, the expense of killing them should be borne by the owner of the station, or by the divisional board for that district, or by the pastoral tenants in that district. That would be a very unfair thing to do at the present time.

The HON. SIR. T. McILWRAITH: Or at any other time.

The PREMIER: At the present time it would certainly not be a fair thing to do, although that system has been adopted in some of the other colonies. Having considered the schemes which we found in force in the other colonies, and having rejected those schemes, the Government came to the only possible alternative, which was that full power should be given to the Government to destroy rabbits. The Government cannot, of course, exercise such a power without an expenditure of money, and Parliament will be asked to sanction the necessary expenditure when the occasion arises. I have pointed out why, at the present time, the elaborate schemes for the destruction of rabbits in force in the other colonies would be inapplicable. At the same time some legislation is necessary, and the House is therefore asked to give the Government the authority conferred by the 5th section, which is the principal one in the Bill. It is as follows:—

"The Governor in Council may authorise any bailiff or ranger of Crown lands, or any other person, to enter upon any land in the occupation of any person and to destroy any rabbits found thereon. And any person so authorised may enter upon any land, and may take such means as appear to him most expedient, and as are approved by the Minister, for the destruction of all rabbits found thereon.

"Any person obstructing, resisting, or hindering any person so authorised in the prosecution of his work of destruction shall be guilty of an offence against this Act."

That is really the most important part of the Bill, because it confers upon the Government powers that they have not now—namely, to do anything that may be necessary in an emergency; and the House will be asked to supplement this by voting the money required. But to keep rabbits out by mechanical means, which I, for one, am disposed to believe is the only effectual way as we are situated now, is a matter for which the sanction of Parliament must be asked in another form, as it is proposed to do. That is a matter that cannot be dealt with by a Bill. What is required for that is to authorise the Government to expend as much money as may be necessary for fencing, or such other means as may be considered desirable for the purpose. Hon. members may rest assured that the Government are giving the matter every consideration. They are getting a great deal of information upon it, and that is necessary, because, supposing it was considered that the proper course to adopt was to erect a fence between the rabbit-infested country and that which is free, we should not think of beginning that fence at Point Danger, and running it westward from there, as that would be a waste of money. We want to know where is the proper place to begin, and that is a point on which we have not yet got information, but we shall

have it, I hope, in ample time to allow the Government, during the present session, to ask for the power necessary for the purpose. It has been suggested in New South Wales to erect rabbit-proof fences there, to separate the infested parts of the colony from the uninfested; but I do not know how long it will take them to make up their minds on the subject, or whether we shall be able to work with them in it. I am disposed to think that it would be better to rely upon our own resources. But with that matter, as I have pointed out, this Bill does not profess to deal, except in as far as it is capable of being dealt with immediately. We are making it unlawful for any man to have rabbits in his possession, and we are giving authority to enter upon any premises and kill them. That is all we can do. We cannot do anything with the rabbits outside the colony except to take steps to keep them out; and that we propose to do.

Mr. MOREHEAD: In what way?

The PREMIER: Parliament will be asked, in a short time, in the ordinary way, to sanction the necessary expenditure of money; and in the meantime we are getting information as to where it should be expended. I hope that in the course of probably two or three weeks we shall be in possession of all the facts bearing on the subject, when the House will be asked to take steps with regard to it. Until then this Bill will form a very material step of protection to the colony.

Mr. STEVENS said: Mr. Speaker,—I must confess that when I first saw this Bill I was rather disappointed with it. I thought that some scheme would have been laid down in it by which we could have kept the rabbits out of the colony. But since the explanation just given by the Premier I feel very greatly relieved, and that will no doubt be the case with many other hon. members. It is now universally admitted that the only way to deal with the rabbits is to fence them out, as we are situated; in the other colonies they are fencing them in. I understand, from what has fallen from the Premier, that a certain sum of money, sufficient in the estimation of the Government to fence in a large portion of our southern boundary, will be placed on the Estimates. Am I right in so understanding him?

The PREMIER: Hear, hear!

Mr. STEVENS: I do not think anything more can be expected from the Government at the present time. A short time ago, many hon. members and the public generally of Queensland were rather inclined to laugh at the matter, and it was said that many years would elapse before this colony would be invaded by rabbits. But the reports from those persons sent out by the Government show that the rabbits have, since this time last year, come somewhat over 100 miles nearer our border. The bad season kept them in check to a considerable extent, but the recent rains will help them forward more rapidly than heretofore. There is one peculiarity with regard to rabbits of which hon. members may not be aware, and that is that the doe, in breeding, gets as far away as she can from the rest of the rabbits to bring forth her young, for the reason that the buck destroys them whenever he can find them. That habit on the part of the doe naturally impels the whole of the rabbits to move forward and cover an ever widening tract of country. I quoted statistics last year showing that New Zealand had up to that time lost considerably over £7,000,000 by the rabbits, and that in 1883 the loss amounted to £1,700,000. Since then their losses have amounted to nearly £10,000,000. Many hundreds of thousands of pounds have also been lost in Victoria, South Australia, and New South Wales, not only in grass and crops, but in money actually expended in attempting to deal with them. Our only wise course is to keep the rabbits out of Queensland, and it is admitted by experts in the other colonies that the only way to do that is to fence them out. I need not now go into the various schemes that have been brought forward, but I may say that the general idea seems to be that a double fence should be erected, as soon as possible, for about 200 miles along the Queensland border. That will probably cost £40,000, but it is a mere flea-bite to what we shall lose unless immediate steps are taken to keep the rabbits out of the colony.

Mr. MOREHEAD said: Mr. Speaker,—I think it is to be regretted, considering what has happened in the House to-night, that the Minister for Lands, who has charge of this Bill, did not give us in his speech an explanation with regard to this very serious question, instead of leaving it to the Premier to do so. What we had from the Minister for Lands was a bald *résumé* of the Bill, and he made no attempt to deal with this most important question—a question which was mentioned in these momentous words in the Speech from the Throne with which this session was opened:—

"The danger threatening the colony of an invasion of rabbits has attracted the anxious attention of my Ministers. You will be immediately asked to deal with this subject."

The way in which we were immediately asked to deal with the subject was to kill a few rabbits that might be in captivity. It may have been necessary to give the Postmaster-General weak food, as his digestion might not be strong in leading a Chamber to which he was unaccustomed, but it is very dangerous for that gentleman or anyone else to imagine that the rabbit question is not one of supreme importance to the colony. Those interested in the welfare of the colony were naturally alarmed when they saw that this measure was, so far as one could judge, the sole way in which the Government intended to deal with this most serious trouble that is impending. We have heard from the Premier that he intends to take certain action, although that is not so certain as I could wish it to be. I should like to hear from him in what manner he is prepared to deal with the rabbit question in the direction of fencing—whether he will put a sum on the Estimates for immediate action to prevent this invasion which, if permitted, will work the same ruin here as it has done in the southern colonies. Perhaps the hon. gentleman may think we are hypercritical, but when we consider the way in which the present Government have dallied with this subject I think he will not altogether blame us for trying to tie him down to a particular policy with regard to it. It will be in the memory of every hon. member that the first step taken by the Government was to send out Mr. Golden to report on this evil. All credit is due to the hon. member for Logan, who first called the attention of the House to it, and when the matter was thus to a certain extent brought home to the Government they sent out Mr. Golden to report; and, sir, his report is the laughing-stock of this House and of the colonies. He could not find any rabbits, and therefore there were no rabbits. That is practically the conclusion he arrived at; and the money expended in Mr. Golden's trip was wasted, or worse than wasted, because it lulled many people who did not know the great danger that actually existed into the peaceful belief that the danger had been grossly exaggerated. In that belief the Government rested quietly and peacefully also, until they were induced by the action of Mr. Tyson and some others to send out the gentleman

whose report the Premier has alluded to this afternoon—that is Mr. Davey—who it appears has now arrived at a certain point and will be able approximately to define the position that the rabbit has taken up in regard to the Queensland boundary. I hope, sir, that the Premier will not lose one day in taking such steps as will save the colony from this fearful disaster which appears to be imminent—a disaster in connection with which a small amount of money expended now will prevent the necessity for the expenditure of enormous sums in the future, besides great loss to the colony. I hope that he is fully impressed with the importance of the question, and that he will tell us before the debate closes that he will put a sum of money on the Estimates.

The PREMIER: I said so.

Mr. MOREHEAD: A sum that will be sufficient. If the hon. gentleman would indicate the extent of fencing that is to be erected, and what the cost is likely to be, it would be all the pleasanter for the House.

The PREMIER: It will be quite sufficient.

Mr. MOREHEAD: I am satisfied with the hon. gentleman's assurance; and I only regret that the Minister for Lands did not deal with the question in the same way that the Premier has done. If he had done so I am certain that the discussion would be much shorter.

Mr. NORTON said: Mr. Speaker,—I hope, sir, that the Government will not think that because it has been reported that there have been only a dozen rabbits seen on one run they are not in that part of the country in considerable numbers, and that there is no particular danger of them increasing rather suddenly. I would point out that in Mr. Golden's report—which I do not think anyone can doubt so far as that gentleman's experience went—he says that on several stations a few rabbits had been seen—in some cases a dozen, in others six or seven; and the inference which might be formed from that is, that they are not spreading so rapidly as they were expected or as it was stated they did. But since that time we have evidence that a dozen or more have appeared miles and miles further east than they were then seen, and that is evidence which we dare not overlook—that nothwithstanding the fact that only a few were seen twelve months ago in a certain part of the country, they have advanced forty or fifty miles in that time. I must say that when I saw the Bill I was very much surprised at its meagreness; but I believe from what has fallen from the Premier to-day that the Government do intend to take steps this session to allay the fears entertained by many people with respect to the pest. At the same time I would point out that, so far as the rabbits about Brisbane are concerned, I do not think it is a matter of much importance, simply from the fact that there have been rabbits along the coast of Queensland ever since it has been Queensland, and they have not increased to any extent and are harmless things. I may mention that, on a station next my own, rabbits were actually brought there some years ago for the purpose of being turned out on the run. For about eighteen months or two years they increased pretty steadily, but afterwards decreased and eventually disappeared. They were not the wild rabbits which have created so much devastation in the southern colonies; they were a description which do not take kindly to the bush, and certainly as quickly as they increase they disappear. For that reason I think the Bill, so far as places about Brisbane are concerned, is very unimportant. I believe, however, that the Government should have power to authorise any person to kill rabbits anywhere; and for my own part I hope they will take steps to prevent the evil, because I know that many people entertain the fear that they are anxious to put it off until the rabbits are so close that it will be doubtful whether they can be kept out at all.

Mr. SHERIDAN said: Mr. Speaker,—I deem it my duty to say a few words on the rabbit question, which is one that I am very intimately acquainted with. Indeed, I remember, sir, that when I came to Australia there were rabbits on the Five Islands, off Woollongong or Illawarra, and I am credibly informed that there are persons living in the neighbourhood now who remember rabbits being there; they have all disappeared. I am well aware that in Queensland, in 1868, rabbits were imported from Victoria and placed on Woody Island in Wide Bay. They increased pretty rapidly for a while, but now it is very difficult to see a rabbit there. They are decreasing, for some reason or the other, rather suddenly. I myself have taken rabbits from Woody Island and turned them out on Fraser's Island near Inskip Point, and they have disappeared. Rabbits have been turned out on the Northumberland Islands, on Percy Islands, at Kilkivan by the late Mr. McTaggart, at Tingalpa by the Hon. William Henry Walsh, and, as pointed out by the hon. member for Port Curtis, in his neighbourhood, and I am perfectly satisfied that they have not increased or multiplied. In fact, it seems to me that the coast climate of Queensland does not agree with rabbits. I do not make use of these remarks, sir, with any wish or notion that the necessary measures should not be taken to prevent the rabbits from invading Queensland. It seems that in the interior they have increased very rapidly, and spread over the country in an extraordinary manner, and some steps are necessary to prevent them from getting into the colony; but I merely point out that, from my experience, rabbits will not increase in the coast districts. In 1868, I believe, the Victorian people were quite proud of their rabbits. In fact, I was invited to Barwon Park to shoot rabbits because they were a great rarity, but unfortunately they have become a great scourge.

