Queensland

Parliamentary Debates
[Hansard]

Legislative Assembly

THURSDAY, 9 SEPTEMBER 1886

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY.

Thursday, 9 *September*, 1886.

Petitions.—The Railway Embankment at Milton Swamp.—Petition.—Gold Mining Companies Bill—third reading.—Opium Bill—third reading.—Sale of certain Crown Lands at Cooktown.—Message from the Legislative Council—Immigration Act of 1882 Amendment Bill.—Free Exchange of Products between the Australasian Colonies.—Mineral Oils Bill—consideration in committee of the Legislative Council's amendments.—Health Act Amendment Bill—committee.—Settled Land Bill—committee.—Adjournment.

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

PETITIONS.

Mr. MELLOR presented a petition from the members of the Primitive Methodist Churches at Howard, Burrum, and Isis, praying for the repeal of the Contagious Diseases Act; and moved that it be read.

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

On the motion of Mr. MELLOR, the petition was received.

Mr. MACFARLANE presented a petition from the minister, officers, and congregation of St. Stephen's Presbyterian Church, Ipswich, praying for the repeal of the Contagious Diseases Act; and moved that it be read.

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

On the motion of Mr. MACFARLANE, the petition was received.

THE RAILWAY EMBANKMENT AT MILTON SWAMP.

Mr. NORTON said: Mr. Speaker,—I do not see the Minister for Works in his place, but possibly the Chief Secretary will give some information as to the accident that took place yesterday on the new line between Brisbane and Ipswich.

The PREMIER (Hon. Sir S. W. Griffith): I know nothing more about it than I saw in the paper this morning.

Mr. NORTON: You cannot give more?

The PREMIER: No.

Mr. LUMLEY HILL: The Minister for Works is away at Beenleigh.

Mr. NORTON: Is it necessary to make a motion, or shall we get the information to-morrow?

The PREMIER: I have no doubt that my hon. colleague will give the information to-morrow.

Mr. NORTON: I would point out that it was by the merest accident that a train did not go down the embankment.

The PREMIER: I know that.

PETITION.

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN presented a petition from the ministers and congregations of various denominations in Townsville and suburbs, praying for the repeal of the Contagious Diseases Act; and moved that the petition be received.

Question put and passed.

GOLD-MINING COMPANIES BILL—THIRD READING.

On motion of the ATTORNEY-GENERAL (Hon. A. Rutledge), this Bill was read a third time, passed, and ordered to be transmitted to the Legislative Council for their concurrence, by message in the usual form.

OPIUM BILL—THIRD READING.

On the motion of the COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. B. B. Moreton), this Bill was read a third time, passed, and ordered to be transmitted to the Legislative Council for their concurrence, by message in the usual form.

SALE OF CERTAIN CROWN LANDS AT COOKTOWN.

Mr. LUMLEY HILL, in moving—

That there be laid on the table of the House,—

1. A copy of the new regulation charging 20 per cent. on the value of improvements allowed on Crown lands, which was enforced at a Crown land sale held 30th March, 1886, at Cooktown.

2. Also, a copy of the protest handed to the auctioneer at the time of sale by Mr. B. H. Palmer.

said: Mr. Speaker,—I suppose the Minister for Lands said "not formal" to this motion when it was called in order to give me an opportunity of expressing my reasons for calling for this regulation. In giving my reasons, I suppose it will be best for me to state as fairly and freely as I can the facts connected with the case. I was in Brisbane just before the date of this sale, about the 20th March, and Mr. Palmer put himself in communication with me, and also sent down an agent to look after his interests in regard to the sale of this piece of land, which he had been living upon for something like nine or ten years. It was a plot of ground about an acre and three-quarters in extent. It had been surveyed into six sections, and Mr. Palmer wished to have the whole of the

land put up in one section, because he learnt that some parties hostile to him intended to levy blackmail upon him by running him for each allotment. He also sent down a claim for valuation of improvements for £1,100, the Commissioner for Crown Lands there having assessed the improvements at £200. I interviewed the Minister for Lands with regard to putting up the land in one block, and he plainly pointed out to me that it was against the law to put up town lands in lots of more than one acre. I went into the case with the hon. gentleman and showed him from information I had that there was a hostile party to Mr. Palmer in the town, because the captain of the army in Cooktown, a bitter opponent of his, had actually telegraphed down to have this land set apart for battery quarters. I have never been there, but I know it is at the end of a hill, and there are plenty of other places that might be used for a battery. I looked upon this man's action, therefore, as only a piece of spitefulness, and I wished to protect Mr. Palmer as much as possible. I asked the Minister to have the land put up in two lots, and to have the amount of the improvements divided. Then arose the question of the value of the improvements, the commissioner valuing them at only £200, and the occupant of the land valuing them at £1,100, and I could not see any way to settle that discrepancy. The Minister informed me that he had made a new regulation by which he charged 20 per cent. on the allowance made for improvements, and so the occupant for the time being might value the improvements at what ever he liked. It appeared to me a fair regulation; it cut both ways. The occupant of the land for the time being, by paying the amount mentioned to the Government, had the ability to prevent himself being run for the land, and thus having blackmail levied upon him. I assented to the proposal of the Minister, and so did Mr. Palmer's agent, who was present, and he communicated with Mr. Palmer by wire. At the same time, as a business arrangement between myself and the agent, and assented to by the Minister for Lands, we agreed to strike the amount at £700, being about half-way between the amount of £200 and Mr. Palmer's valuation of £1,100. The Minister agreed to put up the land with this protection upon it, and I consented to the impost as about the best protection the man was likely to get. I wired pretty fully about it to Mr. Palmer, and he wired back about the protection money, and afterwards, at the sale, I saw a protest from him handed round. I see he has had prepared a printed circular of the case, and has had it sent to every member of the House, so that they will have an opportunity of looking into the merits of the case from the occupant's point of view. He has written to me asking me to table this motion, and I suppose he wants now to be satisfied as to whether the Minister had legal authority for the position he took up at the time. I beg to move the motion standing in my name.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS (Hon. C. B. Dutton) said: Mr. Speaker,—One reason why I called "not formal" to this motion was because it asks for a regulation that does not exist. The addition to the upset price is made to protect improvements under the 80th and 82nd sections of the Land Act, which allow the Minister to impose such conditions as he may think fit, provided they are made known at the time of the sale, and, of course, provided such conditions are within the meaning and spirit of the Act. Another reason I had was that Mr. Palmer has been very persistent in his endeavours to get a return of this money charged for protection of improvements, and has himself induced a great many members of the House to interest themselves in his case; and as they do not generally appear to understand the principle upon which I had gone in protecting improvements, I thought it an additional reason for calling "not formal," in order that I should have an opportunity of explaining to the House the principle upon which I acted in this matter. In order that the House should understand it properly, I should refer to the way in which similar cases have been treated previously in the Lands Department. Wherever improvements have been erected, belonging to people in unauthorised occupation of Crown lands, and those improvements have amounted to a considerable amount in value, there has been an addition of either double or treble the upset price put on to the upset price. In this case it appeared to me that by doing this we would not be protecting the State, or securing, at all events, that we should get a fair sum for the land when there was no possibility of any competition, and I thought such a means of securing it was a very rough and, in many instances, inequitable plan. Being of that opinion, I determined that a percentage on the value of improvements protected should be put on, believing that in every case that would be a fair and equitable way of doing it. Therefore, in every case of this kind, 20 per cent. on the value of the improvements is added to the upset price of the land when it is sold. If there are several acres of land to be sold in a town, and on one of these acres are expensive improvements, the value of these is added to the upset price. It is not a question of an additional impost; it is put on as a protection for the owner, and to protect the State against his acquiring it without competition. There are no doubt a great many men who enter into occupation of Crown lands and trust to the value of their improvements to prevent public competition when the lands are offered for sale. That is the reason, I believe, that double and treble the upset price was originally charged. In this case, when Mr. Palmer was asked to furnish an estimate of the value of his improvements, he sent down a claim for £1,400. This arrived before the improvements had been valued by the land commissioner on the spot. As soon as I received the commissioner's valuation, which amounted to £295, I had Mr. Palmer written to, pointing out the discrepancy between the two valuations, and asking if he could explain it. It appeared to me that he wanted to prevent all possibility of competition for the land, and in pursuance of the principle I had adopted formerly I thought it would have been only fair to accept his valuation of £1,400. But that might have been hard on him, so I asked him if he was satisfied that was the value of the improvements. Then he sent down another estimate of £1,100, which he thought would secure him against competition. His agent, with the hon. member for Cook (Mr. Hill), called on me with reference to it, and I pointed out the great discrepancy between the £295 and the £1,400, or even the £1,100. In the end I determined to strike something like a mean, and took the value as £700, 20 per cent. on which amounted to £140. Under the old condition of things, if he had wanted his improvements protected to that extent he would have had to pay probably £300 instead of £140 in addition to the ordinary upset price. I do not know of any reason why Mr. Palmer, who has been many years in possession, should receive different treatment from any other person who has land on that condition. I think every hon. member will admit that the old practice of doubling or trebling the upset price was not a satisfactory one; it could not be adjusted fairly to every case; but when you take the value of the improvements, and add 20 per cent. of that to the upset price, treating all men alike, there

should be no grumbling at all. It is the only way of protecting the State against the attempts of some people to get land without competition by putting on improvements. Every hon. member knows you cannot keep people off Crown lands. I have had notices put on township land which had been surveyed, that any persons entering upon it would be ejected or prosecuted; but it is a threat there is no possibility of carrying out. In this way the State gets some return for the fact that no competition ever takes place when valuable improvements are on the land; though they may represent a great deal to the man who puts them up, they do not represent the same to the man who buys them. I would also point out in the case of Mr. Palmer's improvements that they were of a peculiar character—terracing on the side of a hill, or something of that kind; and the commissioner admitted that he was not quite competent to estimate the value of the work. In consequence of that I thought there was some reason for accepting Mr. Palmer's estimate. As a rule, I would be inclined to accept the higher valuation—whether it be that of the Government valuator or of the man who wants his improvements protected. I will mention another instance that occurred the other day. A man put improvements on a town lot which he had occupied for four or five years, and those improvements were valued by the surveyor, after careful examination, at £500. The owner sent down a claim for £1,500. He was, of course, informed that his valuation would be accepted, and that 20 per cent. of it would be added to the upset price. The next mail brought a letter stating that on further consideration he would be satisfied with £400. I accepted the surveyor's valuation of £500, and the man got his land with 20 per cent. of that added to the upset price. I trust, Mr. Speaker, that the House will admit that the method I have adopted of dealing with these matters is more equitable than that which prevailed before; it is not only fair to the State, but also to the man who effects the improvements.

Mr. HAMILTON said: Mr. Speaker,—The question is not whether the Government placed too high or too low a value on this particular portion of land. The principle which ought to guide the Government should be, that if the circumstances of a case entitle one to a valuation for improvements effected by him on Crown land, the Government should allow him the full value for those improvements without one penny of reduction. What right have the Government, after admitting that a person is entitled to a certain allowance for improvements, to appropriate to themselves one-fifth of that amount—namely, 20 per cent.? The Minister for Lands states that Mr. Palmer sent him various estimates of the value of the land. That does not affect the principle we are discussing. At the same time, I think the proper course for the Minister should have been to have got a report from the officer who is paid to act as Government valuator in Cooktown regarding the value of the land, to have abided by that report, allowing the value placed by the valuator without any reduction whatever.

Mr. PALMER said: Mr. Speaker,—I think it should be publicly known what are the definite arrangements with regard to these improvements put on the land before sales; there are always disputes about them. I think it is scarcely fair that people should pick out the eyes of a township, and by a few improvements debar genuine settlers who come afterwards from acquiring freehold; but at the same time, I think it should be made clearly known what conditions people will be made subject to. Now, I will give an instance where this equitable arrangement does not seem to work. Some town allotments were advertised for sale in Normanton the other day; they were gazetted at a certain price, and people went prepared to buy at that price; but on the day of sale the commissioner added 70 per cent. to the upset price, and would not start them below that. No notice had been given, and I think the people would have been justified in insisting that the lots should be started at the gazetted price. That, I think, was £25 a quarter-acre allotment; they were raised to £100 without any notice whatever, and that was without any improvements. I think that wants a little explanation.

Mr. ALAND said: Mr. Speaker,—I am not prepared to say that the regulation made by the Minister for Lands is not a fair one; still, circumstances may arise in which such a hard-and-fast regulation as that might work harshly on the person who is occupying the land, who, of course, wants to buy it at as reasonable a price as he possibly can. I do not think very much of Mr. Palmer having valued his improvements as highly as he did. His valuation might perhaps be excessive, but it is mere human nature to do what he did, and I suppose Mr. Palmer has as fair a share of that as most men have. He thought, no doubt, that by putting on so high a valuation he would be more likely to balk anyone else from making an offer for the land. But this regulation of the Minister for Lands might be open to this objection: that the Crown puts whatever upset price on land that it thinks fit, and, in addition to what is perhaps a very high upset price, it charges this 20 per cent. for improvements. I do not say that that is the case, but it is very likely that in this land sale at Cooktown a very high upset price was put upon it. Being in a township, one would naturally think that township allotments in Cooktown are worth £100 an acre. That may or may not be so, but we have this fact, that none of the land which was put up for sale on that occasion was sold except that bought by Mr. Palmer, although other lots contiguous to it were offered. It is just possible that the Crown, knowing that persons in the occupancy of Crown land must have it, might "double-bank" them py putting on a high upset price and then adding 20 per cent. on the value of the improvements. All the circumstances of each case ought to be taken into consideration before charging this 20 per cent. In this case of Mr. Palmer, he has been the occupant of that land for a good many years. If I mistake not he was one of those who went to Cooktown in the very early days, and selected this spot before there was any survey of land anywhere round about it; he fixed upon it to build his house. Although he has been living on Crown land all this time he has not been exempt from taxation. Cooktown is a municipality, and as long as it has been a municipality he has been taxed for occupying that land, although it is true that that money has not gone into the general revenue. But he has not been really occupying a piece of land and paying nothing at all for it. When we consider the value of that land, and reckoning the interest of the capital Mr. Palmer has laid out upon it, we cannot but conclude that by putting on this extra £120 he was very heavily weighted indeed. If Mr. Palmer has had to pay this amount, I certainly think that some of it at least ought to be remitted to him. The Crown, I presume, has a right to make this regulation, or it would not be made; but for all that, every case ought to be taken into consideration before a hard-and-fast line is drawn as to whether 20 per cent. on the improvements is to be charged.

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN said: Mr. Speaker,—I should like to say a few words on

this question, although the Minister for Lands has not spoken to the motion at all, which is, that a copy of the regulation be laid on the table. I did not hear him say whether he would do so or not.

The PREMIER : He said there was no regulation.

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN: Then in that case he cannot lay it on the table. I think the old system of protecting a man's improvements the best, but no doubt the Minister for Lands did what he thought best for the protection of the State. But he has gone further by making people believe that they were actually paying over again for the improvements they had made on their own land. It would have been better if he had doubled or trebled the upset price, and people would have paid it without any demur; but putting 20 per cent. on the value of improvements, which may amount to £500 or £1,000, men do not like, although perhaps they pay no more than they would have paid had the upset price been doubled or trebled. They do not like the idea of paying for their own improvements. In this particular case Mr. Palmer was rather harshly dealt with. I know something of the present value of land in Cooktown, and I know that Mr. Palmer has paid taxes upon that land ever since he has been there, and he has been a very good citizen too. He is not one of those men who go on the land in order to prevent others from getting it, or holding it for a higher market. He went there to carry on business, and built his house. The Minister for Lands should take the case into consideration, and if possible make some remission. I would certainly advise him to alter his regulation, or rather to alter the mode he has for protecting the State. A very strong feeling of dissatisfaction exists in the minds of people who have been obliged to buy their own allotments under this system. Indeed, the Minister was obliged to withdraw a number of allotments on Charters Towers. The people there would not submit to it—rather than do so they combined to "boycott" the sale; whereas had the upset price been doubled or trebled there would never have been the slightest objection to it.

