Queensland

Parliamentary Debates
[Hansard]

Legislative Assembly

WEDNESDAY, 5 AUGUST 1885

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY.

Wednesday, 5 *August*, 1885.

Petition.—Question.—Question without Notice.—The Operation of the Aliens Act.—Formal Motion.—Crown Lands Act of 1884 Amendment Bill—third reading.—Crown Lands Act of 1884 Amendment Bill—Committee.—Police Officers Relief Bill.—Adjournment.

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

PETITION.

The PREMIER (Hon. S. W. Griffith) presented a petition from the ministers and officers of the Presbyterian Church of Queensland, praying that such additions be made to the Licensing Bill now before Parliament as will abolish the employment of females in the bars of licensed houses, and moved that the petition be read.

Question put and passed, and petition read by the Clerk.

On the motion of the PREMIER, the petition was received.

QUESTION.

Mr. JORDAN asked the Colonial Treasurer—

1. What steps, if any, have been taken towards the promised lengthening of the dock in South Brisbane?
2. When are tenders to be invited for the carrying out of this work?

The COLONIAL TREASURER (Hon. J. R. Dickson) replied—

1. The works are under the consideration of the Harbours and Rivers Department, who have been urged to use such despatch as the pressure of business will allow.
2. As soon as the plans have been received from the Harbours and Rivers Department and authorised by the Government.

QUESTION WITHOUT NOTICE.

Mr. BLACK said: I wish to ask the Minister for Lands a question without notice. Perhaps the hon. gentleman is prepared to give an answer as to when the return I moved for in connection with land sales in the different districts of the colony is likely to be laid on the table of the House. It is some time now since I moved for that return, and it is a matter of considerable importance to a large number of people that that return should be produced at as early a date as possible—at all events before the Estimates come on for discussion. I shall be glad if the Minister for Lands can intimate to the House within a few days when that important return is likely to be ready.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS (Hon. C. B. Dutton) said: There are several voluminous returns which have been called for by the House, and their preparation is being gone on with simultaneously. If the return the hon. member has called for is specially needed for discussion in the House I will have it pushed on. I may say that several clerks are kept continuously at the work of preparing these returns. The return the hon. member asks for will, I hope, be laid on the table of the House within next week, at all events.

THE OPERATION OF THE ALIENS ACT.

In reference to a notice of motion for to-morrow, given by the Hon. Sir T. McIlwraith—

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL (Hon. A. Rutledge) said: I can give the hon. gentleman the information now. This morning I inquired of the Registrar of the Supreme Court as to whether the requirements of the Aliens Act were being complied with in all cases, and I found that as a matter of fact they are being complied with in all cases, and that a proper record is kept.

The HON. SIR T. McILWRAITH: Will the hon. gentleman put on the table a list of those who have become naturalised within the last five years?

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: Yes.

FORMAL MOTION.

The following formal motion was agreed to:—

By the HON. SIR T. McILWRAITH—

That there be laid upon the table of the House, a copy of all Correspondence between the Government and others with reference to the Resumption and Sale of part of the Queen's Park, Ipswich.

CROWN LANDS ACT OF 1884 AMENDMENT BILL—THIRD READING.

On the Order of the Day being read for the third reading of this Bill,

The MINISTER FOR LANDS moved that the Order of the Day be discharged from the paper.

The HON. SIR T. McILWRAITH: With what object is this motion made?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: To recommit the Bill.

The HON. SIR T. McILWRAITH: I know that perfectly well, but the hon. gentleman should have given the House the information.

Question put and passed.

CROWN LANDS ACT OF 1884 AMENDMENT BILL—COMMITTEE.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS moved that the Bill be recommitted for the purpose of reconsidering clause 5 and of introducing a new clause.

Mr. ARCHER said: Mr. Speaker,—Before that question is put I have a few words to say. It will be recollected that when the Bill was last before the House I requested the Minister for Lands to extend the schedule to some other parts of the country, because I could not help seeing that the people of the South would have privileges not granted to those in exactly the same position in other districts. I cannot see why the people in the southern part of the colony, as far as Bundaberg, should be allowed the right of free selection before survey without at the same time that privilege being extended to the people of other districts placed in exactly the same position. I know the people in the Central district are in exactly the same position. All the good lands that could be taken up in a solid block have disappeared in that district, and the reason given by the Minister for Lands for the application of the Bill to the South will apply equally to the Central district, and, as other hon. gentlemen have said, further north still. In the Central districts and round Rockhampton, at all events, I know for a fact that every available piece of land has been picked out, and there is just such country open as described by the Minister for Lands—a piece here and there between the spurs of the mountains. There is nothing else for the people in the Central districts to select in the meantime, and they feel aggrieved to think that, while in the South such places are open to survey before selection, they are not to have the same privilege. I mentioned this matter when the Bill was before the House before, but the Minister for Lands not seeing his way to change the schedule, and feeling pretty sure that the House would not have supported me if I went against it, I did not at that time press it further. However, yesterday evening both the members for Rockhampton and myself received the following telegram from the chairman of the Gogango Divisional Board. The Gogango Division, I may mention, represents very nearly the same boundaries as the Blackall electorate—that is to say, it starts half-way between Rockhampton and Gladstone, and goes up to not very far from St. Lawrence. It is, in fact, one of the largest coastal divisions, and the board have roadways to look after of a direct length of a couple of hundred miles. The telegram I am going to read is one that I received last night from the chairman of the divisional board. It is as follows:—

"Regarding amendment to Land Bill namely selection before survey in certain districts at meeting held this day am desired to request you that you will be good enough to exert your influence that Rockhampton will be included Similar will be forwarded to Ferguson and Higson."

I have not been able to see the junior member for Rockhampton, but I have had some conversation with the senior member on this subject, and we are both decidedly of the same opinion as the divisional board—namely, that the Central district, that is, the district about Rockhampton, should be included in the operation of this Bill. The people in that part of the country are placed in exactly the same position as people down here, as all the available land which has been open for selection there, and which has been open for a long time at a price far below the figure now fixed, has been absorbed. It is therefore necessary that residents in that district should have the same privileges that are accorded to the people of the South; and I make this appeal to the Minister for Lands that he will amend his motion so as to include the schedule of the Bill. I have no doubt the House will grant him leave to amend it in that way. I hope that what I have said on the matter will show that I have not risen now for the purpose of delaying the Bill, but simply because I have been called upon by my constituents to represent to the House that they have a grievance which may be remedied in this Bill.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: With the permission of the House I will amend the motion so as to read, "That the Speaker do now leave the chair, and the Bill be recommitted for the purpose of reconsidering clause 5 and the schedule, and the introduction of a new clause."

Question, as amended, put and passed.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS said the new clause which it was proposed to insert in the Bill, and which would follow clause 4, read as follows:—

Notwithstanding the provisions of the fourth subsection of the seventy-fourth section of the principal Act, a lessee of two or more contiguous agricultural farms, the aggregate area whereof does not exceed one hundred and sixty acres, and who is not, and has not been during the term of the lease of any of the farms, the lessee of any other contiguous agricultural farm, may take advantage of the provisions of that section in respect of any or all of such farms: Provided that the conditions of the said seventy-fourth section are fulfilled in all other respects.

When a lessee of an agricultural farm has at any time during the term of the lease been the lessee of another contiguous agricultural farm or other contiguous agricultural farms the aggregate area whereof, including the first-mentioned farm, exceeds 160 acres, he shall not be entitled to take advantage of the provisions of that section in respect of any of the farms.

It had often been charged against him in that House that he was disposed to obstruct and throw difficulties in the way of the homestead selector. It had also been said that under the new Land Act a selector who had taken up one 40-acre surveyed lot was prevented from adding to that by taking up any other contiguous lot—that he could only continue to hold one and reside upon it; and it was affirmed that the way in which that would have been effected would be by making the survey in such a way as to cut the land up into 40-acre lots. He did not think the selector would have any difficulty from his administration of the Act in that respect; but he preferred that no such power should be left to him, and the clause now proposed gave the selector the full opportunity of securing 160 acres whatever might be the size of the surveyed lots. It did not allow him to take up 1,280 acres at 2s. 6d. an acre, but absolutely restricted him to 160 acres, which was the same privilege allowed under the late Act. He did not think that he need say any more except that he would not put any difficulties in the way of the homestead selector; he had always been inclined to extend rather than diminish the area of land that might be taken up by selectors, whether under that clause or any other.

The HON. SIR T. McILWRAITH said that when the Bill was first spoken of it was understood to be the repeal of a very prominent feature in the Act of 1884—namely, survey before selection. After that it went through a different phase, and became a homestead selector's Bill; and the Government finding out, from the facts brought before them by the Opposition, that the homestead selector had been treated in a manner different from that which the House intended, and that the public outside considered the Act did not give the privileges to the selector that the Parliament intended, brought in the amendment that appeared as clause 5 of the recommitted Bill. That put the selector somewhat in his original position. All the time the Minister for Lands and the Premier asserted that the Act of 1884 took nothing from the original selector, and, in fact, gave him additional privileges. They had at last found out what was pointed out over and over again last year, in a debate that lasted a whole night, that the selector had not the same rights under the Act of 1884 that he had under the Act of 1876 and previous Acts. A few leading articles in the newspapers seemed to have had an effect that all the arguments of the Opposition had failed to produce. The Minister for Lands professed to have always been in the interests of the selector, but while the present amendment restored to the selector a privilege that was taken away from him by the Act of 1884 it took away from him another privilege that that Act gave him. Hon. members would remember that in the discussion that took place last year on the subject the Opposition contended for the privilege proposed to be given by the clause just moved, but they met with no response from the Government. He would explain to the Committee what had been taken away. By the Act of 1884, in subsection 4 of the homestead selector's clause, it was laid down that no selector should exercise the privilege of homestead selection on more than one block. If the Government surveyed the land in blocks of less area than 160 acres, then to that extent was the homestead selector's privilege curtailed. If the selection was only 40 acres, then the selector could only exercise his right on 40 acres. At the same time, if the maximum area of selection allowed in the district were 960 acres he was entitled to take up in the ordinary way the balance between 40 acres and 960 acres. The Government now proposed to allow the homestead selector to take up four adjacent blocks of 40 acres each, so as to make up the total of 160 acres, but they also proposed to take away from him the privilege of selecting the balance of 960 acres in the ordinary way. That was possibly taking away from him a good deal more than they were giving him, and if they were to take the honesty of the Minister for Lands at his own valuation it was certainly taking away a great deal more. If two blocks were taken up by a selector, and they amounted in the aggregate to 161 acres, then his privilege as a homestead selector was lost. That was a very great privilege to lose. The matter was put pointedly to the Premier in a question last year—

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

"The PREMIER: Yes.

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

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

Plainly, the hon. gentleman's opinion was asked on the point whether residence on the homestead selection would amount to performing the condition of residence on the other selections; and he said it would. The committee were therefore satisfied on that point. Then Mr. Macrossan asked a similar question—

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

"The PREMIER: Yes.

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

"The PREMIER: Yes; after ten years' residence.

"The Hon. J. M. MACROSSAN: Then I am perfectly satisfied."

That settled that point. However, he (Sir T. McIlwraith) drew the attention of the committee immediately afterwards to what had been the subject of debate before. After Mr. Macrossan had expressed himself perfectly satisfied—

"The Hon. Sir T. MCILWRAITH said there was another point that had not been met. He had said all along that it was in the power of the Government, by refraining from surveying in any particular district any block lower than 160 acres, to prevent homestead selection altogether in that district. If the Government surveyed the land in 180-acre blocks, no homestead selection could take place in that district; indeed, anything above 160 acres would take away the privilege. Why should not the homesteader be allowed to have his homestead in any farming district?"

He pointed out the difficulty there. The Government could block the selector in two ways. They could cause the amount to be selected to be so small that there would be very little inducement to become a homestead selector with such a small area of land—they could survey it in 20 or 40 acre blocks. In another way, the Minister could block the homestead selector by having the land surveyed in such large blocks that he would not be able to come in—that was, he could survey it in blocks of over 160 acres. In every district where land was surveyed in blocks of over 160 acres that privilege could not be availed of by the homestead selector. That difficulty was not met by the clause. The Minister for Lands had still the power;—at least, not the Minister for Lands—he did not understand the Bill;—but the Minister for Lands had told them that while he was Minister for Lands the blocks would be surveyed in such a way as not to hurt the homestead selector. The hon. gentleman must remember he had nothing to do with the acreage of the particular block surveyed. That was attended to by the Governor in Council, upon the recommendation of the Land Board, and it must be remembered that if they had a board that fixed the area, either very little under 160 acres or a very little above 160 acres, in the latter case the homestead selector was completely debarred, and in the former he was limited to just as much as the board or Governor in Council chose. They had got, by that clause, one objection remedied. It provided that if a selector had taken up several portions of land he was not, as before, confined to exercising the homestead privilege upon one portion only; but he might exercise it upon as many as he chose of the adjoining lands, not exceeding 160 acres. That was an advance in the right direction; but a most important privilege that he had under the Act of 1884 was curtailed by its being declared that if he held an aggregate of more than 160 acres—even one acre more—he had not the privilege of the homestead selector at all. That was the effect of the amendment moved at the present time. It took away a good deal more than it gave, and showed that the Minister for Lands and the board had not studied the interests of the homestead selector. Under the old clause, he admitted that with good administration the selectors might everywhere be accommodated, but with difficulty; while under the new clause the homesteader would be actually debarred, if he had taken one acre more than the 160, from having the privilege of a homesteader at all.

The PREMIER said that by the Act of last year, a homestead selector obtained certain privileges which he had never had under the Acts of 1868 and 1876—privileges which he did not think were really intended to be given to him, in addition to all the privileges he had before. As he understood it, what the House intended at that time was to give him as nearly as possible the same privileges which he had before, not to give him greater ones. It happened that additional privileges were given, and also that in a certain event his privileges might be diminished; but only in this way—he never was able to acquire more than one block for his homestead; the difference was that before the Act of 1884 he could himself choose how much he would take, whereas under that Act he must take a surveyed block, which might be less than 160 acres. That was the only diminution in the privileges, except one which was dealt with in the 5th clause of the Bill as it stood now, where in the event of a selector having paid more than 2s. 6d. an acre in five years he might not have been entitled to have the excess refunded. He did not think it was really intended by the House, although the Act said so, that a man who wanted a mile and a-half or two miles of land in one block should also claim the privileges of a homestead selector. The intention was to favour the small selector. It was not intended to facilitate the acquiring of blocks of 160 acres at 2s. 6d. an acre—a great deal less than its value. It was intended to settle the land in small blocks by homestead selectors; that was the object of the Government, and, in so far as that object was not facilitated by the Act, the Act had made a mistake. He did not see why they should offer facilities to men to acquire 640 and 1,280 acre blocks—giving them 160 acres of it at 2s. 6d. an acre. The natural result would be that every man would go for more than he would be able to use, and they wanted to encourage small settlement. The hon. member's arguments were perfectly well founded as arguments in favour of encouraging the monopolist, whereas the Government desired to discourage the monopolist and to encourage the small selector. If they gave a man 160 acres at 2s. 6d. an acre he need not complain; and if he wanted more than that, and was not content with being a small selector, he should do what anybody else would do, and pay for the whole lot. The Act never was intended to allow a man power to take up a homestead selection and pieces all around it. It was not a privilege that he had before.

The HON. SIR T. MCILWRAITH: Yes.

The PREMIER said he did not think that that was understood to be one of the privileges, and it was never one, because the privilege of taking up conditional selections did not extend to homestead selectors in the homestead areas; so that he could not do it, except in the remote parts of the country which were now set apart for grazing farms. If a man took up two selections upon a homestead area he must reside upon both of them, which was impossible.

The HON. SIR T. MCILWRAITH: Upon a homestead area?

The PREMIER: Exactly. The agricultural areas of the Act corresponded exactly with the homestead areas under the Act of 1876. It was exactly the same thing. It could never be done in the agricultural area, as it was called now, or the homestead area, as it was called before. The conditional selector never had that privilege; and therefore it was taking away no privilege that he had before. He was not allowed under the Act of 1876 to take up two selections at all. If he took up a homestead he could not take up more.