Mr. MACFARLANE said: Mr. Speaker,—I almost feel inclined to put in a word for "bunny." This Bill seems to be levelled at tame rabbits in the possession of the little boys of the colony, and it makes no provision at all for paying compensation to those little boys. I am not in favour of compensation, mind you; I only wish to draw the attention of the House to the fact that there is no such provision. I may here refer to what took place in the Pine Mountain district in 1863. At that time a number of rabbits—about a dozen or twenty—were let loose there, and they have never been heard of since. It seems that rabbits do not propagate in that district, or are killed down. We are actually legislating for a thing which does not exist. According to the best information we can get, the rabbits are 100 miles from our borders, and therefore we are legislating for a thing which does not exist within the bounds of the colony. I shall be very glad to assist in passing a Bill through this House that will apply to wild rabbits, which are very destructive, as we know from returns from New South Wales and Victoria, where they have done a great amount of damage; and the only way to get rid of them is to entirely exterminate them. With reference to tame rabbits, I do not see that they will do any harm to the country; and the law at present on the Statute-book, passed some two or three years ago, prohibiting anyone from allowing these rabbits to go loose, appears to me to answer all the purposes

of this Bill at the present time. We can rely upon the present Act with reference to tame rabbits, and pass some better measure for the purpose of exterminating any wild rabbits. I do not think this Bill will do much good.

Question—That the Bill be now read a second time—put and passed.

On the motion of the MINISTER FOR LANDS, the committal of the Bill was made an Order of the Day for to-morrow.

ELECTIONS BILL—COMMITTEE.

On the motion of the PREMIER, the Speaker left the chair, and the House went into Committee to consider this Bill in detail.

Preamble postponed.

Clauses 1 and 2—"Divisions of Act" and "Short title"—passed as printed.

On clause 3—

"This Act shall date from the 1st December, 1885"—

The HON. SIR T. MCILWRAITH asked if that was the earliest date at which it could come into operation ?

The PREMIER said the sooner the Bill came into operation the better. From the beginning of August till the end of November operations would be continually going on under the existing Act, and the Government did not intend to change the mode while those operations were going on. Therefore, that seemed to be the earliest date they could fix.

Clause put and passed.

Clause 4—"Repeal schedule"—passed as printed.

On clause 5—"Interpretation clause"—

The HON. SIR T. MCILWRAITH said that the hon. member for Bowen had given notice of several amendments in the Bill that he intended to propose. One of them came in the clause before the Committee; but it was not of very great importance, and he did not think it advisable to lead to a discussion upon the principle which underlaid the whole of those amendments on the present occasion. The object of the hon. gentleman was to substitute a judge of the Supreme Court in place of the Elections and Qualifications Committee. He would not raise the question now, because the clause was not of sufficient importance to justify a debate. He hoped the hon. gentleman would be present in time to move his amendments.

Clause put and passed.

On clause 6—"Qualifications of electors"—

The HON. SIR T. MCILWRAITH said he had not compared the clause with the Elections Act of 1874, but he wished to know whether the qualifications were the same as in the existing Act or whether any change had been made.

The PREMIER said the only change was that, while the Elections Act of 1874 was passed on the basis of the rolls being compiled each year, there was no provision for making claims. The 3rd proviso was not in the Act of 1874, but it was in the Electoral Rolls Act of 1879, which was an amendment of the former Act.

The HON. SIR T. MCILWRAITH asked if there would be the same time between the time the roll was commenced, compiled, and completed under the old Act as there would be between making the claim and having the roll completed under the proposed Bill? The old Act did not allow the compilers of the rolls to allow a certain time as the probable time for the six months' residence to commence.

The PREMIER said the change was in form and not in substance. The only way of fixing the time was from the time the claim was made. They could not allow a man to make a claim under the belief that he would be entitled to vote at a certain time. He had called attention to the change before, on the second reading.

Mr. SCOTT said the 3rd subsection read:—

"It shall not be necessary that a person claiming to have his name inserted on an electoral roll as a naturalised subject of Her Majesty should have been so naturalised for the period of six months before making the claim."

He thought that was a step in the wrong direction, and that foreigners got on to the electoral rolls of this colony very much too easily altogether. So far from doing away with any disability, additional ones should be put on if possible. Foreigners came to these colonies who knew nothing about the laws, habits, or usages of the country; they became naturalised at once, and became entitled to vote or even sit in the House. Now, he thought that was not as it ought to be, as he considered that men who had been born and brought up in the colony ought to be placed on a better footing and have greater privileges than foreigners. He dared say his ideas on the subject differed very much from those held by other hon. members, but for all that he did not think the clause should be in the Bill.

The PREMIER said he would point out that the clause made no change in the present law. The clause before them was the present law as declared by the Act of 1879.

Mr. MOREHEAD said he thought there was a very great deal in what had fallen from the hon. member for Leichhardt. He considered that the conditions of residence in regard to foreigners should commence from the period of naturalisation. A foreigner should start afresh as from that time, and perform the conditions of residence; and he was convinced there was never any other intention when the Act of 1879 was passed. He could not conceive that the Premier would object to having the clause so altered after hearing the very cogent reasons urged by the hon. member for Leichhardt. He did not see, extending privileges as they did in the most liberal way to those who reached these shores, why those privileges should be so far extended that foreigners should be put in a better position than their own countrymen. Although such a clause existed in the Act of 1879, he did not see why it should not now be removed.

The HON. SIR T. MCILWRAITH said the Premier had told them that to alter the clause would be to alter the law as it stood. Hon. members would remember a controversy which took place between the member for Townsville and the Premier with regard to the fact as to whether the clause as it stood was brought about by the late Government or the present. He had been examining how the clause got into the Act, and he could quite understand the ignorance of the hon. member for Townsville on the subject. He himself, although Premier when the Act was introduced, was not aware that the clause was in it until within the last two or three weeks, and had he seen it passing through it certainly would not have got through so easily. The history of the clause was this—but before mentioning that he might say that there had never been a Bill so much amended and mangled as the Electoral Rolls Act of 1879:—During the mangling operation, many hon members got disgusted and went out of the House. He himself had done so temporarily, and during that time the clause had got into the Bill. It was not often he indulged himself, but at that moment he was out at the wrong time and when he got back he found that this clause was in the Bill. It was constructed by the Premier and put into the hands of the then member

for Charters Towers, Mr. Stubley. It was proposed by him, having been formulated by the present Premier, and during the mangling process it somehow or other got passed; but there were many hon. members who had good reasons for its being eliminated now. They asked some consideration from their own subjects before they got on the electoral roll—they asked that they should reside for six months in an electorate; and surely in the case of foreigners who came here, being mostly working men, it was not too much to ask that they should be naturalised for six months before they got on the roll.

Mr. MOREHEAD said, in connection with the discussion, he might refer hon. members to the 5th clause of the Aliens Act of 1867, which read as follows:—

"Any alien being a native of a European or North American State and not being an alien enemy who shall attend before one or more justices of the peace in petty sessions assembled and take and subscribe the oath of allegiance to Her Majesty contained in the schedule to this Act annexed shall thenceforth be a naturalised British subject within the meaning of the laws now in force and such justice or justices is or are hereby authorised and required to administer the said oath."

That, taken in conjunction with the 3rd proviso of the 6th clause, put naturalised subjects in a very much better position than native-born residents of the colony; that was to say that under the present system an alien who was registered under the Act he had quoted became an elector without six months' residence, while a native-born colonist, or any colonist, had to go through the six months' qualification. He was open to correction if in error, but he believed that in America, before naturalisation could take place, there must be twelve months' residence; whereas it was proposed by the clause that in a short time, without any of the qualifications hitherto considered essential, an alien could have his name placed on the roll. He did not think that those who held different opinions from his with regard to the introduction of aliens—even those who held that the colony should be taxed for their introduction—would go so far as to say that an alien should have superior privileges to those enjoyed by a British subject.

The PREMIER said an elector must have one of the qualifications mentioned in the subsections from 1 to 6; if he had the qualification of six months' residence it was not necessary that he should in addition have been naturalised.

Mr. MOREHEAD said that six months after naturalisation was the very first period at which an alien should receive any consideration as an elector.

Mr. SCOTT said the first part of the clause would not work together with the proviso. The first part of the clause spoke of "a natural born or naturalised subject of Her Majesty," whose qualifications were then enumerated; but the proviso said that if an alien had resided in the colony for six months he could claim to have his name placed on the roll, though he had not been previously naturalised. He contended that, though an alien could be naturalised the day after he landed in the colony, until he was naturalised he was nobody at all.

The HON. SIR T. MCILWRAITH said the contention of hon. members on his side was that a foreigner was under no disability so far as voting was concerned, whereas he ought to be given some time during which to become acquainted with the language spoken in the colony before he was allowed to vote. It was not too much to ask that he should have so much interest in the colony as to have been naturalised six months before making his claim to vote. That was asking little enough.

The PREMIER said the contention of hon. members was perfectly intelligible, but it was not a matter of much consequence. The proviso was inserted to remove any doubt that might exist. The hon. member for Townsville had stated that the opinions of the late Mr. Justice Pring, Mr. Real, and himself (the Premier), had been taken as to whether naturalised foreigners after six months' residence were entitled to vote. He remembered giving an opinion on the point, but he did not remember now what that opinion was. The clause was inserted to remove doubts. Various opinions had been given as to the meaning of the Act without it, and it was far better that it should be cleared up and decided one way or another. He did not see any objection to the clause as it stood.

The HON. SIR T. MCILWRAITH said the opinion given by the hon. member was that, according to the old Act before 1879, they had not a right to be enrolled unless they had been naturalised for six months before. That was the opinion the hon. gentleman gave on the Charters Towers case, and on that opinion the election was conducted.

Mr. MOREHEAD said that a naturalised subject or native-born subject should have his rights conserved, and the proviso interfered with them.

The PREMIER said the proviso was necessary in some form or another—that or some other form—to clear up the doubt.

Mr. MOREHEAD: Well, strike out the word "not," in the 1st line of the 3rd paragraph of the proviso. That will settle the question.

Mr. ISAMBERT said there could not be the least doubt that every nation had a right to make the laws under which it would receive foreigners to be incorporated into its body politic; but, once incorporated, they ought to have the same rights as everybody else. Once a foreigner was naturalised, they could not attach any disqualification or disability to him that did not attach to other persons. The hon. member for Balonne was perfectly right in saying that a foreigner should not have the right to become naturalised until he had been six months in the country; he was right in making those conditions if he thought fit; but, once naturalised, he should have the same privileges as anyone else.

Mr. MOREHEAD: No one disputes that.

Mr. ISAMBERT said every country had the right to make those conditions. A person in six months might show that he would not be a desirable subject. The question was a very wide one. The qualifications entitling a man to the right to vote, and the disqualifications which should deprive him of that right, had occupied a great many minds and had never received a satisfactory answer. For instance, there were certain disqualifications mentioned in the Bill, according to which no person who "is in the naval or military service of the British Empire or of Queensland on full pay, or is an officer or member of the Police Force," was allowed to vote. To his mind those were very unjust disqualifications. He could not see why a naval or military man in the service of the British Empire or of Queensland, or an officer or member of the Police Force should be disqualified from voting, while a foreigner coming here, as soon as he was naturalised, was allowed the privilege. The clause said:—

"Provided that no aboriginal native of Australia, India, China, or of the South Sea Islands shall be entitled to be entered on the roll except in respect of a freehold qualification."

What would be a freehold qualification in that case? Was it the qualification described in the previous chapter? Any nation had a perfect

right to exclude any persons from its body politic if they found that they did not amalgamate with them; and they found that many of the Chinese would not amalgamate with them in this colony.

The PREMIER: We do not want them to.

Mr. ISAMBERT: Then that qualification should be erased; it should not be in the Bill.

Mr. MOREHEAD: Why not?

Mr. ISAMBERT said that if they could not become one with themselves they should not have the right to vote.

Mr. MOREHEAD: We tax them.

Mr. ISAMBERT said that, if that was an argument for their being allowed to vote, women should not be debarred from voting if Chinamen were allowed to vote, because they were taxed. Why was it that men were allowed to vote and women were not? It was because to the right of voting was also attached the duty of defending the country. No one should have a right to vote who was not prepared and in duty bound to bear the consequences of his vote.