Mr. W. BROOKES said: Mr. Speaker,—I have not much to say on this matter, but I agree very much with the hon. member for Townsville. What I know of this case inclines me to think that the Minister for Lands might have very graciously made a concession. It is a remarkable fact that this was the only land sold on that day. If the land had not been very highly priced it seems very probable that more allotments would have been sold; but here we have the fact that these six allotments on which Mr. Palmer's improvements were made constitute the whole of the land sold on that day. I give the Minister for Lands credit for trying to do what is right; but I say, looking at the whole circumstances of the case, here was a man who was one of the very first pioneers at Cooktown, and who has resided there a long time——

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN: Eleven years.

Mr. BROOKES : Eleven years. It has been very properly observed by the hon. member for Townsville that Mr. Palmer did not go there for speculation, but to be what he has been for eleven years, a good active citizen; and he has been a credit to Cooktown. Many other places besides Cooktown would be benefited by having men like him. This is perhaps not a matter which can be weighed in the scale, but it is one which may be brought under the notice of the Minister for Lands, and which deserves very careful consideration. As for Mr. Palmer asking £1,400, we would all have done exactly the same, sir. I do not believe there is a member in this House who would not have asked £1,400 if he thought he could have got it. I do not know whether it is in the power of the Minister to make any concession in the matter, but if it be I should be very glad if some concession were made. Of course, if there is no regulation on the subject, it cannot be laid on the table; but I am inclined to agree with the hon. member for Townsville that it would be better if there was a regulation dealing with it, as people would then know what they were doing. The fact in this particular case, according to my calculation, is that Mr. Palmer paid about double the upset price for his land. That is the way I reckon it. He naturally complains of this, and I think there is some justice in his complaint. Perhaps it cannot be formulated in terms to suit the officials of the Lands Department. The history of the Lands Office contains facts, which have crystallised into traditions, of concessions being made compared with which this is a mere drop in the bucket. But two wrongs do not make a right, and I do not advocate Mr. Palmer's claim on that ground, but on the good, substantial ground that he has been residing on that land and carrying on his business as an active and useful citizen of Cooktown. I think it would be a nice graceful way of recognising his civic and social services if the Minister for Lands could find some way or another of making a concession to Mr. Palmer. The strong inexorable stand the hon. gentleman takes tends to create bad feeling—a feeling somewhat antagonistic to Government proceedings; and I do not think that kind of feeling should be created, especially when one has to deal with an honest, respectable man. Mr. Palmer is not an adventurer, but a solid, substantial, and respectable tradesman, and his case might well be taken into favourable consideration.

Mr. SCOTT said: Mr. Speaker,—It is not often that I agree with the Minister for Lands in regard to his administration of the Lands Department, but on the point that has turned up in the discussion this evening I am inclined to agree with him. I think the only fault he has committed, if he has committed any, is in not having made it a formal regulation that 20 per cent. would be charged on improvements, so that it might be publicly known that that is the system on which all lands in the colony are to be sold. We know very well that people who want to buy land often erect buildings on it before it is surveyed, and even after it is surveyed, expecting to be allowed a good price for those buildings. If they did that on private land they would not get any compensation. I think 20 per cent. is not much to pay for the assurance that a man will be protected in his improvements in such cases, and I am therefore disposed to agree with what has been done by the Minister for Lands

Mr. MACFARLANE said: Mr. Speaker,—I think the explanation given by the Minister for Lands ought to satisfy the House that no injustice has been done to Mr. Palmer. We may not agree with the plan adopted by the hon. gentleman for getting something out of the land for the time a person is in occupation, but I think we will admit that it is plain that if a person occupies Crown land for eleven years, as it has been stated in the House Mr. Palmer has done, he is entitled to pay something for it. I do not believe that taxing improvements is the very best system that could be adopted. There might be a better system than that. I think if 2½ per cent. per annum were charged on the purchase money—that is, the amount of money the land fetched—that would be a fairer system than taxing improvements. We ought to bring the matter home to ourselves, and ask would we allow land

belonging to us to be occupied for a number of years without getting some remuneration? I do not think we would. And if I were living on Crown land for several years I would not object to pay 2½ per cent. per annum on the purchase money for the use of the land. We cannot all agree, perhaps, as to the method which should be adopted, but I think the explanation given by the Minister for Lands is satisfactory. Had the upset price been doubled in Mr. Palmer's case, he would have had to pay just as much as he did through being charged 20 per cent. on the value of his improvements.

Mr. LUMLEY HILL said: Mr. Speaker,—I think, from the general tone of the debate which has arisen on this subject, it is the opinion of the House that Mr. Palmer ought to get some concession. With regard to his being a very excellent and valuable citizen, I know that very well; nobody knows it better than I do. I do not myself think that he has been illegally treated; but the action of the department appears to have come down upon him like a thunderbolt, and to have been retrospective. I believe he applied some years ago to have the land put up for sale. If that request had been complied with, he would never have dropped in for this 20 per cent. business. I do really hope that the Minister for Lands will take the case into consideration, and see if he cannot make some concession. It is rather hard for a man to be made a first example of to the tune of £140, and Mr. Palmer is certainty a most excellent, hardworking, industrious man who has brought up a large family in a very creditable manner. I therefore hope, if it is in the power of the Minister, even if it comes to straining his conscience, he will make some concession and remit a portion of the amount. I cannot say that the treatment Mr. Palmer has received was illegal, but it was harsh; there is no doubt about that. I can only hope that the Minister will see his way to temper justice with mercy.

Question put and passed.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS laid upon the table a copy of the protest referred to by Mr. Lumley Hill, and moved that it be printed.

Question put and passed.

MESSAGE FROM THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

Immigration Act of 1882 Amendment Bill.

The SPEAKER announced that he had received a message from the Legislative Council, returning the Immigration Act of 1882 Amendment Bill without amendment.

FREE EXCHANGE OF PRODUCTS BETWEEN THE AUSTRALASIAN COLONIES.

Mr. DONALDSON, in moving—

That, in the opinion of this House, the time has arrived when free exchange of products should exist between the Australasian colonies—

said: Mr. Speaker,—You will observe that in moving the motion standing in my name I have worded it in such a way as to give it a very wide range indeed. I have done so purposely, in order to have a full discussion upon it, although I do not intend myself to traverse over the whole ground, and show the advantages of reciprocity between each of the Australasian colonies. The remarks I have to make will be chiefly confined to Victoria, because I have been able to get information with regard to our exchanges with that colony that I have not been able to get with regard to the others. I regret that a return I asked for here some time ago has not been furnished, otherwise I should have been in a position to have put the case much more clearly before the House; but rather than lose the opportunity of having the matter discussed now, I prefer to go on with the motion instead of having it deferred any longer. No doubt, if the return I asked for had come to hand, it would have been very advantageous to hon. members while the question is being discussed; but I do not think that any fault lies with the Treasury Department, because it was rather a wide question that I asked, and one that would, no doubt, cause a great deal of research. The Colonial Treasurer promised to furnish all the information within his power, and that has been done, although not exactly in the form I asked for it. With regard to intercolonial reciprocity, I really think the time has arrived when the different Australasian colonies should combine for the purpose of having a free interchange of their commodities. At the present time, Mr. Speaker, we are as much distinct from each other as different nations are. Although we are all sprung from the same nation, and at one time were all in the same colony, but were divided afterwards, still we are as distinct, commercially, at the present time, as any nation. In fact, the goods of France or any other European country are allowed to come into any one of the Australasian colonies on exactly the same terms as the goods of other colonies. Until a few years ago the various Australasian Legislatures had not the power to make differential tariffs; but now they have that power. The position we are in is this: Either that we shall enter into an arrangement by which the goods of either of any two colonies can be exchanged without duty, or we can make such a differential rate as will be favourable to the one we choose to exchange with. For instance, the duty upon our sugar in Victoria is £3 per ton, while our duty upon many of their products—say wheat—is 6d. per bushel. It is quite possible for us to arrange such a tariff that the other colonies would pay 1s. per bushel upon wheat, while Victoria would only be charged 6d.; and they will charge £6 per ton upon sugar from other colonies, while they charge only £3 per ton upon ours. These are the two alternatives—either we should have a free interchange or there should be a differential rate; and that is a matter upon which I should like to have a full discussion in this House, so as to get information from hon. members as to which they think is the better course to adopt. My own opinion is that the time has arrived when the various Australasian colonies should have a free interchange of their commodities. Already, Mr. Speaker, one attempt—only one, I believe—has been made between two Australian colonies to arrange a reciprocity treaty. That was between Victoria and Tasmania, and although the Governments of those colonies arrived at an understanding as to the basis upon which it should be carried out, I believe there was a feeling in the Legislatures of both—I think in the Victorian Assembly particularly—that prevented the treaty being ever entered into; it was not confirmed by Parliament. I believe the chief reason for that was that the products of those two colonies are almost identical, and that there was a feeling between each of them that if that treaty were entered into each party would get the worst of it. It was a strange thing that that feeling should exist in the two colonies, and I think it was stronger in Victoria than Tasmania. I read several reports which showed that both parties claimed that they would get the worst of it; but I am not prepared to say which really would have got the worst of it, but I am satisfied that extreme jealousy existed in that case. But although that useful measure was frustrated, I think it

would be quite possible for Queensland to enter into a treaty with Victoria upon quite different grounds, and there would not be the same jealousy as exists between that colony and Tasmania, because nearly all the products we have for exportation are not produced there. The chief product we have for export is sugar, none of which is produced in Victoria. I shall hereafter take the opportunity of pointing out the goods we receive from the other colonies; the amount of duty paid upon them, and the amount we receive, so far as I have been able to get statistics. I am only dealing with the last couple of years, and I think it can be shown that there is not a very great difference indeed between the amount that we charge upon goods produced, or that can be produced in the other colonies, and the amount paid upon our exported sugar. It may be asked, why should we legislate in favour of the sugar interest and nothing else? But it must be borne in mind that at the present time sugar is grown in large quantities in Europe, and that it can come here and compete with our sugar-growers, because a large bounty is paid upon the article produced in those countries. Now, it is time that we should take some steps to try and protect our industries, if we are to come into competition not only with the products grown in countries where they have cheap labour, but where the Governments of these countries actually give a bounty on the quantity exported. I think it is time that we commenced to protect ourselves. Notwithstanding that I am a free-trader, and that I would like to see freetrade generally adopted, I still think there is such a thing as fair trade, and that if a country or a colony will not trade with us fairly—not allow our products in free—then we should take some steps so as to protect ourselves and not remain a perfect "cock-shy" for all the other colonies that choose to trade with us, while they have all the advantage on their side. I quite admit that the colony that is a freetrade colony surrounded by protective colonies must have a great deal the worst of it, because all goods would be admitted into the freetrade colony free, while the other colonies would be protected by a heavy duty; so that I think a middle course might be adopted, in which case we should have such a thing as fair trade. I know that the Treasurer does not exactly agree with me. I mention this because he looks upon reciprocity as an insidious form of protection. There is a great deal in what he says, and I am not going to contradict him. There is a certain amount of protection about it. Although I am a freetrader, I am not one so strongly of that opinion that I would not yield to the circumstances of the time, if I believed that a certain amount of protection is good for the colony. I certainly would not go against it. But I would certainly like to see some advantage that was to arise from it before we took steps of that kind. I really do believe that Queensland would be a large gainer indeed by entering into a reciprocity treaty with any one of the adjoining Australasian colonies. I have here returns, Mr. Speaker, giving a comparative statement, showing the duty received by Queensland on the undermentioned articles in the years 1884 and 1885. I may say that all these articles are produced, or such as are produced in the other Australasian colonies, although I cannot say that the whole of them have come from the colonies. In fact, I am pretty certain they have not. The quantity of potatoes imported in 1884 was 16,765 tons; the duty is 10s. per ton, and the amount received was £8,377 7s. 5d. In 1885 the quantity was 18,799 tons, bringing in a revenue of £9,400. I may say that potatoes all come from the neighbouring colonies; I do not think any of them come from abroad. The quantity of flour in 1884 was 38,431 tons. On that no duty was paid. Of wheat, the quantity was 26,982 bushels, the duty 6d. per bushel, yielding £674 11s. 3d.; barley, 24,013 bushels, at 6d. per bushel, £591 9s.; oats, 341,756 bushels, at 6d. per bushel, £8,525 9s. 7d. That was in 1884. I cannot separate the different grains for 1885, but the total quantity of wheat, barley, and oats imported that year was 298,938 bushels, which, at 6d. per bushel, yielded a revenue of £7,473 9s. The quantity of malt imported in 1884 was 91,471 bushels, at 6d., bringing in a revenue of £2,275 5s. 10d.; and in 1885, 107,562 bushels, at 6d., £2,689 1s. 1d. Oatmeal, in 1884, 503 tons, at 40s. per ton, £1,004 6s. 9d.; and in 1885, 578 tons, £1,156 1s. 9d. Cornflour, etc., 309,535 lbs. were imported in 1884, which, at 1d. per lb., yielded £1,327 8s. 2d.; and in 1885, 711,093 lbs., £2,962 17s. 9d. Hay and chaff were imported in 1884 to the extent of 9,252 tons; the duty is 10s. per ton, and yielded £4,622 11s. 9d. In 1885 the quantity was 7,746 tons, bringing in a revenue of £3,873 8s. 11d. In 1884, 463,681 bushels of bran and pollard were imported, which, with a duty of 2d. per bushel, yielded £3,871 2s. 3d.; and in 1885 the quantity was 536,674 bushels, giving a revenue of £4,472 5s. 8d. Hops, in 1884, 273,749 lbs.; duty, 2d. per lb.; revenue, £2,065 7s. 6d. In 1885 the quantity was 226,785 lbs., yielding £1,889 17s. 7d. I believe most of the hops were not colonial grown. Then, of bacon and ham, 672,025 lbs. were imported in 1884; duty, 2d. per lb.; revenue, £7,619 7s. 2d. In 1885 the quantity was 797,131 lbs.; revenue, £6,642 15s. 3d. I believe most of the ham and bacon did not come from the adjoining colonies. A great quantity of English ham is imported into the colony. In 1884 the quantity of butter imported was 1,272,748 lbs.; duty, 2d. per lb.; revenue, £10,578 12s. 3d. In 1885 the quantity was 1,180,846 lbs.; revenue, £9,840 7s. 8d. We have got very nearly 5,000,000 cattle in this colony, and yet, strange to say, we import over 1,000,000 lbs. of butter per annum. I think that is really not to our credit. The quantity of cheese imported in 1884 was 1,073,512 lbs.; duty, 2d. per lb.; revenue, £8,946 9s. 8d. In 1885, 1,126,660 lbs.; revenue, £9,388 16s. 8d. Jams and jellies were imported in 1884 to the extent of 3,076,156 lbs. The duty is 1s. per dozen, and the revenue from them was £12,214 16s. 6d. In 1885 the quantity was 2,089,263 lbs.; revenue, £8,705 5s. 3d. In 1884 95,093 gallons of wine were imported; duty, 6s. per gallon; revenue, £26,750 19s. 1d. In 1885 the quantity was 94,700 gallons, and the revenue £28,410 8s. 8d. I have added the total amount of duty on the articles I have in this statement —£105,941 7s. 7d—and in 1885, though some of the articles were not the same, the amount of duty was £101,130 0s. 10d. I have another return here showing the quantity of goods imported in 1884 from Victoria. Out of 1,271,000 lbs. of butter imported into the colony, 282,060 lbs. came from Victoria, yielding a revenue of £2,355. Of the 5,726 tons of chaff, 453 tons came from Victoria, yielding £226 10s. Of the 91,202 bushels of malt, 5,608 bushels came from Victoria, yielding £140 4s. duty. Of 24,103 bushels of barley, 2,185 bushels came from Victoria. Beans and peas—total imports, 11,562 bushels; imported from Victoria, 801 bushels. Barley—total imports, 24,103 bushels; rate of duty, 6d.; total amount of duty, £602 11s. 6d.; imported from Victoria, 2,185 bushels; amount of duty on Victorian imports, £54 12s. 6d. Oats—total imports, 340,654 bushels; rate of duty, 6d.; total amount of duty, £8,516 7s.; imported from Victoria, 26,545 bushels, giving a revenue

