Queensland

# Parliamentary Debates
[Hansard]

## Legislative Assembly

### FRIDAY, 17 SEPTEMBER 1886

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## LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY.

*Friday*, 17 *September*, 1886.

Petition.—Question.—Use of Steel Sleepers on Railways in the Interior.—Printing Committee's Report.—Quarantine Laws Amendment Bill.—Crown Lands Act of 1884 Amendment Bill.—Settled Land Bill—consideration of the Legislative Council's amendment.—Succession Duties Bill—consideration of the Legislative Council's amendment.—Quarantine Bill—first reading.—Divisional Boards Bill No. 2—committee.—Adjournment.

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

### PETITION.

The PREMIER (Hon. Sir S. W. Griffith) presented a petition signed by 4,809 men, residents of Brisbane, 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 the PREMIER, the petition was received.

### QUESTION.

Mr. PALMER asked the Minister for Works—

When the extension of the Northern line from Torrens Creek will be opened for traffic to Prairie Creek?

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

It is expected that the state of the works will admit of the line being opened for traffic to Prairie about the end of November.

### USE OF STEEL SLEEPERS ON RAILWAYS IN THE INTERIOR.

Mr. PALMER, in moving—

1. That, in view of the importance of the extension of main lines of railway into the interior—where the necessary timber for railway sleepers is unavailable, unless at great expense—it is desirable that such extensions be carried out by the use of steel sleepers, for economy and despatch.

2. That the proposed Normanton-Cloncurry line is a suitable one for the experiment.

—said: Mr. Speaker,—In putting this motion upon the paper, I must be absolved from any intention of dictating to the Government in any way the policy that they should adopt; it is rather with a view of opening up discussion, and eliciting some information upon the subject. From my own knowledge of the interior, I can speak with certainty as to the necessity of some alteration being adopted with regard to carrying out railways, because I believe that if the present system be carried out it will be a long time before railways are made into the interior. We must not suppose that we have a monopoly of knowledge on railway subjects. If we consider how railways were constructed when they were first started towards Toowoomba, and then look at the present information that we have, we will see that a very great advance has been made; and it is very reasonable to assume that n the next period of a like duration we will see a further advance in the knowledge of railway-building. It is in that hope, Mr. Speaker, that I place this motion upon the paper—that we might get some information as to the probability of a fresh departure being made under conditions which are quite distinct from those under which railways have hitherto been carried out. I suppose it is known to every member of this House that the further you go west from the coast the scarcer the timber becomes, and the worse it becomes too. I suppose it is like all very large countries—the inland part is never noted for the growth of large timber. The inland part of America is similar to the inland of Australia, and South America is the same. The large plains in the interior are not adapted for forest growth. Even if the timber that grows in the interior were available for railway sleepers, I think there is another objection to it, and that is the ravages of insects. The pest of white ants is so great that I think there is scarcely any timber that will withstand them. There are some timbers that they will not touch, but those are not available for railway sleepers. Timbers of the "gidya" species—the acacia family—they will abstain from; but those are not available. I know that gums of almost all kinds they will feed on as readily as they will upon pine. I have had stockyard posts that have had to be renewed within ten years—large posts—and the ants having once got into them very soon completed their destruction. Anything in the shape of young growth is affected by them quicker than older timber. So that on the ground of the scarcity of timber, and also even if the timber were introduced, the destruction of it would be so great that some modification or alteration should be adopted. With regard to the cost, I have obtained information from Mr. Hannam, the railway engineer in the North, that the cost of any sleeper landed at Normanton would be 6s. 8d., and that the cost of them at Cooktown has been nearly the same. It is a very doubtful question whether ironbark sleepers, which are considered the very best, can be procured at all at Normanton. I have also been getting some information from home with regard to steel sleepers, and I find on comparison that there is very little to be said against the cost—the first cost—of them; and we must bear this in mind: that the tendency in the cost of steel sleepers in these days is downwards, towards cheapness, while the cost of timber is quite the reverse—upwards, and towards dearness. I do not advocate, of course, that steel sleepers should be adopted on the coastal lines, where the timber growth would be quite sufficient for all requirements as long as they are wanted, nor can I be met with the objection that it is not a protection to any native industry—that we should conserve the material that we have at our command. Of course that is a question for the House, or for the Government to consider. But there is another protection to native industry which might be started if there was a great consumption of steel sleepers. We might even start the industry of producing sleepers. I may say that on the Cloncurry there is a mountain called the "Black Mountain," which is nothing but a mass of pure iron-ore; and if only a coal-seam — a workable coal-seam — was discovered in that western country, there would at once be a chance for the initiation of a prodigious native industry. Apart from the question of using our native products, I see that in other countries, that have superior advantages to Queensland in regard to their timber growth, they have adopted the use of steel sleepers. I may mention Holland as an example of this. I have been reading that all the railway companies in Holland have adopted the use of steel sleepers, not because of any pressure brought to bear upon them by the Government, but because it is to their interest to do so. They have a large timber supply there — a national timber supply, and are large exporters of timber both from their national and foreign supply. There we find that a most conservative country like Holland has found the advantage of adopting steel sleepers. Considering the conditions existing in the western part of Queensland, I think the experiment might well be undertaken by the Government and with a prospect of most assured success. I will just quote a few extracts from some letters from England bearing upon the cost of steel sleepers. Of course, as I have stated, I have Mr. Hannam's