Mr. NORTON said he agreed with the hon. member that when a foreigner became naturalised he should have the full rights of a British subject, but under the proviso they were discussing the foreigner was given a right no British subject was entitled to. No British subject was entitled to be placed on the roll until he had resided for six months in his district. A foreigner did not become a British subject until he was naturalised, and the proviso should apply to him then and not before. That was the contention upon the opposite side of the Committee. He thought it a mistake to make a provision entitling a foreigner, on coming into the country, to vote if he made up his mind the day before to become naturalised.

The PREMIER said a more analogous argument would be to compare the naturalised foreigner to a man who had just reached the age of twenty-one years. They did not require a man of twenty-one years of age to wait for six months after his coming of age before he could vote.

Mr. MOREHEAD said that, according to the Premier's explanation, if a British subject came to the colony from Great Britain or any of the other colonies he would have to do his six months' residence, whilst, in the case of a foreigner, immediately he was naturalised that obligation was waived. He wished the clause amended so as to make it necessary for a naturalised foreigner to reside six months before being registered.

The PREMIER said he would suggest that the hon. member should propose the omission of the words "It shall not be necessary that." He did not mean to move that amendment himself; but he suggested it as a means of carrying out what the hon. member desired.

Mr. MOREHEAD said he would move the amendment suggested by the hon. member.

Mr. GRIMES said that foreigners very seldom seemed to understand their political privileges, and they hardly ever applied to be naturalised for the sake of voting. They made application only when they wished to become the proprietors of land. It would be rather hard on a foreigner who had resided in the colony perhaps three or four years, and paid his taxes all that time, that he should have to reside six months after naturalisation before he could apply to have his name put on the roll, and three months after that before he could vote. He must be on the roll and pass the next quarterly meeting before he could claim his vote, and it might be eighteen months or two years before he would have another opportunity of exercising his privileges. He should support the clause as it stood.

Mr. MOREHEAD said the hon. member could surely not have read the 5th clause of the Act of 1867, which gave foreigners the right to be naturalised immediately they landed. It was their own fault if they did not take advantage of the privilege that belonged to them under the law of the land.

Mr. JORDAN said he would be glad if the hon. member would be kind enough to read the clause he had alluded to.

Mr. MOREHEAD said it was the 5th clause of "An Act to amend the laws relating to Aliens," passed in 1867:—

"Any alien being a native of a European or North American State and not being an alien enemy who shall attend before one or more justices of the peace in petty sessions assembled and take and subscribe the oath of allegiance to Her Majesty contained in the schedule to this Act annexed shall thenceforth be a naturalised British subject within the meaning of the laws now in force and such justice or justices is or are hereby authorised and required to administer the said oath."

Mr. JORDAN said in that case it did seem as if aliens were being placed in a better position than British subjects.

The PREMIER said the qualifications were contained in the first part of the clause—

"Every man of the age of twenty-one years, being a natural-born or naturalised subject of Her Majesty, shall, subject to the provisions of this Act * * * * be entitled to be entered on the roll of electors"—

if he had been resident in the district for six months, if he had a freehold estate in the district for six months, if he had held a leasehold estate for eighteen months, or if he held a leasehold estate which had eighteen months to run. Then there were certain provisoes, one of which was that it was not necessary for a person to have been naturalised for six months; but he must have been resident for six months to have a residence qualification, or he must have held a freehold for six months to have a freehold qualification. The only case where a difficulty could occur would be where a man had a leasehold with eighteen months to run; in that case it would not matter how long he had been in the colony.

The HON. SIR T. McILWRAITH said the hon. member did not seem to understand the contention of the hon. member for Balonne or the hon. member for South Brisbane. The clause did give a privilege to foreigners that was not given to Englishmen. It first stated in a general way that all British subjects should have certain privileges subject to certain conditions, and then the proviso said that the conditions should not apply to naturalised foreigners. One condition was that of residence for six months. According to the 3rd proviso, if a naturalised subject had not been resident for six months he certainly had a privilege beyond that given to a natural-born British subject.

The PREMIER said the hon. member read the clause as if it said it should not be necessary for a naturalised subject to have been resident for six months. The clause said it should not be necessary that he should have been naturalised for six months.

The HON. SIR T. McILWRAITH said it seemed as if the hon. member would not see what was meant. Clause 6 gave certain privileges to a natural-born or naturalised subject of Her Majesty under certain conditions. One of those conditions was residence for six months; but a naturalised subject, according to proviso 3, might not have resided six months.

The PREMIER: Then he would not have a vote.

The HON. SIR T. McILWRAITH said he contended that under the 3rd paragraph of the proviso a naturalised subject of Her Majesty

need not reside for six months in the colony, because, according to its provisions, he might be naturalised just a month before he claimed, and he would be entitled to have his name entered on the roll. The first part of the clause provided that a naturalised subject must reside six months in the colony before he could make his claim, but the proviso was inconsistent with that provision.

The PREMIER said the hon. gentleman was not as clear on that occasion as he usually was. Being naturalised for six months was no qualification whatever. The qualification was something else. In the case of a naturalised subject there were two things necessary: he must be naturalised, and he must have resided in the colony for six months. Then, if there was no further provision, it might be asked, "Must he be naturalised for six months as well as reside here for six months?" The proviso answered that question and said, "No; he need not be naturalised for six months if he has resided in the colony for six months." There might possibly be a doubt on the part of some hon. members as to the construction of the clause without this definition, but he thought the construction he had given was correct. The clause said that a man must be twenty-one years of age and a natural-born or naturalised subject of Her Majesty, and that he must have one of the qualifications enumerated in the six subsections, but he need not have been naturalised for six months.

Mr. SCOTT said it appeared to him that the natural-born British subject had to reside for six months in the colony before he could make his application for registration, and that under the proviso to the clause the time of the naturalised subject began before that. The naturalised subject, therefore, had a privilege which was not enjoyed by the natural-born subject, because the former could make his claim to have his name inserted on the electoral roll as soon as he was naturalised, if he had only been in the colony two or three days, while the latter must reside here six months before he could be registered. If it were provided that a British subject who had been residing in England or in any British colony previous to his arrival in this country should be allowed to make his application when he came here, he would then be put on equal terms with a naturalised subject. A foreigner could not have resided in the colony as a British subject for six months until he had been naturalised for six months. He (Mr. Scott) thought the clause should be amended as suggested by the hon. member for Balonne.

Mr. MOREHEAD said the Premier had admitted that he did not want to place the naturalised subject in a better position than the British subject, and that that was not the intention of the Bill. The hon. gentleman had also admitted that there was a doubt as to the meaning of the clause.

The PREMIER: I have no doubt as to its meaning.

Mr. MOREHEAD said there was some doubt about the matter, and the alteration suggested by the hon. gentleman would meet the case, but he would suggest that instead of "a person" they should insert "any person." He believed the hon. gentleman said he would not oppose the amendment.

The PREMIER: I said I would not undertake to accept it.

Mr. MOREHEAD said that there must be a strange echo in that House, for he certainly understood the Premier to say that he would not oppose it.

Mr. NORTON said there appeared to be some misunderstanding in the matter. He heard the hon. gentleman at the head of the Government say that he would not promise to accept the amendment, but he also stated that he would not oppose it.

Mr. BEATTIE: The Premier said he would not propose it.

Mr. NORTON: The hon. gentleman might have said that; but whatever he said, it certainly appeared that there was some misunderstanding about his remark. He (Mr. Norton) thought the proposal made by the hon. member for Balonne was a reasonable one, and that it should be adopted by the Committee. It simply amounted to this: that they should insist upon every foreigner residing six months in the colony after he ceased to be a foreigner; in other words, that he should start on exactly the same terms as an ordinary British subject.

Mr. MOREHEAD: That is all we ask.

The HON. SIR T. MCILWRAITH said he would draw the attention of the Committee to the statement made by a member on the other side of the Chamber, the hon. member for Oxley, which was that Germans did not, as a rule, become naturalised until they had a prospect of becoming proprietors of freeholds. Now, if by legislation the Committee could do anything to force the residents of this colony who were members of foreign communities to become naturalised subjects, he thought they would be only doing their duty, and if the amendment proposed by the hon. member for Balonne were passed it would have that effect. Why should they not become naturalised when they had the whole of the privileges of living in the country and might claim at any time the exemption of a foreigner if any necessity for that should arise? He thought they ought all, at the first opportunity, to come under the laws of the colony and be naturalised. The effect of the amendment, as he had said, would be to hold out an inducement to such people to become naturalised sooner than they otherwise would. He did not think that too much to ask. Indeed, he was of opinion that they had dealt too leniently with foreigners. He did not believe that nine-tenths of the foreigners who came here could give an intelligent vote on the subjects brought before that Legislature when they had been in the colony only twelve months. In saying that, he thought he was saying what must be admitted by almost every member of that Committee. With the ordinary education foreigners had it would, in nine cases out of ten, require a longer period than twelve months to become acquainted with the English language, and in the meantime they were subject to all the influences of most pernicious papers, which were written in a language unknown to the great body of the intelligent electors of the colony.

Mr. ISAMBERT said the remark about pernicious papers was the opinion of one hon. gentleman. Other hon. members entertained a different opinion.

Mr. MOREHEAD said the question really before the Committee was this—Were they going to put alien races in a position superior to their own race? Were they to enjoy superior facilities for returning representatives to their own kith and kin—their own flesh and blood, so to speak? It appeared to him that if the clause were carried as it stood a large number of cheap foreign labourers who were to be imported into Northern Queensland might be employed as an electioneering element to return members to that House and swamp the votes of those men who had borne the heat and burden of the day. Those cheap labourers, whatever their nationality might be, would be at once taken by some unscrupulous agents and naturalised

before the first justice of the peace they could find. With that advantage those men might become a voting power dangerous to the State, for the reason that they knew nothing whatever about the laws or anything else in the colony. If the Premier was really in earnest in what he said he would accept the amendment. If, on the other hand, he wished to put aliens in a more favourable position than those of their own race he would be making a mistake which would not tell well for the future of the colony. His object was to make definite what the hon. gentleman himself admitted would bear two different constructions, and to prevent aliens possessing advantages which were denied to British or native-born subjects.

The PREMIER said the hon. member seemed to think there was something in the clause which gave an alien an advantage over a British-born subject which he was not entitled to. What was required was that a man should be physically present for six months.

The HON. SIR T. McILWRAITH: The naturalised subject should be physically present.

The PREMIER: That is what the hon. gentleman says.

Mr. MOREHEAD: That is what I wish it to mean.

The PREMIER said that in the case of a British subject he was required to be physically present for six months, and the naturalised subject must also be physically present for six months, and the proposition of the hon. member was that he must also be all the time a naturalised subject.

Mr. MOREHEAD: That is exactly what I want.

The PREMIER said the alien was there although he was not legally qualified. But a closer analogy would be in the case of a man of twenty-one. A man must be twenty-one when he claimed, and he might have been twenty-one for over six months; but if he had he could not say that the man who happened to be exactly twenty-one when he claimed had a privilege which he did not possess. The present system had been the law for a long time and he saw no reason for changing it. But it was not a matter of vital importance, and was open to discussion. It was quite correct that a man should be considered as an alien until he was naturalised.

Mr. MOREHEAD said that was the gist of his contention, and therefore the alien should not have a privilege which was denied to the British subject.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL said the clause applied not only to Germans but to Americans. A case occurred in New South Wales some years ago, in which a gentleman of great ability, high character, and considerable property, and who had been resident in one district for twenty-five years, was elected a member of the New South Wales Assembly. The case was that of Mr. Dean, of the Manning River. After Mr. Dean's election somebody discovered that he originally came from America and had never been naturalised in New South Wales. The consequence was that a petition was presented against his return and he was unseated.

Mr. MOREHEAD: Hear, hear!

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL said a man who had been so long in the colony, and who had assisted to make it what it was, had certainly as good a claim to be on the electoral roll as a young man who had only just emerged out of boyhood. The clause was meant to deal with persons who had improperly got on to the roll; and it would be unjust to many foreigners from the Continent and from America, who might have been years in the colony, to deprive them by a technicality of a right to which he thought they were entitled.

Mr. NORTON said he failed to see what the hon. gentleman's argument had to do with the question. The clause was not one to enable an alien to be removed from the roll; it professed to be a clause to enable persons to get on the roll. If they got on improperly they could be removed. As to the gentleman in New South Wales, mentioned by the Attorney-General, being unseated because he was an alien, he was very properly unseated. If the gentleman did not take the trouble to make himself a British subject, what else could he expect? He was simply getting elected under false pretences.