of £663 12s. 6d. Lard—total imports, 18,329 lbs.; imported from Victoria, 8,230 lbs. Potatoes—total imports, 16,784 tons; rate of duty, 10s.; total duty, £8,392; imported from Victoria, 3,290 tons, giving a revenue of £1,645. Jams—total imports, 3,037,000 lbs.; rate of duty, 1d.; total duty, £12,654 3s. 6d.; imported from Victoria, 279,978 lbs., giving a revenue of £1,166 11s. 6d. Bacon—total imports, 373,000 lbs.; rate of duty, 2d.; total duty, £3,108 6s. 8d.; imported from Victoria, 59,131 lbs., giving a revenue of £492 15s. 2d. Ham—total imports, 295,000 lbs.; rate of duty, 2d.; total duty, £2,458 6s. 8d.; imported from Victoria, 11,223 lbs., giving a revenue of £93 10s. 6d. Wine—total imports, 93,190 gallons; rate of duty, 6s.; total duty, £27,957; imported from Victoria, 4,066 gallons, giving a revenue of £1,219 16s. My object in producing these returns is to show the quantity of goods that might be produced in the different colonies, and the amount of duty received upon them. The returns I have read are for the year 1884, and I assume they would be about the same for 1885 and the present portion of 1886. I want to show that were we to enter into some such treaty as I suggest we would gain largely on Victoria, because I find that only £8,057 12s. 2d. was collected in duty on goods obtained from that colony. There is great difficulty in getting accurate returns of the quantities of goods imported, as some goods are sent from colony to colony, and their identity is lost. The true returns cannot really be got, but I have taken these from statistics, and they are approximately correct. My object is to show that by having a free exchange of products we would have a great advantage over Victoria, because we send that colony a very large quantity of sugar, and we would send a very much larger quantity if such a treaty as I suggest were entered into. The duty upon sugar in Victoria is £3 per ton; we export about 40,000 tons per annum, and the consumption of Victoria is about 50,000 tons per annum. So that they could actually take the whole of our surplus production of sugar if such a treaty was entered into—that is, if the two Governments found it to their advantage to enter into such a treaty. If the 40,000 tons of sugar were exported and taken in Victoria free of duty, it would make a difference of £120,000, and £3 a ton is the least duty charged in the colonies. In New South Wales it is much greater, and the whole of the articles that we get here from the other colonies only amount in duty to £101,000. We see, therefore, there is very little difference indeed between the duties collected upon the goods coming in here that may be produced in the other colonies. I do not say they are all produced in the Australian colonies, because I believe the bulk of the hops, ham, and some other goods come from Europe. Nearly all the oats imported into Queensland are imported from New Zealand, and there is very little of it grown in any of the other colonies. Of wheat we import scarcely any, because we put a duty upon wheat and none whatever upon flour. The consequence is the flour is imported instead of the wheat. We had a very able debate on that the other night, pointing out the anomaly, and it might be considered whether it would not be advantageous, provided some such treaty as I speak of is not entered into, to levy a duty upon flour. Possibly such action as that might bring the other colonies to their senses, and show them that we occupy such a position here that we can demand to have a fair reciprocity.

An HONOURABLE MEMBER: A pecul ar free-trade speech.

Mr. DONALDSON: I am aware that this may not seem to be a freetrade speech I can see the freetraders putting their heads together; but though I believe I am as good a freetrader as most of them, I am not above making a good bargain—a bargain that would be advantageous to this colony. I am not such a bigoted freetrader as to say I think that we should not charge any duty at all. There is no such thing as absolute freetrade. There is hardly an article we import in this colony that comes in absolutely free, and yet we call ourselves freetraders, and this colony when spoken of is called a freetrade colony. It would take a very long time if I was to go over each of the items I have just read out, and point out the different amounts collected or duty upon them, but there is one item I cannot refrain from passing a few remarks upon. We imported 93,190 gallons of wine in 1884, and I presume that about the same amount is imported annually. Of that 4,066 gallons came from Victoria, and there is a duty of 6s. a gallon charged upon it. I think it is very hard that we should charge such a duty upon colonial wine. It almost altogether shuts out that article, and is a very large protection to the Queensland grower. I am not a wine-drinker myself, nor do I profess to be a judge; but I get my information from those who know what good wine is; and I have been informed repeatedly that the wine produced in Queensland is of a very inferior quality.

Mr. KATES: Not all of it.

Mr. FOOTE: All except that grown about Warwick.

Mr. DONALDSON: I know that I am treading upon dangerous ground. I say I have been told so. I am no judge myself, but it is just as well I should be candid about this matter. I do not wish to sail under false colours, and want to be just as explicit about wine as about anything else. I know, Mr. Speaker, that in your district around Toowoomba some people profess to sell good wine, and I also know—since some of them have been convicted for it—that they sell it on Sunday. I have heard people say that the wine produced around Toowoomba is not wine of good quality, and many people have said what a pity it is we cannot grow such wine as is grown at—I won't say Victoria, because there is not much good wine produced there, but at Albury, in New South Wales. That is, a nice light wine suited to the climate; and I have heard it said it is a great pity that it cannot be used more largely.

The PREMIER: The Albury wine?

Mr. DONALDSON: That is how opinions differ. I observe the Premier shakes his head and says it is not good wine.

The PREMIER: Not for this colony. It is too heavy for this colony.

Mr. ALAND: We prefer our own wine.

Mr. DONALDSON: Some people prefer not to have stomach-aches. There are very great complaints made of the wine produced here, and is is not equal to the wine produced in New South Wales. If the duty were removed from colonial wine, it certainly would be largely consumed here, but now the duty upon it is just as high as upon first-class wines — as upon the best champagne or Spanish wines. At the present time, even with the strong protective duty we have in favour of the colonially produced article, so far as I can understand, that industry has not gone ahead as it might in this colony. I am sorry to say I have not got the returns upon the subject, but I do not think we produce any large quantity of wine. I certainly do not wish to keep anything back, and I trust hon. members who follow me will take the opportunity of supplying, if possible, any

omissions I may make. There is one thing I am perfectly satisfied about—that there is a strong desire in Victoria for a reciprocity treaty with this colony. I believe it is only about eighteen months ago, in Victoria, that I had the pleasure of introducing a deputation to the hon. the Premier, when a very large number of some of the leading merchants of Melbourne laid before him their views—briefly, because there was not much time. Since then I think nothing official has been done, though I am informed that the Government of Victoria are now fully alive to the situation, and are perfectly willing to enter into a treaty with this colony. I really believe that the sooner that is brought about the better it will be for both parties. I only regret that—even if we do have a reciprocity treaty—it is now so late in the session that it would be hardly possible for both Houses to give their sanction, because the preliminaries would, no doubt, take some time, and I do not think it is at all possible that the matter could be brought before both Parliaments now sitting in the two colonies, and get their sanction before the prorogation. I certainly regret that I did not bring this matter forward earlier in the session, for the purpose of having it ventilated then. If the House approves of the motion it will be for the Government to narrow down their objections —because there are certain objections—and get the matter into such a groove that there will be a possibility of having it passed. I know there is a very great difficulty about it; it is a question on which you can hardly get a number of people to agree—one will object to one article, and another to another. The Treasurer, for instance, will object to the loss of revenue. I have a great sympathy with the Treasurer, because I always fear any increased taxation, and we should lose largely in any treaty of the kind, so that perhaps new taxation would follow to make up the revenue. But the people must remember, on the other hand, that if we enter into an advantageous treaty of that kind, the consumer gets the benefit in the goods received here. I am perfectly satisfied that the removal of the duty will make many articles much cheaper; competition would keep down the price, and so, whatever the revenue might lose, the consumer will have a certain amount of benefit from it. I believe the only articles we export in any quantity to the other colonies are sugar and perhaps cedar. I hope in the future we will become a large exporting community, but we can hardly expect that yet, because many of our resources are not developed. With regard to wool, I believe the quantity exported will in a few years increase considerably; but it is entirely out of the question now, because it is not an article of exchange between the colonies. I think cedar and sugar are the chief articles. The chief reason for which I would advocate the necessity of protecting the sugar industry—if I may say protecting—my chief reason for advocating the advancement of the sugar industry is this; The planters a few years ago introduced a large amount of capital for the purpose of developing the country, and they have met with many difficulties—I am not going into the labour question at all, but other difficulties, such as the fall in prices, and consequently that industry is now carried on at a very great loss. In some places I believe there is a small gain, but it is very small. If such a measure as this were passed, I believe the small additional profit would be very acceptable just now to the sugar-growers of the country. Bear in mind that they have to compete against countries that have bounty-grown sugar. Surely we can give up a little here for the purpose of benefiting our second largest industry! The pastoral is the largest, and, I think, the sugar is the second largest. We surely can be unselfish enough to give up a little for that purpose; whatever loss of revenue may follow will be made up to us amply; and not only that, but I believe it would firmly establish an industry which is now almost perishing. It would be a very great loss to Queensland if the industry were to perish, and we ought to have some consideration, too, for the persons who have invested large sums of money here. We should do all we possibly can to foster any industry we have in the country, provided, of course, we do not give too large a sum for that purpose; and I do not think we would be doing that. I pointed out just now that only about £9,000 duty was paid on goods imported from Victoria, whereas they would be able to take the whole of the sugar we have to export, and the removal of the duty of £3 a ton would mean £120,000, provided they took the whole of our sugar. The other alternative I pointed out is to have differential duties, and to double the duties on imports from those colonies which did not admit our goods at a lower rate. Both these suggestions are before the House, and I would like to have them fully discussed. I am certain that any omissions I have made —and I have made a great number—will be supplied by other hon. members. I earnestly trust that this matter will receive very favourable consideration from this House, and I further trust that the day is not far distant when we shall take the first step towards practical federation, and have a free exchange of the commodities produced in the different colonies.

The PREMIER said: Mr. Speaker,—The course of popular opinion in Australia on this subject of what is called, generally, reciprocity with the other colonies, is somewhat singular. Up to 1872 the colonies were almost unanimously complaining that they had not the power to enter into arrangements with one another for a free interchange of their products. In 1873 the power was given, and from that time to the present no advantage has been taken of it. Various abortive attempts have been made to initiate something of the kind. In 1877 the Government of which I was a member went a considerable way towards making an agreement with the colony of South Australia, which I, for one, thought would be very advantageous to this colony, and probably also to that colony; but the matter did not go any farther. I do not remember any instance since then until the attempt to make a treaty between Tasmania and Victoria, at the beginning of last year; that also came to nothing. Since then an attempt has been made between Fiji and New Zealand; that also came to nothing for very good reasons—the bargain was clearly one-sided. For my own part I have no hesitation in saying that my sympathies are entirely with the motion of the hon. member. As an abstract question, I think there ought to be a free interchange of the natural products of all the Australian colonies, although I do not go so far as to say so with respect to manufactured products. But, as far as natural products are concerned, it would be a very good thing if we had a free interchange of them. Upon all other things let there be a uniform tariff—I do not care how high it is. It must, of course, be understood that I am speaking entirely for myself on this occasion. Those are my opinions on that question. I think the policy of the United States in that respect has been very good, and also in many respects the policy of Canada. But the question for us is—What is the best policy for Queensland under the circumstances in which we are placed? I will go further, and say it would be a very good thing if the entire English dominions were a Customs union to this extent: that they admitted goods from the British dominions at a lower rate of duty than from

any other part of the world. Put on any duty you please, but let the duty charged on foreign goods be higher. If a scheme of that kind were adopted it would, in my opinion, do a great deal more towards the unity and solidarity—to use a French word—of the Empire than all the talk about Imperial federation, of which we hear so much at the present time. We should be bound together by the ties of self-interest, which, after all, always counts for a great deal. With respect to this motion, I am sorry the hon. member dwelt so much upon the sugar industry. I quite agree with him that the sugar industry is a very important one in this colony, and I regret to see that it is not regarded with so much sympathy as it might be by the colony generally, but for that the planters — or, at least, a section of them—have themselves to thank. I am very sorry indeed to find that there is so little sympathy for them as there is in the colony generally at the present time, and the more so because I know that it is only a section of them who by their conduct may fairly be said to have created that want of sympathy which undoubtedly exists. I am not speaking particularly about the labour question, but about the general line of action they have laid out for themselves in the colony. What is certain is, that they are now suffering under an alienation of the sympathy of the greater part of the rest of the community. I do not think the agriculturists of this colony have anything to fear from the agriculturists elsewhere. The distance and the cost of freight and other charges ought certainly to be sufficient to enable them to compete. If they do not, it is quite clear that prices of food in this colony must be kept up artificially by means of the Customs duties. I think the Customs duties on articles of food ought to be as light as possible. At present, although flour comes in free, we have the striking anomaly of a duty on wheat — I do not know how that duty can be theoretically defended. Practically, it is defended because it exists and brings a small sum into the Treasury. Then with regard to wine, I do not think the wine-growers of this colony have anything to fear from the introduction of wine from the other colonies, even if a much lower duty is charged than at present. I want to see the wine industry of this country encouraged. From my experience during the last ten years, since this question was last seriously discussed, it seems to me that the wine produced in this colony has not improved one bit. So far as my experience has gone it has deteriorated. There was a time when I could always get in Queensland a very good wine to drink, but a good many years have passed since my wine merchant told me that that was the last case of it I should get. From that time to the present I have not seen produced in the colony a wine fit to drink regularly.

Mr. KATES: Try Warwick.