statement that any ordinary sleeper landed in Normanton will cost 6s. 8d. With regard, then, to the cost of steel sleepers, the first letter I will read is from Messrs. Kerr, Stewart, and Co., of Glasgow. They say :—

"In reply to your verbal inquiry we have pleasure in quoting you, below, our price for the steel sleepers you require—namely, steel sleepers for 41¼-lb. rails 5 feet 6 inches long, weighing 56 lbs. each, complete with all our patent fastenings for rails, will be 4s. 9d. each. For a quantity above 1,000 the price would be 4s. 6d. each, and for not less than 5,000 the price would be 4s. 3d. each."

That is free on board at Glasgow. I reckon that the freight on each sleeper would be 9d. to Normanton. I believe the freight is 30s. per ton by sailing vessels. I estimate they would cost about £9 10s. per ton, or £475 per mile. The margin of cost in that case would not be very great. The next letter is from Bolckow, Vaughan, and Co., of London. They say :—

"Referring to your letter of the 14th instant, we have now the pleasure to enclose you drawing of a sleeper, rail, and fishplate, which have been largely adopted for metre-gauge railways in India. It would not be convenient for us to give you a close and binding quotation until you are in a position to make the purchase, but we may mention simply for your guidance that our idea of price to-day for this material would be as follows :—Steel sleepers, £5 per ton ; rails, weighing 41¼ lbs. per yard, £3 17s. 6d. per ton ; fishplates, £5 per ton."

That is also delivered free on board. There is a cheaper sleeper than either of these from Macnee and Co., of London, and they are also providing thousands of sleepers for Indian railways. I may as well quote their letter :—

"We are in receipt of your letter of yesterday, and in reply beg to hand you herewith two tracings, marked respectively A and B, of steel sleepers. Tracing A shows a sleeper now being made in thousands for the Indian State railways, and it is the simplest and cheapest form of sleeper at present made. We have made many thousands of them for the Indian State and other railways. The prices of them are £6 10s. per ton to tracing A and £7 per ton to tracing B, delivered free on board ship at Middlesbro' or Glasgow, at our option. The number of sleepers per mile would be 1,980, same as on Queensland Government railways, and the approximate weights are : Tracing A, 54½ lbs. each ; tracing B, 57½ lbs. each. We have quite given up making these sleepers of wrought iron, and will not therefore quote you prices. Steel has taken the place of wrought iron, having been found to be lighter, cheaper, and stronger."

I may mention that there is a discrepancy here with regard to the number of sleepers per mile ; 2,420 is the number used per mile in Queensland, not 1,980. The last letter is from Andrew S. Nelson and Co., and they say :—

"Referring to your verbal inquiry, we have now pleasure in quoting you as follows for steel sleepers suitable for laying with rails, about 40 lbs. per yard :—3 ft. 6 in. gauge, 2s. 7½d. per sleeper ; 4 ft. 8½ in. gauge, 3s. 6d. ; 5 ft. gauge, 3s. 8d. ; and 5 ft. 3 in. gauge, 3s. 9½d. per sleeper. Fitted complete with the necessary rivetted clips, clamps, and bolts, and as per section handed you to-day."