The HON. SIR T. McILWRAITH contended that the case mentioned by the Premier was not at all analogous to the present, because the qualification of being twenty-one years of age applied to aliens and to Her Majesty's subjects alike; and all they asked in addition to that was that before a man asked for that qualification he should have been naturalised for six months; and he (Sir T. McIlwraith) did not think that was asking too much. The words had got into the Bill in some extraordinary way, and he was surprised to hear the Premier say that he had advised, or that it was his opinion, that the construction of clause 6 was that they would have to be naturalised six months before they could claim. He understood that that was the hon. gentleman's advice.

The PREMIER: That they need not have been. Mr. Macrossan said that I said so. I do not remember it.

The HON. SIR T. McILWRAITH: Mr. Macrossan said that his (the Premier's) opinion was that they required to reside six months.

The PREMIER: He said the other way.

The HON. SIR T. McILWRAITH: However, it was not a matter of importance. It had nothing to do with the question, and if the words had not got into the Bill, and but for the other significant fact that the aliens referred to were for the most part blind voters for the present Government, he did not think there would be two opinions on the subject. If it had happened that the votes of those aliens were pretty fairly distributed between the different parties in the House there would not be two minutes' discussion on it in any British community.

Mr. JORDAN said he understood that they might expect to see a very large increase of German immigrants to be employed on the sugar plantations in the North, and if they were not obliged to remain six months after being naturalised they might be made instruments of great evil. He thought the Opposition had forgotten their own interest for a moment, because if a large number of those people were employed on the sugar plantations in the North it would be about twelve months before they understood our language, and they might be made use of as instruments to strengthen the position of the Opposition party. For that reason he was disposed to agree with the hon. member for Balonne.

Mr. MOREHEAD said all he had to state with reference to the German vote, the Irish vote, or any other vote, was that as soon as it became an element to be considered by one side or the other—he did not care which side it was—as a factor in politics it became dangerous.

Amendment—omitting the words "It shall not be necessary that"—put and passed; and the clause—having been further amended by the substitution of "must" for "should" in the same subsection—was agreed to,

Clause 7—"Where joint owners and occupiers shall be entitled"—put and passed.

On clause 8—

"*Disqualifications.*

"Every person nevertheless shall be disqualified from being entered or retained on the roll, who—

1. Is of unsound mind, or in the receipt of aid from any charitable institution; or
2. Has been attainted or convicted of treason, felony, or other infamous offence in any part of Her Majesty's dominions, unless he has received a free or conditional pardon for such offence, or has undergone the sentenced passed on him; or
3. Is in the naval or military service of the British Empire or of Queensland on full pay; or
4. Is an officer or member of the Police Force."

The HON. SIR T. McILWRAITH said that on the second reading of the Bill he drew the attention of the House to the clause, and intimated that subsections 3 and 4 required a little consideration. He could see no reason why naval and military officers on full pay, or members of the Police Force, should not be allowed to vote; at all events, any reason that might have been given in old days was certainly not applicable to more modern times. He did not see why they should not be enfranchised. The reason that had been given was, in his opinion, a very weak one, and was only applicable to the Police Force. It was that, as they were the officers to keep order in case of any riots or disturbances taking place at elections, it was necessary that they should be kept free from any party bias, and that could only be done by keeping them off the roll. He did not think that that object was attained by keeping them off the roll. He knew no reason why naval or military officers should not be upon the roll, and with reference to the Police Force, as he had said, there was only one argument advanced against their being allowed to vote—namely, that if a disturbance arose, they, being the peacemakers, should not be reduced to party men by being voters themselves. Now, he did not think the object aimed at—if that was the only object aimed at—could be attained by any such means, because he did not think the simple exclusion of the names from the voting lists would make the men less party men than they otherwise would be. He saw no reason whatever why those men should not have the right of voting for members of Parliament. He had pointed out that there might be reasons why all Civil servants should be excluded, but at the time they considered the question formerly they might have taken too narrow a view. On a previous occasion, he not only voted but spoke in favour of Civil servants being deprived of the right of voting; but the arguments upon which his contention was based had become of less importance as the colony had grown, because the Civil servants had become a less important factor at elections, and therefore the arguments in favour of excluding them had become weakened. But there was no argument that could apply to the Police Force that did not apply with equal force to the whole of the Civil Service. Clause 3, he believed, would include the members of the Permanent Defence Force, and he saw no more reason for depriving them of the franchise than the Police Force, or Civil servants generally.

The PREMIER said that generally there was some good reason for things that had stood the test of long experience. He did not think it had ever been proposed that members of the army should have votes. He never heard of that being allowed in any country in any part of the world, and it was scarcely necessary for him to go back to the first beginning of things to discover the reason why. Could they conceive anything more unseemly than, say, the members of a military force marching down from their barracks to vote probably in a body—and for whom? Probably the candidate for whom their officers wished them to vote. Could anything be conceived more unseemly, or more likely to cause injury to the public welfare? Would it be desirable that men of the army, or, in our case, the Permanent Defence Force, should take part in electioneering contests—that they should go to election meetings and there get excited, as men sometimes did on such occasions? Would it be desirable? Would it be likely to tend to the general interests of the country? Would it not be likely that a military force, instead of being considered a purely impartial arm of the service of the country, would be regarded as enemies of one side or the other; and that, as soon as the question of continuing them or reorganising them was discussed in Parliament, that they would be considered as enemies of one side or the other? He thought that the Defence Force ought to be a purely non-political body. Nothing could be more inimical to the interests of the country than that it should be supposed that the officers or men of the Defence Force were to be regarded as political partisans. Suppose, for instance, that a particular officer was understood to be a political partisan. When the question came on to vote his salary, if the party whom he supported were in power, they might be disposed to give him an increase, and the question would be, how were they to treat this man—regard him as an enemy, or a friend? The same argument applied to the Police Force. They were to a certain extent a military body, employed for the purpose of keeping order. At elections there was no doubt that order would be disturbed; and he asked any hon. member who had seen a contested election, would it be desirable for the police to take up the position of partisans for one side or the other? It seemed to him most undesirable. How they could give a man the right to vote and ask him not to be a political partisan, he could not understand. He did not, as he had said, want to go back to the beginning of things to discover why officers of military forces and police had never been allowed to vote; but the reasons were apparent on the surface. What the hon. member proposed was a radical change, which he thought was seriously to be deprecated.

The HON. SIR T. McILWRAITH said there was not one single word that had been uttered by the hon. gentleman against giving the naval and military forces of the State the right to vote that did not equally apply to every other branch of the Civil Service. The hon. member had asked how they would like to see the Defence Force marching down from the barracks in a body and voting, very probably, as their officer told them. Was the fact that they were likely to receive direction from an officer how to vote any reason against their voting? And besides, he did not see any way in which an officer could influence his men, unless he openly and to their knowledge exercised authority that was inconsistent with his position; and that he had not the slightest doubt would be resented by the House. There was no reason why the Defence Force should march down in a body and vote. There was no reason why they should not appear at the polling-booth, just as the Premier or himself would do, and give their votes—nobody knew for whom. The hon. gentleman gave another illustration—asking how they would look upon members of the Police Force excitedly going among a crowd as political partisans during an election and inducing men to vote one way or the other? The answer was plain. How should they look upon Civil servants doing exactly the same thing?

Was it not always considered that a Civil servant should have a vote, but that if he brought influence to bear on the Civil servants under him the Government would be forced to see that he should be taught his position—to vote as he thought proper, but not openly, ostentatiously, or in such a way as to control or curb those under him? The Commissioner for Railways, no doubt—though he had no reason for supposing so—exercised the franchise in the same way as any other citizen; still he had far more influence over the men under him than the Commandant of the Defence Force. He could, without reference to the political ideas of his subordinates, control them by the exercise of his power. He could put them out of their billets, put other men in their places, or place them in an inferior position without assigning any cause or without any cause being detected; and all the while the cause might be politics. In that respect his power was greater than that of an officer high in the Police Department. There was no reason to suppose that the police would be worse than they had been during election times, if they had in future the power to vote. They were an admirable body of men, subject to discipline, and had always done their duty well; and the Committee had no right to assume that they would perform the function of a citizen, so far as the "body politic"—as the hon. member for Fassifern would say—was concerned, worse than other citizens. They had opinions on political affairs, and why should they be debarred *a fortiori* from exercising the franchise any more than the Civil servants of the colony?

Mr. STEVENS said: How would the clause apply to members of rifle corps?

The PREMIER: They are not on full pay.

Mr. STEVENS said, with reference to the remarks of the Premier concerning the police, that the members of that force were far more likely to fail in their duty at election times through not having votes than if they had votes.

The HON. SIR T. MCILWRAITH said he supposed "full pay" meant that such pay was the only source of livelihood a man had, because volunteers were on full pay though they only got £2 a year. Subsections 3 and 4 ought to be omitted from the clause.

Mr. MOREHEAD said the Premier had surely something to say in reply to what had fallen from the leader of the Opposition, who had pointed out that the rights of the police were, at any rate, equal to those of other Civil servants. If the Premier would propose the disfranchisement of the whole Civil Service he (Mr. Morehead) would agree with him, but he took exception to the police or members of the Defence Force being debarred from exercising the franchise—a right which ought to appertain to them in a greater degree than to many of those who were qualified under preceding sections. No one could deny that the police were intelligent; that they had passed an educational test, which almost no other body of electors, with the exception of Civil servants, had passed; and to talk about them being marched down and voting in a certain direction—being coaxed to vote for anybody they did not believe in — was an absurdity. He could not see why those men should be debarred from the privilege of voting, nor could he see what difficulty was likely to arise, even in the extreme case of a riot, as mentioned by the Premier, where their services would be required in quelling the disturbance. The members of the Police Force might disagree on political subjects; possibly they had strongly pronounced opinions on those subjects; and to assume that trouble would take place because they would go in a solid voting mass—whether at the command of the party in power or of other officers or anyone else—to say that the police were not as likely to perform their duty in a case of trouble issuing on the declaration of the poll, was to say what the hon. member knew himself to be utterly absurd. If it pleased the Committee to debar the whole of the Civil Service, he would not raise his voice for or against it. If it were said that they were in such a position that their votes might be influenced by members of the House voting increase of salary—that was the low level they were brought down to by the Premier—there might be some tangible reason for disfranchising them altogether; but there was no reason why the Police Force in particular should be disfranchised. He had something to say now in reference to another matter, and in doing so it would be necessary to refer to a subsequent part of the Bill, in order to point out the inconsistency. The 2nd subsection was a renewal of a portion of a clause in the existing Act, providing that after a person had undergone the sentence passed upon him for treason felony or other infamous offence he should be rehabilitated and allowed to exercise the franchise. No one would deny that such was the case. But under the 3rd subsection of clause 93 any person convicted of corrupt practices—meaning certain things done in the heat of politics, which had always been looked upon as venial offences—any such person certainly was not to be rehabilitated after serving the sentence of the court, but for seven years afterwards was not to be allowed to exercise the franchise. The two clauses were utterly incompatible, and he believed the Committee would agree with him. In clause 8 they had a disqualification for a man convicted of treason, felony, or other infamous offence, unless he received a pardon or had served the sentence passed on him, and then he was put back into the world with a clean sheet so far as his electoral qualification was concerned, and he might become a member of that Parliament or anything else; but if they looked to the 93rd clause they would see that if a man committed an offence against that Act he was not only to be punished, but was further to be debarred from exercising his electoral qualification for seven years. Nothing more monstrous was ever put before a Parliament. Could the Premier justify it? The clause they were discussing ran to a certain extent in common with the 93rd and succeeding clauses, and the Premier should give some reason for the distinction he had drawn—a distinction that had never been drawn before. While the disqualification clause was under discussion they should have some reason given for the distinction drawn, and why the breaking of the law under the conditions contained in the 87th and succeeding clauses should be considered greater and deserving of greater punishment than was at present accorded for the commission of infamous offences.

The PREMIER said they would discuss the 93rd clause when they got to it. Hon. members might think its provisions too severe, and some hon. members might hold a different opinion; but it had nothing to do with the clause at present under discussion, which dealt with certain persons who were to be disqualified.

Mr. MOREHEAD: It deals with disqualifications.

The PREMIER said the hon. gentleman said no distinction should be drawn between the Police Force and other members of the Civil Service. Hon. members opposite said all the Civil servants should be disfranchised.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS of the Opposition: No, no!

