Queensland

Parliamentary Debates
[Hansard]

Legislative Council

WEDNESDAY, 5 AUGUST 1885

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LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

Wednesday, 5 *August*, 1885.

Appropriation Bill No. 1, 1885-6.—Seat of the Honourable James Gibbon.—Questions.—Leave of Absence.—Marsupials Destruction Act Continuation Bill.—Police Officers Relief Bill—third reading.—Additional Members Bill—committee.

The PRESIDENT took the chair at 4 o'clock.

APPROPRIATION BILL No. 1, 1885-6.

The PRESIDENT read the following message from His Excellency the Governor:—

"A Bill intituled a Bill to authorise the Appropriation out of the Consolidated Revenue Fund of Queensland of the sum of £250,000 towards the service of the year ending on the last day of June, 1886, as finally passed by the Legislative Council and Legislative Assembly, having been presented to the Governor for the Royal Assent, His Excellency has, in the name of Her Majesty, assented to the said Bill, and has this day transmitted it to the Legislative Council, to be numbered and forwarded to the proper office for enrolment, in the manner required by law.

"A. MUSGRAVE.

"Government House,
"Brisbane, 4th August, 1885."

SEAT OF THE HONOURABLE JAMES GIBBON.

The PRESIDENT read the following message from His Excellency the Governor:—

"1. The attention of the Governor has been called to the fact that the Hon. James Gibbon, a member of the Legislative Council, has failed to give his attendance in the Legislative Council for three successive sessions without any permission of Her Majesty or of the Governor, signified to the Legislative Council, except leave of absence for one year, dated the 23rd day of December, 1882.

"2. The said Hon. James Gibbon having consequently failed to give his attendance for the whole of two consecutive sessions without permission to be absent for such two whole sessions, and no permission having been given to be absent for the second of such two consecutive sessions, as appears to be required by the 23rd section of the Constitution Act of 1867, a question has arisen whether the seat of the said Hon. James Gibbon has become vacant by reason of his so failing to give his attendance.

"3. The Governor, therefore, in pursuance of the provisions of the 24th section of the Constitution Act of 1867, refers the said question to the Legislative Council, to be by it heard and determined.

"A. MUSGRAVE.

"Government House,
"Brisbane, 5th August, 1885."

QUESTIONS.

The HON. A. C. GREGORY, in the absence of the Hon. A. H. Wilson, asked the Postmaster-General—

1. Is the Maryborough Branch Railway Extension being made in accordance with the plans, etc., approved of by both Houses of Parliament last year?
2. If not, what is the alteration, and for what reason is the divergence?
3. Are there any sidings to be made into any private works?—if so, has the Government arranged that the proprietors pay cost thereof?

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL (Hon. T. Macdonald-Paterson) replied—

1. So far as it has been constructed it is in accordance with the plans approved by Parliament.
2. If any divergence from the Parliamentary plans is made it will be only in connection with taking sidings into private lands.
3. No sidings will be made into private works, unless those requiring same pay the cost.

The HON. A. C. GREGORY, in the absence of the Hon. A. H. Wilson, asked the Postmaster-General—

1. If the Vernon Coal and Railway Company, Limited, generally known as the Maryborough and Urangan Railway Company, have been allowed to select part or whole of the 1,000 acres on the Burrum Coal Field Reserve, as allowed under section 3 of the Act?—and if so, how many acres, and where is this land situated?
2. Will the deeds of any lands so selected be retained by the Government until the railway is completed?
3. Have the company proved to the satisfaction of the Minister that they have sufficient capital to complete the construction of the railway, as required by section 5 of the Act?

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL replied—

1. The Vernon Coal and Railway Company, Limited, have lodged an application for 1,000 acres of land in the parish of Walsh.
2. The deed of the land will be issued only in terms of clause 12 of the Maryborough and Urangan Railway Act—namely, when the main line of railway has been constructed.
3. The company had not, to date, complied with the terms of clause 5 of the Act.