That would be about £6 3s. per ton without fastenings, and, of course, delivered free on board. The cost in that case approximates pretty much to what the cost of wooden sleepers would be. I do not speak as to the other effects of steel sleepers. I only speak of my own knowledge of the western country, which, on account of the scarcity of timber, and also on account of the ravages of white ants, is not suitable for wooden sleepers. I believe that in Queensland the average length of life of gum sleepers is eleven years ; at home some of them are stated to last fifteen years, but a great deal depends upon the preparation of the sleepers, whether they are steeped in tar or creosote or other preparations not adopted in Queensland. If the average so far in Queensland is eleven years, I feel certain that the average in the western and north-western parts of the country would be a great deal less. I find in the *Engineer* it is reported that steel sleepers laid thirty-one years ago on the Bristol to Exeter line are still in use. It is also claimed for steel sleepers that they have a great many advantages claimed for them by railway engineers, such as elasticity of running, freedom from corrosion for a long time, and where there is no break of gauge the rails are of unusual firmness and fixture. With regard to the other advantages, I will quote from an article in the *Railway Engineer* for 1885, volume vi. I may say the question of steel sleepers is one of modern growth, and that is why I say our information on the subject is on a *crescendo* scale. We are gradually increasing our knowledge of what is the best material for railway construction. Everything seems to tend to cheapness and expedition, and those two points we should bear in mind in the construction of lines in this colony. This is the quotation I make from a paper in the *Engineer* :—

"The Dutch State Railway Company, having tried for many years experimental lengths of different types of wrought iron and steel sleepers with several schemes of fastenings, tested them severely in sharp curves and steep gradients, under the heavy main line traffic, and having carefully noted during these years the hours of labour for maintenance in comparison with permanent way with oak sleepers, resolved from the result of these statistics on the adoption of the sleeper shown, Fig. XI. and B (length 8 feet 6 inches, instead of 8 feet 2⅓ inches) ; and the replacing of old wooden sleepers by the new steel type is continued actively on the lines in Holland, Belgium, and Germany, worked by the said company. Indeed, one of the district engineers remarks in his annual report in 1884, that to get an idea of the value of permanent way on steel sleepers, he neither lifted nor shifted during twenty-two months (from the 1st of February, 1883), one of the trial lengths lying in a gradient of 1 in 83, and in a curve of 820 yards radius near Glons (Belgium), employing only one man during thirty-four days to inspect and tighten the nuts till 31st December, 1884; and at that date the condition of the track—after twenty-two months' exposure to heavy traffic—was very satisfactory. He adds that the actual cost of maintenance per mile of steel sleeper road on his district, after three-and-a-half years' working, is the same as for oak sleepers, and he deems that from this point the cost per mile will increase for oak sleepers, owing to the beginning of renewal, and decrease for steel sleepers owing to the consolidation."

That shows, Mr. Speaker, that the longer they are laid the firmer they become, and the less necessity there is for renewal. Oak sleepers are I suppose, considered the best in the world, and here is an instance where even oak sleepers were not equal to steel, in a country where timber is much more easily obtained than in this country. It is not as if in this colony we were conserving our forests in any way ; we are actually decreasing our supply year by year. The question has been mooted several times in this House ; but I believe the colony will yet regret the years that are lost in starting some growth of timber to carry on our lines of railway, even those on the coast—the main coastal lines and their branches, which will consume an enormous number of sleepers. What I contend for is that the Government would be quite justified in starting an experiment where new conditions demand that it should be tried. Mr. Stanley, the Chief Engineer, has admitted that even at the extremity of one of the Western lines—at Mitchell, say—the cost of a steel sleeper, including transport, would be 6s., and of a wooden sleeper 5s. 6d., showing that the margin of difference is very small even on the Western lines. Farther north, if wooden sleepers were used they would have to be brought from Maryborough and shipped right round Cape York to the Gulf. Maryborough is the only place likely to be depended on. There are no handier or more convenient sources of supply that I am aware of ; whereas steel sleepers could be landed in Normanton, direct from England, as cheaply as they could be landed in Brisbane. Taking into consideration,