The PREMIER: Well, some hon. members opposite said so.

The HON. SIR T. McILWRAITH said the only one who referred to it was himself, and he had said that he was once in favour of it, but admitted that the circumstances of the colony were changed. He had given the hon. gentleman no indication whatever as to whether he believed in it now or not.

The PREMIER said he inferred from the speech of the hon. gentleman opposite that that was the opinion he held. If, however, he had no opinion upon it, he could not refer to it; and if the hon. member had an opinion and was afraid to express it he could not refer to it in that case either.

Mr. MOREHEAD said the hon. member might refer to what he had said. He had said distinctly that if the Police Force were disqualified the whole of the Civil Service should be disfranchised.

The PREMIER said that if hon. gentlemen had convictions, and were afraid to express them, there was no use in attempting to reply to them. He believed there was a great distinction between the police—who were really a military force—and other members of the Civil Service. He had heard no argument from the other side on the subject; all they asked was, why the Police Force should not be allowed to vote as well as the rest of the Civil Service? He had given some reasons, which were apparent, and he did not need to repeat them. He did not want to go to the beginning of things, or he might give fifty reasons, and carry on the discussion for a couple of days. He believed that the conduct of elections would be better if the Police Force were understood to be entirely disassociated with politics, and he further believed that the efficiency of the Police Force as an important arm of the civil power of the colony would be much more apparent if they were entirely disassociated with politics. Would it not be very undesirable to see a candidate in a country town going round to the police barracks and canvassing for the vote of the sergeant in charge, and trying to get him and his men to vote for him? He did not care to discuss the thing.

Mr. MOREHEAD: We know you do not.

The PREMIER said the reasons were so numerous that it was not worth while to discuss it; and the reasons were so apparent that hon. members who asked for a change might fairly be asked to give their reasons for desiring it.

The HON. SIR T. McILWRAITH said he would put it in another way—an hon. member who introduced a Bill should be able to give some reasons for the clauses he was advocating.

The PREMIER: I have given the universal practice.

The HON. SIR T. McILWRAITH said the hon. member had taunted members of the Opposition with holding opinions which they had not the courage to express, and he suggested that they had opinions upon the disfranchisement of the Civil servants and had not the courage to express them. Whatever his (Hon. Sir T. McIlwraith's) opinions were on that subject, he had not been called upon to express them; but if he were called upon he would have the courage to do it, whether his opinion went one way or the other; so that the hon. member's arguments on that subject were not justified by the facts. The hon. member asked as an argument what they would think of a candidate who would go round in a small country town and canvass for the votes of the sergeant of police and the police themselves? He thought himself it would be indecent for him to do it, and he would not think it likely that any candidate would do it. He had, however, seen the very same thing happening in connection with the Civil Service. He had seen the hon. member for Bundanba openly canvassing for the votes of the men in the Ipswich workshops. He had seen the hon. member there himself, and the hon. member had told him that he was doing it. In those workshops there were 200 or 300 men in the one place, and the hon. member was present with the candidate, and endeavoured to secure their votes for the candidate. They knew that they were receiving wages from the Government, and would understand that if the candidate was elected that would continue to do so. The hon. member was openly canvassing for those men's votes, and in their own time, and he said such a thing as that would not be likely to occur with the police. He could not help referring, therefore, to the squeamishness of the Premier, who had seen that sort of thing going on under his eyes for so long a time, and now raised it as an argument for the disfranchisement of the police.

Mr. FOOTE said he was not quite sure that he remembered the time the hon. gentleman referred to.

Mr. MOREHEAD: You have done it so often.

Mr. FOOTE said he certainly remembered seeing the hon. leader of the Opposition in the Ipswich workshops, and he believed he was on the same business. He believed he had beaten the hon. gentleman on that occasion also. He had been successful, and put the hon. gentleman out of court so far. He might say that at the time he did not look upon those parties as belonging to the Civil Service at all, as they were artisans and mechanics on weekly wages; he did not place them in that category.

An HONOURABLE MEMBER: They are paid by the Government.

Mr. FOOTE said he remembered when the police had the franchise and were permitted to vote, and he also remembered seeing them march down in a body from the barracks to the polling-booth, and they polled as one man for a certain candidate. He knew that some of them voted against their convictions because they were afraid to do otherwise. He should add that at that time it was open voting, and he believed the ballot would shield the men to some extent in places where there was a large number of voters; but, as mentioned by the hon. the Premier, in small electorates where there were not many voters it could easily be seen for whom the police had voted. The hon. the leader of the Opposition knew very well how to manipulate an election; he knew how and where to give the word, and had a full understanding of all those things; and if the party he (Mr. Foote) supported had learned to do it well also, he was sure that they had gathered a great deal of information from the practices carried on by the other side.

The HON. SIR T. McILWRAITH said he did not deserve the credit which the hon. member gave him for the management of an election. He had never got a vote from Ipswich in his life, and he was sure he had never asked for it. The hon. the Premier made an assertion that since that state of things was found to answer in every civilised state in the world there must be some reason for it; but one would think that in that case the reason ought to be apparent. The hon. member, in his position as Premier, had actually told them that no soldiers voted in any civilised country in the world. Whatever was the practice in France now, certainly under the Empire every soldier had a vote.

The PREMIER: Is that a good thing?

The HON. SIR T. McILWRAITH: That had nothing to do with the question. What the Premier said was not true as applied to France. In the next place, the soldiers had votes in America at the present time. General Grant would not have been President three times, or twice, or even once, if it had not been for the votes of the army, who put him in. They did not require to go to other countries, but he just wished to challenge the wholesale statement of the Premier, that soldiers and policemen did not have votes in any other civilised country. That was the Premier's argument; and the hon. member contended that, therefore, the Queensland police and military should not have votes.

Mr. HAMILTON said the argument of the Premier was not a good one—that preventing the policemen from having votes prevented them from exercising their partisanship in an indecent way. It really prevented their exercising it in the only justifiable way. Another objection was that members of the Police Force would be liable to have their pay reduced for voting in a particular way. That was simply absurd. They would only have their pay reduced for exercising their partisanship in a way which depriving them of their votes would make it impossible to prevent. If members of the Defence Force were not allowed to vote, then volunteers should not be allowed to vote either. The same argument applied to both. It was pointed out that volunteers were not receiving full pay; but how did that affect the principle? The reason given for not allowing the Defence Force to vote was because they might be required to keep order; but might not volunteers be equally required to keep order? The statement that it would be very indecent to see a body of policemen sent down to vote in a solid body as their commanding officer directed was simply nonsense. He did not think any member of the Committee had such a poor opinion of the police, who were generally regarded as an intelligent body, as to think they would go in that way and vote like a flock of sheep at the request of their commanding officer.

The PREMIER said he had never made any suggestion as to the police going to the poll in a body; he had referred to the Defence Force marching down from their barracks to vote. The leader of the Opposition had said that the soldiers of the United States put General Grant in. That was true in one sense, but not in the sense the words were meant to convey. No doubt the men who had fought in the United States army put General Grant in, but the soldiers of the army at the time they voted did not put him in. The hon. member must know that the number of men in the army was far less than the majority which elected General Grant.

Mr. MOREHEAD: What about the French?

The PREMIER: Even if what the hon. gentleman said was true about the French soldiers having votes—on which point he entertained some doubt—he did not think it was an argument in favour of allowing soldiers to vote.

The HON. SIR T. McILWRAITH said the hon. member had told them it was not the United States soldiers who put in General Grant, but the men who had fought in the United States army. The hon. gentleman was just as far from the mark, because those two bodies together could not possibly have made up General Grant's majority; but they were a material influence in putting him in, and he would not have got in without them. As for policemen not having votes in any other part of the world, he would go back to the most civilised country in the world—Scotland. He did not know how it was now, but he had seen policemen voting there before he came to this country. They were wise in their day, and no doubt they were wiser now. He did not know whether the matter had been agitated among the men, but he looked upon it as a well-grounded grievance that while other Civil servants had votes the police and military officers should be excluded. Not one argument had been used by the Premier against giving them votes that did not apply with ten times more force to a large section of the Civil servants.

The PREMIER said he supposed the hon. member knew as well as any other hon. member of the Committee that the police force in Scotland was on an entirely different footing from that in this colony. The men were not officers of the general Government at all; they were not appointed in the same way, nor subject to the same discipline or organisation. They were servants of the districts in which they were appointed.

The HON. SIR T. McILWRAITH: But they were the police officers at the elections, and that was the only ground the hon. member had for denying the franchise to the force here.

Mr. KATES said that something had been said about the French soldiers having votes, but that was only since the Republic. They had no vote under the Empire.

The HON. SIR T. McILWRAITH: Napoleon got his throne by the votes of the French soldiers.

Mr. KATES: In Germany the soldiers had no vote, and Germany was as civilised a country as even Scotland.

Mr. MOREHEAD said that Scotland was civilised long before the Germans were heard of. The Premier had said, or had led them to infer, that if the same results followed here from letting policemen vote as had followed in France from letting the soldiers vote, he should be very sorry for it. For his own part he did not see that there was anything to prove that great damage was done by giving votes to the French soldiers, and it was an impertinence on the part of the Premier towards a great nation to make such an assertion. Unless he intended to use that statement to back up an argument, there was absolutely nothing in it. He thought the hon. gentleman was going to base some argument on it, but instead of that he simply said that he did not know, or did not believe, or was not sure, that the French soldier had a vote. Then, when it was proved that he had, the hon. gentleman said, "Well, if he has, I hope the police here won't have one." His (Mr. Morehead's) opinion was that the police here were as highly qualified and better entitled to have a vote than the bulk of those who had the franchise. The remarks of the hon. member for Bundanba were quite beside the question. The hon. member said he had seen a body of police in this colony march down from their barracks and vote as one man.

Mr. FOOTE: It is quite true.

Mr. MOREHEAD said he would like to know whether that occurred in Ipswich?

Mr. FOOTE: In Ipswich.

Mr. MOREHEAD said he was aware that there had been strange things done in Ipswich. The hon. member, unfortunately for himself, went a little too far in his argument and told too much. He said the incident referred to occurred before the days of ballot. Then what was the worth of his argument? If what he had related took place before the ballot was in operation here his argument did not apply now, when those men could vote in absolute secresy. Who could tell now how a policeman voted, if he did vote, in any part of

the colony? He (Mr. Morehead) did not care how small the electorate might be, but maintained that it would be utterly impossible to tell how a policeman voted any more than how any other Civil servant voted. All that was asked in this matter by the leader of the Opposition was that policemen should be put on the same footing as other members of the Civil Service, and he did not think the Committee would be justified in asking anything less. If it were a question of whether any Civil servants should vote, there would be something to argue about; but when they had to deal with one section of the service, the members of which were debarred from voting—for no earthly reason so far as he could see—he did think it was time that they wiped the absurdity out of their Statute-book. Did they imagine that the police were more likely to prove untrue to their trust than the riff-raff who got on electoral rolls? Were not those men more likely to vote on the side of law and order who had been educated and tutored to keep and observe the law? Were those men their worst citizens? Were they to be debarred from having a vote, when any man about whom they knew nothing, who had been six months in the colony, was entitled under certain conditions to vote for a member of that House? He thought the men who were disfranchised in that case were the men whom they should be proud to have on the electoral rolls, and he did not believe any coercion would force them to vote against their own convictions. He certainly hoped the hon. member for Mulgrave would stick to the position he had taken up and press the matter to a division, so that it might be seen who were in favour and who were not in favour of a considerable and intelligent section of citizens having a right which pertained to many others who were less worthy of it.

Mr. FOOTE said the hon. member who had just sat down seemed scarcely to credit the statement he had made with reference to the voting of the police, but the circumstance had occurred. As far as his memory served him it was somewhere about 1854 or 1856, when what was now the colony of Queensland was connected with New South Wales and returned two members to the Parliament of that colony to represent it as the county of Stanley. As a body of men he had not one word to say against the Police Force. As far as the exercise of the franchise was concerned, they were quite capable of exercising it intelligently. The Police Force in this colony comprised a body of men of whom any hon. member who knew anything about them felt proud. At the same time he was of opinion that they, being officers of the peace, should be removed from anything like political partisanship. He was quite aware, as the hon. member for Balonne had said, that the ballot would shield them from any consequences that might follow their vote, but like all other persons they would have very strong views on political questions, which they would no doubt discuss in their barracks and at other places, and that would not tend to the efficient discharge of their duties. He felt sure that the officers who had the supervision of the police — the Commissioner and inspectors — would much rather that their men were kept free from all political partisanship. And he was further of opinion that in the interests of the colony and in the interests of elections it was desirable that the law which had worked so well hitherto should be continued, and he should certainly vote for the clause as it stood. He hoped the matter would come to a division, as he was desirous that it should be seen who were in favour of it and who were not.