The HON. W. FORREST asked the Postmaster-General—

1. What information the Government possess with respect to the distance from the Queensland border of rabbits in New South Wales and South Australia?
2. What steps, if any, the Government are taking to prevent rabbits getting into this colony from New South Wales and South Australia?
3. Whether the Government propose bringing in a Bill this session to deal with the foregoing danger?

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL replied—

1. The latest information in the possession of the Government is to the effect that rabbits are distant from the Queensland border not less than 100 miles on the Paroo and a considerably greater distance on the Darling. The Government have no very definite information as to the distance in South Australia, but it is believed to be some hundreds of miles.

2 and 3. The Government are now causing a thorough investigation to be made to ascertain the northern limit of the infested districts in New South Wales, and propose to ask Parliament to sanction the necessary expenditure to effectually prevent the incursion of rabbits into Queensland.

LEAVE OF ABSENCE.

The HON. A. J. THYNNE said: Hon. gentlemen,—I beg to move—

That leave of absence be granted to the Hon. W. H. Walsh for the remainder of the session.

When giving notice of this motion I did not anticipate any question would arise upon the motion, but I understand there is doubt in the mind of one hon. member, at any rate, as to whether this course is the correct one to follow, it being supposed that adopting such a course would be an infringement of the privilege that is given to Her Majesty the Queen and to His Excellency the Governor of granting leave of absence for the session, under the Constitution Act. I may say at once that leave of absence granted by this House cannot under any circumstances affect the loss of a member's seat, or preserve his seat, if he absent himself, without leave from the Governor or Her Majesty the Queen, for more than two sessions. The object of applying for leave in this House is to comply with the provisions of our Standing Orders, the 24th of which says:—

"No member shall absent himself during the session for more than one week without informing the President, nor for more than three consecutive weeks without express leave of absence from the Council, and any member wilfully infringing this order shall be held guilty of contempt."

The fact of granting leave of absence in this House is, I think, only a compliance with the Standing Orders, and an act of courtesy to the other members of this House. It is not one which can in any way interfere with the functions of Her Majesty the Queen or His Excellency the Governor with regard to the seat of an hon. member.

The PRESIDENT: In putting the question, it is my duty to point out to the House that, under the Constitution Act, the power to grant leave of absence for the whole of the session rests with Her Majesty the Queen or His Excellency the Governor. I am quite aware that this House has before now given leave of absence, but when the question came to be tried it was ruled by the House itself that the leave of absence had no effect whatever; that is, if an hon. member is absent for two sessions, having leave of absence from this House will not help him in any way. Then the Standing Order the Hon. Mr. Thynne has quoted will not absolve the hon. member in question from contempt. In fact, he is already in contempt, as he has been considerably more than three weeks absent without the leave of the House, or without intimating his absence to the President. Of course hon. members will please themselves how they vote; but I have done my duty in pointing out that by agreeing to the motion they will only stultify themselves—they will assume a power which they have not got.

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL said: Hon. gentlemen,—I think, under all the circumstances, and in view of what has fallen from the President, also the subject-matter of the motion of which I gave notice for to-morrow, it would be advisable for the Hon. Mr. Thynne to withdraw his motion. I agree with what has fallen from the hon. the President. We should stultify ourselves if we assumed authority we do not possess. Having that in view, it should be the duty of the House, at a convenient time, to refer the 24th Standing Order to the Standing Orders Committee, and have it removed. It is simply a farce to allow it to remain, and, under this aspect of the case, I think it better that the hon. member should withdraw his motion.