The HON. SIR. T. MCILWRAITH: Only in the homestead areas.

The PREMIER said they were exactly the same thing as the agricultural areas under the

Act to which the provisions applied. The hon. gentleman did not think of that before, and now he would deny it; but it remained a fact, notwithstanding his denial. The homestead area corresponded with the agricultural area, and the privilege was never given to the homestead selector in a homestead area of taking up conditional selections, and it was not right that he should have it. The real result of the clause would be to put him in the same position exactly as he was before, except that it would be a little more liberal. The hon. gentleman said that, with respect to surveying the land, the Minister for Lands had nothing to do with it. The hon. gentleman was wrong. The board had nothing to do with it. The Surveyor-General made the survey under the direction of the Minister. The board fixed the price.

The HON. SIR T. MCILWRAITH: No.

The PREMIER said the hon. gentleman said "No," but if he looked at the Act he would see that it was so.

The HON. SIR T. MCILWRAITH: I have looked at the Act.

The PREMIER said the hon. gentleman was remarkably obstinate—it was his nature. The Act said:—

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

The clause exactly restored them to the position they were in before, and it took away from them a privilege which he thought was given to them by mistake in the Act of 1884.

The HON. SIR T. MCILWRAITH said the Premier was perfectly wrong in saying that the homestead areas under the Act of 1876 were exactly analogous to the lands thrown open to the homestead selector under the Act of 1884. Under the Act of 1876 the homestead areas were a very small portion of the land that was open for selection; but the homestead selector under that Act had the privilege, and exercised it to a greater extent outside the homestead areas than within them. The homestead areas formed a very limited amount of the land actually taken up by the homestead selectors. The selector had the privilege of taking up not only his selection of 160 acres in a homestead area, but he had the privilege of every other ordinary selector, of taking up the maximum amount allowed in the district. The hon. gentleman was quite wrong, therefore, in saying that the homestead selector's privileges had not been curtailed. The selector was now compelled to take up not more than 160 acres, and if he took up one acre more than that, his privilege as a homestead selector went. As to the surveys, he knew perfectly well the clause to which the Premier referred, but if he had looked two clauses further back he would have seen that the Governor in Council, on the recommendation of the board, might, by proclamation, define and set apart any land as agricultural areas. Did the hon. member think the House would have passed a law giving to the Surveyor-General the power to allot lands in particular districts? That belonged to the board and the Governor in Council, and not to the Minister for Lands and the Surveyor-General.

The PREMIER said the hon. gentleman might say so, but the only answer to it was that such was not the case. The Act provided that the surveys should be made by the Surveyor-General, who was an officer under the Minister for Lands and had nothing to do with the Land Board. As to the other matter, all the land was divided into agricultural areas and grazing areas; and any man who took up a homestead selection in a place not fit for agriculture—who took it up as a sort of outpost—was not a *bonâ fide* selector, and the Parliament had deliberately determined that there should be no selection of that kind.

The HON. SIR T. MCILWRAITH said the remarks of the Premier showed exactly how far they had curtailed the rights of the homestead selectors. They were now limited to the agricultural areas. But the right of selection ought to have been granted all over the colony, whether in agricultural or grazing areas. There were as many men in proportion to population wanting homesteads on the other side of the Range as on this side of it, and the hon. member had deliberately limited them to the coast. The land to the west would be nothing but grazing areas, and that again showed how far the privileges of the homestead selectors had been curtailed. They were cut off from three-fourths of the colony, and of the remaining one-fourth they were cut off from nine-tenths. No reason had been given why the old privilege of selecting to the full amount of an ordinary selector should have been done away with. A privilege had been taken away from the selectors worth far more than the privilege that was being granted them, of allowing them to take up two or three selections provided they did not in the aggregate amount to more than 160 acres.

Mr. KELLETT said he had always thought it was the intention of the House, in passing the Act of 1884, that the homestead selector could take up 160 acres as a homestead selection, and could also take up the maximum selection as an ordinary selector as well. He remembered that there was a long discussion on the point, and the general opinion arrived at was that the homestead selector should be allowed to take up a homestead at 2s. 6d. an acre, and also take a selection adjoining up to the maximum allowed in that particular district. He should be very sorry to see that privilege curtailed or taken away. It was one of the best provisions of the Act of 1884. In many localities a man could not live on his homestead selection alone, and it was necessary that he should have grazing land in addition to it. He sincerely hoped that no alteration would be made in the position given to the homestead selectors by the Act of 1884.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS said that if a selector took up 960 or 1,280 acres of land, what sense was there in allowing him to have 160 acres of it at 2s. 6d. an acre? The man who was allowed the privilege of taking up 160 acres at that price should be restricted to it, and there was no reason why it should be extended to the man who took up 960 or 1,280 acres. Why should the maximum selector be allowed to get a portion of his land at so small a sum compared with what he would have to pay for the remaining portion? The hon. member for Mulgrave had said there would be no agricultural areas set apart over the Range. How could he or anybody else know that? If there was any need or probability of lots of 160 acres being used over the Range, that requirement would undoubtedly be met. It was not likely to be required to the same extent as on the coast lands, but no doubt it would be required in the neighbourhood of some towns, and when required he had no doubt whatever that it would be met. The hon. gentleman had referred to the way in which he (the Minister for Lands) had opposed the homestead clauses throughout the present Act when it was going through the House, and in duty to himself he felt bound to make some explanation on that matter. He had never done so in the House, and had never had any occasion to do so outside the

House, because he knew perfectly well that a large majority of the people of the colony at all events knew that he was not opposed to small occupants of land in any sense, nor had he any desire to curtail their interests or their chances of prosperity by the occupation of land anywhere whatever. But he knew that there were very large numbers of men in the colony amongst the homestead selectors who did not desire to have any special privileges given to them. All they asked from the country, or from their representatives, was that they should have a fair opportunity of obtaining land for settlement in areas where they desired to settle, and that they should be protected against the greedy monopoly of capitalists. That was where their danger came in. They had been excluded all over the country from the occupation of land suited for the settlement they desired to make. He would give an illustration of his argument by mentioning a group of cases that came under his notice only recently. In 1882 the Mackay-Hamilton Railway was brought forward, and plans and sections were laid upon the table of the House. Within three or four months there were twelve or thirteen selections taken up, of 1,280 acres each, and by whom? By members of the late Government, by the hon. member for Mackay and others—their belongings or hangers-on. Some 13,000 or 14,000 acres of land were absorbed in that way at the end of that railway line, and was made no use of whatever except to graze a few head of stock upon it. The history of that case would be the history of a great deal of land in other parts of the country. The persons who selected it fenced it in to carry out the conditions of improvement; and those fences were often pulled up, and no use was made of the land, which was left there to increase in value; and then when extension of settlement came and the small selector wanted land in the locality he would have to pay these people £2 or £3 an acre for it or pay a rental of perhaps 10s. an acre. That was the way settlement had been retarded up to the present time in every district of the colony, and the effect had been most pernicious. The small holder had been driven further afield, and was compelled to give a high price for land which cost the holders comparatively little, although it might have been a very fair price at the time they took it up. It was for those reasons he contended that the homestead selector should have a fair field and no favour from anybody. He was prepared to go upon land if he had the same opportunity as other men; and he should be protected against the land being rapidly absorbed by men who made no use whatever of it, but simply allowed it to lie idle and increase in value by the industry of others. That had been the mischief in the colony, and the cause of the great injury that had arisen and now existed even in the southern portion of the colony.

The HON. SIR T. MCILWRAITH said he believed that the hon. gentleman spent half his time mooning about the Lands Office trying to find out something that the late Government had done. He failed entirely to see what the hon. gentleman's argument had to do with the question before the Committee. He had told them that a great wrong had been done to the country, because some members of the late Ministry, and ten or a dozen other people, had taken up selections on the Mackay-Hamilton Railway. He failed to see what that had to do with the question, and he could assure the hon. gentleman that those persons knew what they were doing, and were not quite such fools as as he had put them down as being. The object of the clause, and the strenuous desire of the Minister for Lands, was to confine the homestead selector to 160 acres. If he dared to take up 161 acres his privilege as a homestead selector was gone. He could figure then as an ordinary selector, but he could not exercise the privilege of a homestead selector. Now, let them look at the character of the hon. gentleman who was now trying to force that amendment on the Committee, and see what he said on the subject when introducing the Bill of 1884. He said:—

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

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

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

The hon. member was very anxious that he should be kept out of the clutches of the big freeholder. Then he went on to say—

"Instead of the country being held in the hands of a few men, whom one can almost count on one's fingers, we shall have thousands of men holding and prospering on their small holdings, instead of being shut in upon areas of 160 or 640 acres, but men who can get space enough to live upon and prosper upon, as they have not been able to do heretofore. I can only conceive the purpose of some hon. gentlemen in this House"—

Always looking out for motives of men sitting opposite to him, and of the late Ministry especially—

"I can only conceive the purpose of some hon. gentlemen in this House who must have known that 160 acres was not enough for a man to live and rear a family upon. Some may, from ignorance of the interior, have thought it was enough; but there were many who knew better, and who can only have affected to believe it because it secured to them the possession of their leaseholds or freeholds without interference."

In that the hon. gentleman might be right or wrong, but how grossly inconsistent it was with the amendment he now wished to foist upon the Committee! What he proposed was this: The homestead selector, at the present time, had a privilege under the Act of 1884; under that Act he could select up to the maximum allowed in the proclamation for the district—he could make freehold any one of the blocks, provided it did not exceed 160 acres. He proposed now, by this clause, to give a further privilege of making a homestead in two or more of the same blocks, provided that they did not exceed 160 acres, and in addition to that they practically took away the privilege altogether of the homestead selector who had selected more than 160 acres. That was the position in which they were at the present time, and he maintained that they were taking away a great deal more than they were giving to the selector.

The PREMIER said it seemed to him that if the hon. gentleman's contention was correct they might as well drop the term "homestead selector" altogether. In fact, what the hon. gentleman was contending for was to abolish the homestead selector, and it would be a simple question whether every man should get 160 acres of land at 2s. 6d. an acre. That was what it amounted to. It would abolish all distinction between homestead selectors and other selectors.

The HON. SIR. T. MCILWRAITH said the hon. gentleman had grossly misrepresented what he had said. What he had contended for was, that all the conditions required to be performed by the homestead selector should be performed by him. He did not propose

to take away any single one of the conditions, nor did he propose to put the homestead selector in a better position than he was in before. What he said was that the homestead selector had the privilege — with the exception of homestead areas under the Act of 1876, which was a very small exception—he had always the privilege of an ordinary selector. He said it was a good thing for the community that he should have it. How could it do away with the homestead selector to give him a start at the time he was occupying his selection by permitting him to lease an adjoining block? As had been shown most distinctly and clearly by members on the Government side of the Committee, in ninety-nine cases out of a hundred, 160 acres was not enough for a man in this colony; so that, considering the character of the land to be selected at the present time, they were actually abolishing homestead selection.

Mr. KATES said that, considering the homestead selectors had the privilege of picking the very best spots for their homes, he should say they ought to be, and he believed they were, perfectly satisfied. They had only to pay 6d. an acre per annum, and by allowing them to have larger selections alongside they might neglect those upon which they had their homesteads. The homestead selectors were fully satisfied with 160 acres, and he knew scores of homestead selectors who had not got 160 acres, but who employed all their energies for high tillage and made a better living than they would be able to make out of a 640-acre grazing area. As to the statement that there might be 161 acres surveyed, he did not think that either the board or the Government would designedly survey over 160 acres in order to deprive those selectors.

Mr. MOREHEAD said he did not propose to address himself at present to the clause, but to some remarks which he was told fell from the Minister for Lands. He regretted very much he was not in his place when the hon. member made the attack he did on certain gentlemen whom he was informed the hon. gentleman described as "the late Ministry and their friends." He was told that the hon. member charged them with getting land in the Mackay district at a price at which they would not have been able to secure it had they not been in the position he had indicated. That was what he was told the Minister for Lands had said.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: You were told wrongly.

Mr. MOREHEAD said the hon. member could correct him afterwards. With regard to the selection he (Mr. Morehead) held in the Hamilton district, he would point out that as a matter of fact it was the only selection he had ever taken up in the country, and he had taken it up under the same circumstances as other individuals took up selections. He would go further and say that had they been desirous—the ex-Ministers and their friends—or Ministers, as they were then—it could have been secured at a very much lower price than that at which it was taken up by himself and others. That was a matter of record, as the hon. the Premier could find out for himself. As soon as Mr. Perkins and he had come back from the tour they made in the North they were so satisfied that the lands in the Mackay district were undervalued that they increased the price. It was after that increase in price that he had taken up his land, though he might have taken it up at the first lower price had he so chosen. He was further told that the hon. gentleman stated that that land was close to the terminal point of a railway voted by that House. He had never been on the land himself, but he was informed that it was thirteen or fourteen miles from the terminal point of that railway.

Mr. BLACK: Fifteen miles

Mr. MOREHEAD said the hon. member for Mackay, who had a local knowledge of the land, said it was fifteen miles from that railway. He thought that before the Minister for Lands made a charge against any persons of having taken advantage of their position to improperly secure land which they would not otherwise have been able to secure, he should be perfectly satisfied as to the circumstances surrounding the charge. He (Mr. Morehead) had stated the facts of the case fairly and honestly, and he was prepared to leave the Committee to judge between himself and the Minister for Lands. He was told further that the hon. gentleman said his selection was not improved. It might or it might not be improved, but he knew it was a matter which had lately been tried before a special commissioner. He did not know what was the result of the special commissioner's inquiry, but he knew that Mr. McLean was sent up there to inquire into the way in which the conditions were carried out on a special set of selections. He was happy to think the hon. member thought him of so much importance as to send up a special commissioner such as Mr. McLean—such a prominent blue-ribbon man; he hoped the gentleman found plenty of water on the selection. The Minister for Lands might have taken a broader view than he did and examined other selections round about Mackay. He could tell the hon. gentleman how he was being fooled by selectors round about Mackay; but he was not going to take him into his confidence. There were people whose selections there had not been sufficiently improved. He did not know why the Minister for Lands should have made the charges he had made against him and the members of the late Government. He had always treated the hon. gentleman with a most gentle hand. When he had seen him running for shelter under the wing of the mother hen, the Premier, he had always helped him; and he could not see, therefore, why the hon. gentleman should have gone out of his way to single him out and charge him with having made use of his position as a Minister of the Crown to get possession of land in a way that no other individual was able to do. All he could say was that there was not a single word of truth in the hon. gentleman's charges. It did not take much to make him (Mr. Morehead) angry, but the charge made by the hon. gentleman was so untrue and so absurd that he simply left it to the good sense of the Committee as to whether the Minister for Lands or himself had stated the facts of the case. The hon. gentleman's schoolmaster should look after him more; and if he (Mr. Morehead) were his schoolmaster he would put him in the corner for a week.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS said the hon. gentleman had taken a great deal of trouble to state a case which had never been mentioned by himself. He had never charged the hon. member or anybody with having got improper possession of land. He had mentioned those selections as an illustration of the effective shutting out of small men by allowing large areas of land to be taken up near which or through which a railway was going to be made. He said that was bad policy, and the effect of a bad land law badly administered, to allow any men to take up land in that way. He said that land should have been reserved for close settlement when it was known that a railway was to be made through it or near it; however, the contrary had been the fact, for the land was taken up in large areas, and

close settlement there was absolutely excluded. The hon. gentlemen were no fools ; they knew what they were about, and he had no doubt that they knew what they were about so far as making a judicious selection of land was concerned, and that they took up the best. In doing that they did a great injury, a great mischief, to the country. The Government ought to have excluded those men from selecting the land referred to as soon as they knew a railway was going through the land, and to have retained it for small settlers. His speech had been taken up by the hon. member for Balonne in a way that he never brought it before the Committee. The hon. gentleman, instead of getting his view from someone else, should have asked him about the speech before wasting the time of the Committee as he had done.