Mr. NORTON said he had been listening to the discussion in the hope of hearing some solid reason advanced for disfranchising the Police Force, because it had always been a wonder to him that they had not been allowed to exercise the franchise; but he was sorry to say that no substantial reason had been brought forward for their disqualification. There were good reasons why they should not be disqualified, and equally good reasons also why members of the Defence Force should not be disqualified. He would point out that in many instances members of the Defence Force were Australian born, and when they grew up to manhood exercised the right to vote. Those men had come forward in the hour of danger and entered into the service of the Government as members of the Defence Force, prepared to risk their lives for the benefit of the whole country. Why then, when they took up that position—when they took upon themselves the noblest part that any man in the colony could undertake, should they be disfranchised? Had they done anything wrong that they should be disqualified from voting? No! Instead of being disfranchised they should have every facility to exercise the franchise like other citizens. The provision in the clause before them meant that those men were not to be represented in that House; that they were not to have any vote or the right to claim any member of that House as their representative. On the face of it, it was a cruel thing that men who came forward in that way for the benefit of the whole colony should be placed in that ignominious position. Then, with regard to the Police Force, that was just as much a defence force as the men serving under Colonel French. The only difference was that they were at continual warfare with the criminal class of the population. There was not one man of that body who would hesitate, if called upon, to risk his life, and he did it for the protection of society. Was that a reason why they should be disfranchised? If those men had had votes, he ventured to say they would not have been turned out of their barracks as they were the other day. They would not have been turned out of their comfortable quarters to make room for another force which was new to the colony, and which no one was in a position to say would do what was required of them. There was every reason why those men should be represented in Parliament. Instead of the Government making the Police Force satisfied with their position, and giving them every reason to regard their work as a pleasure as well as a duty, they were turned out of their barracks, and their homes broken up; they were rendered discontented, and they were now scattered all over the town.

The PREMIER: No, they are not. They are in barracks.

Mr. NORTON said they were turned out of their barracks before provision was made for settling them anywhere else, and for some time they were located in different parts of the town. He would ask hon. members to compare the position in which those men were placed with that of aliens, whom, until the 6th clause was amended, it was proposed should, from the day they landed in the colony, acquire the right to be on the electoral roll. Even now they were entitled to vote after being here six months and becoming naturalised. Why should so much regard be paid to men who were aliens in every sense of the word, while men of their own race—men who in many instances had been born and brought up in the colony—should be treated in a manner which, as compared with the others, he could only style as ignominious?

Mr. MIDGLEY said they all regarded the passing of the Defence Act last year as some-

thing very opportune and useful; and the events which occurred immediately afterwards gave that measure a degree of favour which perhaps it would not otherwise have received from the people. He always held that the Act was a good, sound one; amongst the best ever passed by that Legislature. They all felt the fullest confidence in the men who so readily and in such numbers responded to the call of duty in a time of danger; and they would continue to feel confidence in them so long as they were kept out of the arena of politics. If they were allowed to engage in politics that confidence would very likely be materially diminished. The state of things was very different in small communities like those of Queensland from large communities where there were millions of inhabitants, and where a few votes given to one side or the other would have no effect on the result. But in a place like Brisbane, for instance, where the greater part of the Defence Force would very likely be located, and which in time of danger would be very largely increased, they would have the power of turning an election whichever way they chose. Being only human, they would in all probability generally vote for what they deemed to be for their own interest and advantage, and very likely other matters of State of greater importance would be lost sight of in considering what would be best for the army. With regard to the Police Force, individually he believed them to be as worthy of respect and of all the rights of citizens as any other class of men in the colony. But the same line of argument would apply to them as a body that might be applied to the Defence Force. If the Committee did what the leader of the Opposition asked them to do in his amendment they would be increasing and aggravating an already serious existing evil. He could not understand the hesitancy, the reluctance of the Opposition to give expression to their opinions with regard to the entire disfranchisement of the Civil Service. A matter of that kind should be dealt with, not only from the critical but also from the constructive point of view, and if members of the Opposition thought they could propose something that would materially improve the measure, apart from mere criticism of what it contained, they were perfectly free to suggest anything for its improvement. He could not understand the hesitancy on the part of the Opposition in giving expression to what they thought with regard to the entire Civil Service. He should refuse to vote for the amendment—not because he distrusted the Police Force, not because he did not believe that they would conduct themselves as orderly and as well as any other class in the community, even in the excitement of a contested election; he believed they would—but he should oppose it because it would be increasing an evil that already existed. If they did anything in the matter at all, instead of increasing the elective power of the Civil Service in any of its branches they ought to cut it off altogether from the exercise of electoral rights. He was perfectly certain that in many elections they were a very powerful factor in deciding the result; and he was also certain that whatever policemen might do, Civil servants, pending an election, used their influence politically—used it to the utmost—used it sometimes in a way to bring strong power to bear in some hidden form upon those over whom they had influence; and seeing that the Civil servants were perpetually at their doors, perpetually demanding something, perpetually becoming greater burdens upon the colony, the direction they ought to take in their legislation ought not to be as contained in the amendment of the hon. member for Mulgrave. The members of the Civil Service generally were creatures of the existing Government. If the Government remained in power for any considerable time there was likely to be a large number of those creatures put into the Civil Service, who, he was convinced, would use their influence at the next election for the outgoing Ministry just as they did for the Ministry that was defunct during the last elections. He should oppose the amendment, because he thought it was going entirely in the wrong direction; another reason was that there would have to be a very material alteration in the constitution of the Police Force, both from a national and sectarian point of view, before he would consent to having the franchise given to them.

Mr. ISAMBERT said the Opposition, and particularly their leader, in defending the right of the police and military men to vote, had failed to point out why they should or should not have that right. The leader of the Opposition failed to see that there was a great difference between a man who was a soldier for a short time and a professional soldier. The soldier of Germany was a citizen soldier, not a professional. There were no professional soldiers in Germany—the men only holding arms for a certain time and then retiring again into private life. There was as much difference between the soldier of Germany and other countries as there was between the militia of England and the professional soldier of England. He certainly said that the professional soldier of England was not fit to have a vote, because, as the hon. member for Fassifern had said, he would always vote in the interests of the army; and if they were to have professional soldiers here the sooner they did away with the Defence Force the better, because instead of being a source of protection they would become an element of danger. With reference to whether the police should have a right to vote or not, they were certainly as intelligent a body of men as any in the colony, and were fully as much entitled to have a vote as the members of the Civil Service. The only reason that might be advanced in favour of their disfranchisement was that if they were given the right to vote their efficiency as a force might be lessened in the interests of the country. That was the only reason he could see—that they might be tampered with and exercise as much political influence at elections as the rest of the Civil Service, who were ready to promise their vote and their interest if they were remembered for a rise in salary. He thought that if the Police Force were disfranchised the Civil Service deserved it quite as much.

The HON. SIR T. MCILWRAITH said they were all learning something, and he was not ashamed to learn something from the hon. member for Rosewood, who had said that there were no professional soldiers in Germany. It was the first time he had ever heard such a statement. He knew that he had stood in the streets of Berlin, near some of the public offices, and had come to the conclusion, from what he had seen, that all Germans were professional soldiers. Every young German was bound to serve in the army for three years; the Defence Force here had also to serve for three years, and where was the difference, so far as the professional part of the business was concerned? However, that was entirely beside the question. The hon. gentleman had been defending an argument that had nothing whatever to do with the point at issue. In moving the amendment, he (Sir T. McIlwraith) should take it in two motions: first, in relation to persons who were in the naval or military service of the British Empire, or of Queensland, on full pay; and then with regard to the Police Force. Before moving the amendment, he would like to hear from the Premier to whom the 1st line of subsection 3—"Is in the naval or military service

of the British Empire, or of Queensland, on full pay"—would apply. He thought it was scarcely worth while putting those men under the disqualification. It was not at all likely, but highly improbable, that men in the military or naval service of Great Britain on full pay would come under the residence qualification; and if they came under the freehold or leasehold qualification it would be very hard that they should be deprived of the privilege that every other member of the British Empire had got. He did not see that there was any use in making such a distinction as that. Any member of the British Empire had a right, under the freehold or leasehold qualification, to come in without six months' residence, and why go to the extraordinary expedient of disqualifying a member of a country where disqualification would almost certainly never apply? He should like to hear why those words had been inserted. In fact, it was a remnant—the Premier had got back to his old Toryism, and did not like to alter anything that had been in an Act of Parliament for a long time. Those words had been in the Act for a long time; but he did not see that they were at all applicable at the present time, or why they should be retained.

The PREMIER said that no doubt it had been law for a long time, and it was law at the present time. There was an instance in the neighbouring colony of New South Wales. The "Nelson" had been lying in Sydney harbour for twelve months with the same crew of men, and, if such a case happened here, every man in her crew would be entitled to vote under the residence qualification if the clause were struck out. Would that be a desirable thing? The men were simply there without any interest in the country—simply as soldiers and sailors on full pay. It was absurd. Such a thing might happen, and very likely would happen. They had not had it for the last few years; but it might happen. They fortunately did not require soldiers here at the present time; but it was not certain that they should never want a garrison. Was it certain they should never have any troops besides those now in the colony, and was it desirable that a regiment of English troops quartered in Queensland should be entitled to vote because they happened to be six months in the colony? Of course it was not. The clause applied to persons who had no right to a vote, but who, by the existence of the residence qualification, might be entitled to vote if they were not excluded. Under the residence qualification the mere fact of being present in the colony for six months would give them a vote. That was quite a sufficient reason why exception should be made.

The HON. SIR T. MCILWRAITH said the hon. gentleman had given a very good reason in that case, and he would withdraw anything he had said about that. He would now move that the words "or of Queensland" be omitted.

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

AYES, 22.

Messrs. Rutledge, Miles, Griffith, Dickson, Dutton, Brookes, Aland, Isambert, Jordan, White, Annear, J. Campbell, Sheridan, Foote, Wakefield, Buckland, Bailey, Salkeld, Grimes, Beattie, Midgley, and Wallace.

NOES, 9.

Sir T. McIlwraith, Messrs. Archer, Norton, Morehead, Stevenson, Govett, Ferguson, Stevens, and Hamilton.

Question resolved in the affirmative.

The HON. SIR T. MCILWRAITH moved that the words "or is an officer or member of the Police Force," in the 12th and 13th lines of the clause, be omitted. He thought the matter had been, to a certain extent threshed out; but there was one point, however, that had been omitted, and it was one that he ought to call attention to. There was no section of the community that figured so well in the Savings Bank returns of the colony as the Police Force. The first and best quality of working men was that they should make something more than a bare living out of their wages, and there was no man who had any knowledge of the police who did not know that fact—that the best bank depositors, as a section of the community in Queensland, were the Police Force. That must be pretty well known to the Treasurer; at all events, it was very well known to anyone who had had anything to do with the savings banks. There was scarcely a policeman in the interior who had not a deposit or a banking account.

The PREMIER said he believed that the Police Force were an extremely efficient body of men; but whether they had more money in the savings bank than any other people receiving similar wages he did not know. He knew they were an efficient body of men; but he believed that the Committee would strike a very serious blow at their efficiency if they left those words out of the clause.

Mr. MOREHEAD said perhaps the hon. gentleman, who dealt in fine phrases, would explain his last phrase—that they would strike a very serious blow at these men?

The PREMIER: At the efficiency of those men, I said.

Mr. MOREHEAD said he would like the hon. gentleman to elaborate upon his text. He believed he was born to preach, and he would like to hear him preach there.