The HON. F. T. GREGORY said: Hon. gentlemen,—It strikes me that the Postmaster-General has perhaps been taken a little by surprise, and hardly apprehends the true position of the motion made by the Hon. Mr. Thynne. The Standing Order quoted by the Hon. Mr. Thynne was passed expressly to prevent members being careless in giving their attendance during the currency of the session; it has nothing to do with the general question of leave of absence from the House. Taking that view of the matter, if we removed it from the Standing Orders we should, in many instances, get but a scanty attendance, because, under the Constitution Act, until a member is absent for a whole session he incurs no liability; therefore I should be sorry to see the Standing Order removed. On the present occasion, the consideration of the message from His Excellency the Governor, I do not think bears on the question in any way. It is simply a question of leave, and whether an hon. member has transgressed the rule by which he should have applied to the House for leave. While I quite agree with the hon. the President that he would have been guilty of contempt had the House been sitting for the whole period, from the opening of the session to the present time, there is one slight difference in the present case, and that is, that we adjourned for a fortnight, and I think notice of motion was given on the last day provided by the Standing Orders, or at any rate one day afterwards, which, I think, was an oversight on the part of the hon. gentleman who gave notice. So far, I think the Hon. Mr. Walsh has not been guilty of contempt; but, as regards the Postmaster-General's view of our deferring the consideration of the question, unless the mover wishes to withdraw it, I can hardly see any reason for not dealing with the question at once.

Question put and passed.

MARSUPIALS DESTRUCTION ACT CONTINUATION BILL.

The PRESIDENT read a message from the Legislative Assembly, forwarding, for the concurrence of the Council, a Bill to amend and continue the operation of the Marsupials Destruction Act of 1881.

On the motion of the POSTMASTER-GENERAL, the Bill was read a first time, and the second reading made an Order of the Day for to-morrow.

POLICE OFFICERS RELIEF BILL—THIRD READING.

On the motion of the POSTMASTER-GENERAL, this Bill was read a third time, passed, and ordered to be returned to the Legislative Assembly, with message in the usual form.

ADDITIONAL MEMBERS BILL—COMMITTEE.

On the motion of the POSTMASTER-GENERAL, the President left the chair, and the House went into Committee to consider the Bill in detail.

Clauses 1 to 4, inclusive, passed as printed.

On clause 5—"First electoral rolls"—

The HON. F. T. GREGORY said on the second reading of the Bill he mentioned the importance of doing justice to certain electors, and after carefully looking over the Bill it appeared to him that in introducing the amendment which he was about to read it would be desirable to place it in clause 5 as subsection 4. The amendment read as follows:—

"Any person who at the time of the passing of this Act is possessed of qualifications as a voter in both divisions of either of the divided electorates, may, at any time prior to the holding of the first revision court for such electoral district, lodge a claim to be placed on the electoral list of the new electoral district for which he is not already registered as an elector, and such application shall be received by the clerk of petty sessions for the district, and entered in the supplementary list aforesaid."

To make the amendment effective it would be necessary to make another slight amendment in subsection 3 of clause 5. In line 37 he proposed to insert the words "and the supplementary lists as hereinafter provided" after the word "compiled." That supplementary list was a list which would enable electors to register their names in the two electorates if they possessed a qualification—that was, in any division in which they actually now possessed the qualification, but had not been registered. He was aware that an objection might be raised that there was very little time for the consideration of that question, and that very few electors might have time to go and record their names so as to be put upon the quarterly lists, but he thought that subsection 1 of the clause provided for ample time. It read as follows :—

"The Governor in Council shall appoint and notify by proclamation a day or days, not less than fourteen days nor more than two months after the passing of this Act, for holding revision courts for each of the said electoral districts."

Consequently, he wished to point out there was time for a considerable number of those qualified voters to go and register between the passing of the Act and the time that the election could possibly come off. He presumed that it was hardly probable that an election could take place under one whole month, and therefore the objection which he understood the Postmaster-General had to the supplementary lists would not hold good. With the object of inserting the amendment he had read, he would move as a consequential amendment, that after the word "compiled" in the 37th line, 3rd subsection, the words "and the supplementary list as hereinafter provided" be inserted. Practically the decision upon the new subsection would be given when hon. gentlemen decided whether or not to accept the consequential amendment, as if the main amendment was not accepted the consequential amendment would be superfluous. He might point out that it would be extremely unfair in subdividing a district to deprive those who possessed qualifications in both districts of the right of exercising the franchise. He therefore trusted that his amendment would meet with the approval of the House, and be inserted.