Mr. MOREHEAD : I should have to ask the Premier if I wanted to get anything from you.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS said they had heard a good deal from those hon. members about their horror of anything like cheap labour — from the hon. member for Mackay as well as the hon. member for Balonne. On every occasion they had expressed their disgust and contempt at anything that would tend to lower the wages of the working men in the country. Now, he would give them a sample of what those gentlemen themselves had been doing up in the Mackay district. It was well known that, under the Land Act, selections, after they had been confirmed, had to be bailiffed. In a return which he held in his hand it appeared that a selection, numbered 1,030A, had been taken up by Mr. B. D. Morehead on the 1st January, 1882, and that on the 12th of October he employed a bailiff for six months at £1 per annum, without rations and without any house to live in. Mr. M. H. Black took up a selection, numbered 1,011, on the 1st of January, 1882, and on the 9th of October he employed a bailiff for three months, also at £1 per annum, with no rations and no house to live in. In the case of the next man, the amount was lower than that again, being only 10s. per annum ; and the next bailiff he employed for six months he had actually to give him £6 per annum. The Hon. P. Perkins was in a similar condition to those already mentioned, he paid his bailiff £1 per annum ; and the Hon. J. M. Macrossan, the member for Townsville, paid his bailiff 1s. per annum only, with no rations and no house to live in ; B. M. Perkins paid £1 per annum ; and Catherine Brennan—he did not know who she was, nurse perhaps for the hon. member for Balonne—gave her bailiff £2 per annum, which was very liberal indeed compared with the others. That was the way the old Act was carried out by the hon. gentlemen who were now sitting on the opposite side of the Committee. He had simply said in the first instance as he said now, that they could see what mischief would be done to the country by carrying out the Act in the way he had described. Bailiffing in the way he had referred to might be legal, but it was certainly not within the spirit of the Act. If the hon. member for Mackay had been in New South Wales five years ago, he would have found it much more profitable to have been a land agent than a sugar-grower or a selector in the Mackay district.

Mr. MOREHEAD said that the matter was getting very pleasant. He was very glad to find that the apparently weakly member of the Government, the Minister for Lands, had shown pluck at last ; and he was perfectly certain that hon. members on the Government side of the Committee were pleased to find that he was not the stuffed figure they supposed, as probably he held the most important portfolio in the Ministry. But he was afraid that, although the hon. gentleman had selected him to point a moral and adorn a tale, he had adorned his tale too much. The hon. gentleman read out a list just now, evidently a carefully prepared list, made as an adjunct to a prepared attack on himself and others who had, unfortunately or fortunately, selected land in the Mackay district. After making an attack on him, in which he stated that he (Mr. Morehead) paid £1 a month or £1 a year to a bailiff, and that somebody else paid 5s. a year, the hon. gentleman said he thought they had acted legally, that they were within their legal rights. If the hon. gentleman thought that, he had the remedy in his own hands ; he could repeal the Act and alter the conditions under which the land could be taken up ; then if he (Mr. Morehead) and others accepted the altered condition of things they would act in a different way. But he did not think there was any cause of complaint if they had not committed any legal crime. Although the Minister for Lands had brought out of his box a tremendous petard—which he thought had blown up the hon. gentleman himself—he maintained that the Minister, by his own speech, had clearly shown that no charge could be proved against the selectors who had been referred to of having infringed the law. If they had done so the hon. gentleman had the remedy in his own hands. But he admitted they had not infringed the law—that they had not done anything illegal, although their actions might not have been sentimentally correct. He admitted that they had carried out their affairs in the way he would have done. He (Mr. Morehead) thought that so long as a selector did not break the law, either directly or indirectly, he had a right to manage his own property in such a manner as suited himself, and he believed that the Minister for Lands would see that he was not benefited either as a Minister or member by making charges against members of that which he could not sustain, and which referred to matters that were strictly legal.

Mr. BLACK said it was certainly not anticipated that, in a debate like the present, the Minister for Lands would have departed from the subject-matter before the Committee for the purpose of making what he could only designate as a mean vindictive attack upon some of his political opponents. He had always held that there were certain rules by which those who claimed to be called gentlemen should be actuated. Although they might, meeting in that House, have their own political causes to advocate, as long as they confined themselves within the bounds of what would be considered gentlemanly behaviour, there should be no feeling of political antagonism after they left the House. He regretted that he could not give the Minister for Lands credit for that straightforward honest feeling which ought to actuate all politicians when they left the House. The action the hon. gentleman had taken, and which, to his own disgrace, he had thought fit to refer to in the House, would certainly not increase the feeling of respect he (Mr. Black) would like to hold towards a Minister of the Crown. Not only had that gentleman thought fit to refer to matters of a semi-private nature, but he had misrepresented evidence by only reading those portions which he thought would be the means of bringing a certain amount of discredit on his political opponents. The hon. gentleman had quoted instances in which certain gentlemen had engaged bailiffs, giving them £1 a year without rations and with no house to live in. Now, if the hon. member had read the evidence—which he no doubt had in the box beside him, ready to produce on any opportune occasion—if he had read that and

told the Committee the truth he would have told what those bailiffs were really getting, what work they were engaged in, and how the conditions of those selections had been carried out. Although it was diverging somewhat from the matter before the Committee, still, as a personal attack had been made upon himself chiefly, he was quite prepared to explain the conditions under which those selections had been taken up and the terms under which those conditions had been complied with, and he defied the Minister for Lands to touch one of those selections unless he was prepared to confiscate half the selections in the colony. What he was going to tell the Committee was contained in evidence which he believed was in possession of the Minister for Lands. In the first place, he would mention that he believed attempts were made to prevent the attendance of himself and two other hon. members at the opening of Parliament. The Minister for Lands had chosen to make the attack, and he (Mr. Black) considered himself justified in letting the Committee know all the particulars of the affair. The House was summoned for the 7th of July, and he, with the hon. member for Balonne and the hon. member for Townsville, were summoned to appear at the Land Court at Mackay on the 9th, to show cause why certain selections taken up by them should not be forfeited. He would like to point out, as of peculiar significance, the way in which certain political opponents of the Government were persecuted while all others in exactly the same position were allowed to go free. The member for Balonne, the member for Townsville, himself, and the late Minister for Lands—the Hon. P. Perkins—were those selected to be made, if possible, painful examples of. He received the summons three weeks before the House met, and he at once applied—not fearing any investigation—to have the case brought on at an earlier date. He offered, in writing, to waive the thirty days' notice the Act entitled him to, but he got a reply that the cases would not be brought on earlier. He then communicated with those in Brisbane for whom he was acting, and after, as he believed, a certain amount of pressure had been brought to bear, the cases were brought on earlier. The hon. the Premier would remember his referring to the matter on board a steamer, pointing out the inconvenience it would occasion him; and he gave the hon. member credit for making a note of the matter and saying it would be looked to. When he got home that night he found a telegram stating that the case would be brought on earlier. He believed that if the Premier had been in town he would not have permitted such a gross injustice as that sought to be perpetrated by the Minister for Lands. The cases occupied three days in hearing, and every opportunity was given for taking evidence. He had not heard anything yet as to the result; but he maintained that in not one case was it proved that the conditions as laid down by the Act had been in any way evaded. So far from the selections being unimproved, they were very highly improved, considering the depressed state of the agricultural industry in that district and the whole colony. If the bailiffs only received £1 a year hon. members might naturally think there was something fraudulent about it; but the fact was that they were all contractors and had very large contracts. The hon. Minister for Lands had all that information in his box; it all came out in evidence, and in every case, as far as he remembered, the actual amount of money received by the bailiffs had been sworn to. The hon. member had said that the hon. member for Balonne engaged a bailiff at £1 a year, leaving the Committee to infer that that was all the man was paid. The amount of improvements on that selection alone amounted to £305, and that was the sum received by the bailiff. On another selection of his own (Mr. Black's) the hon. member had told them that 10s. was paid to the bailiff. Well, the amount expended on that selection for improvements alone was £275. There was another case referred to by the hon. member — that of Mr. Perkins. As to that selection, it was only taken up in September last year. As hon. members knew, selectors were allowed six months to get their bailiffs and make their arrangements, so that there was no real necessity to occupy that selection before the March of that year. In May that selector was called upon to show cause why the selection should not be forfeited, during which time improvements to the extent of £326 had been effected. Mr. Perkins was one of the selectors who was called upon to show cause why his selection should not be forfeited. He (Mr. Black) could go through the whole of those cases, and there was not a single genuine ground for the selectors being called upon to show cause. He considered that it was unfair that those cases should have been allowed to be pending so long. What was to be gained by it? The hon. gentleman had had the depositions in his possession now, he assumed, for more than a month. He (Mr. Black) had had them, at all events. He brought down the whole of the evidence with him. Hon. gentlemen must understand that there had never been any question of applying for certificates. There was no necessity according to the Act for putting on any improvements whatever, and had they applied for certificates it would have become the duty of the Minister for Lands to see that the conditions had been perfectly complied with. There was really no necessity to do more than put a bailiff upon the land; but in the cases he referred to, the selections had all been highly improved, and continued to be occupied and continuously improved, with the intention of putting them to the purpose for which they were originally selected as soon as the conditions of agriculture were sufficiently suitable. The hon. gentleman had also referred to the fact, and led the Committee to believe that they were somewhere near a railway line. They were fifteen miles from a railway line, and if that was any inducement to anyone to go and select land, or had it been the wish of those selectors to take advantage of the railway, they could have got land within one mile or two miles of the line. But in no case did they do it, and he might inform the Committee that that part of the district where the selections were taken up was at the time a totally new portion of the district. It was forty miles from Mackay; and the result of those selections having been taken up was that the whole of the land round about had been readily selected and was now in occupation; and a district that might have remained for years without any occupation was likely to be one of the most thriving portions of the district as soon as the conditions, whatever these conditions might be, of labour and one thing and another, were more favourable than at present. He did not think that any hon. gentleman who considered the question would agree that a man should spend money recklessly to satisfy the peculiar opinions of the hon. Minister for Lands. What he complained about in the Land Act of 1884 was its uncertainty. Selectors did not really know what their positions were. A selector, as was clearly shown last year, was to receive the land for 2s. 6d. an acre. Then the Minister for Lands was only too ready to make out that they ought to pay a great deal more, and an attempt

was now being made to cut down the area. It was clearly shown last year that he could take up 160 acres as a homestead, and he could take up an additional area as a conditional selection. Now, the proposed amendment was intended to curtail them again. There should be some sort of finality about it. What did they find again? The Minister for Lands had issued regulations insisting upon occupation in agricultural areas the moment a selection was taken up under the Act of 1884. He defied the Minister for Lands to point out where in the Act that provision was laid down. There was not a single clause in the Land Act of 1884 that he could find which insisted upon continual and immediate occupation by those who selected agricultural land. There was still another point—what was the selector to do? He did not know whether he was safe. If he selected land, believing that he was to be guided by the Act, he was liable, at any time during the fifty years of his lease, to be turned out. He hoped the Premier, who, he believed, understood a great deal more about the Bill than the Minister for Lands, would look up the matter he referred to, because he thought it was just as well, if they really wanted to encourage settlement, that they should put that Bill into the waste-paper basket and bring in a new one. The present Bill was so uncertain and vague, and liable to so many different interpretations, that none of the conditions were made clear. It was a gigantic failure, as anyone might have expected, being the fad of such an unpractical man as the Minister for Lands.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS said the hon. gentleman who had just spoken wanted a Land Act something like that of 1876, if he wished to work in the same way that he had been working with regard to those selections at Mackay, where he could keep them without bailiffs, or a bailiff's bailiff, which, he believed, was within the meaning of that Act. In no sense could a man reconcile to himself that he had complied with the law by putting a bailiff upon those selections. The hon. gentleman would like the present Act to be of that kind that he could carry out its provisions in three years, and make land freehold, and be absolved from doing anything more with it, so that it might grow in value without his doing anything to it at all. The hon. gentleman had made a very serious charge against him—that was if it had been true—which was, that he had called upon certain members on the other side of the Committee to show cause why their selections should not be forfeited. He might tell the Committee, in the first instance, that his attention was frequently called to the fact that no residence was being performed upon those selections—not upon four, or three, or two, as the hon. gentleman stated, but upon thirteen. The hon. gentleman wished the Committee to believe it was confined to four selections; but, as a matter of fact, he did not call upon them to show cause. He instructed the land commissioner in the district to institute inquiries, which was done, and the land commissioner subsequently fixed the day for holding his court. It had nothing whatever to do with him (the Minister for Lands); he had no more to do with it than the hon. gentleman himself. About four or five days after they had been called upon to show cause a telegram came down from Mackay from one of those selectors—he did not know his name, but the Under Secretary told him that a telegram had come down stating that one of the selectors wished his case to be heard in a week's time instead of in a month, as was usual. He sent back a reply to the effect that if there was no immediate cause or reason why that should be conceded the case should stand till the time he was called upon to show cause.

The HON. SIR T. MCILWRAITH: You did not know the selector's name?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS said he did not even see the telegram. He told the Under Secretary what answer to make. Three or four days after that, he believed, the hon. member for Balonne came into the office and saw the Under Secretary and told him that the date upon which the case was down for hearing was the 9th of July, or two days after the House was called together. When the Under Secretary told him (the Minister for Lands) of that he sent a telegram at once to so fix the date as to suit those selectors who had to put in an appearance n the House. He could do nothing more than that. It was not his fault that the date was so fixed in the first instance, and as soon as ever he knew what the objection to the date was he instantly ordered it to be corrected. The hon. member, in talking about the bailiffs, said there was continuous residence there. Would anybody tell him that even in the climate of Mackay a man could be expected to carry out the work of a bailiff when he had not a house to live in—not even a sheet of bark? The thing contradicted itself. It was no use the hon. member stating that the condition of bailiff had been carried out continuously, for the facts showed that it was not true. He did not believe that any man getting even 30s. or £2 a week—one was said to have been paid £300 a year—would be content to reside there without any place to live in. Although tent-pegs were seen, there was not even a tent on the ground, and no person was visible. Whether that could be considered a fulfilment of the conditions he would leave it to the Committee to judge.