The PREMIER: That is where I used to get it from. The fact is, there is not sufficient competition. I believe competition would greatly improve the wine business, and that in time we might produce large quantities of excellent wine, not only for local use but for export also. But the last ten years have shown not an improvement, but a decided falling-off in the quality of our Queensland wine. I do not propose to go into the subject in detail now. I rise merely to express my own individual sympathy with the motion, and to say that I am always delighted to see any effort made to break down those artificial barriers which exist between the different Australasian colonies. The hon. member made special reference to the sugar bounties in the Old World. There is no doubt that the price of sugar in Queensland is, to a great extent, governed by the sugar bounties of Germany. It may be said that Germany is a very long way off. So it is; but all the sugar produced in Queensland not being consumed in the colony, the price of it is governed by the Melbourne market. The Melbourne market is also open to other sugar-producing countries—Mauritius and the East Indies; the price in which is governed by the greater market of London; and that in its turn is governed by the sugar bounties on the Continent. Those sugar bounties have had a most disastrous effect upon the industry. I do not see any reason on earth why, under such circumstances, the British people should not take the matter into their own hands—all the tenets of freetrade notwithstanding. We can do nothing in that matter ourselves. All we can do is to make some arrangement with Victoria for the purpose of getting a better market. But, to use Prince Bismarck's favourite maxim, "*Do ut des*," if we ask them to give us any concession they will want to know what we are going to give them in return; and that is exactly where the difficulty comes in. What is there that would be of any benefit to them that we can afford to give them? That is a matter that requires very serious consideration. We might ask them to take off or reduce the duty on Queensland sugar; or, as that sugar duty is a very important factor in their revenue, they might prefer to impose higher duties on other sugars coming into the colony. What can we give in return? I have not had any formal communication with the Government of Victoria on the subject for some time past, but I have taken the opportunity of communicating informally with Mr. Gillies and others who take an interest in it, and have asked them to suggest, if they can, in what direction we can make return concessions to them. It might be that the concessions they desired would be injurious to the colony, or injurious to some important interest in it, or they might injure one interest to benefit another, which we should not be justified in doing. In the meantime I can assure the House that, personally, I take the very greatest interest in the matter, and should be delighted to assist in bringing about such a result as the hon. member desires. There is no chance of doing much during the present session. I am very glad the hon. member has brought forward the motion, because it is a thing upon which public opinion is not yet educated. It is a thing which is bound to come sooner or later, and the sooner we get accustomed to look at it in that light—as a thing that we should get acquainted with and ultimately welcome—the better. At the present time, many persons regard it much as a timid horse regards a steam engine, and look upon it as something dreadful, which ought to be avoided as far as possible. I think, on the contrary, we should endeavour to familiarise ourselves thoroughly with the subject, and I believe that when we have informed ourselves thoroughly upon it it will suddenly dawn upon everybody that it should have been done long ago. The treaty between Victoria and Tasmania, which was abortive, after all contained only a few items. Yet it occupied a very long time in negotiating. I happened to be in Hobart when the negotiations were going on, and I know that the commissioners sat day after day and only agreed upon a very few items. But even those few items did not satisfy everybody in Victoria, and the Victorian Government eventually withdrew from the treaty. The Tasmanian Government were, however, prepared to go on with it, and were very indignant, and thought they were badly treated because it was not carried out. Before I sit down I will just remind hon. members that this question is one

which will affect the revenue of the colony. That is a point which cannot be lost sight of. I know my hon. friend the Colonial Treasurer keeps his eyes very firmly fixed on that part of the question. I am not quite prepared to say that the time has arrived when a general reciprocity system should be adopted. But if it has not arrived it certainly will arrive soon. I do not know whether the hon. member cares much about formally carrying the motion, but it will be quite easy, I think, to modify it, I was going to say, in such a way as will meet the general views of the members of this House, but I will, at least, say, in such a way as I hope and trust will meet the general opinion of members of the House.

Mr. MACFARLANE said: Mr. Speaker,—This is one of those motions that look very well in theory, but when we come to put it into practice it will be found to be almost unworkable. As far as I am concerned, I would like to see goods passing between the various colonies admitted, not exactly free, but in some kind of way to encourage each colony to produce the things it is best able to produce. The Premier, in replying to the mover of the motion, seemed to think that only natural products should be admitted free. I am not aware that there are many natural products sent from one colony to another. Wine, for instance, is not a natural, but a manufactured product. The grape is the natural product, and it is manufactured into wine. I do not think, therefore, that wine can come under the term or designation of natural products, and if that is the case, wine will be prohibited according to the view of the Premier. But, apart from that, it is impossible to admit wine from the other colonies duty-free at the present time, because the Treasurer is not in a position to do it, and, besides that, it would be unfair. It would be a very partial proceeding to reduce the duty on wine while increasing the duty on rum, brandy, and whisky. The fact is that so long as the Treasurer demands 10s. per gallon duty on strong spirits it will be impossible for him, or any other Treasurer, to satisfy the colony by reducing the duty on wine. It is all very well to say that wine from the other colonies is better than the wine made in this colony. I believe myself that that is a bit of sentiment. It is very seldom that a prophet has any honour in his own country, and it is just the same with our wine. I do not drink the wine of any colony, and I believe that one wine is just as good as the other. But just because a wine is made in another colony it is thought by some people to be better than our own. If the Premier were in his place I would advise him to have the wine made in Ipswich, although I cannot recommend that. I may mention another thing in connection with this subject. Wool is a natural product, and in Victoria is manufactured very largely into woollen goods. The mover of the motion stated that the annual revenue received from goods imported from Victoria is only about £8,000. I cannot understand that at all. I think we must have received almost that amount from woollen goods alone. There is a very large consumption of Victorian woollen goods in Queensland. What would be the result if a reciprocity treaty were entered into between Victoria and Queensland? The effect would be this: Woollen goods manufactured in Victoria could be brought into Queensland for about 1 per cent., which would be about the charge for freight, whereas similar goods imported from Great Britain would have to pay 5 per cent. duty, besides 10 per cent. for freight, insurance, and other charges. The difference between the cost of importing woollen goods from England and Victoria would be at the very least 10 per cent., and that would be in favour of Victoria. What would be the result? Simply that the revenue now received by the Treasury from English manufactured goods would go to Victoria; and the imports from Victoria would go on increasing until the importation of goods from Great Britain ceased entirely.

Mr. DONALDSON: We have not gone into that.

Mr. MACFARLANE: If woollen goods are to be excepted, the case is very different. If only one or two articles are stated, it might be very well; but if all goods which are natural products in one colony are to be admitted free into the other, it will work to the disadvantage of this colony. Victoria is much in advance of us as a manufacturing colony, and if we were to allow her manufactured products to be admitted free, it would result to the disadvantage of Queensland and the advantage of Victoria. I am as much a freetrader as any member in this House. I have always been a freetrader; but I contend that while we are freetraders we must look to the interest of the whole of the colony, and not allow Victoria to be benefited to our disadvantage. The proposal contained in the motion opens a very wide question indeed, and the whole subject of protection *versus* freetrade might very well be discussed under it; but I do not think this is the time to go into that subject, and I have simply stated a few facts as to what is likely to be the result if commercial reciprocity is established between Victoria and Queensland.

The COLONIAL TREASURER (Hon. J. R. Dickson) said: Mr. Speaker,—I have listened with very much interest to the manner in which the hon. member for Warrego introduced this motion to the House, and I do not think, after his speech, that he need be apprehensive that anyone will accuse him of being a freetrader; and if he has been labouring under that impression I think he has been deceiving himself. I may say, for my part, that I much prefer a staunch protectionist than to be what I may term a "milk-and-water" fair trader, because, as I have mentioned in a previous debate, when we have been discussing this matter, that I look upon "fair trade," as the phraseology now goes, to be an insidious form of protection. Protection itself may be adopted and honestly advocated by many gentlemen as a proper system of national policy, and I respect gentlemen with whom I disagree for an open, straightforward advocacy of an opposite fiscal system to what I myself desire and uphold. But as a rule I have observed that fair traders in their advocacy contend for some measure by which one interest will be specially benefited, without considering the larger question of how many interests are neglected, and what a large number of people must become contributories, merely for the benefit of one individual industry. The hon. gentleman's resolution, as placed before the House, is one that I might assent to in part—"That a free exchange of products should exist between the Australasian colonies." If we could dispense with Custom-house duties, I should be inclined to enlarge upon such a policy and have free interchange of products throughout the civilised world without any Customs tariff. But that is an utopian idea at the present time, which we cannot for one moment regard as a practical issue, and therefore it is outside of our present scope of observation. I think the hon. gentleman, in dealing with this motion, should have considered whether at the present time such a project is really feasible or practicable. I think he should have regarded it in the light of Treasury considerations. However much it may commend itself to the hon. gentleman as a desirable result, yet it seems to me that he must admit that

if the motion were carried and acted upon it would necessitate an entire revision of our financial system. We should require to revise the whole tariff; and not only that, but I am of opinion that we ought then to proceed upon some definite lines of freetrade or protection. And it would be far better, if this reciprocal system is to be confirmed by the House, that the country should commit itself to a protective policy by which all industries would for a time benefit, rather than sacrifice all industries to one product. We should not surrender other industries merely to encourage any other country to consume one of our own products, for that is what the hon. gentleman's argument chiefly maintained throughout. As I have said already, a system of protection pure and simple can be well understood. It is a system under which certain gentlemen imagine that our manufactures will be encouraged, and industries will be established, notwithstanding that our whole people will have to put their hands in their pockets and contribute to the maintenance of these industries. That is a perfectly intelligible issue. But I do not see that that applies with the same clearness to the system by which the hon. gentleman wishes arrangements to be made with another country for the purpose of inducing it to take our sugar, while we are to be flooded with its manufactures and lose revenue, and actually lose all the rising nascent industries —few in number though they be—which we possess at the present time. It is no use disguising or obscuring the perception of this matter to ourselves. I have had a communication from the Chamber of Commerce in Melbourne with a view of opening up this question, and the list of exports from Victoria upon which they desire to establish a reciprocity treaty comprises—

"Apparel and slops, dynamite and lithofracteur, bacon, biscuits, blankets, blue, boots and shoes, bronzeware, brushware, butter, candles, cheese, chicory, confectionery, cordage, bottled fruits, furniture, furs, glassware, hams, hats (felt), honey, hops, printing ink, jewellery, jams and preserves, lard, leather, leatherware, malt, meat (preserved), milk (preserved), oatmeal, onions, oilmen's stores, neatsfoot oil, paper (wrapping), paper bags, pickles, saddlery and harness, sashes (window), sauces, soap and fancy soaps, turnery, twines and lines, varnish, vinegar, wine, wickerware, woodenware, woollen-piece goods, potatoes, hay and chaff, bran and pollard, barley, maize, oats and wheat, maizena, cordials and bitters."

These, Mr. Speaker, form no inconsiderable portion of our tariff at the present time.

Mr. CHUBB: How much is left?

The COLONIAL TREASURER: I place this before hon. gentlemen to let them see the basis upon which the Victorian authorities desire us to establish a treaty for the purpose of accepting, at a reduced rate, our sugar. What we should consider is, how far will this affect our present revenue. We cannot arrive at an accurate idea of the total amount of Victorian produce that comes here, because a very great proportion of it crosses the Murray and is subsequently exported from Sydney to our markets. The total amount of Victorian produce under these heads, which came direct from Melbourne during last year, represented £128,789 in value, the duty upon which was £21,089 12s. 10d. But we must not be led away by the idea that this would be the whole loss to the revenue if this system were adopted, because if we receive Victorian goods at this reduced tariff the consumption of similar commodities produced in other colonies would, of course, cease. That consumption would be diverted towards the article which paid the lower duty. Therefore we must see what will be derived from these different items. I have not got a return made up of the total revenue received from these different items, Mr. Speaker, but I will direct attention to another view of the matter which will convey to hon. gentlemen an idea of the amount of revenue we would lose. I have no hesitation in saying that we would lose from £200,000 to £250,000 under the items which I have mentioned.

Mr. DONALDSON: We are not getting that now.

The COLONIAL TREASURER: I think I could show that the Queensland Customs have received over £200,000 from the items mentioned by the Chamber of Commerce of Melbourne. But I will direct my attention more to showing how this question will affect our natural products, because it is in that light that the question comes before hon. members for approval. Suppose that we classify under these products our agricultural industry—our various descriptions of produce—hay, chaff, maize, malt, onions, potatoes, and so on. The natural productions of Victoria that we would receive here in lieu of sugar—I have just taken a few of these—are barley, bran, pollard, hay, chaff, hops, maize, maizena, malt, oatmeal, onions, oats, potatoes, wheat, bacon, butter, cheese, hams, and lard. I have taken these by themselves, because they are purely agricultural products; and the Customs revenue which we received under these articles last year coming in from Victoria direct represented £14,805. But, as I have already said, that would not be by any means the only loss to revenue. We must look at the total amount collected under these heads. It was £67,514. It may interest hon. members if I mention a few of the articles:—Bran and pollard, £4,472; hay and chaff, £3,873; maize, £9,031; oats, £7,057; potatoes, £8,500; butter, £9,840; bacon, £3,138; hams, £3,500.

Mr. FOOTE: These are exceptional years.

The COLONIAL TREASURER: I contend that if we are to look at this matter in view of a reciprocity treaty, surely we cannot expect the agriculturists of Queensland to be relieved of whatever incidence of protection in their favour is afforded by this taxation merely for the purpose of selling our sugar in the Victorian market.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

The COLONIAL TREASURER: I do not think that would be a popular action to be taken by any Government. Nor, while I profess to be a freetrader, do I feel inclined to remit at the present time—until there is a thorough revision of the tariff—the incidence of the protection which is afforded to our own Queensland industries.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

The COLONIAL TREASURER: As I have already stated, the question, if affirmed, leads necessarily to an entire revision of the tariff—possibly on entirely different lines from those that obtain at present. I do think it would be undesirable to introduce in a piecemeal manner this revision merely for the purpose of giving the hon. gentleman an enlarged market for his sugar in Melbourne. Now, I regard this matter of the overtures from Victoria as not dictated by any great sense of philanthropy for the colony or commerce of Queensland.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

The COLONIAL TREASURER: The overtures are dictated by sheer necessity. Victoria would not have approached us if the New South Wales markets had not been closed to them by the imposition of recent duties. Depend upon it what they want to obtain from us is the best side of the bargain; and what I would try to obtain would be an equitable bargain, and naturally I am somewhat inclined to favour Queensland. But what I see here is entirely one-sided,

because, viewing the balance of trade between this colony and Victoria, we admit their flour to the extent of 30,000 tons per annum free.

Mr. DONALDSON: Flour does not all come from Victoria.

The COLONIAL TREASURER: Victoria does not allow freetrade in flour. We must look at that 30,000 tons of flour, valued at £300,000, to be a set-off against the quantity of sugar we send south; and that should be the first thing to consider before they ask us to make such concessions in our tariff as would enable them to remit the tax on our sugar, which represents £700,000 in value. There has been no disposition on the part of Victoria to recognise this fact: that we admit their flour free to a very large extent indeed, and that we are entitled to demand a proportion—if we enter into a reciprocity treaty at all—of that value as a set-off to the concession they now ask with regard to the wholesale remission of Customs duties in Queensland on imports representing the total value of the sugar we export to the southern markets — introduced into Victoria. I view these overtures, Mr. Speaker, with great suspicion, for I know they are made with a desire to obtain an enlarged market for their products at the present time, the products which they inform us they can send to us being products of a character which we can produce here. Potatoes and all the other agricultural products we are able, I think, to raise in ordinary seasons—at least to a considerable extent. And, in regard to other manufactures, I am not inclined at the present time, when things are comparatively dull in trade and business, to withdraw whatever encouragement there may be from the existing tariff from the local manufacturers. We have had jam manufactories established lately, and several other manufactures, and I should be sorry unnecessarily to disturb the tariff at the present time. I give my individual opinion on the matter; but I believe I express the feeling of a majority of hon. members in the House in regarding this proposition as one to be received with extreme suspicion. If we were in the position that Victoria could send products which we could not produce ourselves as an equivalent for our sugar exports, I would be inclined to regard the matter with considerable favour. But I do not think we should make wholesale concessions in our tariff at a time when we have to increase our Customs revenue by additional taxation; or that we should be led away by the sentimental idea that we would be improving the trade of this country by affirming the motion of the hon. gentleman. There are many positions in which the question may be regarded. I do not intend to argue the question, either from an extreme protection or extreme freetrade point of view. It does not commend itself to my approval as a step in the direction of freetrade. I was going to say that it commended itself to my hostility, not on account of its protectionist aspect, for I cannot say that I disapprove of it on those grounds solely. I would much prefer protection out and out, for there is something tangible—something to handle —in protection; but this is an insidious form of a change in our commercial relations which will necessitate an entire revision of the tariff, and will lead to very great loss in the annual revenue of the colony immediately. The hon. gentleman has argued that competition would keep down prices, and that goods would be cheaper to the consumer if a reciprocity treaty were entered into. I say that is an entire delusion. I say there would be a loss to the revenue, and so long as there was a differential tariff the importer of the goods would obtain the higher price for the goods as admitted under the higher tariff sold to the consumer. The gain to the consumer would at best be nominal, and there would be a direct loss to the revenue. The hon. gentleman says we ought to give up something to encourage the sugar industry. I should be glad to hear what practical form that is to take. I think the hon. gentleman should submit to us what we should surrender to encourage the sugar industry. He says the consumers of Victoria have to pay £120,000 per annum for their sugar.