Mr. HAMILTON said the Premier gave his testimony in favour of the police by saying that he believed them to be a respectable body of men, but at the same time he deprived them of the franchise, which every respectable citizen was entitled to. The reasons given by the Premier, he (Mr. Hamilton) really could not think could be real reasons, simply because they were utterly absurd. They would not hold water. For instance, he gave a reason that those men might come down in a body and vote. But supposing they did, how on earth would that fact prevent them exercising their vote conscientiously? So long as they voted conscientiously, it would not matter if they came down in a body or singly. There was no reason why those men should not, as conscientious men, be just as much entitled to vote as any other person. The other reason given was that by depriving the men of their votes improper partisanship would be prevented, but he could not see how that would be. A respectable body of men—men who had a stake in the country—men whom, as the leader of the Opposition had said, were shown to be as thrifty a class as any other class of colonists—were now being deprived of their right to vote; while, at the same time, men who had no stake in the country—who were foreigners and aliens—had a voice in the affairs of the State as soon as they put their foot on the soil.

Question put, and the Committee divided:—

AYES, 22.

Messrs. Rutledge, Miles, Griffith, Dickson, Sheridan, Dutton, Foote, Beattie, Grimes, Salkeld, Bailey, Midgley, Wallace, Kates, Buckland, Wakefield, Annear, White, Jordan, Isambert, Aland, and Brookes.

NOES, 9.

Sir T. McIlwraith, Messrs. Morehead, Norton, Archer, Hamilton, Ferguson, Govett, Stevens, and Stevenson.

Question resolved in the affirmative.

On clause 9—"University of one hundred graduates, when established, to return member"—

The HON. SIR T. McILWRAITH said that clause was one of those fancy clauses of the Premier's, and he might as well say at once that he was going to strike it out. They were asked to provide for the representation of a university that was not established, and probably would not be for a considerable time.

The PREMIER said the clause was one he was unwilling to part with. It had been an old friend, but he was afraid it must go.

Mr. MOREHEAD : I object to its being withdrawn.

The PREMIER said the clause had been done away with in a neighbouring colony. He should not like to take upon himself the responsibility of letting it go.

Mr. MOREHEAD : I object to the withdrawal of the clause.

The PREMIER : It has to be negatived, not withdrawn.

Mr. MOREHEAD : Then I shall divide the Committee upon it.

Clause put, and the Committee divided :—

AYES, 3.

Messrs. Rutledge, Morehead, and Wallace.

NOES, 28.

The Hon. Sir T. McIlwraith, Messrs. Dickson, Miles, Archer, Norton, Griffith, Brookes, Dutton, Foote, Sheridan, Isambert, White, Salkeld, Wakefield, Grimes, Buckland, Kates, Govett, Beattie, Ferguson, Hamilton, Jordan, Bailey, Annear, Stevens, Stevenson, Aland, and Midgley.

Question resolved in the negative.

On clause 10—"Registration courts"—

Mr. MOREHEAD said he wished hon. members to understand the reasons why he divided the Committee on the last clause. It was not because he believed in having a member for a university, but in order to show that the Government had no heart in backing up their own opinions. They brought in a clause with a great flourish of trumpets ; told hon. members what it would do and what it would not do ; and then, because a few members on their own side objected to a member for a university, they ratted, turned tail, and left only the rat's tail of the Ministry, as it were, to sit on the benches to the right with him. He was happy to say that they were able to make a division ; and he only rose to say that the Government, whenever they got any pressure from their own side, abandoned what they themselves had introduced.

The PREMIER : Just so.

Clause put and passed.

Clause 11—"Electoral registrar"—passed as printed..

On clause 12—"How constituted and presided over"—

The HON. SIR T. McILWRAITH said the clause was very much the same as that in the existin law.

The PREMIER : The 2nd paragraph is new.

The HON. SIR T. McILWRAITH said the tendency of that paragraph was bad. He saw no objection to judges acting on some occasions, but did not see any use in Crown prosecutors acting ; and, after all, the best system would be to leave the people in each district to manage their own business. If hon. members opposite believed in their own protestations they would not agree to police magistrates going to the district courts to take part in the proceedings of the registration courts.

The PREMIER said it very often happened that they could not get a quorum for the revision courts, and the police magistrate was disqualified from presiding, under the present Act, unless he resided in the district. On the second reading of the Bill he had pointed out that in Brisbane the lists were revised for six electoral districts, or parts of districts, and yet the police magistrate could only sit for the district in which his house was situated. In large districts—outside, of course—the police magistrate would probably reside in the district, but in a place like Brisbane it would be very convenient if the ordinary president of the court could preside at the revision courts held in Brisbane. Taking the case of the revision of the rolls for Oxley, it very often happened that two or three names had to be revised, and for the revision of those names they had to wait until they could get two justices residing in the district to attend and do the work. The work was almost entirely formal.

Mr. MIDGLEY said he was still unable to see what constituted a quorum of the registration court. The 1st and 2nd paragraphs of the clause appeared contradictory. The 1st paragraph provided for two or more justices sitting as the court, while the 2nd paragraph provided that the police magistrate might sit by himself.

The PREMIER : A police magistrate can always sit for two justices of the peace.

The HON. SIR T. McILWRAITH asked if the Premier knew of any case in which the Crown prosecutor had acted as chairman of those courts ?

The PREMIER : Not one.

The HON. SIR T. McILWRAITH : Then what is the reason of putting in the provision ? One good reason why it should not be in is, that if a Crown prosecutor does this work I guarantee he will be paid extra for it.

The PREMIER said he believed the provision had been introduced by Sir Arthur Palmer. It was probably an adaptation to a small extent of the English system of revising the ballot. Provision was made for including the judges, but they were very limited, and by including the Crown prosecutors they doubled the number. It might be convenient to have them in, though a case in which a Crown prosecutor had presided had not come under his notice.

Question put and passed.

Clause 13—"Majority to decide"—passed as printed.

On clause 14—

"Every registrar and assistant registrar of births, deaths, and marriages shall, during the month of August in each year, furnish to the electoral registrars of every electoral district, any part whereof is comprised in the registry district for which he is such registrar or assistant registrar of births, deaths, and marriages, a correct list of all deaths of adult males of twenty-one years and upwards which have been registered by him during the twelve months then last past"—

The PREMIER said the assistant registrar did not keep a register, and he proposed to omit the words "or assistant registrar" in the 4th and 5th lines of the clause.

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

On clause 15—"Rolls to be marked ; notice to be sent to persons whose names are intended to be omitted from rolls, or the statement of whose residence is to be altered"—

The HON. SIR T. McILWRAITH asked how it was proposed to pay the electoral registrars ?

The PREMIER said that, where they were not already officers of the Government, their salaries would have to be voted by Parliament. It was proposed, however, that clerks of petty sessions should do the work.

The HON. SIR T. McILWRAITH: Do I understand that it is not proposed to pay them? Is there no sum on the Estimates for their payment?

The PREMIER: No.

The HON. SIR T. McILWRAITH: Were they not paid last year?

The PREMIER: No; not for this purpose.

The HON. SIR T. McILWRAITH: And were they not paid for an analogous purpose under the old Act?

The PREMIER: No.

The HON. SIR T. McILWRAITH said that he knew perfectly well that unless the electoral registrars were paid for the work they would not do it. It was because they were not paid before that the rolls were not properly prepared. The hon. member appeared to him to be going back into the old rule of paying certain salaries to officers and then making additions to them afterwards. Those men would have to make inquiry of the residents of the district and inspect rate-books, lists of selectors, lists of pastoral tenants, and any other documents accessible to them; and, unless they were paid for the work, and payment for that work was provided for on the Estimates, he was perfectly satisfied it would never be done. There was a good deal of work about it, and they would certainly scamp it if they were not paid for it—in fact, they had scamped it before.

The PREMIER said he had a higher opinion of them than that. The salaries of the clerks of petty sessions were fixed last year, and he had no reason to suppose that the work was not done properly last year. They understood that it was part of their duty to do that work, and if they did not do it they would have to get some person who would. He had no reason to suppose that it had not been properly done, except in one or two instances where he knew it had not been properly done and the officers were reprimanded, and probably more serious consequences might ensue.

The HON. SIR T. McILWRAITH asked if the hon. member said that those men were not paid for doing the work last year?

The PREMIER: Yes.

The HON. SIR T. McILWRAITH said they were paid for it—the amount was added on to their salaries. The fact of their having done the work during the present year as well as previously did not show that they would not go back to the old system unless they were paid for doing the work. The reason they had been paid was that they did not do the work, or it was done inefficiently, and they had therefore agreed to pay them. They would soon forget that it was part of their duty, and look upon it as extra work for which they were not paid? The registrar was to get the best information he could from inquiry. But how much inquiry would he make if he were not paid for it. The hon. member professed to have a higher opinion of clerks of petty sessions than he (Sir T. McIlwraith) had. Well, the result of his experience was that if they were not paid for work they would not do it. Not only was all the work of compiling the roll to fall entirely on their shoulders, but they were to send by post notices to every person whose name it was proposed to omit from the roll. Their work would be very much increased by that.

The PREMIER said that his experience was that the very points dealt with were those on which clerks of petty sessions applied to the department for instruction. As the law made no provision for such cases, no instruction could be given to the clerks of petty sessions.

Clause put and passed.

Clause 16—"Lists to be compiled from rolls and quarterly list"—passed as printed.

On clause 17, as follows:—

"Such list shall be alphabetical, and shall be in the following form:—

"ANNUAL ELECTORAL LIST.

"List of persons appearing to be qualified to vote at the election of members of the Legislative Assembly in the year 18 , for the electoral district of , [within the division of].

"Dated this day of 188 .

"A.B.,
Electoral Registrar."

Christian Name and Surname.	Residence.	Qualification.	Situation of property in respect of which qualification arises.	Polling District.
Brown, William	Charlotte street	residence		
Smith, John	Ann st., Fortitude Valley	freehold	Adelaide street, North Brisbane	

"And such list shall be the annual electoral list for such district."

The HON. SIR T. McILWRAITH said he thought rather an unfortunate illustration had been chosen under the head of "Situation of property," etc. He thought the number of the allotment should be given.

The PREMIER said if that were done in every case it would throw a great deal of extra work on the person compiling the list. Any person claiming to be put on the list had to give particulars of his qualification; his claim was kept in the office, and anybody was entitled to see it if he wished. Hitherto there had not been so much required; it had only been necessary to put "Brisbane" both under the head of residence and situation of property.

Clause put and passed.

Clauses 18 to 27 passed as printed.

On clause 28—"Electoral roll, how compiled"—

The HON. SIR T. McILWRAITH said that clauses 15 to 19 inclusive prescribed what was to be done by the registrar. By the 15th clause the registrar was required from the means at his disposal to make up a list of persons entitled to vote, and to send notices to those whose names were intended to be omitted from the roll or whose residence was to be altered. Up to this time the alterations would be in writing. Then clause 18 made provision for the supplementary list, and the next clause enacted that the lists should be printed and sold to any persons requiring the same on payment of a reasonable fee. Afterwards those two documents, the amended roll — amended in writing — and the newly printed quarterly roll, were to be submitted to the revision court to be further amended. Then those documents were to be handed to the returning officer to make up a new roll alphabetically. He thought that was the *modus operandi* described in those clauses.

The PREMIER said the electoral registrar would take the existing roll and put a mark in the margin against the names of people who were dead, or had left the district, or were otherwise disqualified. Then that roll would be produced at the registration court, and also the quarterly list—that was, the list of persons who had proved their claims to have their names entered on the roll. Both those documents would be

dealt with by the revision court in November. If they approved of the corrections made by the registrar they would adopt them, and what was left of the old roll after striking out the names of those who were dead or otherwise disqualified, and of those to whom objection had been made and proved, would be printed together with the quarterly list, and handed over to the returning officer. It was the same system as that in force at the present time.

Mr. NORTON said he did not think the form in that clause made clear enough what was the character of residence or other qualification. For instance, in the column headed "Situation of residence or property in respect of which qualification arises," it gave "Beenleigh." Well, if Beenleigh, why not Brisbane? In a form given in a previous clause there was something to distinguish the property so that it might be traced. Should the place of residence not be distinctly defined?

The PREMIER said he thought the place of residence should be stated if it could be done conveniently, but it was immaterial, except at the time a man was applying to have his name entered on the roll. Then it was important to know who he was. If the qualification was residence, the qualification should be stated; but if it was property it was not of so much importance where the applicant lived, because a person was entitled to vote wherever he lived, so long as he had the property qualification. On the whole the form was just as good as any other, and the hon. member knew the inconvenience of having too much in a column.