Mr. MOREHEAD said every member of the Committee must regret the indecency shown by the Minister for Lands in dragging forward a case which he himself admitted was still *sub judice*, and of which he himself was to be the judge. A more indecent exhibition had never been made in that or any other House in the colonies. The annals of Parliament contained no record of such a disgraceful proceeding on the part of any Minister of the Crown. That notorious rack-renter, the hon. member for Stanley (Mr. White), might laugh—the member who made such gushing speeches about the rights of tenants in general, and ground down his own tenants in particular. That hon. member argued the other night that landlords should be abolished, and no doubt he would like to see all landlords abolished but himself. He would like to be sole landlord, and a more grasping and avaricious landlord did not exist in Queensland to-day than that hon. member. It was known from one end of the railway line to the other. On passing Laidley, one was told that the whole of the land thereabouts belonged to Mr. Peter White, that he got a large rent for it—25s., and in some places a great deal more per acre—and that when a tenant could not pay what he called the actual value of the land he turned him off very quickly. So much for that philanthropic landlord. Returning to the Minister for Lands, the statement made by that hon. gentleman as to the action he had taken with regard to those selections was not absolutely correct. As soon as he (Mr. Morehead) heard from the hon. member for Mackay of the action taken by the Government, he went and saw Mr. Hume, the Under Secretary for Lands, and told him that the date fixed would be very inconvenient—Mr. Black having already been refused by the Government to have the date altered. Mr. Hume said he had nothing to do with it. He (Mr. Morehead) said that if the date was not altered to suit the convenience of Mr. Macrossan and Mr. Black, who

would have to be present in their seats in Parliament on the day fixed, he should call attention to the fact as soon as the House met. Mr. Hume then said, "Dutton is ill in bed; he is not in the office." The statement of the Minister for Lands now was that he immediately went to Mr. Hume in his office, and said, "Alter it." He (Mr. Morehead) had made a record of all that took place. He felt and expressed himself very warmly on the matter, and told Mr. Hume in fairly vigorous English what he would do if the alteration was not made. He then returned to his office. Some time after lunch—perhaps about 3 o'clock in the afternoon—he got a telephonic message from Mr. Hume stating that the alteration would be made, and that the case would be tried at an earlier date than that mentioned in the original summons. He had still some slight recollection of his "Latin Delectus"—though his classical acquirements had nearly all evaporated—and he said, "My dear Hume, *Litera scripta manet.*" He put it down, and that was the fact. The Minister for Lands would lead them to believe that he was in his office at the time, and that immediately on the thing being put before him he made the alteration. That was not so. The alteration was not made until after he had stated in the most emphatic language that trouble would be raised, and a good deal of trouble, if three members of Parliament were forced to neglect their public duties to attend to their private interests. He would now go a little further, and would ask—did the Minister for Lands send out notices to every one who was supposed to be in the same condition as he and the other unfortunate selectors were said to be in? Did he send a notice to the Minister for Works' banker, Mr. Abbott, whose selection was in an identical position with theirs? The hon. gentleman did nothing of the sort, and he had Mr. Abbott's own statement for it. The Commissioner, Mr. McLean, like the traditional policeman, simply acted from "information received"; beyond that he did not go. He (Mr. Morehead) did not care two straws for his selection; it might go to the four winds of heaven for aught he cared, but it should not go without a struggle, and he would not be defrauded of his right by the Minister for Lands or any Ministry. If anything wrong was being done it was being done by others besides himself and those connected with him; and why was Mr. Peter McLean, that apostle of temperance, that man who was foisted into a position because he had been three weeks Minister for Lands——

Mr. MACFARLANE: Make it hot for him!

Mr. MOREHEAD: The Supreme Power will make it hot—very hot—for the hon. member. He will go where he would want water. There was no doubt about that, and everybody who knew the hon. member would indorse his statement. He (Mr. Morehead) charged the Minister for Lands with having, for personal and political reasons, selected certain electors in the Mackay district to be the subjects of a special investigation by a special commissioner, while other selectors in an exactly identical position were allowed to go scot-free, amongst them being the banker for the Minister for Works. He should like to hear some explanation from the Minister for Lands on that point, and why special cases were selected for investigation under very suspicious circumstances.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS said the only reason why other cases were not investigated was because no complaints were made at the time. He acted in all cases in which complaints were made that the law was not being carried out—that the conditions were not being performed. He directed the inspector to report upon those cases, and his report was to the same effect. Then the investigation was held.

Mr. MOREHEAD: No general inquiry.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: Every case was heard in which it was reported that the conditions were not carried out. It was impossible to hold a general inquiry as to all the selections in the district. The inspector could not afford the time, but in every case where he heard that the selector, whoever he might be, was not fulfilling the conditions, he reported upon it. The hon. gentleman had chosen to give his version of the correction made by him (the Minister for Lands) of the time fixed by the land commissioner.

Mr. MOREHEAD: I gave the true one.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: But there was one special part of it that he most distinctly and emphatically said was not true—and that was that the moment that Mr. Hume came to him and said that Mr. Morehead had complained that the time that they were called upon to show cause would prevent them from putting in an appearance at the House, he (the Minister for Lands) instantly directed that it should be altered, and that the alteration should be telephoned to him. That the hon. member had denied; but it was so.

Mr. MOREHEAD said, as a matter of personal explanation, he might state what he had already graphically described. When he saw Mr. Hume that gentleman did not go into the Minister's room. The Minister for Lands would lead people to believe that he was in his office at the time, but he (Mr. Morehead) was sorry to say he was not, being confined to his bed through sickness. He contended that the hon. gentleman having ultimately to give way after having refused to accede to the request of the hon. member for Mackay, showed that he acted under compulsion or pressure.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS said, with regard to what the hon. member called pressure being brought to bear upon him, no pressure was necessary. And did he think for one moment that the Under Secretary would carry to him any threats which the hon. member said were made by him? He did not believe the Under Secretary would presume to do anything of the kind. If he did he would get a good snub from him (the Minister for Lands). That officer stated the case and nothing more, and he (the Minister for Lands) told him to alter the day. If he (the Minister for Lands) could have been influenced at all in the matter, it would be to refuse to concede what was asked.

Mr. BLACK said he thought it was time to get back to the question. The present discussion had been introduced by the Minister for Lands, and it was not very edifying. He would like to ask that hon. member this question: What clause in the Act of 1884 gave him power to issue the regulations insisting upon continuous and *bonâ fide* residence on selections taken up under the conditional clauses of that Act?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS said he had very little doubt about the power. He had followed the reading of the Act, and knew exactly what he was doing. He need not turn up the clause. The hon. gentleman could turn it up for himself if he wanted it.

The HON. SIR T. MCILWRAITH said it was not often they heard downright impertinence from a Minister of the Crown addressed to a member of that House, such as they had just heard from the Minister for Lands. He remembered that he was never more disillusionised than

on reading Thomas Moore's life of Sheridan. He remembered how the writer clearly and glibly told how Sheridan used to work out his jokes from month to month, improving upon them and keeping them in his box alongside of him until at last he saw a chance of firing off a joke which gave him credit for ready wit. He thought a great deal less of Sheridan after that, but he could not express the contempt he could feel for a Minister who would bottle-up his indignation, keep it in his box for month after month, and wait until he had a chance of speaking to shoot it off at some political antagonist. He thought it was most degrading that they should find a Minister of the Crown trying to turn the whole of the Crown servants in the office, and the whole of the machinery of the law, to his use, in order to give effect to a bit of petty spite against some of his (Sir T. McIlwraith's) late colleagues, the hon. member for Balonne and the hon. member for Townsville. But those gentlemen would stand the test of anything the hon. member liked to bring up. He repeated that it was most discreditable on the part of the Minister for Lands, who had the whole of the evidence before him, and yet he brought up a little garbled bit which he knew perfectly well would be explained away the moment he mentioned it. He had the whole of the evidence before him which, he was satisfied, would prove that the conditions on the selections referred to had been performed, and having been performed was all the Government possibly could ask. He moved that the words in the proposed amendment, "and who is not and has not been during the term of the lease of any of the farms, the lessee of any other contiguous agricultural farm" be omitted.

The PREMIER said he was glad that the amendment had been moved, because it would bring the question to an issue. He rose chiefly for the purpose of saying that hon. members opposite, and especially the hon. gentleman who spoke last, seemed to have a singular idea of the functions of the Government. If a complaint was made to the Minister for Lands that prominent persons on the other side in politics had failed to comply with the law the Government should shut their eyes, and not make any inquiries, simply because those persons happened to be prominent in politics. That was not the way that the Government was administered at the present time at any rate. He did not think that causing inquiries to be made was any evidence of malignity or impartiality or unfairness. On the other hand, he thought that if his hon. colleague had failed to cause inquiries to be instituted when these complaints were made to him he would very justly have been charged with cowardice.

Mr. MOREHEAD said he quite agreed with what had fallen from the hon. gentleman, but he must remember that this matter was brought before the House by the Minister for Lands and by nobody else. He for one, as he had said before, thought the Minister for Lands would have been very much wiser if he had not introduced cases which were *sub judice*—upon which no decision had yet been come to, so far as he knew. But that hon. gentleman having brought the matter before the Committee, prominent members on that side of the House had no desire whatever to shirk any inquiry. In fact it was pretty evident that they had courted inquiry—that they were very desirous that inquiry should be made; and although they should not be sheltered in any way whatever, but should be exposed to the "fierce light that beats upon a throne," at the same time they should receive the same justice that was meted out to others. They should be treated identically the same way that other selectors were treated. They asked for nothing more and expected nothing less. What he complained against the Minister for Lands was this: That with regard to the particular action he had taken with regard to himself (Mr. Morehead) and others he was not animated by any pure desire to see that no wrongdoing was permitted against the State, but that he was actuated by a much lower motive—personal spleen—which should not actuate any person occupying such a high position as the Minister for Lands.

The PREMIER said that before the motion went to a division——

The HON. SIR T. McILWRAITH: I have something to say about this other point before you take up that.

The PREMIER: About the Mackay selectors?

The HON SIR T. McILWRAITH: Yes.

The PREMIER: Oh! if the hon. member wishes to make a speech about the Mackay selectors I will make way for him.

The HON. SIR T. McILWRAITH said he did wish to say something about the Mackay selectors. The Premier had said that the Minister for Lands would have shown cowardice if, having received complaints from any individual, and simply because they were complaints against political antagonists, he would not investigate them. But that was not the position. He would state the position of the case. If the hon. member had received complaints only about his political antagonists, had he been a wise man he would have examined into their truth, and would have seen if there were any other men in the same position in that neighbourhood before he took the action he did. He was putting the case correctly when he said that the information given to the Minister for Lands covered a good many more individuals than those against whom he issued summonses to appear and show cause—Patrick Perkins, Hume Black, Weld-Blundell, Walter Black, B. D. Morehead, John Murtagh Macrossan, Bridget Perkins, and Catherine Brennan. Those persons politically opposed to him he had deliberately chosen, and left out several persons who were either friends of the Government, or at all events, were not tinged with the same political antagonism. He left out—as they had been told by the hon. member, Mr. Morehead—the banker friend of the Minister for Works; though his selection was worked by the same agent, and the conditions were performed in exactly the same way. So that the Minister for Lands, without making use of the information he had to include a large number of Brisbane people who had selections up there, refrained from that, and deliberately selected his political antagonists; and he now had the meanness to come forward with a garbled report of the evidence in order to support the charges he had made against his political opponents.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS said the inference the hon. member had drawn from his action was wholly untrue. The hon. gentleman said he had information against other selectors up there, although he (the Minister for Lands) had distinctly stated that the complaints made to him were confined wholly to those called upon to show cause why their selections should not be forfeited, and upon whose selections the commissioner was instructed to inquire. He had been informed that the conditions of selection were not being carried out by those whose selections Mr. McLean was instructed to inquire into. As to the banker referred to, he did not know

that he had got a selection in Mackay. How did the hon. gentleman know what information he had received on that matter? The information he received was contained in a private letter from two or three persons, who had not the courage probably to make their complaints openly—and there were many men who had not the courage to do that. Those persons saw the conditions were not being carried out, and they gave certain information. Upon that he requested the inspector to go up and report, and his report was that the conditions were not being fulfilled, and the land commissioner then called upon those persons to show cause why their selections should not be forfeited. He had no reference whatever to anyone else.

Mr. MOREHEAD said he had been informed that the Minister for Lands said one of the selectors—Miss Brennan—was a nursemaid or something of the kind.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS on the Government side: No, no!

Mr. MOREHEAD: Did the hon. gentleman say so or not?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: No.

The HON. SIR T. McILWRAITH: The hon. gentleman did say so.

The PREMIER: He said he did not know who she was, and that she might be a nursemaid, for all he knew.

Mr. MOREHEAD said that if the hon. member made any such statement he told a distinct falsehood. He could tell the House that Miss Brennan was quite as respectably connected as anyone the Minister for Lands was connected with. It was disgraceful that the Minister for Lands should, even by innuendo, cast any such slur upon that young lady, and he flatly denied that there was any truth in it.

The HON. SIR T. McILWRAITH said the Minister for Lands had told them that he had received a private letter from two or three people —who had not the courage to publicly and openly make the complaints they made—and that he acted upon that. If the hon. gentleman had intended to do justice he would never have appointed a commission to inquire into the complaints made by those private persons who had not the courage to state their complaints openly. If he had asked for further information and seen how many others were in the same position, then he would have been in a position to act. He did not intend to question the statement that the hon. gentleman had received complaints concerning those persons against whom summonses were issued to show cause, but he certainly acted most unfairly to those persons, because it was notorious at the time that a number of Brisbane selectors held selections up there which were in the same position exactly. Mr. McLean knew that for one, and he ought to have inquired into them as well as the others, and as he had not done so he had not done his duty.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS (Hon W. Miles) said there were some persons who, whenever they were accused of some dirty action, always tried to drag someone else in with them. Why the hon. member for Balonne should have mentioned his name in connection with the matter he was at a loss to understand. The hon. gentleman seemed to insinuate that he (Hon. Mr. Miles) was under an obligation to his banker. He had always been in a position to snap his fingers at the bank. The hon. member seemed to insinuate that he was under obligations to Mr. Abbott, and because of that he had recommended that his selections should not be inquired into. He would repeat again—there was a Scotch phrase to express it, but he did not care to use that language in the Committee—that every man who was accused of a dirty action liked to drag in someone else with him.

Mr. ARCHER said that the hon. gentleman who had just spoken talked about some dirty action, but before he had done so he ought to have explained on which side the dirty action was. He had not yet heard of anything to prove that a dirty action had been done on the Opposition side of the House. To say that it was unjust or in any way dirty or mean under the Act of 1876 to get a contractor who was doing work for a person to do residence at the same time, was mere bosh. He could inform the Committee that if he had a selection he would consider such a man a proper and fit person to do it. He had to reside upon the selection while putting up improvements, and the very first improvements contracted for was the putting up of fences, and it was nonsense to say that such residence should not hold good. What had led them to enter upon that discussion? They came to the House that night to discuss a Bill which had passed in Committee a few evenings ago. The discussion was begun by the hon. member for Mulgrave, who confined himself entirely to what was down in the Bill, in the amendment, and in the Act of 1884, of which it was an amendment. He had no doubt that if that matter had not been raised in the middle of the discussion the Committee would have long since come to a decision on the question before them. But what did the Minister for Lands do? He took from his box and read a paper which was altogether irrelevant to the subject. They all knew how absurd it was for a Minister who had charge of business in that Committee to initiate a discussion such as they had had that afternoon. He did not think the Minister for Lands had come out of that matter with any greater honour than those whom he had attacked. He insisted that as far as they had heard that afternoon there had been no dishonesty proved, and not even the slightest attempt to carry out the provisions of the Act of 1876 in any other way than they would be carried out by the most honourable man in the country. One thing he intended to say in reference to the unfortunate blunder of the Minister for Lands in stating that he had been induced to take the action he had taken by representations made to him in private letters. It would be a great pity if the hon. gentleman now refused to let them see what those letters were, even if he concealed the names of the writers. In his (Mr. Archer's) opinion they ought never to have been mentioned, but having been referred to, hon. members should have an opportunity of hearing their contents. The hon. gentleman had also committed an error of judgment in confining his instructions to persons who were his political opponents instead of making them general. Again, he would say that now the hon. gentleman had told them that he had acted on private letters, he might lay those letters on the table of the House and allow hon. members to know what their contents were, even if honour prevented him giving the names of the writers.

Mr. FOOTE said he hoped the Minister for Lands would not take the advice of the hon. member for Blackall in reference to the letters which had been the chief means of influencing him in his action in respect to the instructions given to the officers of his department to make inquiries regarding the selection of certain land which he thought had been obtained in a somewhat questionable manner. He thought the Minister for Lands was perfectly justified in the action he had taken. He was astonished that

the hon. gentleman had sat so long and listened in silence to the ribaldry and nonsense and insults from members on the other side of the Committee. He was surprised that any man with a spark of manly feeling should listen to the bosh that came from hon. members on the other side from time to time without replying. Who had any right to administer a castigation to the hon. gentleman in the manner the leader of the Opposition had done that afternoon? Was the Minister for Lands to sit there and listen to all that without replying? Was it to be wondered at that the hon. gentleman occasionally retorted when he knew he had the power to retort, and to do so effectively? Was it to be wondered at that with the information he had he should reply after the hon. member for Balonne addressed him in the manner he did?

Mr. ARCHER: The hon. member for Balonne was not in the House when the Minister for Lands first spoke about this matter.

Mr. FOOTE said the hon. member for Balonne made use of the words which had been imputed to him, for he (Mr. Foote) heard the hon. member and heard him speak of the Minister for Lands as a nonentity, as a figure stuffed with straw; and every other hon. member must have heard him also.