Mr. DONALDSON: I did not say so. I say that they consume 40,000 tons of sugar in Victoria, on which a duty of £3 a ton is paid.

The COLONIAL TREASURER: I think it would be much better for the people of Victoria to continue to pay £3 duty on 40,000 tons than for us to give up the much larger sum of about £200,000 from our revenue here. I hope the hon. gentleman will understand that Government is quite prepared to hear what the Melbourne Chamber of Commerce has to say, with a view to see if any fresh matter be introduced for consideration. But nothing that has yet definitely come before me has altered the views I have already expressed; and I really do not see at the present time—until we can alter our fiscal system entirely—how we will be able to enter into a reciprocity treaty with Victoria in regard to products we can produce here, and which we ought to encourage the local production of ourselves. I think the motion might well be amended, Mr. Speaker; or, rather, to emphasise what I have said, and show that I do not consider this a suitable time for the consideration of the resolution, I move the "previous question."

The SPEAKER: The question was, "That in the opinion of this House the time has arrived when free exchange of products should exist between the Australasian colonies," since which the previous question has been moved. The question, therefore, now is, "Shall this question be put?"

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN said: Mr. Speaker,—The motion which the hon. member has moved seems to be a very simple one, but when we consider the consequences of carrying it out we must regard it as being very far from a simple one. I think, instead of the time having arrived for this action, as the hon. gentleman says in his motion, it is quite the reverse. The time is receding. All the Australian colonies are putting on fresh taxation. Here we have just passed an additional 2½ per cent. *ad valorem* after having increased the duties on certain articles last year. New South Wales is putting on increased duties; so that so far from "the time having arrived," it is really going from us; it has gone past. I do not intend to make a long speech upon this question, but I may say that I have great sympathy with the Colonial Treasurer. I do not see how he is going to make up his revenue if he is called upon to forego £200,000 or £250,000 derived from Customs. It would puzzle any Colonial Treasurer to do so at the present time. I therefore quite agree with the hon. gentleman that the time is inopportune, and that it is much better for us to carry "the previous question" than this motion in its present form. There is no doubt that the question of reciprocity, as introduced by the hon. gentleman and as dealt with by the Victorian Chamber of Commerce, is not a question of sentiment but of self-interest, and that is the line on which it will have to be decided, not only in this but in all the colonies. I believe myself that it would be much better if we could have a free interchange of products in these colonies — if we were united as the United States of America are united—but I do not at present

see any possibility of that. I believe it will come in time, but there are very great difficulties in the way. The United States have a free interchange of products, and have always had since the foundation of the republic. But it was a much easier matter when the Union was founded to carry out a policy of that kind than to carry out a similar policy at present in Australia. I hope the time will come when the motion of the hon. gentleman may probably be carried into effect by the different Governments of the colonies, but it will certainly require more than an afternoon's debate to carry it out. I agree with a very great deal that fell from the Premier. I think the words he spoke were words of great wisdom. At the same time, he did not do himself justice in the way in which he spoke of a certain very great interest in the colony. I do not think it is a good position for anyone who occupies the position which the hon. gent eman occupies, not only in this colony, but in Australia, to take up—a position of antagonism or apparent antagonism to any class of men or portion of the community.

The PREMIER : I did the very opposite.

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN : I think he should have spoken of whatever vagaries those men may have been guilty of in more indulgent terms.

The PREMIER : I thought I did so.

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN : I give the hon. gentleman full credit for having thought he did, but he certainly did not. In saying so much, I am not putting myself forward as the champion of the gentlemen to whom he alluded, though I think it would have been much better if he had not alluded to them at all. The discussion so far as it has gone has proved, what I tried to prove the other evening, the great difficulty there is in governing this great colony with its diversity of interests. The discussion has shown that to carry into effect this motion would benefit one portion of the colony, and the chief industry of that portion of the colony at the expense of the general revenue, and, consequently, at the expense of the other portions of the colony. Really, it proves to a very great extent the position the separationists of the North have taken up. I know the very first thing the separationists of the North will do, if separation is effected, will be to enter into a reciprocity treaty with Victoria. That will be the first thing they will do, and they can do it without sacrificing any special interest of that portion of the colony. At the present time, if a reciprocity treaty was entered into between this colony and Victoria for the benefit of the sugar-producers, certain interests in this colony would have to be sacrificed to a very large extent. That brings us back to what I say, and proves the very great difficulty of legislating in this House for the whole of the interests of this great colony, diverse as they are and opposed as they are to each other. We have now a 5 per cent. *ad valorem* duty upon machinery, and if that was taken off, to induce the other colonies to enter into a reciprocity treaty with us, it would be a benefit, not only to the sugar-growers, but to the whole of the Northern people who depend so much upon machinery; but then it would be adverse to the interests of Brisbane and Maryborough. Therefore, I say the interests of the two ends of the colony are adverse to each other. I do not think it possible to do justice to a motion of this kind in a few hours of an afternoon, and for that reason I took no trouble to prepare myself for a debate upon the question. I could not help being amused at hearing the hon. gentleman who moved the motion speak so strongly in favour of protection as he did, the motion being a free-trade one. I was perfectly astonished. I expected to hear freetrade arguments, and instead of that I heard protectionist arguments, with which I agree very much, I assure you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. W. BROOKES said : Mr. Speaker,—It is, of course, understood among hon. members that there is no opportunity now of doing justice to this question, or of dealing with it at any great length. The Colonial Treasurer, I think, was a little frightened at the proposal for the Treasurer to do away with £200,000 or £250,000. It is a very serious thing indeed. Even in the interests of protection I should not like to sacrifice £250,000. There is reason in everything. I am sorry the hon. member has misunderstood the Premier. What the Premier said was that he was sorry that the sugar-planters should have acted so as to alienate from them the sympathies of the colony. I believe those were the exact words he used. I do not believe the hon. member for Townsville, if he weighs these words, will be able to detect any trace of ill-feeling towards the sugar-planters in the mind of the Premier. I hold exactly that opinion. I believe myself that the sugar-planters have by their action estranged themselves from the sympathies of the colony from North to South, and no wonder. Of course this is a sugar-planters' motion we have now before us.

Mr. DONALDSON : I deny it. I do not think I would be acting fairly to myself if I allowed that imputation to pass unchallenged. I have not been asked by the sugar-planters to do this, nor do I do it in their interests although I admit it may be to their advantage.

Mr. W. BROOKES : Then, Mr. Speaker, I will let the hon. member for Warrego off, and say this is a motion introduced for the express benefit of Messrs. Sloane and Co.

Mr. DONALDSON : Mr. Speaker,—I must protest against that imputation. I have brought this motion forward of my own free will. I have not been instructed or asked by Messrs. Sloane and Co. to bring it forward, and there are hon. members in this House who are aware that such is the case.

Mr. W. BROOKES : Then I will try again. I say this motion is for the benefit of nobody else but people like the sugar-planters.

Mr. DONALDSON : I will admit that; it is in favour of them. It would be to their advantage.

Mr. W. BROOKES : Well, I am very easily contented, Mr. Speaker, and I am quite satisfied. As far as regards the general run of the speeches, it is perfectly clear to me, and it is very pleasing to me to observe, that there is a thin stream of protectionist feeling running through the minds of hon. members to-night. Even the Treasurer could not keep out of it. He reminded me of a person midway between the two horns of a dilemma; it would be impossible for anyone to say what his opinions on freetrade and protection are. The terms of the resolution are that "the time has arrived" for accepting the proposal of the hon. member for Warrego. Now, I say the hon. member is at least 100 years too soon. The very talk this afternoon shows me that the federation of Australia is a dream. When four or five Australian colonies meet to talk about federation, the moment any breeches-pocket question arises they all turn their backs upon each other, and go straight away home. The Premier related three distinct instances of that, and so it will be to the end of the chapter. If we are going to admit the agricultural produce of Victoria free, we may as well wipe out our farmers at once—tell them there is no further market for them. The cessation of the drought will flood this market

with our own agricultural produce within the next three or four months, and that state of things will continue till we have another drought, which, I hope, a kind Providence will put off to the most distant possible future. In the meanwhile, I am quite content to take things as they are, and I am not disposed to sacrifice our farmers for the sugar-planters in any part of the world.

Mr. FOOTE said: Mr. Speaker,—I would like to say a word or two on this matter, although I have not thought it over sufficiently to go thoroughly into all its details, as one ought to do on such a question. However, that is not necessary on this occasion, for I see the feeling of the House is almost all on one side—that the time has not arrived when a measure of this sort would be adaptable to the circumstances of the colony. I regret that the hon. member for North Brisbane should have made the allusion he did, separating the sugar industry from every other industry in this colony, with the view of showing that this motion was brought forward to help on that industry. The sugar industry is one of very great importance, and notwithstanding the drawbacks it has suffered from the low price of sugar and the difficulties in connection with labour, I am sure it will hold its own, and by-and-by be one of the best industries in Queensland; therefore it should not be treated lightly or disrespectfully by this House. Now, one of the reasons why I think the time has not arrived for this step is that the colony of Queensland and the colony of Victoria are in very different positions indeed. Victoria is an export colony; she is a small colony producing more than she can consume, and she must find a market in some other locality; hence she must of necessity become a manufacturing colony in order to maintain her large and increasing population. She will, of course, take every opportunity of securing trade with the other colonies on the best possible terms. As the Treasurer observed the other night, Victoria got on swimmingly with her protective policy so long as she had a free colony alongside to consume a great deal of her produce; but as soon as that colony puts on a duty which prevents her goods from coming in free, it becomes a different matter altogether: she wants some other place to export her goods to. Now, what is the case with Queensland? We do not produce anything like as much as we consume of any one item—flour, wheat, vegetables, hay, straw, maize, or anything else with one exception, and that is sugar. Of course I do not include wool. I believe the sugar industry does produce more than the colony requires, and that there is an export duty arising from that source. Of course, England is our market for wool, tallow, and things of that sort; but, so far as the farming interest is concerned, we do not grow what we can consume. Now, Mr. Speaker, what would have been the result during the last years of the drought if we had not had the other colonies to go to? Those were the sources of that great additional revenue which the Colonial Treasurer has quoted—the revenue on certain products which, he says, can be grown within the colony. But he must not expect a revenue of that sort in years of prosperity; it is only in years of adversity that we are obliged to go go outside the colony to such an extent. But every year since I have known the colony there have been seasons when we required to go out of the colony for certain articles which we cannot produce in sufficient quantities for our own consumption.

At 7 o'clock,

The SPEAKER said: In accordance with the sessional order, the business under discussion at 6 o'clock stands adjourned till after the consideration of the Government business.

MINERAL OILS BILL—CONSIDERATION IN COMMITTEE OF THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL'S AMENDMENTS.

On the Order of the Day being read, on the motion of the COLONIAL TREASURER, the House resolved itself into a Committee of the Whole to consider the Legislative Council's amendments in this Bill.

The COLONIAL TREASURER said the amendments of the Legislative Council in the 1st paragraph of the 5th clause were not of a character that the Government could object to. They simply gave the owner or person in charge of oils full opportunity of ascertaining its quality. The reason the Government could not consent to the Council's amendment in the 2nd paragraph was that it was a matter supervised by the Customs, which act under the administration of the Treasurer for the time being, as defined in the 3rd clause, and he thought it was desirable that the Treasurer should still continue to decide the time to be allowed for exportation. He moved that the amendments in the 1st paragraph of clause 5 be agreed to.

Amendment agreed to.

On the motion of the COLONIAL TREASURER, the Legislative Council's amendment in the 2nd paragraph of clause 5 was amended by the omission of the words "collector of Customs," and the insertion of the words "Colonial Treasurer."

On the motion of the COLONIAL TREASURER, the Legislative Council's amendment in clause 7 was agreed to.

The House resumed; the CHAIRMAN reported that the Committee had agreed to the first three amendments in clause 5, had made an amendment in an amendment, and agreed with the amendment in clause 7.

The report was adopted; and, on the motion of the COLONIAL TREASURER, a message was ordered to be sent to the Legislative Council, intimating that the House had made an amendment in an amendment, that the other amendments had been agreed to; and requesting the concurrence of that House in the amended amendment.

HEALTH ACT AMENDMENT BILL—COMMITTEE.

On the motion of the PREMIER, the House went into Committee of the Whole to consider this Bill in detail.

On clause 1—"Short title and construction"—

The PREMIER said that would be a convenient opportunity to let hon. members know what the Government proposed to do with respect to some objections that were raised during the debate on the second reading of the Bill yesterday. The principal object of the first part of the Bill, as he had before pointed out, was to abolish the anomalous condition of things that the general revenue was at present called upon to contribute to the cost of emptying cesspits and cleansing earth-closets. That was a ridiculous anomaly, which was never intended, and which ought not to be allowed to continue. By the Health Act provision was made in clause 120 that—

"All expenses incurred or payable by a local authority in the execution of this Act, and not otherwise provided for, shall be charged on and defrayed out of the municipal fund or divisional fund, as the case may be."

And the 1st section of the 121st clause provided that—

"For the purpose of defraying any expenses chargeable in the municipal or divisional fund which that fund

is insufficient to meet, the local authority shall from time to time, as occasion may require, make and levy, in addition to any other rate leviable by them under any Act, a rate or rates to be called 'General Health Rates.' "

On those rates an endowment was payable from the general revenue in the same way as upon other rates. The expenses which the local authority might incur under that Act were many. They were charged with, sometimes, drainage works, with the supervision of private properties, so far as related to keeping them clean, with the supervision of lodging-houses, and with other duties relating to the suppression of nuisances. Many expenses incurred in that way might fairly be said to be matters of public concern, in respect to which they could fairly claim assistance in the shape of endowment. But one of the most important and expensive duties imposed on them was contained in the 44th clause, under which they might undertake or contract for the removal of house refuse from premises, the cleansing of earth-closets, privies, ashpits, and cesspools, and the proper cleansing of streets. He did not think it was ever intended that they should do that out of contributions from the general revenue. After considering the arguments adduced yesterday, the Government proposed to amend the Bill by omitting the 3rd section, which repealed the provision as to endowment, and to substitute for it provisions that the general health rate should not be used for those particular purposes. They would continue to receive the endowment on the health rate so far as it was applied to what might be called general purposes. That, he thought, would meet the views of hon. members. To give effect to that it was proposed to provide that a separate account should be kept of all moneys raised by general health rates and received as endowment thereon, and of all expenditure defrayed out of such moneys. Then it was provided that no moneys raised by a general health rate, made for any period after the present year, or received as endowment upon them, should be applied to those purposes, and in order to prevent them from indirectly applying the proceeds of the health rate to purposes to which it was not intended they should be applied, it was proposed that if they spent the divisional or municipal funds for those purposes, they should not apply the general health rate to recoup it; and lest there might still be some ways of evading it, if it was found that a local authority was contravening the provisions of the Act the Treasurer should withhold the endowment until the accounts were properly adjusted. And if they raised a general health rate for purposes for which it was not required, a proportionate part of the endowment would be withheld. The amendments would, he thought, meet all the arguments urged the previous day on the subject, except those of one or two members, who contended that the general public ought to contribute towards those works, which were of a purely private character. It would also meet the objection urged against the Bill, on the ground that money had been raised during the present year by a few municipalities on the strength of the promise that they would receive endowment upon it. The Government were prepared to give them endowment on the money raised this year. That seemed to be only fair, but after this year no endowment would be paid on moneys raised by a general health rate unless those moneys were applied to other purposes than those he had referred to.