therefore, the first cost, the transport, the laying, the maintenance, the renewal, and the interest, I can see no reason why we should not adopt such an experiment as this. Considering, too, that the line from Normanton to Cloncurry is a main line, which, as the Minister for Works has intimated to me and also to the House, he considers to be the beginning of a transcontinental line, I consider it should be started on another gauge—the 4 ft. 8½ in. gauge, similar to that of New South Wales. I suggest that because it will be a transcontinental line right through the country; and the sooner that line is connected with Brisbane the sooner will the advantage be felt both by Brisbane and the Gulf, and also by the towns along the coast. It is in the interest of the expedition of this, what I call a national railway policy, that I have brought forward this motion. I hope the Minister for Works will give it his best attention. I am quite certain he will be assured of success if he makes this departure from the usual course, and I do not think any interest in the colony will be hurt by it in any way.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said: Mr. Speaker,—The motion of the hon. member for Burke is, I take it, simply intended to elicit an expression of opinion as to the desirability of building the railway from Normanton to Cloncurry with steel sleepers. I may inform the hon. member that the Government have had this matter under consideration for some time, and that they have come to the conclusion that it will be desirable to introduce steel sleepers on this particular line, taking into consideration the peculiar country to be gone through, the depredations of the white ants, and the scarcity of timber. The Government have taken action so far that Mr. Phillips, the late inspecting surveyor, and Mr. Annett, assistant engineer to Mr. Stanley, have designed a steel sleeper which is considered well adapted for the purpose. Mr. Phillips is now in Sydney, and has interviewed several ironfounders there as to the cost per thousand of producing those sleepers. He has supplied the Government with the various estimates he has received, and one of them will compare favourably with the cost of wooden sleepers when we take into consideration the difference between the durability of steel and wood; I believe it will be a great saving. I am not going to disclose the cost, because the Government intend to invite tenders within the colony, and see if our own ironfounders can produce sleepers at a price which will compare fairly with the prices quoted by the Sydney founders. They intend to get 4,000, and have them laid down on some line now under construction for the purpose of ascertaining their suitability. I have no doubt whatever about the matter, and am sure that taking into consideration the difference of the life of steel and wooden sleepers, more particularly where the country is infested with white ants, this Cloncurry line is admirably adapted for trying the experiment. Not only that, but I believe we shall have to resort to it as we extend our main lines into the interior. Sleepers have now to be drawn from Miles to the present terminus at Dulbydilla. They have to be drawn from there right up to Charleville; and it is a question whether in the future—if we find that iron sleepers are suitable—whether we should not use them on all our main lines in places where no timber is to be procured without having to draw it some 200 or 300 miles. As soon as Mr. Phillips—who is now doing some work for the New South Wales Government—brings up his designed sleeper, so as to enable the Government to call for tenders here, the work will be proceeded with at once. Tenders, as I said before, will be called for 4,000 sleepers, to be laid on the Southern and Western Railway in order to ascertain their suitability. I may mention that iron sleepers have been used for a short distance on the Sandgate line, and I believe they have worked very well, with the exception that the fastening of the rails into the sleepers is rather defective. The sleepers designed by Mr. Phillips are of a different description altogether, and it is stated by those who understand the matter that they are likely to be well adapted for the purpose required. I trust this information will be satisfactory to the hon. member—that the Government are on the point of calling for tenders for 4,000 sleepers as an experimental test, and if found suitable they will be used in the construction of the line from Normanton to Cloncurry. With reference to width of gauge, to which the hon. member referred—whether it would be advisable to construct that line on a broader gauge—I do not intend to express any opinion upon that point at present. It is a question that will require very serious consideration. It might be very awkward to have two different gauges on our railways. However, that is a matter for consideration, and at present I am not prepared to make any promise as to what the gauge will be.

Mr. NORTON said: Mr. Speaker,—I should like to ask the Minister for Works whether Mr. Phillips has designed this sleeper for the Government, or whether he has made it on his own account?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: On his own account. I believe he has patented it.

Mr. NORTON: Then will the Government have to pay him for the design?

The PREMIER: I suppose he will be entitled to it.