The HON. SIR T. MCILWRAITH: That is pretty generally indorsed.

Mr. FOOTE said it might be indorsed by some hon. members, but the Minister for Lands probably had a different idea, and might prove not only that he was not a man of straw but also that they could not make him one. Those were the tactics he (Mr. Foote) would adopt if he were attacked as the hon. gentleman had been. Hon. gentlemen opposite were annoyed that it should even be hinted that they had in any way striven to evade an Act of Parliament. What else had they done? The Act stated that certain conditions of residence should be complied with in taking up a selection; and they had entered into a contract with a fencer to erect a certain amount of fencing, and while the man was doing that work it was understood that he was to act as bailiff. He supposed the next thing they would do would be to claim that a man cutting down trees was a bailiff. The inference he drew from the remarks of the Minister for Lands was that the lands which had been the subject of so much discussion had not been taken up in accordance with the spirit of the Act, and he thought hon. members had no right to attack the Minister in the manner they had done that afternoon. In fact, they had tried to sit upon the hon. gentleman. He commended the hon. gentleman for the way he had resisted them, and trusted that on future occasions he would show those hon. members that he was by no means the man of straw they thought he was.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS said he would just say one word in reference to what had fallen from the hon. member for Blackall. The hon. gentleman assumed that the action he had taken in setting the land commissioner in motion was in consequence of private letters he had received, and stated that he would like to see those letters laid on the table of the Committee. But the hon. member must remember that there was an intermediary in the matter—that the inspecting commissioner was asked to investigate the circumstances and to report to the Minister. The report of that officer enabled him to determine what action should be taken, and that report was such as required him to set further machinery in motion; and he therefore gave instructions to the commissioner to call upon the selectors to show cause why their selections should not be forfeited. If he had acted directly on the statements contained in the private letters he had received, his conduct would have been deserving of censure, but he had not done so; he had acted altogether differently.

Mr. WHITE said he had to thank the hon. member for Balonne for honouring him with his attention. He could now quite understand the objection that had been shown by hon. members opposite some evenings ago to the reading of his catechism. A number of those hon. gentlemen had been going in together for a big swim, and were looking forward to setting up landlordism on a large scale. Of course he quite sympathised with the hon. member for Balonne.

The HON. SIR T. MCILWRAITH said his object in moving the amendment was to prevent the homestead selector from being deprived of a right which he possessed under the Act of 1884. By that Act a man had a right to select up to the maximum allowed in the particular district, and the additional right of being a homestead selector on one holding, provided it did not exceed 160 acres. The object of the clause that had been proposed was to give to the homestead selector the right of exercising homestead privileges over the adjoining holdings so long as they did not exceed 160 acres. He pointed out at the same time that the insertion of those words in the 2nd paragraph would take away from him the right he possessed at the present time—namely, to hold as much as any selector, with the additional privilege of being a homestead selector of not more than 160 acres in one block. He held that the privilege taken away from him by the clause would more than curtail what was given to him, and the conditional selector would be placed in a worse position than he was before. According to the clause he had a right to exercise the privilege of a homestead selector on two, or three, or four selections, so long as they did not exceed 160 acres; but if he held more than 160 acres in any way, under the Act, he had not the privilege of a homestead selector at all. He did not think it was the intention of the House, when the Bill of 1884 passed, to curtail the privileges of the homestead selector. He had pointed out that he held the privilege of an ordinary selector in addition to his privilege as a homestead selector upon all the land open for selection under the Act of 1876, except those lands that were called homestead areas. He also pointed out that the lands that were actually in the homestead areas under the Act of 1876 were a very limited portion of the land actually open for selection. Not only, therefore, were they confining the homestead selector within narrower limits than before, but they were taking away privileges which he had always enjoyed.

The PREMIER said the hon. member had reiterated the arguments he had already used in support of the amendment, but he (the Premier) did not wish to reiterate those on the other side. He simply said that the privileges of the homestead selector would be the same as under the Act of 1876, with this difference, that homestead selection would not be allowed in grazing areas. The agricultural areas were the only areas under the Act of 1876 where homestead selection was intended to take place. The homestead selector was to be confined to the agricultural districts, and, if the clause were passed as it stood, the provision would be the same as it was before. He had also pointed out that it was never intended to, in effect, reduce the price of land, but to encourage small settlement.

The HON. SIR T. MCILWRAITH said the hon. gentleman had admitted that he was wrong in saying that it was the intention of the Act of 1876 that homestead selection should take place

in agricultural areas only. The Act distinctly specified that the homestead selector had the right of selection upon any land open for selection for any purpose. As the amount of land open for selection under the Land Act of 1876 exceeded in a very great degree the amount of land that was now open for selection as homestead areas, it followed that they had curtailed the privileges of the selector very considerably compared with the Act of 1876. Not only that, but they took away a privilege that was given under the Act of 1884—that was, the privilege of being a selector under the Act and being able to select up to 160 acres as a homestead selector as well. No doubt the hon. gentleman tried to make out that their only contention was that the selector ought to have the privilege of getting a certain part of his land at 2s. 6d. an acre. He performed all the conditions of settlement, and expenditure of his money on his selection, and residence, and, in fact, everything that the homestead selector had to do he actually did do, and he retained what he had always had under the Act—the privilege of a selector in addition to it.

Mr. JORDAN said it had been clearly pointed out by the Premier that the proposed amendment gave a right to any person holding 1,280 acres of agricultural area, under the Act of 1884, to take up 160 acres of it at 2s. 6d. an acre. He took sufficient interest in the matter not to allow persons able to take up 1,280 acres to have the privilege of taking up 160 acres at 2s. 6d. an acre. His (Mr. Jordan's) opinion was that the homestead clauses of the Act of 1884 should be carried out, and that homestead selectors—poor men, wanting only 160 acres of land—should be certain of getting it at 2s. 6d. per acre and no more. There were two classes of men, the large selectors and the homestead selectors, working together side by side, in the Logan district, where he resided for six years, and he could not help being struck with the contrast between the success of the small man who contented himself with from 20 acres to 160 acres and the non-success of those persons who had tried to extend their operations over large areas. The small men were mostly Germans and Scotch, and people who thoroughly worked their land and were invariably successful. The successful farmers on the Logan were those who were contented with small holdings. The others were chiefly Englishmen and Irishmen, who seemed to have a great desire to be large landholders, and they ruined themselves in their attempts to grasp too much. He did not want to see the amendment passed in the form desired by the leader of the Opposition. He should be very sorry that men who could afford to take up an area of 1,280 acres of land should have a right to take up 160 acres at 2s. 6d. an acre. He wanted to legislate for—he would not say the poor man, for that phrase was too much hackneyed—but he wanted to legislate for the *bonâ fide* farmers—men who by the labour of their hands made agriculture successful in the colony. It was a matter of the very greatest importance that they should legislate in that direction—that they should almost give away the land to that class of persons—but certainly not to those who could afford to take up 1,280 acres of land.

Mr. KELLETT said he also wished to legislate for the *bonâ fide* agricultural selector; but under the Act of 1884 a new system—that of leasing—was introduced, and he could not see why a man who was a *bonâ fide* agricultural farmer with a homestead selection of 160 acres should not be able to take up and lease an adjoining block of 160 acres if he chose. It did not necessarily follow that he would take up the whole 1,280 acres; the majority of them would take up small leaseholds, which they would use for grazing purposes. That was, he believed, the intention of the House in passing the Act of 1884.

The HON. SIR T. MCILWRAITH said that in speaking on the homestead clause last year the Premier said :—

"The provisions were, as nearly as possible, the same—taking away one privilege that had been abused from the selector, and conceding the additional privilege he had pointed out. Not a single word had been said till that afternoon, publicly suggesting for a moment that the clause did not carry out what was desired, because it was as nearly analogous to the homestead system as was compatible with the general scheme of the Bill."

He would now read to the Committee what the Premier said with regard to the privileges which the selector had previously enjoyed. The hon. gentleman said :—

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

That was all he (Sir T. McIlwraith) was contending for now; and the Premier used almost the same words last year that he had been using to-day. The hon. gentleman also contended that the selector under the Act of 1876 could not be a homestead selector and a conditional selector too, but his own words showed plainly enough that he considered they had that right, and did away with his present contention that they were trying to give a new privilege to the selector which he did not enjoy under that Act.

Mr. MOREHEAD said that surely, after the quotations that had just been read by the leader of the Opposition, the Premier would explain or try to explain them away.

The PREMIER said the leader of the Opposition had made the same speech twice before that evening, and he had answered it twice. He did not think it necessary to answer it again.

The HON. SIR T. MCILWRAITH said he had not read the same extracts before, unless the hon. gentleman had repeated his speeches more than once.

The PREMIER said he had been obliged in the debates on the Crown Lands Bill of last year to answer the same objections and questions over and over again.

Mr. MOREHEAD said that no doubt the members of the Opposition had asked the same questions over and over again, but they were obliged to do so because they could not get direct answers from the Government unless they nailed the Premier down as hard as a man could be nailed. Questions were answered by the hon. gentleman in an indirect way, whereas they wanted positive answers.

The HON. SIR T. MCILWRAITH said he had certainly quoted before from the hon. member's speeches on that subject last year, and one of them he would quote again.

During the whole of the speech of the hon. member for Townsville, there was only one interjection by the Premier, and it was this :—

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

"The PREMIER: Yes."

That was the only speech of the hon. gentleman that he had quoted that night—"Yes." Then—

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

"The PREMIER: Yes; after ten years' residence.

"The Hon. J. M. MACROSSAN: Then I am perfectly satisfied."

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

AYES, 27.

Messrs. Griffith, Rutledge, Miles, Dickson, Dutton, Kellett, Foote, Aland, Isambert, Jordan, White, Kates, Campbell, Buckland, Wakefield, Foxton, Grimes, Salkeld, Beattie, Wallace, Macfarlane, Midgley, Higson, Horwitz, Sheridan, Brookes, and Bailey.

NOES, 10.

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

Resolved in the affirmative.

Question—That the proposed new clause stand part of the Bill—put.

The HON. SIR T. MCILWRAITH said he had another amendment to propose. The effect of the part of the clause that had been retained by the last division was this : A homestead selector who had an additional selection beyond those which he wished to make homesteads was not to have the privilege of having his homestead in two or three pieces ; and they now came to the main point as contained in the last paragraph :—

"When a lessee of an agricultural farm has at any time during the term of the lease been the lessee of another contiguous agricultural farm or other contiguous agricultural farms the aggregate area whereof, including the first-mentioned farm, exceeds one hundred and sixty acres, he shall not be entitled to take advantage of the provisions of that section in respect of any of the farms."

If he could not get what he desired—that all homestead selectors should have the privilege of making up their 160 acres from one, two, or more contiguous farms—he would try now for what he held they had always had, that was the right at all events to one block under the Act of 1884, no matter how many more contiguous selections they might hold. Hon. members would understand that they had not yet decided the whole question. They had only decided that those who held contiguous blocks to a greater extent than 160 acres should not have the privilege of having a homestead in more than one block. He wanted to decide now whether or not they should have the right of selection in addition to the 160-acre homestead that they had selected. He therefore moved that the paragraph he had read be omitted from the clause.

The PREMIER said that the paragraph was complementary to the other. It was a converse proposition—that certain persons should not be entitled to get more than a certain amount of land at 2s. 6d. an acre. The proposition put forward was, that if a man wanted to get more than 160 acres he should not get any of it for 2s. 6d. an acre ; while the proposition the hon. member put forward was that he should.

Mr. MOREHEAD said he noticed that the new clause was proposed by Mr. Dutton—he presumed he was the Minister for Lands—yet they had not heard a word about it from him. Here they had the Premier again taking up the work. Why should they not have a word from the father of the original Act—if it was original? To be told it was complementary to the other was not a sufficient argument.

Mr. KATES said that by the amendment, the leader of the Opposition proposed to allow a homestead selector to take up more than his homestead. It was most undesirable to allow a man in the settled districts to take up a selection of the very best land in the country, and at the same time give him the privilege to take up land outside it. The result would be that between the two stools the selector would come to the ground. If they confined the homestead selector to 160 acres, they almost compelled him to concentrate his energies upon that particular piece of land and he was almost sure to succeed, whereas if they allowed him to take up land beyond his means he would be likely not to succeed. Although they had millions of acres of land in the colony, what was really good land was very scarce indeed. What they wanted was a multitude of selectors, and by allowing them to take up 160 acres each they would be well satisfied. He had heard no complaints from men who had only 80 acres, and he was sure that if they were allowed to have 160 acres they would have good reason to be satisfied, and there would be no grumbling.

Mr. ARCHER said the hon. gentleman said it was not judicious to allow the homestead selector to have more than 160 acres of agricultural land ; but that was not their contention at all. They contended that to be successful he should be allowed to have grazing land. The clause prevented him from taking up land in any other part.

The PREMIER : No, no !

Mr. ARCHER said it prevented him from taking up a contiguous selection. The clause would not allow the selector to combine agriculture with grazing. There was a tendency to pick out probably the very best bits of the Darling Downs. There he believed there were a good many farmers who made a good living on their farms, but there was no such thing in his part of the country as a farm which paid a man. He had tried farming himself, and he had not succeeded in getting a crop for the last three years. It would be very hard for the farmer in the Central districts if he could not get grazing land with his farm. That clause would prevent him. He might get grazing land miles away, but that would be of no advantage to him. It was probably accounted for by the fact that some people were only acquainted with the place in which they lived. The hon. member for Darling Downs perhaps came from a part of the country where 160 acres of good agricultural land might be got in one block, but that was not the case in other parts of the colony.

Mr. JORDAN said he was reminded of what took place twenty-one years ago in Rockhampton, when he first had the pleasure of being introduced to the hon. member for Blackall. He remembered they had a very interesting conversation upon that very question, and the hon. member then told him that he did not think that agriculture could be shown to have been successful in that district. He had, however, had conversations with other persons in the Rockhampton district—it was at that time his business to inquire into the agricultural capabilities of that locality. He ascertained that though the hon. member for Blackall

was well known—in fact, everybody knew him—he did not know everybody; and he certainly did not know much about the operations of a number of farmers there. Many of them had told him that they were able to make an excellent livelihood by agriculture, and many of them had said they were able almost to make a living out of their poultry and dairy.

Mr. ARCHER: That is grazing land.

Mr. JORDAN said that agriculture was a success in the Rockhampton district twenty-one years ago, and he had no reason to believe it was not so now.

Mr. ARCHER said he very much regretted that the prosperity of the agriculturists there had not continued. The Minister for Lands knew as well as he did that agriculture in the Rockhampton district, unless combined with grazing, had not been a success, and he further knew there had not been a crop in the district for the last three years. It was well known that the successful men there had invariably to combine grazing with agriculture. He did not believe there were fifty persons in the whole of that district making a living simply by agriculture.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS said what the hon. gentleman had stated was correct as to the character of the Rockhampton district for agricultural purposes. It certainly was not an agricultural district; there were bits here and there of good agricultural land, but it was not fitted for homestead settlement. There were, however, a good many places in the colony that were not fitted for homestead settlement; but the persons living there could take advantage of the other provisions of the Act.

Mr. ARCHER said the hon. member had admitted that there were some portions of land here and there, even near Rockhampton, that were good enough for agriculture, and why should not persons be allowed to settle upon portions of that land, and combine with it so much land for grazing? They were making the Bill so that it would only be applicable to the richest parts of the country; and if they permitted a selector to combine grazing with agriculture they might apply it to nearly all parts of the colony.