Mr. FERGUSON said he quite saw the drift of the Premier's arguments, and thought the proposal now made was a very fair one. He did not think it would be fair to require the general public to contribute towards the cost of cleansing cesspits and the general cleaning of the town, but he would like to know whether endowment on drainage rates was included in the amendment?

The PREMIER: We leave the law exactly as it stands now.

Mr. FERGUSON said he believed there was no law at the present time under which a local authority could receive endowment on drainage rates. He did not know a single municipality in the colony that had received endowment on drainage rates, and as far as he could see there was no law which allowed a local authority to claim endowment in respect of such rates. Yet drainage was, he considered, the principal part of the Health Act. The endowment allowed by the amendment would be very small indeed unless it included endowment on drainage rates. There were towns in the colony which had gone to great expense in drainage works, and he would like the Premier to show the Committee that there was a clause in the Local Government Act which enabled local authorities to claim endowment on drainage rates.

The PREMIER said some confusion had arisen about that subject from the fact that no endowment was payable upon special loan rates. When money was borrowed for the purpose of constructing sewers or drains no endowment was paid upon the special rate levied to pay the interest on that loan. If there were, the result would be that the interest would be diminished from 5 per cent. to $2\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. in the case of municipalities, and to $1\frac{3}{5}$ per cent. in the case of divisional boards. But under Part III. of the Health Act local authorities had very ample powers—very large powers, at any rate, with respect to sewerage and drainage—and the cost of those works would be defrayed out of the general health rate. On that it was proposed that the endowment should be continued. As to sewerage and drainage rates, endowment was paid on those now. He knew one divisional board which had levied a general health rate to a considerable extent, for the purpose of carrying out drainage work, and they received endowment on that rate; and, as he had already said, it was not proposed to interfere with the provisions of the Act in regard to that.

Mr. GROOM said he was very glad the Premier had seen his way to amend the clause in the manner he had indicated. There were many other matters, apart altogether from what were designated cleansing back-yards and cesspits, which local authorities had to perform. He would just give an illustration which would show that it was really necessary that those who endeavoured to carry out the Health Act honestly should receive some assistance from the State. Hon. members would no doubt recollect the cases of cholera which occurred on board the steamer "Dorunda," and the scare there was created throughout the colony for fear that some passengers who had landed at Cooktown might scatter themselves among the population, and so spread the disease in the colony. Under Part VI. of the Health Act, the Central Board could, with the consent of the Governor in Council, prepare regulations which, when published in the *Government Gazette*, had the force of law; and the Governor in Council could, by proclamation, call upon all municipalities in the colony where the Act was in force to carry out those regulations. There were certain parts of the Act in force in all municipalities, and it did not require any notice from the Governor in Council to proclaim that they were in force. In last November, at the time of the "Dorunda" scare, Part VI. of the Act, which referred to infectious diseases and contained provisions

against infection, was declared to be in force in all municipalities, and the Governor in Council issued a proclamation in the *Government Gazette* calling upon all local authorities to put those provisions in force in order to prevent the spread of the cholera, which was regarded as a filth disease. The local authorities had to keep all gutters and drains clean, and generally attend to the sanitary condition of their towns and districts, so that the disease might be kept away. How were small municipalities, with the little revenue they possessed, able to do that without some assistance? It was not fair to small municipalities to gauge their revenues for local purposes by the revenues of such places as Brisbane, or the municipality of Rockhampton, or the municipality of Townsville. Brisbane received a large revenue from wharfages, and Rockhampton and Townsville were both in a similarly fortunate position. But provincial municipalities had nothing but the small revenue derived from taxing properties, and in nine cases out of ten, even with the present endowment, it was not sufficient to carry on the real work of local government. In many of them the streets were still in a bad condition, entirely owing to want of revenue. He therefore thought the Premier was wise in amending the Bill as now proposed, and allowing endowment on the general health rate levied for the purposes he had named in connection with the Health Act. There was this also to be taken into consideration, which was not a matter of cleansing back-yards — namely, that by the Health Act large powers were given to local authorities with regard to houses in which infectious diseases occurred. For instance, a house might be infected with diphtheria, which was a very contagious disease; it lodged in the walls of a house, probably for two or three years, and rendered tenants who occupied it liable to take the disease. The local authority could quarantine a house in such a case or, if they thought it better, order it to be destroyed, but it was necessary that the municipality should have funds to carry out things of that kind, and the whole expenses should not be defrayed entirely by the local authority. It should not bear all the burden. In such a case as that the general revenue should bear a portion of the expenditure. Therefore under the circumstances, he thought the Premier had acted wisely in accepting the suggestions made on the second reading of the Bill. The Public Health Act also imposed on local authorities the duty of looking after lodging-houses and other matters of that kind, so that he thought local authorities had a right to receive some consideration at the hands of the Colonial Treasurer. He was glad to hear the hon. gentleman say, in regard to those municipalities which had already levied a rate, and upon the strength of that rate had entered into contracts from which they could not withdraw, that the Government were prepared to continue the endowment. That was a fair arrangement, and in conjunction with the amended clause would fully meet the difficulty. He thought the Health Act was one of the most valuable measures ever passed by the House, and if any hon. gentleman would look at the Vital Statistics laid upon the table a short time ago they would see that the death-rate in many municipalities had decreased within the last two years, a result that he attributed very largely indeed to the efforts of those municipalities which had carefully and zealously administered the provisions of the Health Act.

Mr. McMASTER said he was not clear upon one point. Was he to understand that the endowment would be paid up to the 31st December

The PREMIER: All the endowment with respect to this year's rates.

Mr. McMASTER said that was all any hon. gentleman could expect. He understood the Chief Secretary to say that if a separate account were kept of the other expenditure under the Health Act, such as supervising lodging-houses and such things, an endowment would be paid upon that. As a matter of fact drainage works were generally constructed, at least so far as Brisbane was concerned, out of loans. But before the Colonial Treasurer would grant the loan they had to levy a special rate. It would be manifestly unfair to levy a special rate to represent that endowment, and then levy a special rate for the carrying out of drainage; it would be double-banking the ratepayers. He was glad that the Chief Secretary had seen his way clear to allow the endowment to run on till the end of the year. The Brisbane Municipality had entered into a contract extending over three years for scavenging, and would be heavy losers, as they would not get any endowment for the last two years. However, they could not expect to get everything.

Mr. WAKEFIELD said he was glad that the Chief Secretary had made some concession by granting the endowment to the end of the current year; but he would have been better pleased if he had consented to grant it for the next two years, as he (Mr. Wakefield) had suggested, as it would be an encouragement to municipalities and divisional boards to adopt the provisions of the Health Act. The Treasury would not suffer much, as Brisbane, and other large municipalities which drew large sums, would fall off immediately almost. Still he was glad that some concession had been made in the Bill.

Mr. PATTISON said he could quite sympathise with the remarks of the hon. gentleman who had just sat down, and could appreciate the concession made by the Treasurer. At the same time, he thought that if the hon. gentleman would extend the endowment over two or three years it would meet the objection raised against the alteration. The hon. the Treasurer had endeavoured to make him believe that Rockhampton was not sincere upon the question, but he repeated what he said, and would add this—that, if necessary, he should take a trip to Rockhampton and give effect to his views upon the question, and that might be necessary. If the object of the Bill was to wipe out the Health Act there was no shorter method by which the Government could do it than that they were adopting. So far as Rockhampton was concerned, the resolution they had adopted would be rescinded at a very early date. From a consultation he had had with the mayor and from sundry telegrams that had passed, he believed that the majority of the municipal council there intended that, if some considerable concession were not made, that resolution would be rescinded. The Colonial Treasurer appeared to doubt him; but he would repeat what he said. The council there passed a resolution to levy a rate, in anticipating an endowment. They levied a rate of 6d. in the £1, but it was the endowment they should get from the Government that led them to adopt that resolution. He did not think that the proposed concession would alter the opinion of the people of Rockhampton. They would not come under the Act merely for the purpose of getting the endowment this year and then abandon it. The concession did not go far enough; it should go for two or three years, which was not asking too much. The resolution was passed simply because they believed that they would get an endowment, and they had already incurred

sundry expenses in connection with the purchase of land. They had not gone so far that they could not recall what they had done, but rather than accept the amendment they would go back to the position they occupied before they passed the resolution or levied the rate. If the Colonial Treasurer could see his way clear, as the hon. member for Moreton said, to allow the endowment to continue for two years, they would be prepared to go on, and when that time came the Treasurer would, he believed, be able to continue it. The Treasurer was by no manner of means a man who was to be depressed. He was hopeful and buoyant, and anticipated good times—a hope that he (Mr. Pattison) trusted would be realised. He had no doubt that at the expiration of two years the Treasurer's anticipations would be realised, and that he would be in a position to continue the endowment under the Health Act. If the hon. gentleman would allow the endowment to go on for two years he would satisfy all cavillers, himself (Mr. Pattison) amongst the number.

The PREMIER said the hon. gentleman was evidently under the impression that the main function of the Health Act was to empty people's closets. That was one of the outside functions of the Act. That elaborate Act was not passed simply for that purpose. That was merely an incidental power given to municipalities, and they could leave it alone if they thought fit. The Rockhampton Council could abandon it if they did not care to continue it, and they would have enough to do without it, and much more necessary work too.

Mr. BLACK said he stated last night that if the endowment was paid in consideration of the cleansing portion of the Act he was quite in accord with the Government in the matter. But he was not clear now, and would like to have some explanation. He would like it to be made clear that the endowment in reference to other clauses of the Health Act—namely, that which they were entitled to for the construction of sewers, etc.—were really ensured by the present Bill. It appeared to him that the endowments under the Act were to be entirely discontinued, and he would like to have the matter settled.

The PREMIER: If you had been here half-an-hour ago you would have heard.

Mr. BLACK said that showed that the Government had brought in the measure before they understood what they were legislating upon, and he was very glad to find that they had taken notice of the remarks he and some other hon. members had made upon the subject, and had thought fit to amend the Bill in the direction to which he had referred. He did not consider the Government could take any credit to themselves for having brought in an immature Bill such as they admitted this to be when they introduced it.

The PREMIER said if the hon. member had been in his place quarter of an hour ago he would have heard all that explained. In most Parliaments Bills were amended in committee, after the second reading. He did not know of what use the debate on a second reading was unless to suggest necessary amendments. The hon. member ought to congratulate himself that his arguments were so forcible as to induce the Government to accept them.

Mr. FERGUSON said there was one point which he would like cleared up. Supposing under the Health Act a certain amount of money was expended on drainage: the Premier told them that endowment would be given on that; but did he understand the Premier to say that if the money was borrowed the endowment would be paid on the borrowed money?

The PREMIER: No. We do not pay endowment on special loan rates.

Mr. FERGUSON said that the principal expenditure would be on drainage and such things. But if buildings had to be pulled down and compensation paid to the owner—and he supposed the Health Act allowed that—there would be no such thing as levying rates for such compensation; it would be simply keeping accounts.

The PREMIER: Oh, you must levy rates first!

Mr. FERGUSON said he understood that whatever money was expended beyond scavenging or cleaning, in accordance with the Health Act, would receive endowment if a separate account were kept, and a rate not levied at all.

Mr. PATTISON: That is a mistake.

Mr. FERGUSON said if that was the case then the rate of 6d. in the £1 would be similar to the present Act. He did not see any difference whatever.

Mr. McMASTER said he did not understand that endowment would be paid on compensation paid to a man who was compelled by the local authority to pull down a dwelling after it was condemned. He did not consider there should be any compensation to pay for pulling down a house that was not worthy to live in. He understood that endowment would only be paid on the rates levied for the purposes of the Health Act, and not on sums paid for compensating people who kept rookeries in the centre of cities unfit for human habitation. Such people were not entitled to any compensation; on the contrary, he would have them fined.

Mr. FERGUSON said that the hon. gentleman quite misunderstood him. If there were houses where disease existed, or which had been quarantined, and the health board or municipal authority saw fit or necessary to have these houses destroyed, surely there would be compensation paid! Would endowment be paid in such cases?

The PREMIER said that endowment was payable, not on money spent, but on the rates paid, if those rates were levied for the purposes of the Health Act.

Mr. WAKEFIELD said that in respect to drainage, if a rate was levied, endowment was paid on that rate. If money was borrowed no endowment was paid on it.

Mr. ANNEAR said he understood the Chief Secretary to say that if, say, a municipality borrowed £10,000 for a system of drainage approved by the Government, they would get £1 for £1 on that loan.

The PREMIER: No, no!

Clause 2 put and passed.

Clause 3 put and negatived.

Clause 4 put and passed.

Clauses 5 and 6 were put and negatived, and the following new clauses moved by the PREMIER, were put and passed:—

Separate and distinct accounts shall be kept of all moneys raised by general health rates and received as endowments in respect thereof, and of all expenditure defrayed out of such moneys.

No moneys raised by a general health rate made or levied in respect of any period after the thirty-first day of December, one thousand eight hundred and eighty-six, or received as endowment in respect of any moneys so raised, shall be applied for any purpose other than the purpose of defraying the expenses incurred or payable by the local authority in the execution of the principal Act or this Act, and not being expenses incurred in respect of any of the works mentioned in the last preceding section but one.

When any part of the cost of any such last-mentioned works has been defrayed out of the municipal or divisional fund, and by reason thereof such fund is insufficient to meet the expenses incurred in the execution of the principal Act or this Act, it shall not be lawful to apply any part of the moneys raised by a general health rate, or received as endowment in respect thereof, for the purpose of making up the deficiency so caused.

The PREMIER moved the following new clause, to follow the last new clause as passed :—

When a local authority contravenes the provisions of the last preceding section, the Colonial Treasurer shall withhold the whole of the endowment which would be payable to such local authority in respect of general health rates until the accounts of the local authority have been adjusted to his satisfaction in accordance with the provisions of this Act.

New clause put and passed.

The PREMIER moved the following new clause, to follow the last new clause as passed :—

When a local authority makes and levies a general health rate of such amount that the moneys raised thereby, with the endowment payable in respect thereof, are substantially in excess of a sum sufficient to defray the expenses of the works to the cost of which such moneys are properly applicable, the Colonial Treasurer may withhold such portion of the endowment as is proportionate to the amount of such excess.

New clause put and passed.

Clause 7—"By-laws as to cleansing rates"—and clause 8—"Local Government Acts applicable"—put and passed.

On clause 9, as follows :—

"1. Any health officer or inspector of nuisances may at all reasonable times enter, inspect, and examine, any dairy or place in which milk or any product of milk intended for the food of man is obtained from cows or other animals, or prepared, collected, or deposited.