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL said he regretted he could not see his way to assenting to the amendment proposed by the hon. gentleman. The machinery for enabling electors to be placed on the rolls already existed, and almost in the same form as that proposed by the hon. gentleman ; besides they would be introducing an element into the Bill that would, he was certain, delay its passage, and at that particular time it was not desirable that such a delay should take place. He would respectfully desire hon. gentlemen to recollect that the ordinary quarterly electoral rolls had just been revised throughout the colony, and therefore the subsisting roll might be regarded as a roll up to date. All electors who might have votes in both districts, such as in Mitchell and Barcoo, would suffer no injustice ; on the contrary they would have an additional member. Take the case of an elector, who in Townsville had a vote by virtue of his property qualification, and a vote in virtue of property in the electorate of Musgrave, and assuming that the sitting member chose to sit for Musgrave, the elector of Townsville would suffer no injustice, because he would be able to exercise his vote in respect of Townsville. Of course it might be argued that the converse might happen in regard to those who had a double electoral right, but they must be content to conform to the Electoral Rolls Act, which would enable them to have their names put on the next quarterly roll. All a man had to do after the passing of that Bill was to put his name on the roll and he would be entitled to vote at the next election. It might be that a few electors would not be able to vote for a new member in the new district, but it would be a far greater injustice to the larger number in the new electorate, if they were to be deprived of the right of sending in a member immediately ; therefore, if the amendment of the hon. gentleman were carried it might not only cause delay in the passage of the Bill, but delay in the new member being returned and taking his seat during the present session. It was most desirable that the new members should be elected forthwith, and if an interval of a fortnight or a month were allowed from the passing of the measure they would be able to take their seats. On the other hand, if the new machinery proposed by the hon. gentleman were adopted, great delay would take place. Under the circumstances, he thought hon. gentlemen would see that the balance of common sense was on the side of retaining the clause as it had been put before them.

The HON. A. C. GREGORY said he thought that the Postmaster-General was scarcely putting the case in the form in which it would practically work. He would give the hon. gentleman credit for desiring to bring the Act into operation as quickly as possible. That was his own desire, as it must be that of every hon. gentleman. The Postmaster-General had said that the elector who resided in Townsville and possessed a property qualification in Musgrave could register his name, but that was just the point. He could not. At the present time he probably had got his name on the Townsville roll, and if he went to the clerk of petty sessions and lodged a claim to vote in the electorate of Musgrave, he would be told that the claim could not be entertained. The consequence would be that he would be debarred from lodging an application until after the Bill became law. Now, should the Bill not become law so that it would be in operation up north on the 30th September, what would be the result? The election must take place before a single individual who had the second qualification could possibly bring himself on the electoral roll, because he could only lodge his claim after the quarterly revision court. No claim could be lodged before the Bill came into force. He would assume that he was an elector in Townsville, and he also possessed a piece of country land, in virtue of which he would be entitled to be registered as an elector of Musgrave. He could not register himself unde the two different claims. He could only be registered as an elector in the present single district, and when he wished to vote for the return of a member for the district of Musgrave he would find that he was debarred from so doing. Now, that was the class of case for which the amendment was intended to provide, and he thought that on careful consideration it would be seen that it was exceedingly undesirable to disfranchise what would be a considerable number of persons, who, at the present time, held two different qualifications. He was under the impression that when the matter was carefully looked into it would be seen that it was very important that the amendment should be made. What amount of delay would take place? None at all, he was convinced. The amendment was one that he was satisfied the moment it went back to the other House would be gladly accepted. It was, no doubt, an oversight on the part of the other Chamber and he did not believe that it was the desire of hon. gentlemen there that any man should be disfranchised. Of course he did not say there was any want of care in drafting the Bill, but the use of that Chamber was to look over those matters, and if they found

a little defect of that kind to remedy it. So far from there being delay, the moment the Bill went back with the amendment it would gladly be accepted.