Mr. SALKELD said they ought to bear in mind the class of persons for whom the homestead clauses were introduced. He had always been under the impression that they were intended to meet the case of persons who had not the means to take up large areas, and who wished to go into agriculture. If that were so, he could not see that the amendment of the leader of the Opposition was going to help that class of persons in any way whatever. The effect of the amendment would simply be that persons who could afford to take up larger areas of land than it was anticipated would be taken up by homestead selectors would be able to obtain 160 acres at 2s. 6d. an acre. It was no use for hon. members opposite to pose as the friends of the homestead selector—of the working man—who was unable to take up more than 160 acres. It was very easy to draw a red herring across the track, and he thought that was what had been done that evening. As far as he knew, homestead selectors, and those who were desirous of becoming such, would be perfectly satisfied with the Land Act as amended by that Bill. The only protection the homestead selector had was the limit to the area and insistence upon the conditions of residence and improvements. If that were not done the old story would be repeated over again: all the best land would be taken up by persons of means.

Mr. MOREHEAD said that whatever might be the result of the division with regard to the new clause proposed by the Minister for Lands, the country would bear this in mind: that even that concession to the homestead selector had been dragged out of the Ministry by the Opposition side of the Committee. If it had not been for the action taken by the hon. member for Mackay, Mr. Black, the present amendment would never have been submitted to the Committee. They must remember how the Government benches were flustered when the amendment was proposed by the hon. member for Mackay. Hon. members sitting at the back of the Premier got up and spoke against the measure as it stood, and announced their intention of supporting some such amendment as was proposed. If the Opposition had done nothing more than get the concession that had been made they would deserve very well of the country, and especially of the homestead selector, for having asserted his rights in a way they were not asserted in the Bill as it was introduced by the Government. They had that much to their credit. They had forced the hand of the Government. If the Government had as docile a majority now as they had in sessions gone by they would have forced their tyrannical measure through the House. But there were ominous growlings and grumblings and signs of discontent from the back benches when the Bill was brought forward. And when they saw that, what course was adopted by the Government? Why, the Premier moved that "this House do now adjourn," so that he might amend the measure in his own way. In the meantime he had soothed that section of his following who had threatened to leave him on that matter. But the whole of the good there was in the amendment was due not to the action of the Government, but wholly and solely to the action of the Opposition. The hon. gentleman could not deny—the members on the Government back benches could not deny—that unless action had been taken by the Opposition to prevent a gross injustice being done to the homestead selector they would not have had the amendment proposed by the Minister for Lands. He was glad to see that the Government supporters were not hoodwinked in that matter, that they did not see it through the Great Liberal spectacles, and he hoped they would soon come to see, in what an hon. member opposite would probably call, "the light of perfect day." He took no credit for the amendment himself, but he contended that whatever benefit it gave to the homestead selector was due to the action of the hon. member for Mackay and the leader of the Opposition.

Mr. GRIMES said the speech of the hon. member for Balonne showed the reason why that amendment had been proposed by the leader of the Opposition. It was not with a desire to benefit the *bonâ fide* selector; it was to make a show. It was let out by the hon. gentleman that what they wanted, was to be able to say, "We have forced this"—"We have got you this"—and of course it would go forth to the country that they and not the Government were the friends of the homestead selectors.

The PREMIER: Oh no, it won't!

Mr. GRIMES said the selectors would not believe it; they were too wise to be caught in that way. They knew that the desire of the Government in power was to give them a fair amount of land and prevent the remainder from being taken up by monopolists. That was the desire of the Government, and a very laudable desire it was. It ought to be known to hon. members that homestead areas were picked portions of the country—picked on account of their suitability for agriculture. If they gave men with money a chance of taking up 160 acres, and then contiguous pieces, piece after piece, the homestead areas would very soon be all selected;

and then the grazing land would be useless to the small selector. He trusted the amendment would be treated as it deserved.

The HON. SIR T. MCILWRAITH said he thought the hon. member for Ipswich must see that he had done a great injustice to the Opposition in saying that they had been attempting to draw a red herring across the trail. They had been attempting to get the selector put in the position that he was left in under the Act of 1876, and had used exactly the same arguments last year when the present Act was before the House. The hon. members for Oxley and Darling Downs said the Committee ought not to give any of the privileges of the homestead selectors to anyone except those who were not able to take up more than 160 acres. Did the hon. gentlemen think that was the position of things at the present time? It was not. At the present time, under the Act of 1884, the homestead selector could select his 160 acres and as much as any other selector, provided there was a block of a quarter of a mile, or even one-eighth of a mile, intervening between his holdings.

The PREMIER: He must occupy it.

The HON. SIR T. MCILWRAITH said he was coming to that. They gave a certain class of men the right of homestead selection to the extent of 160 acres. Then, if a man was wealthy enough to be able to afford to take up more land at a distance of a quarter of a mile or ten miles away, and pay a bailiff, he had the privilege of selection—a privilege denied to the man who could not pay a bailiff. The amendment simply had the effect of blocking the homestead selector, not from taking up additional selections near him, but adjoining him. It was an additional handicap on the man who had not so much means as the other. The whole of the arguments of members on the other side of the Committee were based on the supposition that a man who was entitled to 160 acres at 2s. 6d. an acre had no other privileges under the Act, while as a matter of fact he had the privilege of being a selector, provided he was rich enough to be able to afford to select at a distance from his homestead.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS said that if a man took up land not contiguous to his homestead he could not make it a leasehold, and that was the point members on the Opposition side professed to attach so much importance to.

Mr. BLACK said the hon. gentleman did not seem to know his own Bill. A man could not make his selection a freehold as long as he kept away from it, but as soon as he had complied with the conditions on his homestead he could then set to work and make his other selection a freehold.

Mr. MACFARLANE said they were losing sight of the effect of the Act passed last year. Under that Act the land of the country was divided into three parts—large grazing areas, 50,000-acre areas, and agricultural areas—so that every man in the country might be allowed to select according to his means. If a man were rich enough to go in for a large selection he might make part of it into an agricultural farm. Then in the case of another man, who could not take up so large an area, but could take up from 5,000 to 20,000 acres—there was nothing to prevent him from going in for as much agriculture as he liked. He could put the whole area under crops if he pleased. Then the small man with no means, who could not take up 5,000 acres, was also met. He could go in as a farmer; the best land in the country was picked out for him, and he could get it for 6d. an acre per year, or for 2s. 6d. an acre altogether. If a man took up a homestead, and wanted an additional area for grazing purposes, would it be right to allow him to have ground contiguous to his homestead that was set apart for agricultural purposes? That would be unreasonable, and unfair to all the other selectors in the colony. He did not think the farmers themselves who had homestead selections would be better satisfied if they had the privilege which it was sought to give them, if they had taken up the land to cultivate it and not with the view of becoming graziers. He should oppose any amendment that had been proposed on the other side.

Mr. NORTON said there appeared to be a misapprehension in the minds of some hon. members, who thought the homestead clauses were to enable people to settle down and go in for agriculture. Originally there was no such intention. There was one class of selectors who were sure to take advantage of the homestead clauses, and who were almost debarred from cultivating the ground by the nature of their business; and those were the carriers. When the clauses were first introduced in the Bill of 1868 the carriers were specially referred to, and they had been referred to on every occasion when the matter had come before the House since. Although those men did not cultivate the land themselves, still they promoted agriculture, because they had to buy fodder for their horses, and so they induced others to cultivate. They settled on the land and took up homesteads where they really made their homes; they had paddocks for their stock, and encouraged agriculture as much as those who were actually engaged in it. Their claim was just as strong as that of any other class of men; and he could not see why they should be deprived of any privilege they now enjoyed. They were certainly a large class indeed, and a class whose services the country could not get on without; and they were just as much entitled to consideration as anybody else. He did not know whether it was necessary to refer to what had fallen from other hon. gentlemen about the impropriety of allowing land to be taken up for grazing purposes in agricultural areas. He did not suppose that anyone imagined that land taken up in agricultural areas would be cultivated. He agreed with what fell from the hon. member for Darling Downs, Mr. Kates, as to the richness of land taken up for selection; but he agreed with him only in so far as his remarks applied to the Darling Downs and similar places. There were places in other districts where rain did not fall so frequently, where the soil was not nearly so rich, and where it was impossible to go in for agriculture, as they did about Allora. He agreed with the Minister for Lands in the remarks he made, that in many places it was impossible for a man to live upon 160 acres, simply from the fact that he could not cultivate more than a small portion of it, and what was left was not sufficient to raise the stock he required to keep him going. Upon that ground the proposition for extending that selection should be considered. A great deal had been said about the Opposition wishing to gain credit for having studied the wants of the homestead selectors in regard to the matter. Well, whoever got credit for it, he was sure the Government would not get it. They had only to look at the Bill which was introduced last year, from which homestead selections were omitted altogether, and read remarks made with regard to homestead selection, to see the feelings of the Government concerning that question. Were not the homestead provisions pronounced an absolute failure? and were they not said to have a demoralising effect upon the population? He did not know how far the Press was posted up in the matter; but the public

were told on several occasions that the Government met at Cabinet meetings to discuss the provisions of the Bill, and after all that consideration the Government came to the conclusion that the homestead selectors should not be studied at all. The result of the homestead provisions, as they had been proved up to that time, was perfectly unsatisfactory, and, as the Minister for Lands had told the Committee upon the second reading of the Bill, were a perfect failure. After that, did hon. members expect that the Government would get any credit for the advantages given to the homestead selectors? Those who were most benefited by the clause were those, in most cases, who would take the trouble to read in the papers and *Hansard* what had taken place in that Committee, and he did not doubt that they would be able to form their own opinions and give credit where credit was due. He was certain that there was no man, however strong a partisan of the Government he might be, who could read the discussion that took place upon the second reading of the Land Bill in 1884—last session—and be disposed to give the slightest credit to the Government for whatever benefits people had derived from the advantages of the homestead provisions of the Act.

The PREMIER said he thought that praise and blame would be very fairly dealt out. Hon. gentlemen opposite would get all the credit they deserved, and so should the Government. The Government would quite contentedly look forward to their special share of the praise or blame.

Mr. MOREHEAD said he did not quite understand the hon. gentleman as to whether he intended to take credit to the Government side of the Committee for those homestead selectors being recognised. He thought, if he was not in error, that the hon. Minister for Works stated that it would be better to cast the Bill into the waste-paper basket than to allow the homestead clauses to remain in the Bill. If he were in error he would be corrected, and if he were not, he thought there was some little credit due to members upon his side of the Committee, who were assisted by the intelligent portion of the supporters of the Government. The hon. Minister for Works appeared to be in his mumbling stage. If he were in error in saying that that hon. gentleman had said that it would be better to throw the Bill into the waste-paper basket than re-insert the homestead clauses, he would withdraw his statement; but he was not. The hon. gentleman was interrupting him again, and he ought to know better, as he was, if not the father of the House, at any rate, one of the oldest members. He did not think the hon. gentleman should interrupt him, more especially as he was in the proud position of office, with the opportunity of snubbing deputations. Let credit be given to those to whom it was due, and he hoped the Committee would not be led away by the suave manner of the Premier, who said there was equal credit due to both sides of the Committee. The Opposition had fought for the homestead selector, no matter whether it might have been from the meanest of motives that the hon. Premier could possibly impute—and he had never met an individual more capable of attributing or ascribing mean motives than that gentleman; whatever the motive might be, the result had been the same. The motive would be left possibly in the hands of people who would deal more generously with their opponents than the Premier. Possibly the people of the colony would not assume that the Opposition had been actuated by the motives that the hon. the Premier ascribed to them. They had advocated the retention of those clauses, and insisted upon them, and got them—that was the fact, ascribe it to what motive they liked.

Mr. JORDAN said that the hon. member for Balonne was prepared to admit that there was an intelligent portion upon that side of the Committee.

Mr. MOREHEAD: I deny it when I see you there.

Mr. JORDAN said he was prepared to give credit to the Opposition for having insisted upon the reinsertion of the homestead clauses, but he could quite understand the Minister for Lands believing he should be meeting the case of small farmers by the provision of the Act as it originally stood, although there were some of them who insisted upon it that the small farmer should get his land for a mere nothing. They thought, then, that they should avoid the very appearance of anything which would militate against the success of the poorest class of men, who would go upon land and make farming a success. He was beginning to think that the members of the Opposition, led by the member for Balonne, were being converted to the idea that agriculture after all would be a success in Queensland, and he would give credit to the hon. member for Mackay for having a sincere desire to promote agricultural settlement. It was for that reason that he (Mr. Jordan) saw his way to support the amendment with the alteration that had been made in it. He understood the hon. member for Mackay was willing to accept the amendment of the Premier on his amendment, and he was surprised to hear that the hon. member objected to it. Rather than suppose, however, that hon. members opposite were trying to only pose as the farmers' friends, he believed they were gradually becoming the farmers' friends in reality. They would find, by-and-by, the Hon. Sir T. McIlwraith coming out, as he (Mr. Jordan) had heard him come out in a most eloquent manner, in favour of introducing large numbers—multitudes, as one hon. member said—of farmers from the old country, who were now going in millions to America and taking their money with them. Why, then, should they not advocate a system for encouraging that class to come to the colony, and have multitudes of people settled on the land?

Mr. BLACK said he did not, as a rule, take much notice of adverse criticism, but it was only right that he should set the hon. member right. He had stated that he was under the impression that he (Mr. Black) was going to accept the clause as introduced by the Premier. Now, he had not opposed it. The whole of the time the discussion had been going on he had sat quietly, listening to what was being said. He was prepared to admit that if he could not get anything better he would accept the Premier's proposition, but it had been ably pointed out that the homestead selector, who was supposed to derive a certain amount of benefit, would not by it derive the full benefit to which he was entitled. The member for Port Curtis had ably pointed out what the real position of the homestead selector would be under the clause. It was admitted by hon. members that it might happen that a homestead selector would require more than 160 acres in order to get a decent living. In many places in the colony 160 acres of good agricultural land could not be found. When the selector was allowed, in order to provide grazing ground for his working bullocks and horses, to take up an additional selection, but which must not be contiguous, it might be a quarter of a mile away. He would appeal to all sensible men in that Committee why the selector should not be allowed to take up land adjoining his own

selection. He could work it very much more cheaply, and, as far as he (Mr. Black) could see, every point was in favour of the contention of the Opposition. No single reason had been advanced why, having admitted that the selector was to be entitled to additional land besides his homestead, he should not be allowed to take it up alongside his own selection, thereby enabling him to work it very much more economically than if he had to go half-a-mile away. That was what the Opposition contended for, but if they could not get that they would have to accept the substitute. It would be far better for the selector, however, if rational principles were allowed to prevail, and, assuming that land was available, he should be allowed to take it up contiguous to his own selection. Hon. members seemed to think that when a man had taken up a homestead selection he could not take up any more land, but that was not the case. Assuming that 1,280 acres was the maximum in any district, a selector could take up 160 acres as a homestead, and he might take up the balance anywhere he pleased, provided it was not alongside the homestead. He, however, maintained that a man should be allowed to take up land contiguous to his homestead, instead of being put to extra and vexatious expense in having to fence his other land some distance away.

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

AYES, 24.

Messrs. Rutledge, Miles, Griffith, Dickson, Macfarlane, Dutton, Bailey, Higson, Horwitz, Beattie, Salkeld, Foote, Grimes, Kates, Sheridan, Wakefield, Buckland, Jordan, Campbell, Isambert, Brookes, Annear, Kellett, and Aland.

NOES, 8.

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

Question resolved in the affirmative.

Question—That the new clause, as read, stand part of the Bill—put and passed.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS moved the omission of the words, "In the case of any such lessee who has not, during the term of his lease, been the holder of any contiguous farm," in clause 5. The amendment was rendered necessary by the clause just passed.

Amendment put and passed.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS moved that the words, "any such lessee" be substituted for the word "him" in line 17, clause 5.

Mr. MOREHEAD said he should like the Chairman to read clause 5. The Government were disposed to, and generally did, alter clauses in a way that perhaps no other Government ever did, and the members of the Committee should know what alterations the Government were making in their own Bill. He should like to hear the clause read as it stood, and as it would be affected by the proposed amendment.

Amendment put and passed.