Mr. NORTON: Then that will be in excess of the amount which the Minister gave us just now as the cost of the sleepers?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: There has been no private arrangement made with Mr. Phillips. All that the Government have decided to do is to lay down 4,000 of these sleepers and ascertain whether they will be suitable for the purpose required.

Mr. NORTON: The hon. gentleman gave us the cost at which the sleepers could be made in Sydney. To that, I presume, would have to be added the sum paid to Mr. Phillips for his design.

Mr. LUMLEY HILL: He did not give us the cost.

Mr. NORTON: I can speak for myself, Mr. Speaker. Added to that sum will be, of course, the amount paid to Mr. Phillips for his patent—for I suppose Mr. Phillips intends to make something out of it. I heard some time ago that Mr. Phillips had left the Government service in order to carry out this idea of perfecting a design for steel sleepers. For my part, I believe it would be a very good thing if this plan could be adopted. There is no doubt whatever that steel sleepers will answer as well in this country as in India, where they have been very largely used—especially in those parts of the country to which the hon. member for Burke referred, where it is impossible, I believe, to get timber that will stand. The best timber which the colony can produce for sleepers would have to be carried there from the South, and that could only be done at a very heavy cost; and even when it reached the North, what with the moist soil and the ravages of white ants, it would last a much shorter time than anywhere else. It is a very important matter, therefore, to consider whether any other material can be used as a substitute. I listened to what fell from the hon. member for Burke with a great deal of

pleasure, because he has taken a great deal of trouble to gather information upon the subject—information which, I am quite sure, is in every respect reliable. I am glad to hear the Minister for Works confirm the statement he has already made outside, that the Government intend to make a trial of these sleepers, to see how they will answer. The result of that experiment will be, I believe, that instead of using inferior timber, as they are sometimes obliged to do in the western portions of the country, there will spring up a large manufacture of steel sleepers; and I trust that instead of being made elsewhere they will in a very short time be made in this colony.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The Government have fully satisfied themselves as to the cost at which steel sleepers can be procured in Sydney, but they intend inviting tenders for the manufacture of those 4,000 sleepers in this colony. When we find the New South Wales Government pushing their railways to our borders, and trying to tap our trade, the House may rest assurred that nothing shall go to that colony that I can keep out. It is not advisable that I should disclose the cost at which these sleepers can be manufactured in Sydney. Surely the hon. member will give the Government some credit for common sense and business capacity. It is not desirable that the Government should disclose those things.

Mr. NORTON: You were never asked to do anything of the kind.

Mr. LUMLEY HILL said: Mr. Speaker,—I rise to ask whether my ears have been deceiving me. I heard the Minister for Works say he would not disclose the price, yet the hon. member for Port Curtis distinctly stated that the Minister for Works had given us the cost of the sleepers, and wanted to knew whether that amount included the sum which Mr. Phillips would want for his patent. I interrupted the hon. member because I was aware that his memory is particularly defective and inaccurate. It is, at all events, satisfactory to hear the Minister for Works again say that he declined to disclose the price.

Mr. ANNEAR said: Mr. Speaker,—I do not know that there is any occasion at the present time for this House to enter into the question of using steel sleepers for the colony. We have, I believe, plenty of timber in the colony to supply all the railways we shall construct, at any rate for the next fifty years, and that at the end of that time we shall not have taken very much from our stock. I may tell the hon. gentleman that I am not aware that we have used gum sleepers in the colony for the construction of our railways. All the sleepers used so far are ironbark. Ironbark sleepers of the largest dimensions used in the colony are delivered at Cooktown at £22 per 100, and the same kind of sleepers can be delivered at Normanton at £28 per 100—that is, under 6s. each. At Cooktown the price is under 4s. 5d. for sleepers. What do we see on the Southern and Western Railway? Let any hon. member travel over that line, and he will see at Miles and Yeulba and other places along the railway small townships almost of timber-getters, who are employed with their families all the year round getting timber for railway sleepers. Those sleepers have to be carried on our present railways, and the amounts paid for freight add to their weekly earnings. The Southern and Western section now in course of construction takes over 200,000 sleepers, which have all to be carried from those places, and a large number of people have to be employed in obtaining them. From information I got in Melbourne a few months ago I believe that we can obtain sleepers from North Borneo—good timber—delivered at Normanton at a price not much above what would be incurred in shipping them from any of the Southern ports of this colony. But when we do decide to go in for iron sleepers for our railways I sincerely trust that the ironfounders in this colony will have an opportunity of competing with New South Wales. I believe I speak correctly when I say that up to the present time neither New South Wales nor Victoria has used iron sleepers. Both those colonies use squared sleepers made out of hardwood grown in the country. We have hardwood in this colony equal to any in either New South Wales or Victoria, and we have it in unlimited quantity. In the southern division, on the duplication of the Southern and Western line now in process of construction, the engineer is using square sleepers, so that they have to be cut out of logs similar to those cut up by saw-mills; and it cannot therefore be said that our forests are being unnecessarily destroyed. The number of those sleepers we shall require is 2,476 for each mile of railway, and I am sure it would be a great infliction on timber-getters and saw-millers in this colony if we were at this time to withdraw any portion of this work from which they at present obtain their livelihood. I am sure also that it will be to the interest of all, to Normanton and other places as well, to use the beautiful timbers we have growing in this colony for many years to come,