The HON. W. FORREST said the Postmaster-General had pointed out that if the amendment was insisted on delay in the passage of the Bill would take place, and the new members would be prevented from being elected in time to take their seats during the present session. Well, if they passed the Bill as fast as it was possible to pass it, it was scarcely possible for the new members to take their seats. There was nothing in that contention whatever. It would take some time to give the usual notices required before a member was elected, and altogether he did not believe, if the Bill was passed now, the members could be elected sooner than six or seven weeks, and at the end of that time the session would have terminated. He thought there was a good deal in what the Hon. Mr. Gregory had brought forward, that if the Bill was passed as it stood a great many who had votes already would be disfranchised through want of proper machinery being provided.

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL said he would like to call attention to the fact that the Bill was not one to provide in any way whatever for the special admission of electors on to a supplementary list. It was a Bill the primary object of which was to give additional representation to certain districts of the colony, and hon. gentlemen would observe in clause 5, subsection 5, the lists were to be made up from the existing rolls, under certain conditions. He wished to inform the House that the Bill was framed with the special object of giving immediate facility for the election of members for those districts. It was never intended that special provision should be made for supplementary lists, because, as he had said, greater injustice would ensue through that course being adopted. The process to be gone through after the Bill passed would be something like this: The justices would meet; they would take the subsisting roll and with one day's work they would be able to apportion every man's name on that roll, either in one electorate or the other. Now, where was the hardship? The electorate of Kennedy, instead of having one member, would have three members, and it was an exaggeration to say there would be a considerable number of people who would not be able to vote at a contested election. Again, he would remind hon. gentlemen that the lists were to be made from the existing rolls and lists which were made up to date. The Bill dealt with the matter of increased representation for specific electorates, and the subject had been before the country for some time. As a matter of fact, therefore, the districts that were to have additional representation were quite prepared for it. He could not accept the suggested amendment on behalf of the Government; and if it were passed he feared that it would considerably delay the measure.

The HON. A. J. THYNNE said the question had not been raised as to whether the districts mentioned in the Bill should have additional members or not. He thought it was admitted on all sides that they should, but the question raised was one as to the proper and fair way of providing for the electoral lists in the districts in which two electorates would be created. He could not see what the objection of the Government could be to giving everyone who had a right to get on to the electoral roll, and take part on the new elections, the opportunity of exercising the franchise. It was something exceedingly novel and surprising that the Postmaster-General, representing a Government supposed to have all its tendencies of a most liberal character, should defend a clause which had the effect of depriving men of their right to vote. The hon. gentleman objected to the amendment because it might cause possible delay, but as he understood it no delay could by any possibility occur. As he understood the amendment, claims could only be put in by men whose names were now on the roll. There would be no opportunity for party organisations for the purpose of stuffing the rolls with new voters, and the voters now on the list would, according to the Hon. Mr. Gregory's amendment, have the right, if they could show their qualifications for the two electorates, to put their names on the rolls and record their votes in the two electorates. There might be few, or there might be many, to come under the consideration of the magistrates at the time of the division of the electorate, but why it should take longer than the time proposed by the Bill he could not see. The work did not take many days, and the amendment would cause no delay, but would give everyone who had a right to vote an opportunity of exercising that right. Would the Postmaster-General, who represented a Government professing to hold liberal principles, refuse to give every man who had a right to vote the opportunity of voting? The clause might have a different effect to what was anticipated by the Government. A member had to decide which two electorates he wished to represent.

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL: It is not compulsory.

The HON. A. J. THYNNE: Suppose an electorate was represented by an Opposition member. He would elect to hold the seat for the new electorate in which he might think it was possible that a Government candidate might be chosen for the other part after the division was made. He should support the amendment, on the principle of giving everyone who had the right to vote an opportunity of doing so.

The HON. A. RAFF said he took it that if a man had a qualification in both districts—say Musgrave and Townsville—he would have to decide in which district he would record his vote; in that case there would be no injustice. If he had a qualification for the two, and decided to vote in the one in which an election was immediately to take place, he could afterwards apply to the revision court and get his name put on the roll for the other electorate as well.