On the motion of the MINISTER FOR LANDS, the clause was further amended so as to read as follows :—

"If the amount paid by any such lessee as rent in respect of the farm for the five years preceding the time when he so becomes entitled to a deed of grant exceeds a sum equal to two shillings and sixpence per acre of the land comprised in the farm, the lessee shall be entitled to have returned to him a sum equal to the difference between the sum so paid and a sum equal to two shillings and sixpence per acre."

Clause, as amended, put and passed.

On the schedule, as follows :—

"The Land Agents' Districts of Beenleigh, Brisbane, Ipswich, Toowoomba, Warwick, Gympie, Maryborough, and Bundaberg"—

Mr. ARCHER said he had already stated the reasons why he intended to ask that the schedule should be extended to the Central district, and he would suggest to the Minister for Lands that the words "and Rockhampton" be added to it.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS said he did not know that the Bill would be of much service to the district of Rockhampton, as most of the land there was at present under leasehold, but there could be no objection to its being included. He moved the insertion of the words "and Rockhampton."

Mr. NORTON said that before the question was put he wished to propose as an amendment that the district of Gladstone be added to the schedule.

The PREMIER : Why?

Mr. NORTON said he would tell the Committee why, if the hon. gentleman would give him time. The reasons for the inclusion of Gladstone were just as good as those which could be urged for any other district mentioned in the schedule. In the Gladstone district there were, to his knowledge, pieces of land which were not under lease when the Act of 1884 was passed, and which were not open for selection. It was the wish of the lessees there, and particularly of the divisional board, that all the land in the district should have some owner, and they were justified in entertaining that wish. When a Bill of that kind was introduced it ought certainly to be made to include a district like that of Gladstone. He moved that after "Bundaberg," the word "Gladstone" be inserted.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS said that Gladstone was very much in the same position as Rockhampton, and he did not think the Bill would be of much service in either case. There was certainly land in the Gladstone district not open for selection and not leased to any person, but he did not think there was any land outside the timber reserves which was not included within the boundaries of runs. There was none of that kind of land which was specially intended to be dealt with by the Bill—such land, difficult and almost impossible of access, as they had in the Southern districts—scrub lands which could not be seen except by riding over them and which it would take days and weeks to examine. However, if the hon. gentleman particularly desired that Gladstone should be included in the schedule, he had no objection to offer.

Mr. NORTON said he probably knew as much, or more, of the Gladstone district as the Minister for Lands, having resided in it for twenty-five years, and he knew of land there that was not under lease, that was not open for selection, that was not on a timber reserve, and that was fit for occupation. He knew, further, that men were prepared to take up that land and pay for it if they could get it. The Bill would be of just as much benefit to Gladstone as to any of the other places named in the schedule.

Mr. MOREHEAD said that as additions were to be made to the schedule he would like to know where the Government were going to stop. They had already consented to add two districts—where did they intend to stop?

An HONOURABLE MEMBER : At Carpentaria.

Mr. MOREHEAD said he wished they would go there and stop there. Surely, if they brought in a schedule, which had evidently been constructed with considerable skill, and no doubt after considerable consideration, one would think they would feel inclined to abide by it. But it appeared to him that whenever hon. gentlemen on that side of the Committee or anyone on the other side—and he was happy to find that on the

Government side there was already a party created similar to that which he had had the honour to lead some years ago—a subsection which did a great deal of good—he had observed that whenever members of the Opposition, or members of that party supporting the Government, made a proposition, it was treated with contempt. He would like to ask the Minister for Lands where he was going to stop, because he (Mr. Morehead) had another proposition to make after the one under discussion, and if the hon. gentleman would not accept it, he (Mr. Morehead) would give as good reasons in support of it as had been given for the amendments that the Government had accepted; and then he would be prepared to go still further.

Question—That "Gladstone" be added to the schedule—put and passed.

Question—That "Rockhampton" be added to the schedule—put.

Mr. MOREHEAD said he was going to ask the Committee to consent to the addition of Dalby. He could not see why Warwick and Toowoomba should be in the schedule and Dalby should be omitted. He did not know whether it was a mistake on the part of the Minister for Lands, or those who drafted the Bill—of course, the Ministry were finally responsible for it—but he should like to know why Dalby had been omitted. He asked that in the absence of the hon. member for Dalby, who was unavoidably absent.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS said that, although there might be some inaccessible places in the neighbourhood of Dalby, he did not consider the Bill applicable to that part of the country. It was not necessary there.

Mr. MOREHEAD said he would like to hear more on the subject from hon. members who knew more about that part of the country than probably the Minister for Lands did. He held that Dalby had exactly the same claims to be included in the schedule as Warwick or Toowoomba, and he appealed to the hon. member for Darling Downs, Mr. Kates, whether what he had said was not correct? He was sorry the hon. member for Dalby, Mr. Jessop, was not present. He was kept away by business intimately connected with the town he represented, and he (Mr. Morehead) knew that if he were present he would press in every way the claims of that district to be included in the schedule, and he was sure that he would get the assistance of hon. members representing the Darling Downs.

Mr. KATES said the hon. member for Balonne would get no assistance from him in that matter, because he was entirely opposed to any of the districts named being in the schedule. His conviction had always been that the Bill was not wanted at all—that there was no necessity whatever to suspend clause 43 of the Act passed last session. He never believed in the schedule, neither for Dalby, Warwick, Toowoomba, or any other place. Of course the Minister for Lands ought to have made a stand, and not have allowed any additional districts, such as Rockhampton and Gladstone, to be inserted. He supposed next they would have the hon. member for Mackay rising and asking for his district to be included, and probably the hon. member for Cook would do the same. He was entirely opposed to the schedule as it stood. As he had said on the second reading of the Bill, he considered that it was not wanted at all, and from what he had ascertained since it was clear that his opinion was entirely correct. It was stated, on the second reading of the Bill, that the reason for its introduction was because the lands were so bad, inaccessible, and sterile that it would not do to send surveyors out to survey them. But what had he found out since last week? That when Mr. Acting Commissioner Warner was at Warwick he had no less than eighty-eight applicants for the same land that had been condemned by the Government. If the hon. the Minister for Lands would look at the records of the Lands Office he would find out that his statement was correct. Being opposed to the schedule altogether, he should certainly oppose the insertion of "Dalby."

Mr. MOREHEAD said he was excessively sorry that they had not had that testimony from the hon. member for Darling Downs (Mr. Kates) before, because he knew that hon. member was more conversant with the wants of the people in regard to agricultural matters than any other hon. member; and had he stated his views at an earlier stage with regard to the schedule, he (Mr. Morehead) should have done all he could to assist him in preventing it from being adopted. They now found that hon. gentleman stating that, in one case where the land was described by the Minister for Lands as being in inaccessible places, there had been actually eighty-eight applications for it.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: No.

Mr. MOREHEAD said he was at liberty to take which statement he pleased, and he preferred to take the statement of the hon. member for Darling Downs to that of the Minister for Lands. He supposed that in a matter of that sort it was quite parliamentary for him to select the individual whose word he preferred to take, and in that instance, as he had said, he preferred to take that of the hon. member for Darling Downs. He was sorry that that hon. member had not pushed his objection to the schedule at an earlier period, because if he had done so he should have assisted him to reject it. But having now passed the principle of the Bill the schedule was, to a certain extent, a matter of detail, and that being so, he did not see why the Dalby district should not be included. The hon. the Minister for Lands hah given them his old answer, that there were inaccessible lands there; but they had heard the exact reverse of his idea in regard to inaccessible lands from the hon. member for Darling Downs; and that being so, he thought the Committee would act very wrongly indeed if they did not include Dalby, even with its inaccessible lands. He could not himself see what reason there was for objecting to it. They had admitted Rockhampton and Gladstone, and he now asked to admit Dalby. What other door might be knocked at he did not know, or whether it would be opened by the Ministry he did not know, but were they going to close the door at Dalby? What had Dalby done to deserve that? Was its position any worse than that of Gladstone and Rockhampton, or were the lands surrounding it any worse that it should not be included? He would await the reply of the Minister for Lands.

The PREMIER said he hoped the Committee would proceed to business. The hon. member seemed determined that they should not proceed to business any further than he could help that evening. They were not now discussing the question at all. The question now proposed was whether Rockhampton should be added to the schedule. The hon. member asked why Dalby was not included, and the answer given was that the land there could be easily surveyed before it was selected. The hon. member did not controvert that in the slightest degree, but apparently intended that the Bill should not get out of committee before a certain hour. If the hon. member was determined upon that, they might as well take the speeches up to that hour as read, and proceed to divide.

Mr. MOREHEAD said the answer given by the Premier to the expression of his desire to know why Dalby should not be included in the schedule was not the answer given by the Minister for Lands.

The PREMIER: Yes, it is.

Mr. MOREHEAD said he would reply most distinctly that it was not. The question raised by the Premier was never entered into by the Minister for Lands. The Minister for Lands never told them it was because Dalby could be easily surveyed. On the contrary, he talked about the worthlessness of the country, and so forth. He never said the land about Dalby could be easily surveyed while that about Rockhampton and Gladstone could not. That was a pure invention of the Premier's, brought in to bolster up the Government contention. The Government should abide by their schedule and give good reasons why it should be the schedule of the Bill, or they should be prepared to accept suggestions or amendments from any member of the Committee who could show that a certain district ought to be included. The hon. member had become petulant and cross because the Opposition dared—they were small in number but great in heart—because they had dared to question or cavil at what he or his supporters put before them. They were in no way bound to accept that. They were sent there to do their duty according to their lights—be they good or bad—and criticise or comment upon every measure brought before the House; and most people inside and outside the House would agree that he had never shirked his duty. The Minister for Lands had agreed to accept Gladstone and Rockhampton and include them in the schedule, and he now stood there as an humble advocate for the rights of Dalby.

Mr. BLACK said they should have a very much lengthier consideration of the schedule than the Premier seemed to think necessary. He would point out that although certain districts might be included in the schedule it was entirely at the option of the Government to say whether they would extend the principle of selection before survey to them or not. They had to be specially proclaimed as districts in which that principle would come into operation. He thought that the principle of survey before selection got into the Bill by mistake. He knew the hon. member for Darling Downs did not agree with him in that, but the majority of members of that Committee were certainly of opinion that selection before survey was very much better than the principle they now had of survey before selection. He would go so far as to say that the schedule should be extended to the whole of the coastal districts. The reason why they should give the matter more consideration than they appeared inclined to do was that, from a revenue point of view, the principle of survey before selection would militate greatly against the success of the Bill, because the expenses of the surveys would swamp all the rents likely to be got for many years from the land. He did not want the Government to proclaim the whole of the land of the colony open for selection before survey, but what he did want was that they should retain the power to proclaim certain districts open to selection before survey without having to come down to that House every session with an amending Bill. It was a great mistake for the House to refuse to allow the Government to retain that power when the principal Act was introduced. The Government had already shown themselves prepared to accede to the additions of Rockhampton and Gladstone to the scheduled districts, and he would ask them now to go a little further north and include Mackay. He could see no reason why selection before survey should not be allowed where the land had been picked over quite as much as it had been in the more southern portions of the colony. There had certainly been no argument advanced to show why, if not the whole of that district at all events certain portions of it, where the land was quite as accessible as portions in the South, should not be left in the hands of the Government to proclaim open for selection before survey. The hon. member for Darling Downs referred to the desire for selection shown by some eighty-eight applicants for selection in his district. That was a proof that people were only too anxious to get on to the land where it was thrown open. He did not know how many selections were open in that case, but he was given to understand that the number was very few and that applications were put in over and over again for the same selection. That state of things should not be. If they had selectors, in the present depressed state of the colony, so eager to get on to the land, and if that craving for settlement could only be satisfied by throwing open the land in certain districts, or selection before survey, the Government should be permitted to retain the power of so throwing open the land if they found it necessary. People were entirely prevented from settling now upon land, because the Government had found it impossible to get a sufficient number of surveyors in the field. By-and-by, when the Government could make some attempt to get the land in the colony surveyed, those lands could be selected after survey; but in the meantime, and in order not to retard settlement, they should be permitted to retain the power of proclaiming land in certain districts open for selection before survey. It was on those grounds that he now suggested that they should retain the power of extending that principle to Mackay, and, in fact, to other districts along the coast running up to the most northern portions of the colony.

Mr. GRIMES said he wanted to give one reason why the schedule should not be extended any further than was at present proposed. On the second reading of the Bill hon. members who agreed to the clause allowing survey before selection understood from the Minister for Lands that the principle was only to be applied to the districts included in the schedule, and he thought it would be unfair to those members if they extended the schedule now that the Bill had passed through committee.

Mr. HAMILTON said he certainly saw no reason why the Government, having been so exceedingly pliable that evening in admitting other districts in the schedule than those originally specified, should not travel a little further north and include the Cook district. If the Minister for Lands could give any satisfactory reasons why that district should not be included he would be satisfied. But if the districts of Gladstone and Rockhampton were to be included in the schedule he thought they should also include the Cook district. It contained a large amount of land not under lease, equal to any land in the colony, and in addition to that there was a class of people living in the district who ought to be afforded every facility for taking up land and settling down on holdings of their own. He remembered that many years ago more land was taken up in the vicinity of Gympie than in any other district of the colony, although there was less inducement to select land there on account of the poorness of the soil. In many parts of the Cook district the land was superior to that about Gympie, and he did not

see why the residents of that part of the colony should not have the same privileges that it was proposed to give to people in other districts.

Mr. MOREHEAD said that as he understood the schedule as now amended, it included the land agents' districts of Beenleigh, Brisbane, Ipswich, Toowoomba, Warwick, Gympie, Maryborough, Bundaberg, Gladstone, and Rockhampton. Seeing that the Gladstone district had been introduced into that schedule he could not see why any objection should be made to other districts being included. While they were dealing with the question as to which districts of the colony should come under the provision allowing survey before selection, which was a most important question, he thought that they should seriously and deliberately discuss the rights or wrongs, the propriety or otherwise, of including in the schedule any district that might be suggested by any member of that Committee. It was perfectly clear from the action of the Government—and he was very glad to see it—that they had laid down no hard-and-fast rule in the matter. Assuming, therefore, that the Government did not intend finality at Rockhampton, he presumed they would consent to the word "and" before "Rockhampton" being struck out, and "other land agents' districts" added. The hon. member for Mackay had suggested that the district which he represented should be included in the schedule, and the hon. member for Cook that his district also should be included, but he (Mr. Morehead) was not prepared to say whether survey before selection should be extended to either or both of those districts without hearing further arguments. The Bill was a distinct departure from the Act of 1884, which provided that selection should take place after survey. But if the Government in their wisdom considered that selection should precede survey in certain portions of the colony it was within the province of any representative of the electors to propose that his district should be included in the Bill.

The PREMIER: Why does he not do it?

Mr. MOREHEAD said that was exactly what he wanted to get at. He proposed that Dalby should be included.

The PREMIER: Well then, take a division on it.

Mr. MOREHEAD said he did not think there should be a division; they should be of one mind on the subject; and he would ask the Minister for Lands whether he was prepared to include Dalby in the schedule.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS said the extension to Gladstone and Rockhampton had been permitted because it would do neither good nor harm. A line must be drawn somewhere, and it would stop there; they were not going any further.

Mr. MOREHEAD said the hon. gentleman had told him that the line could not go any further. Of course, it was within his province to move that every land agent's district in the colony should be included. And the Government having admitted the principle of selection before survey, which he abhorred, and having enlarged the schedule by the introduction of the land agents' districts of Gladstone and Rockhampton, he did not think they could object to the matter being pushed further. He would point out that if the schedule passed in its present form there was nothing, even as it stood with the amendment, to prevent its extension in the future. He thought the hon. member for Mackay and the hon. member for Cook should press the claims of their electorates to have the schedule extended to them. No reason had been given by the Government, except that the lands in the schedule were worthless lands. They were giving a barren boon to the people of the country. The hon. members for Mackay and Cook had stated that if the same privilege were extended to their districts a large amount of land would be taken up; but the Georgian representative who sat in the present Ministry as Minister for Lands, who believed that no man should own any land but himself, distinctly stated that he would only offer land that was worthless. He would not throw open the really valuable land; he said—"No; I will stop at Rockhampton; I will go no further. I have added more worthless land to the worthless land already included in the schedule." The people asked for bread, and the Minister for Lands gave them a stone.