Mr. BLACK said: Mr. Speaker,—I do not clearly understand the drift of the remarks of the hon. member for Maryborough, as I thought the other day that he wished to do all he possibly could to foster the iron industries of the country. But at the present time this is not a question referring to Maryborough or any particular district which the hon. member has described as making a good deal out of supplying sleepers for railways, but the subject for our consideration is, what sleepers are most suitable for the northern portion of the colony. From the peculiarities of the climate of the North, it has been found that no timber, not even ironbark, can withstand the ravages of white ants there. That is well known to hon. gentlemen who have travelled through the North. The consequence is that not only is the cost of sleepers considerably increased in the North, owing to the absence of suitable timber in that part of the colony, but when they have been obtained they are not even likely to stand for the time the Railway Department expect they would stand. And that is one reason of the delay in the construction of our Northern railways. We know that other countries for some years past have been directing their attention to the substitution of iron, or later, of steel sleepers for wooden ones. I am sure hon. gentlemen do not wish to see the construction of our Northern railways delayed owing to the disinclination, or the assumed disinclination, of the Government to substitute these steel sleepers, which have proved successful in other countries, for wooden sleepers. I am sure that the rapidity with which railway construction is proceeding in the whole colony, especially in the southern portion of the colony, is sufficient to keep those who are engaged in procuring wooden sleepers actively employed. But here is a want—an undoubted want—which has sprung up in the northern portion of the colony: to find an efficient substitute for timber as sleepers. We well know that in the construction of the Cloncurry and Gulf line some means will have to be adopted to secure the sleepers from the ravages of white ants. None of our timbers can withstand their ravages. I am informed that the best ironbark that can be procured in the South is

liable to decay—very rapid decay—owing to the extraordinary ravages of the white ants there. The sleepers will therefore have to be soaked in some solution which will render them impervious to white ants, and that solution has not yet been discovered, or at all events has not been subjected to actual experiment. We must either adopt a plan of that kind or use manufactured steel sleepers. The hon. member for Burke has taken a great deal of trouble in getting his information on this subject, and has furnished the House with estimates as to the cost of steel sleepers. I am credibly informed that the cost will not exceed the cost of ironbark sleepers, and in addition to that we shall have security against white ants. We shall know that when once laid down on the line the sleepers will be comparatively indestructible — will last for years. I think the Minister for Works is doing right in making an experiment in the matter, and he is not going to flood the colony with unnecessary expense in doing so. I regret that the experiment is to be made on so small a scale—with 4,000 sleepers only—which is scarcely enough for a practical test. I would much prefer to see about twenty miles of line laid with these sleepers, as I am of opinion that the experiment will be a success, and that the adoption of steel sleepers will open up a means of production which will be of enormous benefit to the colony. We have huge quantities of iron-ore here, and we have foundries in a somewhat languishing condition, and there is no reason why we should not look to the future. This experiment will be the means of successfully establishing foundries in the colony, which will produce these steel sleepers at a cost not very much over, probably equal to, what they could be imported from home for; and I maintain that the general welfare of the colony will be considerably enhanced thereby, and we shall have an additional branch of manufacture. The production of the hardwood sleepers the hon. member for Maryborough has referred to will still go on. I do not suppose there will be any necessity, for many years to come, to use steel sleepers in the southern portions of the colony, but it is an absolute necessity in the North, and the sooner the experiment is tried and proved successful the better will it be for the North, and the sooner we shall have established in the colony a branch of industry which does not at present exist.