The HON. F. T. GREGORY said there were voters possessing qualifications for both divisions, but they were not registered in more than one. If an election came off in Musgrave, for instance, although they possessed a qualification there but were not registered in that district, they would be deprived of their votes. The objection raised by the Postmaster-General in regard to the lists showed that he had fallen into a mistake. There were two classes of lists referred to in the Bill—one to be made from the electoral rolls, and the other a quarterly list not yet dealt with, by which the people could be put on the rolls. His object in moving the motion was to bring qualified electors on the quarterly electoral lists by means of supplementary lists. They would then be in a position to be put on the rolls, from which would be made the lists dividing the electorate and showing which particular individuals were entitled to vote in the respective electorates—for instance, Townsville and Musgrave. He had received communications from parties interested,

in Townsville, who felt keenly the risk of being disfranchised, unless the amendment were passed. He therefore trusted the Postmaster-General would withdraw his objection, as it had been clearly pointed out that the amendment would cause no delay.

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL said that to make the matter clear he would repeat what he had said before — that new rolls would be made from the electoral rolls and quarterly lists. The roll would be compiled from that material by the revision court, and he failed to see where the hardship came in. A resident in Townsville was at present only represented by one member, but when the Bill became law he would have three members to represent him. If he had a property qualification in Musgrave he could claim to be placed on the next list under the Electoral Rolls Act. It was not a proper time now to introduce electoral machinery into a Bill like that before the Committee, which was simply an Additional Members Bill using the machinery at present in existence to enable additional members to be elected. As he said before, no injustice could follow from Townsville and the district having three members instead of one, and every man discovering an additional qualification to that fixed by the revision court could have his name put on the roll forthwith. It was never intended to hamper the measure by introducing other machinery than that which was at present the law of the land.

The HON. W. FORREST said he disagreed with the remarks of the Postmaster-General regarding the machinery for carrying on elections. Surely it was necessary to have some machinery to carry out the elections in question, and also that no elector should be disfranchised; but, unless the amendment were adopted, an elector having a property qualification in Townsville and another qualification in Musgrave would be disfranchised so far as one of them was concerned. He did not think it was intended that it should be so, and he was of opinion that a much greater injustice would be done if electors were disfranchised than if a little delay were caused to enable them to record their votes when entitled to do so.

The HON. W. H. WILSON said the Postmaster-General had pointed out already that the ordinary electoral rolls had only just been compiled, and that the existing rolls were equal to rolls made up to date. If that were the case electors could not suffer any injustice, and it was far better that the Bill should pass in its present form.

The HON. A. J. THYNNE said that hon. members opposite could not have apprehended the difficulty pointed out by the Hon. Mr. Gregory. In the district of Mitchell, for instance, if an elector had a residence qualification on one side of the dividing line between the two electorates, and a property qualification on the other —if he were registered in the electorate in which he resided, there was no provision in the Bill by which he could also record his vote in the electorate in which his property was situated. The Postmaster-General and those who supported him were absolutely unwilling to allow such a man an opportunity to vote in both electorates, and he was surprised that there should be so much opposition to the amendment. He could not understand the motive for, or secret of, the opposition, especially as the object of the amendment was to give men a right they ought to have and ought to be able to exercise.

The HON. W. FORREST said that at present the law gave every man the right to vote either under a property qualification or a residence qualification; but if the Bill passed as it stood it would deprive a number of voters of that right. The amendment was brought forward to rectify what at first appeared to be an oversight, but what he now began to think was a design to prevent a certain number of men from exercising the franchise.