Mr. HAMILTON said that if the Minister for Lands had given any reason for not including his electorate in the schedule he would have been satisfied; but the hon. gentleman had not attempted to do so: he had simply said that it was the will of the Government, and the schedule would not be extended. The hon. member showed reasons why Gladstone should not be included, and then he included it. If the hon. member would not go on further with the schedule, then if other hon. members were of his (Mr. Hamilton's) opinion the Bill should not go any further. He had given good reasons why the Cook district should be included in the schedule, and he was determined to have a reason, and a good reason, why his reasonable request should not be acceded to.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS said the reason the Cook district was not included was that there was a large quantity of good land in that district quite capable of being dealt with which had not yet been surveyed, and therefore the Bill was not applicable to it. The hon. member was not quite correct in saying there was a large quantity of very fine country there that could be proclaimed open for selection at once. The best part of the country was already leased, and could not be thrown open for selection till the division of the runs was complete. The land was quite capable of being surveyed, and therefore it was not necessary to bring it under the Bill, which was only intended to apply to very inferior land.

Mr. HAMILTON said he could not understand the Minister's reasons. The hon. gentleman objected to include Gladstone because there was no good land there, and yet he objected to include another district because there was good land. He (Mr. Hamilton) thought that in a mining district every inducement should be given to the miners to settle on the land, and therefore he submitted that the Cook district should be included in the schedule.

Mr. STEVENSON said that during his absence from the House for half-an-hour he found that the schedule had been extended to include the Gladstone and Rockhampton districts. He should be glad to know why a line had been drawn between the Rockhampton district and his district—the St. Lawrence district. Was it because there was no bad land, or because it was all bad land? He did not believe at all in the principle laid down, but he did not see why fish should be made of one and flesh of the other. If the principle was a good one, surely it was worth extending a little further; if it was not a good one, why extend it at all, or introduce it at all?

Mr. HIGSON said he thought the hon. members for Mackay and Cook were quite astray. It was because there was no good land near Rockhampton that the schedule was extended to that district; whilst they had any amount of good land in their districts. He wanted the schedule extended to Rockhampton in

order that the people who had selections there already might be able to take up the waste lands outside that were of no use to the Government and which it would not pay to survey. The selectors about Rockhampton would be willing enough to take up the waste land if they had only to put in the pegs and not reside on the land.

Mr. STEVENSON said that, whilst he was very gratified to get any explanation at all from the other side, he could hardly go to his constituents and tell them that Mr. Higson had said so-and-so. He wanted an explanation from the Minister for Lands and not from the hon. member for Rockhampton.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS said the reason the schedule was not extended beyond Rockhampton was that beyond that point there was still some good land that could be dealt with by survey, and therefore was not open to selection before survey?

Mr. BLACK asked if there was no land in the southern portion of the colony that could be dealt with by survey?

The PREMIER: Plenty of it.

Mr. BLACK said there was not a single argument the hon. member had used that would not apply with equal force to the northern part of the colony. As he had pointed out when the Bill was first introduced, it was evidently an attempt to encourage settlement in the southern portion of the colony at the sacrifice of the North. Now it was becoming more and more apparent when the line was going to be drawn just south of Cape Palmerston. He could see now, more than ever, that he was perfectly justified in the remarks he had made. North of Cape Capricorn no encouragement was to be given to selection; while to the south every encouragement was to be given.

The PREMIER said the hon. member surely could not expect such arguments as that to be seriously answered as he knew perfectly well what the facts were; no one knew better. He did not know why the time of the Committee had been occupied for more than an hour in what was apparently a simple attempt to take up time. If it were desired that no more business should be done after the Bill before them was disposed of, and hon. members would say so, he would give them that assurance. The Act of 1884 provided for survey before selection, and the present Bill was brought in because it was pointed out on the second reading of the Bill, and accepted by both sides, that there were some parts of the colony where to require survey before selection would be to require a useless waste of money and to retard settlement, and in those districts where survey before selection would not retard progress there was no reason why the principle should be suspended. It had been pointed out that, in certain districts, to insist upon the principle of survey before selection would be injurious. What was the use of hon. members asking why this and that district should not be included, and saying that the Government wished to encourage settlement in one place and retard it in another? It was a serious matter, and not a matter for joking and treating in a childish manner.

Mr. BLACK said that if anyone were to be accused of childishness it was the hon. gentleman. He had not brought forward one single argument to show why that facility for settlement should not be extended to the northern portion of the colony equally with the South.

The PREMIER said the only argument was that used over and over again, that in the northern part of the country the principle of survey before selection could be applied with advantage to the country and without any hindrance to selection.

Mr. HAMILTON said the Government were evidently dissatisfied with their own arguments. Each time a Minister got up he gave a different argument, and each one was more absurd than the previous one. The Minister for Lands, in the first instance, stated that he included Rockhampton and Gladstone simply because it would not do any harm. Then he was requested to give another reason, and he stated that he included them although he did not think there was any good land there. He next said he included them because there was some good land there; then the Premier had given as another reason why certain districts had been left out, that to insist upon survey before selection in those particular districts would be injurious. The hon. gentleman simply made an assertion; he had not given one good reason to support it, and he (Mr. Hamilton) did not think he could do so.

The HON. SIR T. MCILWRAITH said he could see no reason for the condemnation by the Premier of the remarks made by the hon. member for Mackay. The hon. Premier had quite forgotten the debate on the second reading of the Bill he brought before the House and also how it was amended in committee. Let him consider what it was when it was introduced, and he would see that the remarks of the hon. member for Mackay deserved grave consideration. And not only that, but the remarks made by the Opposition had received consideration from the Government and induced them to recede from their position and make the Bill different from what it was. When the present Bill was introduced it was for the purpose of reversing the decision of the House so far as the settled districts of the colony were concerned. There was an addition which gave the Government power, by their own action, to extend the schedule over the whole colony; so, evidently, the aim sought to be attained by the Bill was to reverse the decision of the House last year. The arguments used by the hon. member for Mackay had a very material effect in altering the opinion of the Government, and made them concede what was granted now, and made the Bill so small that it was hardly worth while fighting about the schedule at all. The only places under the operation of the Act were lands situated in any districts specified in the schedule, and which did not form part of a run, and which, before the commencement of the Act, had not been open for selection. Those lands were very limited and very worthless, and it was no use disputing about the schedule. They could not have forgotten how completely the Government had turned tail in their own measure.

The PREMIER said the hon. gentleman made use of curious arguments, sometimes. Hon. gentlemen seemed to forget that the Bill had been already through committee, and the schedule had also been passed by the Committee, and none of the present bursts of enthusiasm then took place. The schedule had only been recommitted that evening so that the question of including Rockhampton might be considered, and hon. gentlemen now wished to discuss the whole question again. He did not understand the position hon. gentlemen opposite had taken up. The Government brought in a Bill, and they objected to some feature in it and used arguments with apparent sincerity. The Government accepted those suggestions, and the next time the matter came up those members of the Opposition took the other view. Surely they did not intend to legislate in that way—to insist upon a thing

because the Government did not propose it, and then denounce it when the Government did propose it. They were here for serious work.

The HON. SIR T. McILWRAITH said he did not know what the hon. gentleman had been talking about all the time. What he said could not apply to the remarks he had made. He hoped he was not referring to him.

Mr. NORTON said he knew that Mr. Black, the member for Mackay, wished to bring on the discussion about the Mackay district, and he (Mr. Norton) wished to say a word about Gladstone.

Question—That the words "and Rockhampton" be added—put and passed.

Mr. BLACK moved that the words "and Mackay" be added to the schedule.

Question put, and the Committee divided:—

AYES, 11.

Sir T. McIlwraith, Messrs. Hamilton, Archer, Black, Annear, Morehead, Stevenson, Ferguson, Macfarlane, Wallace, and Norton.

NOES, 18.

Messrs. Griffith, Dickson, Bailey, Rutledge, Miles, Dutton, Sheridan, Horwitz, Salkeld, Aland, Grimes, Kates, Wakefield, Buckland, Foote, Jordan, Isambert, and Brookes.

Question resolved in the negative.

Mr. HAMILTON moved as an amendment, that the words "and Cook" be added to the schedule.

Mr. MOREHEAD said he could quite understand the hon. member for Cook wishing that a division should be taken.

The PREMIER: Well, take it.

Mr. MOREHEAD said the hon. gentleman must know by this time that the Opposition would take it when they wanted to do so. As a rule they did not take it before they wanted it. He thought the hon. member for Cook was justified in wishing that the schedule should be altered, and he (Mr. Morehead) should support him.

Question put, and the Committee divided:—

AYES, 6.

Sir T. McIlwraith, Messrs. Hamilton, Morehead, Archer, Norton, and Black.

NOES, 21.

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

Question resolved in the negative.

Question—That the schedule, as amended, be the schedule of the Bill—put and passed.

The House resumed, and the CHAIRMAN reported the Bill with further amendments.

The report was adopted, and the third reading made an Order of the Day for to-morrow.

POLICE OFFICERS RELIEF BILL.

The SPEAKER informed the House that he had received a message from the Legislative Council returning this Bill, with an amendment, in which the Council requested the concurrence of the Legislative Assembly.

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

ADJOURNMENT.

The PREMIER said: Mr. Speaker,—I rise to move that this House do now adjourn. The hon. member for Rosewood gave notice of motion yesterday that he would move that the House adjourn till 7 o'clock to-morrow. I have endeavoured to ascertain the wish of hon. members. There is no private business on the paper except a formal motion, and if the House should meet to-morrow it will be a thin one; therefore, from the conversation I have had with hon. members, I am inclined to think that I shall be consulting the convenience of the House if I move that the House adjourn till Tuesday next. With the permission of the House, therefore, I beg to move that this House do now adjourn till Tuesday next. The business then will be—after the consideration of the Bill returned to us from the Council, and the notice of motion for the approval of railway plans, of which the Minister for Works has given notice—the Licensing Bill, and if the debate on that does not occupy the whole of the evening we shall proceed further with the Elections Bill.

The HON. SIR T. McILWRAITH: What are the arrangements of the Government with regard to next week? It is proposed to adjourn till Tuesday for the Rosewood Show; but a more important show than the Rosewood Show takes place next week.

The PREMIER: No arrangements have been made with regard to next week. It is usual every year to adjourn for one day, at least, for the Toowoomba Show, and I believe a motion will be made on Tuesday next to adjourn for that show. Whether we shall meet again on Thursday, or adjourn till the following Tuesday, may then be settled; but if we adjourn till Thursday I shall ask the House to take Government business on that day instead of on Wednesday.

The HON. SIR T. McILWRAITH: I think the Government ought to have consulted the House with regard to so important a matter. Tuesday is the only day we shall meet next week as a matter of fact; and the hon. gentleman says the Government have not made up their minds. Probably they have not had a Cabinet meeting; but he knows what he intends to do, and it will suit the convenience of members if he will tell them what he intends to do.

The PREMIER: For several years a motion has been made to adjourn for the Toowoomba Show, which has been opposed but always carried. The Government desire that there shall be an adjournment next week, and that they shall have Thursday instead of Wednesday for Government business. I hope the House will consent to that.

Mr. MOREHEAD: I think it would be much better if the Government consented to an adjournment till Tuesday week.

The PREMIER: I do not.

Mr. MOREHEAD: I do; because it will afford Northern members an opportunity of going home and back again; at any rate, it will prevent the waste of time which will be caused if we adjourn only till Tuesday, and take Government business on Thursday, which ought to be private members' day. No business can be done on Thursday, and it will be just as well to adjourn till Tuesday week. The Government—by which term I mean the Premier—certainly needs rest. After having done five, six, or seven men's work, he is entitled to a period of relaxation. If we are called together on Thursday it is possible that no quorum will be formed, and it is certain that no work will be done. I intend to be in town on that day, but I think I shall take steps to prevent any work being done. Many of us would prefer to be up at Toowoomba on Thursday, but the exigencies of the case and the two guineas to be earned will compel me to remain in Brisbane. If we adjourn for a fortnight it will enable country members to go to their homes, and allow other members, whose time is pretty well taken up, to attend to business. It is no use the hon. gentleman thinking that any work will be done on Thursday, for it will not be done.

The HON. SIR T. McILWRAITH: What about the Estimates—they were to have been laid on the table this evening?

The PREMIER: They will be down on Tuesday next.

The HON. SIR T. McILWRAITH: Are they ready?

The PREMIER: Yes.

Mr. BLACK: It somewhat fortunately happens that there is not very much private business to be transacted to-morrow, but I should like to have some expression from the Government as to whether we are again going to start this system of adjourning for every twopenny halfpenny show that takes place in or near the city of Brisbane. On principle, I have opposed these adjournments for shows in the past, and I shall consistently continue to do the same. It seems derogatory to the Government, especially after complaining of the time of the House being wasted, to fritter away the time of the country by adjourning the business of the country for the sake of a show of some cabbages or beetroot or pumpkins that may take place near this city. I hear it is intended that the House shall adjourn the week following for a show at Toowoomba, and I presume a similar course will be adopted the week after that, in consequence of the show at Brisbane. Why should the Government suspend the business of the country for the sake of adding a bit of prestige to those shows and for the sake of enabling the committees to say, "See how important we are—the whole business of the country is stopped to allow members to come to our show." I look upon it as a cruel grievance to Northern and Western members—being compelled by a majority of the House to waste their time in the way proposed.

The PREMIER: Of course you will not go to the show to-morrow?

Mr. BLACK: Having, I am sorry to say, nothing better to do, the probability is that I shall. I do not consider that because I oppose this adjournment I am to debar myself from what is undoubtedly a pleasure to me, and which I should very likely avail myself of in any case. I want to know from the Government whether they intend to sanction this unnecessary waste of the time of the House. It must be remembered that we have just passed a measure for remunerating hon. members their expenses; each adjournment of this kind will be an expense to the country of 110 guineas. If the House is determined to adjourn, I would suggest that, in order to allow all members an equal privilege of visiting their homes, the adjournment should be for a fortnight. Let us get done with these shows, and then, when hon. members think they have had sufficient fun and amusement out of these little shows, we can settle fairly down to business again.

Mr. STEVENSON: I have always opposed these adjournments, but if we are to have one on this occasion we ought, in all fairness, to make it long enough to enable members from a distance to visit their homes. I am satisfied no real business will be done until after the Brisbane Show. One or two hon. members have to be in Toowoomba on Tuesday as judges for the show, and those who go for Wednesday will not be back here to do any business till the following week. Then we have the Brisbane Show the week afterwards, and we know very well what kind of business is transacted here during the show week. I have never seen any real business done during that week, and I agree with the hon. member for Mackay that it would be far better to adjourn till Tuesday week. Indeed, I will go further, and say we ought to adjourn till Tuesday fortnight. I think, sir, that, considering the Toowoomba Show is to come off next week, out of respect to you the Premier ought to adjourn the House until next Tuesday week.

Mr. KELLETT said: Mr. Speaker,—I quite agree with the last speaker. I think that if we are to adjourn for the Toowoomba Show we may as well at once adjourn for a fortnight. I am satisfied that there will be no business of any importance done, especially as the Exhibition will follow the Toowoomba Show.

The PREMIER: There will be important business.

Mr. KELLETT: There may be very important business to be done, and no doubt the Premier desires to get it done, but I am afraid that he will not have the chance of doing it. I do not think it is likely that there will be any House at all next week, because a great number of members will go up to Toowoomba on Tuesday. That is the judging day, which is considered the best day of the week at all these shows. If there is to be no House on Wednesday I think we may as well take advantage of Tuesday as well, to see the whole thing right through. If we are to have these adjournments, which I certainly object to myself, I think we had better adjourn for a fortnight.

Question—That the House do now adjourn until Tuesday next—put and passed; and the House adjourned at twelve minutes past 10 o'clock.