The PREMIER said: Mr. Speaker,—I think the hon. gentleman did not quite follow my hon. colleague, the Minister for Works, with respect to the experiment about to be tried. Possibly my hon. colleague did not explain fully the nature of Mr. Phillips's invention. Mr. Phillips's sleepers, if they fulfil what he expects and what I anticipate, will dispense not only with wooden sleepers but also with ballast in country like the Gulf country. The iron sleepers at present in use on the Sandgate line, and in Holland and other countries, are merely a substitute for wooden sleepers, and require to be packed with ballast just the same as other sleepers. Mr. Phillips's invention makes a great change in that. His proposal is to make the sleeper much deeper—with a depth of six inches, half of which will be in the ground. Then it is proposed to pack the whole of the sleeper from each end with the sort of earth of which the great plains in the Gulf country are composed, and the result will be that the sleeper will be a rigid bar composed of iron outside, full of the earth, and resting upon the natural bed of the undisturbed surface. I have gone into the matter carefully with Mr. Phillips, and considered it in other ways, and I believe it will be successful. It is with that sleeper that we are going to make the experiment. We do not want to buy 4,000 of them, however, merely to see whether iron sleepers will do or not, because we know they will. What we want to know is whether this system can be adopted. If it can it will not only diminish the cost of making the Gulf railway, but diminish the time required for its construction to an enormous extent. In point of fact, you can commence the railway from the station-yard—lay down the rails, and push the train along; and the contractor's train can carry all the material required as the construction of the line proceeds. That is the especial object of the experiment, to see how this system of packing the sleepers with the earth from either end to make them solid will do; and that is proposed to be tried in some place where the soil is like that which exists on the great level plains between the Gulf of Carpentaria and Cloncurry.

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN said: Mr. Speaker,—I am glad the hon. gentleman has made this explanation to the House, because the Minister for Works left the question in rather a hazy condition. I understood him well enough, but I am sure that hon. members generally did not understand what the experiment was to be—that it was to be a trial with respect to Mr. Phillips's patent sleeper. There is no necessity for making an experiment to see whether steel sleepers will answer for purposes of general construction or not, because that system has got beyond the region of experiment years ago; but the experiment about to be tried is one that ought to be tried before entering into a large contract for sleepers for 200 or 300 miles of railway. I have a very good opinion of Mr. Phillips, and from the explanation given by the Chief Secretary I think it is very likely that his sleeper will suit the purpose for which it is intended. The ordinary steel sleeper spoken of by the hon. member for Burke would not be much cheaper compared with the wooden sleeper, because it would require ballast just the same. There are some defects about steel sleepers of which the hon. gentleman has not spoken, and there are some other defects which have not yet been discovered—the exact nature of which time alone will discover. There are also defects caused by contraction and expansion owing to the state of the weather. I think this House is bound to give the hon. member for Burke great credit for the industry he has used in working up this question. He has given us a great deal of information; I am certain he has given me information of which I was not aware before. But I think, though the Cloncurry line may be difficult to make with timber sleepers, that the experiment mentioned by the Chief Secretary should be tried before the Government decide not to use ironbark sleepers. I believe in using the material in the country as long as we can to our own advantage, and though it has been said that the hardwood sleepers used in Queensland live only eleven years, I think that is a mistake. If it is so, the timber used must have been of inferior quality when put in, because the term of the life of ironbark sleepers has not yet been discovered anywhere in Australia. I have the authority of one of the ablest engineers in New South Wales for saying so—one who has been engaged in the construction of railways for twenty-five years. Nor do I think our ironbark forests are so nearly exhausted as some hon. members think. I know there has been some difficulty—great difficulty—in getting sleepers for the Cooktown Railway, and that they have been got from the southern end of the colony; but I am inclined to think the same difficulty would not exist if we were prepared to go in for the use of ironbark sleepers on the Carpentaria route, because there are rivers on the shores of the Gulf not very much explored, on one of which at least there is a vast amount of good timber known to exist—namely, the Batavia River.