"2. If it appears to the health officer or inspector of nuisances that the dairy is in an unclean or unwholesome condition, or that diseased cows or other animals are milked in the dairy, or if any person affected with an infectious disease is found to be in any part of the premises upon which the dairy is situated under such circumstances that the milk in the dairy is likely to be contaminated or made unwholesome, the health officer or inspector of nuisances may, by notice under his hand, forbid the selling of any milk or product of milk from such dairy until the matter has been determined by justices, and shall proceed to make a complaint to a justice accordingly.

"3. Upon the hearing of the complaint the justices may give such directions as they think fit with respect to cleansing or disinfecting the dairy, or destroying or removing from it any diseased cows or other animals which are milked in it, or removing any sick person from the premises, and, if they give any such directions, shall also forbid the sale of any milk or product of milk from the dairy until such directions are complied with to the satisfaction of the health officer or inspector.

"4. Any person who, after any such notice or order forbidding the sale of milk from a dairy has been given or made, and while it is in force, sells or delivers any milk or any product of milk from the dairy referred to in the notice or order, shall be liable to a penalty not exceeding fifty pounds, or, at the discretion of the justices, without the infliction of a fine, to be imprisoned for a period not exceeding six months, and any milk or product of milk so sold or delivered may be destroyed by any person.

"5. In this section the term 'dairy' means any stock-yard, milking-yard, milk-house, or other place in which milk or any product of milk intended for the food of man is obtained from cows or other animals, or is prepared, collected, or deposited."

Mr. McMASTER said he should like to know what provision was made to enable an inspector of a local authority to examine dairies outside the boundary of the local authority for which he was appointed. He alluded to the difficulty yesterday on the second reading of the Bill, and pointed out that the inspector of the municipality of Brisbane would not have power to examine the dairies at Eagle Farm and other places outside the city boundary from which milk was supplied to the city. There should be power given to the inspector of the municipality to inspect dairies outside the boundary from which milk was supplied to the people of the city. If that power was not given justice might be defeated, as in the case he mentioned yesterday, by the milkman declaring that he delivered the milk by contract.

The PREMIER said the hon. member had rather mixed up two things. The question of examining milk and seeing whether it was fit for sale was one that arose under the Sale of Food and Drugs Act. Under that Act the necessary power could be exercised wherever the milk was found. But with respect to the inspection of the dairies, he did not think it would be convenient to allow the officers of one local authority to interfere in the district of another. That had been carefully considered more than once by the Government. It would be a great inconvenience to allow, say, the health officers of the municipality of Brisbane to interfere in the divisions of Woollongabba, Toombul, or any other division, and *vice versâ* it would be inconvenient to allow the health officers of any other district to interfere in the municipality of Brisbane. There might be a conflict of authorities, and that would be found to be very inconvenient. They must trust each local authority to execute the Act within its own district; but if they did not do it the Health Act contained ample provisions for compelling them to do so. The 15th section of the Health Act provided that, if any complaint were made to the board that a local authority neglected to enforce the provisions of the Act which it was its duty to enforce, the Governor in Council might make an order compelling them to do so within a certain time. If they did not do it the board might appoint some person to perform the duty for them. It would work in this way: Suppose any particular local authority refused to inspect the dairies within its jurisdiction, an officer would be appointed by the Board to do the work of that local authority in that district, and to do it at their expense, and so the work would be done without the inconvenience of allowing the officers of one local authority to interfere in the district of another. Of course, it was quite inconsistent with the principles of local government to allow the officer of a local authority to exercise his functions outside the district for which he was appointed.

Mr. McMASTER said he might be mixed up in the matter, but what the hon. gentleman had stated did not meet the objection that he had in his mind. For instance, the Toombul Board had appointed no inspector. There was scarcely any milk sold in Toombul, as most of the people there had cows of their own ; but there were large dairies there which supplied milk to Brisbane. The milk was not sold within Toombul Division, and it appeared the Toombul Divisional Board were not supposed to care whether the milk was good or bad that was supplied to Brisbane. The Premier said that if the board did not do the work they might be compelled to do it by the Central Board of Health. Their experience of the Central Board of Health was that it took a heavy team to move them, and it would take a great deal to compel them to appoint an inspector to examine the dairies outside the municipality. It might be inconvenient to allow the officers of the municipality power to inspect dairies outside the municipality; but in the absence of those divisions having inspectors of their own it was very inconvenient for the citizens of Brisbane.

The PREMIER said the way to get over the difficulty, if, as the hon. member said, the Toombul Board were so neglectful of their duty, and regardless of their responsibility as to refuse to appoint an officer to inspect the dairies, was

for the Central Board of Health to appoint one of the inspectors of the municipality to do the work, and the Toombul Board would have to pay for it.

Mr. BUCKLAND said the Toombul Board were not neglectful of their duties in declining to appoint an inspector. The majority of the inhabitants in that district had cows of their own; and although they had a large number of dairies in that division, most of the milk was sold in Brisbane. There was one part of the clause he thought might be better defined. The clause said, "Any health officer or inspector of nuisances may at all reasonable times enter, inspect, and examine," etc. He thought it would be better if a time were mentioned—say from 6 a.m. to 6 p.m.

The PREMIER: Say "during the daytime" if you like.

Mr. BUCKLAND said he thought it would be better to say "during the daytime."

The PREMIER said that, by the 94th section of the principal Act, any health officer might at all reasonable times inspect any animal food, and so on. He had no objection to putting "in the daytime"; but no one would be likely to inspect dairies in the night-time—it would not be a reasonable time.

Mr. CHUBB said he thought the clause might be made a little wider. Very often it was not the dairy which was unclean, but the utensils in which the milk was stored. He would suggest that it should be made to apply to the utensils.

The PREMIER said that would be met by paragraph 2.

Mr. BUCKLAND said he might mention that the reason the Toombul Board had not appointed an inspector was that they had not yet come under the Act.

Mr. McMASTER said it was time they did. There were other things which wanted examining besides dairies and milk. He was satisfied that more disease was brought into Brisbane by the Chinamen's vegetables than by anything else. He was sure that if hon. members were to see the liquid manure used by the Chinamen they would not touch their vegetables. Medical men blamed milk for being the cause of fever, but none of them had said anything about the Chinamen's vegetables. He knew a gentleman in Brisbane who had to put a bailiff in on some Chinamen for rent, and he found a certain number of oil-drums tightened up in a certain place in the buildings. He was anxious to know what they contained, so he got a practical man, a chemist to examine them, believing he had the worth of his rent in the drums; but when the chemist drew the cork from one he very soon cleared out. Now, that was the stuff used on Chinamen's gardens, and brought into the towns, filling the hospitals with fever patients. He hoped the Government would see the necessity of appointing someone to examine dairies and Chinamen's gardens, and hunt the Chinamen out.

Mr. BROWN said medical men were agreed that one of the causes of disease was the use of bad water. Now, they knew that all round Brisbane there was water in small holes, and there was a great temptation to people having dairies to use this water. They all knew that water was put in milk, and it was very desirable that it should be clean water. It would be a good thing if the inspector were given discretionary power to see where the water supply came from. As for this matter of utensils, it seemed to him that paragraph 5 would cover that; but he did not see anything to provide for the examination of the water used in dairies.

Mr. SHERIDAN said the Premier had told them it would be very inconvenient for an inspector of one district to interfere with another. Now, the 1st subsection said—

> "Any health officer or inspector of nuisances may at all reasonable times enter, inspect, and examine, any dairy or place in which milk or any product of milk intended for the food of man is obtained."

That certainly gave permission to any inspector at any time to go and examine any district.

The PREMIER said that, according to the principal Act, a health officer would mean the health officer appointed by the local authority having jurisdiction in the place in question.

Mr. ANNEAR said he would like to make a few remarks before the clause was passed. The Bill had only been issued yesterday morning, the second reading was passed in one day, and now the last clause was going through committee. It was a very important matter to the country at large, and he had received several telegrams from people in authority in his district who would like to see a copy of the Bill. Hon. members would remember the great scare that went through the whole colony when the "Dorunda" came into Brisbane with cholera on board. In Maryborough the council spent hundreds of pounds to endeavour to meet that case, and how were they met now? Last night they had a Bill where the Treasurer did not want to receive duty—a Bill to wipe out the opium trade; and here was a Bill of a different character altogether. The Treasury was in a low state and could not afford to pay this money any longer. The Premier had told them that good suggestions thrown out during the second reading would be taken advantage of and embodied in the Bill, and no doubt the amendments which had been introduced were the result of suggestions made during the second reading. He did enter his protest against that hurried manner of putting legislation through in two days. Many hon. members had not the Bill in their hands till 3 o'clock yesterday afternoon, and now at ten minutes past 8 in the evening of the second day the measure had passed finally through committee.

Mr. BLACK said he entirely endorsed every word that had fallen from the hon. member for Maryborough. He considered the action of the Government was not at all creditable. The Bill had only passed through its second reading yesterday evening, and then numbered nine clauses. It was fully discussed then, and several objections were made; and now the Premier had just told him that had he been in his place at a quarter past 7 he would have seen certain amendments. What did those amendments amount to? To no less than five clauses. The Bill would now contain ten clauses; therefore, one-half the Bill was submitted to hon. members about half-an-hour before they were expected to pass it. There was no necessity for such unseemly haste. The constituencies of the colony had looked with very great suspicion on the Bill as first introduced; they looked upon it as sapping the foundation of the endowment by which they had been induced to go into local government. It was always anticipated that when the outside districts took advantage of the Local Government Acts brought from time to time by the Government, on condition of their contributing a certain amount to their own necessities, the Government would endow those contributions. They were also led to believe that as local expenditure increased the central expenditure at the seat of government would decrease. But they had been deceived in all that, and taxation was increasing year by year in municipalities and divisional boards. It was a most unseemly thing for the Government to use their majority to force such a measure as that on the

country without mature consideration. He would read a telegram he had just received to show what the opinion of the outside public was on the question. They were under the impression that the intention of the Bill was to do away with the endowment on health rates. He was very glad to find that the Government—no doubt owing to something which fell from him last night—had retraced their steps, and did not intend to go so far in that direction as they did when the Bill was introduced. This was the telegram—it was from a divisional board in the constituency that he represented :—

"Board requests you to use best endeavours to get Treasurer to alter his decision *re* discontinuance of endowment on general health rates."

That was what the people outside really thought. But there was no necessity for such hurry. The Treasury would not be depleted if the further consideration of the Bill had been allowed to stand over till next week. The amendments ought to have been distributed in the morning if it was intended to pass them the same day; and it would have been more creditable still to the Government to have deferred going into committee on the Bill till next week. But the Government had taken alarm. Brisbane and Woollongabba had drawn last year no less than £14,000 from the Treasury, and the Colonial Treasurer no doubt thought that if that state of things was to go on he would have to adopt some very unpleasant means in the way of extra taxation to provide for the endowments that were necessary. He had already expressed his objection to endowing rates collected merely for cleansing purposes, and was glad that that was going to be disallowed; but there really was no necessity for the undue haste the Government had shown in rushing the Bill through that evening.

Mr. BUCKLAND moved that the 1st paragraph of the clause be amended by the insertion of the words "in the daytime" after the words "at all reasonable times."

Mr. McMASTER said that the insertion of such an amendment would render the clause perfectly useless, as the cows in public dairies were nearly always milked before daylight. His own milkman was at his place on Bowen terrace, and he had to come a considerable distance, every morning at 5 o'clock. The cattle ought to be examined while they were in the yards or sheds.

Mr. SHERIDAN said he was aware of a dairy in the neighbourhood of Brisbane where the cows were milked at 2 or 3 o'clock in the morning. If inspection was only to take place in the daytime how were those cows to be inspected?

Mr. NORTON said that his milkman, for months together, used to bring milk to his house half-an-hour and sometimes an hour before daybreak.

Mr. BUCKLAND, with the consent of the Committee, withdrew his amendment.

Mr. NORTON pointed out that the clause provided for the inspection of other places than dairies. It provided for the inspection of any place where milk, or any product of milk, intended for the use of man was stored. That was a very comprehensive provision.

The PREMIER said that if the power of inspection was limited it would diminish its usefulness very much. Butter and cream and cheese would be just as liable as milk to spread infection if kept in an unfit or a filthy place.

Mr. NORTON moved that the word "forthwith" be inserted in subsection 2 of the clause.

Amendment put and agreed to.

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN said he thought they should deal with dairies in a very summary way. About the best plan to adopt would be that adopted in France. In that country an inspector inspected the milk when it came into town, and if he found that it was unfit for human consumption he simply spilt it on the ground, and ordered the dairyman before a justice at once.

The PREMIER said he forgot whether it was provided in the Sale of Food and Drugs Act that the milk should be destroyed, but he knew it was provided that it should be seized. That, however, was a question altogether apart from that Bill.

Clause, as amended, put and passed.

On the motion of the PREMIER, the CHAIRMAN left the chair, and reported the Bill to the House with amendments.

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

SETTLED LAND BILL—COMMITTEE.

On motion of the ATTORNEY-GENERAL, the Speaker left the chair, and the House resolved itself into Committee of the Whole to consider this Bill in detail.

Preamble postponed.

Clause 1—"Division of Act into parts"—passed as printed.

On clause 2—"Short title; commencement"—

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL said he did not see any reason why the Act should not come into operation at once, and as the 2nd section in that clause provided that it should not take effect until the 1st January next, he moved its omission.

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

Clauses 3 to 6 passed as printed.

On clause 7, as follows :—

"Where a person who is in his own right seised of or entitled in possession to land is an infant, then for the purposes of this Act the land is settled land, and the infant shall be deemed tenant for life thereof."

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL said that when the Bill was on its second reading the hon. member for Townsville (Mr. Brown) raised the question as to the status of an infant who was beneficially entitled to any property left in trust for him until he reached a certain age. He told the hon. gentleman then that unless the clause was altered it would not meet the case, and he would therefore propose the insertion of the following words after the word "land" in the 2nd line of the clause: "or beneficially entitled to hold an interest in land."

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

Clauses 8 to 12, inclusive, passed as printed.

On clause 13, as follows :—

"A tenant for life may lease the settled land, or any part thereof, or any easement, right, or privilege of any kind, over or in relation to the same for any purpose whatever, whether involving waste or not, for any term not exceeding—

(*a*) In case of a building lease, sixty years;
(*b*) In case of a mining lease, thirty years;
(*c*) In case of any other lease, twenty-one years."

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL said that hon. members would see that it was proposed that leases might be given in the case of a building lease for sixty years, in the case of a mining lease for thirty years, and in the case of any other lease twenty-one years. He did not know whether hon. gentlemen had any ideas on the subject as to whether those terms were too long considering the circumstances of the colony. He was disposed to think they were.

Mr. CHUBB said he was very glad the Attorney-General had drawn attention to the matter, and was prepared to accept a modification of the terms mentioned in the clause. He (Mr. Chubb) drew attention to the point when the Bill was on its second reading. He would point out that a tenant for life need not give a lease directly he came into his life-tenancy. He might lock up the land for sixty years; but, of course, in a colony like this, which was growing so rapidly—a "young giant" as it had been described at home—it would be impolitic to give a lease for sixty years which would possibly deprive the person who next came into possession of the ability to deal with the estate during his life. If the first tenant was an old man and lived to a good age the next man might be a middle-aged man when he came into it, and might not be able to do anything with it. Of course, he had always power to give a fresh lease. He was told on very good authority the other day that in Fortitude Valley a building lease for eight years was taken, and that the tenant expected to make 25 per cent. upon his investment.

The PREMIER: What sort of building was it?

Mr. CHUBB: A very good building. He thought that thirty years should be the maximum. He therefore moved that in paragraph (*a*) the word "sixty" be omitted with a view of inserting the word "thirty."