The HON. A. C. GREGORY said that a resident of Townsville might have selections all over the district, but could only be registered under one qualification, and that qualification might be for a selection in the country. If the Bill became law without the amendment, and such an elector were registered under a residence qualification in Townsville, he would be disfranchised in regard to his property qualification in Musgrave. Such was not the case in Fortitude Valley, which was to have two members. He did not object to that, because it was nothing but justice; but justice should also be done to the Northern districts—indeed, the more distant they were the more careful hon. members should be to watch over their interests. Even if the Bill passed at once, without any trouble, it was hardly possible that it should come into operation in Townsville and Musgrave before the end of September; and even if it did, there would be no time left for the parties who had duplicate qualifications and were registered only in one part to get their names on the supplementary roll before it would be passed beyond the power of their getting their names on the roll. If it was the intention of the Government to disfranchise a large number of the people in Townsville and Musgrave and only allow them to vote for one division when they were qualified for both, hon. members could understand the reason for the opposition to the amendment. Until the Bill became law an elector, in what was at present the Townsville electorate, could only register himself under one qualification; and unless sufficient time were allowed between the passing of the Bill and the completion of the quarterly list—because the revision took place afterwards—there would be no chance of a man getting his name on the roll for the new electorate until January. He presumed it was not the intention of the Government to delay the new elections till that time; but if it was their intention to delay the elections the Postmaster-General should say so, and then there would be no necessity for the amendment. The supplementary list would be equivalent to saying that the quarterly lists, which were being prepared, should, on the very day of the revision court being held, be taken up, instead of waiting until the end of the quarter. And in the first instance, the idea in framing the amendment was to allow the revision court to take all the names that might have been entered with what would be put on the quarterly roll in the broken period of the quarter. Everyone could see that it was dealing fairly and justly with the electors to take every name lodged up to the time the revision court was held; that must be fourteen days, and might be two months. It could not be put off till the next quarterly list came in. He was surprised at the Postmaster-General saying that the Bill gave additional representation, and that was enough; but because a man had some right, and part was given to him, that was no reason why he should not have the rest. As to the machinery, the clerk of petty sessions would be authorised to put the names on the list, and, instead of being kept in his pigeon-hole till the 31st December, they would be put before the revision court whenever the revision court sat. It was not necessary to go further into the matter, because it was simple and straightforward, and when it was considered on its merits no one could deny that the amendment, or some equivalent, ought to be introduced.

The HON. A. RAFF said that, admitting what the Hon. Mr. Gregory had stated to be correct, the question narrowed itself to a very small compass. By passing the Bill in its present form they might deprive a number of electors who had qualifications in both districts of the right to record their votes for the new district. But, again, if by inserting the amendment they delayed the operation of the measure and the return of a member to represent the new constituency, they would be doing a far greater injustice.

The HON. W. FORREST said he could not agree with what had fallen from the Hon. Mr. Raff. Doubtless, new privileges were to be conferred on electors in certain parts of the colony; but, because additional privileges were conferred, were voters who previously had privileges to be deprived of their votes? Were certain voters to be deprived of their rights in order that a member should be put in by only a small number of voters in that electorate? Those who had taken any interest in revision courts must know that a man having a residence qualification was thereby entitled to vote, and if he possessed property, he could elect to vote under that qualification. If a voter resided in the Mitchell, and was registered under a property qualification in that portion called the Barcoo, and if the sitting member elected to represent the Barcoo, that elector would be disfranchised for the next election unless the amendment were adopted. He was astonished at the opposition given to the amendment, for he considered that nothing should be done to deprive a man of his sacred right to vote, but everything should be done to protect that right. If a resident in what would be the Musgrave electorate had an allotment in Townsville, and was registered under that qualification—the sitting member had already elected to represent Townsville—according to the Bill he would be disfranchised at the next election, unless the Committee agreed to the amendment. As he had said before, all the amendment did was to give a voter a right to vote, and surely he was entitled to that privilege.

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL said that on behalf of the Government he most distinctly repudiated the idea that was attempted to be put forward in the House that there was any desire on the part of the Government to disfranchise any one elector in the colony. There was no such intention, and no argument had been brought forward to sustain that allegation. Where did the disfranchisement come in in the circumstance of a few voters who had a property qualification in a subsisting electorate, and in a possible other one adjacent thereto, being deprived of the power to vote at the coming election, when they could put their names on the roll forthwith when the Bill became law? They must regard the matter in this way. If a general election were to take place next week there would be thousands of electors in the colony in the same position as the few referred to by hon. gentlemen as possibly existing in the new electorate of Musgrave.

The HON. F. T. GREGORY called attention to the state of the Committee.

There not being a quorum, the CHAIRMAN reported to the House accordingly.

The PRESIDENT said: There not being a quorum, the House stands adjourned until to-morrow.

The House adjourned at twenty minutes to 6 o'clock.