Mr. NORTON said the scrutineers could not be supposed to know every man who came up to vote. For instance, there might be two "John Smiths" at Beenleigh, only one of whom was entitled to vote in respect of his property qualification. If the scrutineer knew the property on which the qualification was based, and the wrong John Smith came up to vote, he could bowl him out.

The HON. SIR T. MCILWRAITH said that up to clause 28 they had provided machinery by which the names of electors already on the list for the past year might be struck off, but no machinery had been yet referred to by which names might be put on.

The PREMIER: That comes afterwards.

The HON. SIR T. MCILWRAITH said he thought the 31st clause was somewhat misplaced; it ought to be considered before the revision court was referred to at all.

The PREMIER said the matter was only one of convenience of arrangement, and he thought it more suitable in its present form.

Clause put and passed.

Clause 29—"Quarterly registration court"—passed with a verbal amendment.

Clause 30—"Notice of sitting to be given"—put and passed.

On clause 31—

"A person claiming to have his name inserted in any electoral roll may deliver his claim or send it by post to the proper electoral registrar for the district in the roll for which he claims to have his name inserted. The claim must be signed by the applicant with his own hand, or, if he cannot write, his mark must be attested by a justice. The claim must be in the following form or to the like effect, and in it must be set forth sufficient facts to show that the claimant is possessed of a qualification under this Act:—

"To the Electoral Registrar of the [Division in the] Electoral District of .

"I hereby give you notice that I claim to have my name inserted in the Electoral Roll for the Electoral District of , my name and qualification being as hereunder stated. And I hereby declare that I am possessed of such qualification and am of the full age of twenty-one years and upwards.

Christian Name and Surname.	Residence (specifying if in a town the name of the street).	Qualification.	Length of residence, if qualification is residence; or, where property is situated, its value, and how long held, or to be held, if qualification is property.

Dated this day of , 188 .

(Signed) A.B.

"The fourth column of the claim shall be filled up in such one of the following forms as is applicable or to the like effect:—

(*a*) Residence for six months at [*describing the situation and number of the portion or allotment (if any)*];

(*b*) Possession for six months of a freehold estate at [*describing situation as above directed*], of the clear value of one hundred pounds above all encumbrances;

(*c*) Householder at [*describing situation as above directed*] for six months, the house being of the clear annual value of ten pounds;

(*d*) Holder of a leasehold at [*describing situation as above directed*], of the annual value of ten pounds, the lease of which has eighteen months to run;

(*e*) Holder for eighteen months of a leasehold at [*describing situation as above directed*], of the annual value of ten pounds;

(*f*) Holder for six months of a license from the Government to depasture lands at [*describing situation as above directed*].

And the situation of the property, if any, in respect of which registration is claimed, shall be specified in such a manner as to enable it to be clearly identified."

The PREMIER said that in consequence of previous amendments it would be necessary that in the case of a foreigner the claim should show on the face of it that the claimant was entitled to be registered. He therefore proposed to add after the surname, in the first column, the following words, "and whether natural-born or naturalised subject, stating, in the latter case the date of naturalisation."

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

The HON. SIR T. MCILWRAITH asked the Attorney-General if there was any record kept in the Supreme Court giving a list of the naturalised subjects of Her Majesty in Queensland at the present time?

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL said he was not aware that there was any such list kept.

The HON. SIR T. MCILWRAITH: Then what record was there at all, that a man had become a naturalised subject? It ought to be registered in the Supreme Court, but the Attorney-General said it was not, and he should like to know what became of it.

The PREMIER said that according to the Act it should be registered in the Supreme Court in a book kept for the purpose.

The HON. SIR T. MCILWRAITH said he believed that the Attorney-General was right for once—that no such record was kept.

The PREMIER: I said it ought to be kept.

The HON. SIR T. McILWRAITH: The Act said it ought to be kept; but he did not believe it was, for the simple reason that only 1s. had to be paid for it, and he did not believe anybody about the Supreme Court would take any trouble for such a small amount as that. It was a very important matter.

The PREMIER: It is very important.

The HON. SIR T. McILWRAITH said he did not see how they were to challenge any foreigner at any place unless they could prove that his name was not registered in the Supreme Court. The Act said distinctly that it should be registered, and the Attorney-General said there was no record of it. He hoped that hon. gentleman would be able to find time, after his arduous duties in Parliament during the present session, to look into the whole matter and give—he would not say more correct information, because, as he had already stated, he believed the hon. gentleman was correct for once.

On clause 32—

"The clerk of petty sessions shall produce every such claim at the next following sitting of the quarterly registration court.

"The declaration contained in any claim shall be taken as *primâ facie* evidence of the qualification claimed.

"No claim shall be rejected for informality.

"When any claim is rejected by the court the chairman shall endorse on it the cause of rejection and the electoral registrar shall forthwith transmit by post or otherwise to the person from whom the claim was received a notice specifying the cause of rejection"

The PREMIER said on the second reading of the Bill it was suggested that there might be some ambiguity in connection with the 3rd paragraph, relating to informality. He therefore thought it would be better to amend the clause as suggested at that time, by inserting the words, "if it discloses that the claimant is possessed of qualification under this Act."

The HON. SIR T. McILWRAITH said he thought the Premier had misapprehended, to some extent, the effect of the objection that was taken to the words, "no claim shall be rejected for informality." Everyone would admit that the clause was a great improvement upon the present Act, and was a step in the direction of reform. But that reform might be defeated by the way in which the clause was worked. For instance, one of the most common cases that they would have to decide would be where, according to the schedule in clause 31, applicants would have to state the situation and number of the house they lived in, and the portion or allotment it stood on. They would find plenty of cases where they put in simply residence for six months. That would be considered as informality by the clause, and he did not think the amendment proposed by the Premier touched upon that point; because they had disclosed the nature of their claim to be put upon the list—namely, residence for six months—but had omitted to describe where it was. Many a man would say to himself, "I am John Smith; I am pretty well known, and that is enough." That would defeat the object of the amendment. Of course, he only gave the qualification of residence for six months as an example. The clause said:—

"And the situation of the property, if any, in respect of which registration is claimed, shall be specified in such a manner as to enable it to be clearly identified."

A man had to describe the situation of the land and so forth, and, supposing he omitted that, he (Sir T. McIlwraith) supposed that would be considered an informality under the clause. But the object of giving those particulars was to see whether the applicant was a *bonâ fide* one or not. The same thing applied to every one of those subclauses, (*a*), (*b*), (*c*), (*d*), (*e*), and (*f*) in clause 31. He would rather see any claim rejected for informality, and strike it out altogether, because it was an invitation to applicants to put in their claims carelessly. They should be required to state definitely where they held their property, and he did not think they would have much sympathy if they lost their votes.

The PREMIER said he rather agreed with the hon. gentleman. The difficulty was to define an informality. The claim must show sufficient facts to prove that the applicant had a qualification under the Act. He thought the subclause might be left out, and he would ask leave to withdraw his amendment.

Amendment withdrawn accordingly.

On the motion of the PREMIER, the words "no claim shall be rejected for informality" were omitted.

Clause, as amended, put and passed.

On clause 33—"Oral application"—

The HON. SIR T. McILWRAITH asked if there was any other clause in the Bill referring to the same subject?

The PREMIER: No, there is not.

The HON. SIR T. McILWRAITH said there should be some provision by which the court should decide claims of that sort. A man from the country could not wait about all day long.

The PREMIER said he was of opinion that applications from the country could be taken first.

Mr. MOREHEAD asked if the provisions in clauses 26 and 29—power of adjournment, and quarterly registration court—applied to clause 33? A man might be pressed for time during the sittings of the court, and could not make his claim without unduly interfering with the business going on.

The PREMIER: He can make his application at any time whilst the court is sitting.

The HON. SIR T. McILWRAITH said he thought personal application to the court would be a very favourite way of getting on the roll. When a written application was sent in the Lord only knew what became of it, but the business was done when a man appeared personally. Was he to understand that the reading of the clause was that during the sitting of the court any man claiming to be an elector could draw the attention of the court to the fact, no matter what other business was going on?

The PREMIER said he would not like to say that any person was entitled to interrupt the proceedings of the court. It would not take long to go through the list, and if the court was engaged upon that work they could not be blamed for asking those in attendance to wait five minutes. The justices regulated the proceedings in their own court, and they would no doubt deal with the cases as they saw most fitting and convenient.

The HON. SIR T. McILWRAITH said he believed the way in which the clause would work would be that most of the electors would choose to be put on the roll in that way and not send in claims on paper. He thought some provision should be made that the court should hear, before they adjourned their business, the claims brought forward during the day. The court might deprive a number of electors of their right by not hearing and determining the claims. It ought to be made compulsory upon the court to hear the applications before it adjourned.

The PREMIER said justices were compelled to hear claims, and if they did not do so they could be compelled by the Supreme Court. The clause would not be made any plainer if the word "shall" was inserted, and no difference would be made in the law.

Mr. MOREHEAD said, of course, if justices of the peace regulated their business in the way judges of the Supreme Court did, there would be no difficulty; but he could understand them declining to hear a case, and putting a man to great inconvenience—making him stand on one side, or adjourning the case from day to day.

The PREMIER: If the court had half-an-hour's work to do there would be no hardship in keeping even fifty men waiting to have their claims heard. A justice of the peace had power to adjourn a case from day to day. He also had power not to do his duty, but he was subject to the consequences.

Clause put and passed.

Clauses 35 to 38 passed as printed.

The HON. SIR T. McILWRAITH said he thought the hon. gentleman should now consent to adjourn. He himself had been working hard since half-past 7 that morning; and why should they go on after 10 o'clock at night?

Mr. KATES said they had done very well so far, and it was about time to adjourn.

The PREMIER said he did not complain of the progress the Committee had made, but the hon. member opposite wanted to introduce a new rule—that whenever 10 o'clock came they should adjourn, no matter at what part of a Bill they had arrived. The conduct of the business of the House rested with the Government, and there was no reason why they should adjourn simply because one member called out "Adjourn." If hon. members wished to discuss fully the four or five succeeding clauses in the part under consideration, that would be a reason for adjourning, but so far as he knew those clauses were of a non-contentious character.

The HON. SIR T. McILWRAITH said the Premier was incorrect. While he was Premier he adjourned the business at 10 o'clock when requested, though he admitted that very often it was twenty minutes past 10 before the House really adjourned; because when he was ready to adjourn members of the Opposition kept on talking—and not on Government business.

The PREMIER asked whether hon. members desired to discuss the succeeding four or five clauses? If not, there was no reason why they should not pass them before adjourning.

Mr. MOREHEAD said that on such an important measure as the Elections Bill they should not be hustled into hasty legislation by the Premier. The hon. gentleman knew there was nothing to be gained by refusing to adjourn. They had done a good deal of work already; and though the hon. the Premier might keep them till 12 o'clock, there would be very little more business done.

The PREMIER: Is it the wish of hon. members to discuss the remaining clauses?

The HON. SIR T. McILWRAITH: We should not have asked you to adjourn if we did not want to discuss them.

Mr. ARCHER said there was not a member who had not tried to make the Bill as good a one as possible, yet the Premier insisted on going on with the business when requested by members on both sides to adjourn, though he knew by experience that no more business would be done. When the hon. member was in opposition and wanted to go home he took care that there should be no more business done.

The PREMIER said he did not wish to press business against the wish of hon. members, but he also wished it to be distinctly understood that it devolved upon the Government to conduct the business of the House. He moved that the Chairman leave the chair, report progress, and ask leave to sit again.

The HON. SIR T. McILWRAITH said the Opposition also had a great deal to do with deciding when to adjourn and when not to adjourn; but the hon. member thought he could treat them like children.

The PREMIER said he only desired that courtesy should be shown by each side to the other.

The HON. SIR T. McILWRAITH: Set the example!

Question put and passed.

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

ADJOURNMENT.

The PREMIER said: Mr. Speaker,—I move that this House do now adjourn. The order of business for to-morrow will be:—Crown Lands Act of 1884 Amendment Bill, third reading; Marsupials Destruction Act Continuation Bill, which will be recommitted for the purpose of introducing some amendments which will be circulated to-morrow morning. We wish to dispose of that, because it is desirable to send it to the other House as soon as possible. Then we propose to take the second reading of the Licensing Bill, and if there is any time available to proceed with the Elections Bill.

Question put and passed.

The House adjourned at five minutes past 10 o'clock.