Amendment agreed to.

On motion of the ATTORNEY-GENERAL, paragraph (*b*) was amended by omitting the word "thirty" and inserting "twenty-one," and paragraph (*c*) by omitting the words "twenty-one" and inserting "fourteen."

Clause, as amended, put and passed.

On clause 14—"Regulations respecting leases generally"—

Mr. CHUBB said the clause was an innovation on the law at present in force in the colony, inasmuch as our statute did not require that leases should be made by deed. The clause was adopted from the English Act, but he thought it would be better to leave the law as it stood at present.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL said the hon. gentleman was quite right. Our law did not require leases to be made by deed. He therefore moved that the words "by deed and be" be omitted.

Amendment agreed to.

Mr. BROWN said he would point out to the Attorney-General that subsection 4 provided that a copy of the lease should be delivered to the tenant for life. Perhaps the tenant for life might be an infant, and he hardly saw the use of providing an infant with a copy of the lease.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL said he did not think any difficulty would arise in that case.

Mr. ISAMBERT said paragraph 3 provided—

"Every lease shall contain a covenant by the lessee for payment of the rent, and a condition of re-entry on the rent not being paid within a time therein specified not exceeding thirty days."

He thought thirty days was rather a short time when very important interests might be at stake.

Mr. CHUBB said, with regard to that point, the hon. gentleman must remember that if the rent was not paid for a long time it was lost to a certain extent. Thirty days was the usual time allowed at home.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL said there might be cases of hardship if the term was fixed at thirty days. He therefore moved the omission of the word "thirty" with a view of inserting "sixty."

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

Clauses 15 to 20 passed as printed.

On clause 21, as follows:—

"Notwithstanding anything in this Act, the principal mansion-house on any settled land, and the demesnes thereof, and other lands usually occupied therewith, shall not be sold or leased by the tenant for life without the consent of the trustees of the settlement, or an order of the court"—

Mr. NORTON asked the meaning of the phrase "mansion-house and the demesnes thereof."

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL said that the phrase had acquired, by usage in the old country, a distinct meaning. The mansion-house of an estate would be the principal residence of the lord of the manor—the proprietor of the estate—a family mansion or residence. Although we had very few of such houses, still there were a few isolated ones, and as time went on and the circumstances of the colony improved, there would be likely more. Take the case of the fine house at Jimbour. He should call that the principal mansion-house of the property. There were other places where very palatial residences were put up on freehold portions of a station, or any other freeholds, which might properly be described by the words used in the text of the Bill.

Mr. NORTON asked how they were to distinguish a mansion-house from one which was not a mansion-house?

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL said a mansion-house was a man's place of residence. The Committee could very well understand that if a man had a large station and a splendid house on it, that would be his general place of residence. But he might also have places at a distance from the principal place of residence in which probably some of his children or servants resided. The term would acquire more meaning as time went on. This Bill would, he hoped, last for a great many years, and would be more applicable to the condition of the colony in the future than even it now was as regarded this part of it. He did not suppose that anyone was deceived in what a mansion-house really was. The same principles of interpretation as understood in England would be applicable in the construction of this section here.

Mr. CHUBB said that what was understood as a mansion-house was really a manor-house. In olden times when manors were conferred on distinguished persons—usually barons—they had a house attached to certain lands which they could not dispose of. It was to be hoped that while our manners improved, our manors would not be increased. We did not want those feudal institutions of the old country. He did not think there was much use in the clause. However, it could do no harm.

The PREMIER thought there was something in the clause. A tenant for life was a person who had very short interest in a property, and might be at animosity with the rest of the family. Why should he be allowed to make away with what the other members of the family regarded as their home and was of inestimable value to them, simply of his own motion?

Mr. NORTON could quite understand that explanation, but he did not think the clause fully applied, because the term "mansion-house" was applied to old feudal houses. The clause would not apply to smaller houses, and protect members of a family who had small houses, but equally valuable to them as large houses. If the object was to protect the members of a family against one who happened to be in occupation at the time, it should apply to all dwelling-houses as well as to large ones.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL said that the whole phraseology of the clause went to show that a principal mansion-house had a demesne attached to it. Inferior houses could not have a demesne or large area of land connected with them in the same way as a principal residence house would have.

Mr. NORTON said, take the case of Gowrie. Was that what they would call a mansion-house? It did not come up to his ideas of a mansion-house in the present state of the colony or any other.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL said that such houses as Gowrie House were all included in the demesne. They would go with the principal mansion-house, and be reserved from sale.

Mr. NORTON said that many of those properties had reserved roads running through them, although they did not know that because they did not happen to see the plans. Many large properties were really subdivided by roads.

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN said he did not believe in legislating for things which did not exist, and were not likely to exist. In taking the English Act they should omit what did not apply to the circumstances of the colony.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL said there were many persons who had sprung up in England during the last fifty years who had got their estates by purchase, and not in the way described by the hon. member for Bowen. Yet their principal residences were called mansion-houses in the same way as the principal dwelling-house of the lord of the manor.

Mr. NORTON said he was afraid they were getting too aristocratic.

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN said that perhaps the Attorney-General expected to become one of the future aristocracy—probably a baron.

Clause put and passed.

On clause 22, as follows :—

"On or in connection with a sale or grant for building purposes, or a building lease, the tenant for life, for the general benefit of the residents on the settled land, or on any part thereof—

(*a*) May cause or require any parts of the settled land to be appropriated and laid out for streets, roads, paths, squares, gardens, or other open spaces, for the use, gratuitously or on payment, of the public or of individuals, with sewers, drains, watercourses, fencing, paving, or other works necessary or proper in connection therewith;

(*b*) May provide that the parts so appropriated shall be conveyed to or vested in the trustees of the settlement, or other trustees, or any company or public body, on trusts or subject to provision for securing the continued appropriation thereof to the purposes aforesaid, and the continued repair or maintenance of streets and other places and works aforesaid, with or without provision for appointment of new trustees when required; and

(*c*) May execute any general or other deed necessary or proper for giving effect to the provisions of this section (which deed may be enrolled in the office of the Registrar of Titles), and thereby declare the mode, terms, and conditions of the appropriation, and the manner in which, and the persons by whom, the benefit thereof is to be enjoyed, and the nature and extent of the privileges and conveniences granted."

Mr. CHUBB said the clause gave the tenant for life power not only to let the property, but to give it away. Of course the making of streets might improve the estate for those who came after.

On motion of the ATTORNEY-GENERAL, the clause was amended by the omission of the words "or grant" on the 1st line of the clause.

Clause, as amended, put and passed.

Clauses from 23 to 28, inclusive, passed as printed.

On clause 29, as follows :—

"In the application of this Act to married women, the following provisions shall have effect :—

(1) Where a married woman who, if she had not been a married woman, would have been a tenant for life or would have had the powers of a tenant for life under the foregoing provisions of this Act, is entitled for her separate use, or is entitled under any statute, passed or to be passed, for her separate property, or as a *feme sole*, then she, without her husband, shall have the powers of a tenant for life under this Act.

(2) Where she is entitled otherwise than as aforesaid, then she and her husband together shall have the powers of a tenant for life under this Act.

(3) The provisions of this Act referring to a tenant for life and a settlement and settled land shall extend to the married woman without her husband, or to her and her husband together, as the case may require, and to the instrument under which her estate or interest arises, and the land therein comprised.

(4) The married woman may execute, make, and do all deeds, instruments, and things necessary or proper for giving effect to the provisions of this section.

(5) A restraint on anticipation in the settlement shall not prevent the exercise by her of any power under this Act."

Mr. NORTON said the 2nd subsection provided that a woman and her husband might together have the powers of tenant for life. Would the husband cease to be tenant for life at her death if he acquired the right through the wife?

Mr. CHUBB said the husband could not carry on after her death unless he himself was tenant for life.

Mr. NORTON said he wanted to know whether the husband retained possession after the death of the wife?

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL said it would be seen from the 1st and 2nd subsections that he did not. In the event of her death the dispositions made with regard to the land would operate.

Clause put and passed.

Clauses 30 to 37, inclusive, passed as printed.

On clause 38, as follows :—

"1. The tenant for life, and each of his successors in title having, under the settlement, a limited estate or interest only in the settled land, shall maintain and repair, at his own expense, every improvement executed under the foregoing provisions of this Act, and where a building or work in its nature insurable against damage by fire is comprised in the improvement, shall insure and keep insured the same, at his own expense, in such amount, if any, as the court by order in any case prescribes.

"2. The tenant for life, or any of his successors as aforesaid, shall not cut down or knowingly permit to be cut down, except in proper thinning, any trees planted as an improvement under the foregoing provisions of this Act.

"3. The tenant for life, and each of his successors as aforesaid, shall from time to time, if required by the court, on or without the suggestion of any person having, under the settlement, any estate or interest in the settled land in possession, remainder, or otherwise, report to the court the state of every improvement executed under this Act, and the fact and particulars of fire insurance, if any.

"4. The court may vary any order made by it under this section, in such manner or to such extent as circumstances appear to require, but not so as to increase the liabilities of the tenant for life, or any of his successors as aforesaid.

"5. If the tenant for life, or any of his successors as aforesaid, fails in any respect to comply with the requirements of this section, or does any act in contravention thereof, any person having, under the settlement, any estate or interest in the settled land in possession, remainder, or reversion, shall have a right of action, in respect of that default or act, against the

tenant for life; and the estate of the tenant for life, after his death, shall be liable to make good to the persons entitled under the settlement any damages occasioned by that default or act."

Mr. NORTON asked what was the definition of "proper thinning"? The 2nd paragraph of the clause said:—

"The tenant for life, or any of his successors as aforesaid, shall not cut down or knowingly permit to be cut down, except in proper thinning," etc.

Was the tenant for life to settle the question, as to what was proper thinning, himself? He might cut down all but one or two.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL said it would depend upon how much timber was growing on the estate, but in any case the persons interested could move the court to restrain the tenant for life from doing anything improper. This was also one of the clauses which was more applicable to England than to this colony, where there were woods growing on the properties subject to settlements in that way. He did not think any difficulty would arise under the clause.

Mr. CHUBB: It might in a hundred years.

Mr. NORTON said a difficulty might arise long before a hundred years. On some of the estates there might be valuable timber, such as cedar or pine. Young pine-trees might be cut for use as spars by anyone whose interest it was to thin them out for immediate purposes, and he might not be prevented until he had perhaps cut down half of them.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL said the clause referred to trees planted as an improvement. These might include trees planted for commercial purposes. If they were to cut them down indiscriminately, or in greater quantities than was necessary for the purpose of thinning out, then it could be prevented.

Mr. NORTON: After the trees are cut down?

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: They could always see what was going on. A whole forest of trees could not be cut down in a few days.

Mr. ISAMBERT said that on the Continent, where forestry was recognised under a proper system, the provision as to proper thinning had a meaning. But in a country like Queensland, where they had no such system and where the forests were demolished by vandalism, the provision had no meaning.

Mr. CHUBB said that in England there were provisions as to lopping and topping of trees known to leaseholders there. There were always trustees and protectors of the settlement to look after the interests of those who came after the tenant for life, and they would not allow the tenant for life to do an improper act. Again, under the Bill the provisions of the 63rd section allowed the tenant for life to cut down timber with the consent of the court or the trustees, and to receive a fourth of the proceeds.

Mr. NORTON said that when the tenant for life had run his head into a noose and was very much pressed by his creditors he might cut down the trees to defer the evil day. He believed that timber-planting would be much more general in the colony than many persons imagined, not merely for commercial purposes, but to make up for the destruction of timber on ranges, as they had had to do where timber was destroyed on ranges in other countries. It was true that the present effect was advantageous, and some portions of the country were enabled to carry two or three sheep that only carried one before. That was exactly the position they were in now, but the effect of destroying the trees was that by-and-by the small fibrous roots became decomposed, which before held the soil together and prevented it being washed away by heavy rains. When the trees were destroyed on the ranges here he believed the effect would be the same as it had been on the steep hillsides of the Pyrenees and other places. In the same way as had occurred elsewhere, the whole of the soil would be washed away, and the bare stones left in place of it; and eventually they would be driven to the necessity, as they had been in France, of spending hundreds of thousands of pounds in replanting the sides of the hills. He believed in France they were spending £10,000 a year upon that. There was a volume in the Library on the subject of *reboisement*—the replanting of trees on country which had been absolutely destroyed by the very process carried out so largely here.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL said the hon. member was quite right as to the growing importance of conserving timber in that way, but the provisions of the Bill referred to timber which had been planted. The same thing might happen with regard to anything else. If a man trespassed, and were doing you serious financial injury by his trespass, all you could do was to take action to restrain him from it. That right of action was in the Bill—given expressly to certain persons. Any person having an interest in the property could take action, and if damage had been done, provision was made for compelling the offender to recoup the property for the damage.

Clause put and passed.

Clauses 39 to 51 passed as printed.

On clause 52, as follows:—

"The court or a judge may, by order, authorise the trustees of a settlement to retain for their own use out of the income of the trust property, or, in case of a sale by the trustees, out of the proceeds of the trust property, a reasonable sum by way of commission for their pains and trouble in the management or sale of the property; but no such commission shall be allowed at a higher rate than five pounds per centum of the income or proceeds.

"An order under this section may be made upon summons or petition, or, if the settlement is a will and the executors are also the trustees of the settlement, upon an application to pass the accounts of the executors."

Mr. MACFARLANE said if the order of the judge would entail any expense, would it not be better to allow the trustees to reimburse themselves without getting a judge's order? It would make it much cheaper.

Mr. CHUBB: And nicer.

Mr. MACFARLANE said he knew the lawyers would object to it.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL said he thought it would hardly be safe to allow them to dip in their hands without some control.

Mr. MACFARLANE said they might be limited not to take more than 5 per cent.

Mr. CHUBB: They would never take less.

Clause put and passed.

Clauses 53 to 69, inclusive, passed as printed.

On clause 70—"Application of Act to land held under Real Property Act of 1861"—

Mr. CHUBB said that under the amending Real Property Act of 1877 there was a section—section 31—which provided that where property was burnt down or destroyed the tenant was not liable unless the lease expressly stated that he should be so liable, and the rent was suspended in the meantime. Leases under the present Bill ought not to be subjected to that provision, and he would suggest to the Attorney-General that a sub-clause should be inserted excepting them.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL said that probably it would be a good thing to introduce a provision of that kind, as otherwise serious harm might be done to an infant. He would accept the suggestion of the hon. member, and would move the insertion of the following new subsection to follow subsection 7 of the clause :—

The provision of the 31st section of the Act of 1877 shall not apply to a lease of settled land made by a tenant for life under this Act.

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

Clause 71, and preamble, passed as amended.

On motion of the ATTORNEY-GENERAL, the CHAIRMAN left the chair, and reported the Bill to the House with amendments.

On motion of the ATTORNEY-GENERAL, the Speaker left the chair, and the House went into committee to further consider clause 17.

On clause 17—"Variation of building or mining lease according to circumstances of district"—

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL said it had been pointed out by the hon. member for Bowen that probably that clause was an unnecessary provision, having regard to the circumstances of this colony. It proposed to give the court power to grant leases in perpetuity. He thought that cases in which a provision of that kind would be desirable were scarcely ever likely to arise here, and he therefore moved the omission of the clause.

Question put and passed.

On motion of the ATTORNEY-GENERAL, the CHAIRMAN left the chair, and reported the Bill to the House with a further amendment.

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

ADJOURNMENT.

On the motion of the PREMIER, the House adjourned at a quarter to 10 o'clock.