The PREMIER: I doubt it very much.

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN: Of course, it has to be proved that the timber will do for sleepers. I have an idea of the country, because, though I have not been on that river, I have been on the eastern part of the Gulf waters. At any rate the countries which have gone in for the use of steel sleepers have done so on account of their timber supply being exhausted, or because their timber was not equal to the timber to be found in Australia for railway purposes. There is not a country in the world that has timber equal to the Australian timber for bridge-building and for sleepers, and where they have gone in largely for the use of steel sleepers they have been compelled to do so from the want of timber or from other circumstances, on account of which the timber would not last long. That may be the case in the Carpentaria district, but as yet it has not been proved. I do not think it has been proved that ironbark will not live as long there as elsewhere—that is good sound ironbark. Of course there is ironbark and ironbark—many different kinds of ironbark—but it has not been proved that it will not last in that district. At any rate, the Government are wise in making the proposed experiment. The late Government, six or seven years ago, came to the conclusion that it would be advisable to make an experiment—in view of constructing railways in the Gulf country—as to the use of iron sleepers, and for that reason a mile and a half of iron sleepers were laid down on the Sandgate Railway. I believe they have answered very well, though I thought myself—and think so still, and I believe experience has proved—that the sleepers are not quite adapted to our railways; there is a defect in the ends of the sleepers. I am glad to hear that Mr. Phillips has gone into the question in order to improve on it, and make a sleeper that will be of greater advantage to the colony if we go in for steel sleepers. It was with the view of making railways in the Gulf country that the late Government made the experiment to which I have referred, therefore there is no necessity for making any experiments as to the use of iron sleepers. I do not think the hon. member for Maryborough was to blame in advocating the use of timber sleepers. I believe he is, like myself, most anxious that the material in the country should be used before we go abroad for fresh material. If we cannot use the timber in the country then we must go in for steel sleepers, and try to encourage the making of them in our own colony. If we cannot get the one here, we must try and get the other made here; and so far the hon. member for Maryborough ought to be credited with good intentions in speaking in the way in which he did. The hon. member for Mackay, I think, was a little bit too severe on him. We all know the hon. member for Maryborough is a protectionist, and I think he is quite right in trying to carry out his protectionist views as far as he possibly can on any question which arises in this House. I am sure it was with no intention of holding back the construction of railways in the northern part of the colony that he spoke as he did: neither do I admit that the want of steel sleepers in any respect has kept back the construction of railways in the North; because they can be made as fast in the North as the Government choose to spend the money. With the present supply of wooden sleepers they can be made as fast as they could be made with iron sleepers, if the Government only choose to make them.

Mr. SCOTT said: Mr. Speaker,—If the sleeper that has been explained to us by the Chief Secretary is to be a rigid sleeper such as laid down on some of the railways in England a great many years ago, it would be very well that the experiment should be tried on a small scale at first. I recollect when the railway was first made between Edinburgh and Glasgow the sleepers were of stone for a considerable number of miles, and they had all to be removed and replaced with wooden sleepers simply from the fact that the roadway was too rigid and injured the rolling-stock. Unless these sleepers are of different construction and sufficiently elastic to permit of the vibration of the rolling-stock, or if they are so rigid as the Chief Secretary led us to suppose, I am afraid they would not answer as well as we expect. It would be advisable, therefore, that the experiment should first be tried on a small scale.

Mr. PALMER, in reply, said: Mr. Speaker,—I am very glad to hear from the Chief Secretary that the Government have determined upon this experiment of laying down 4,000 sleepers, but he did not say where the experiment would be tried.

The PREMIER: Where the conditions are, as nearly as possible, the same as in the Gulf country.

Mr. PALMER: Mr. Phillips, who is well acquainted with the interior of Queensland, and particularly with the Gulf country, where he was engaged in surveying for some years, knows the conditions under which railway construction should be carried out there. He has a very good knowledge of the nature of the soil, and its adaptability in regard to finding ballast for railway sleepers. I was quite aware that Mr. Phillips had been experimenting, and that he has had an idea in his head for some years in regard to the construction of railway lines over the black-soil plains of the interior, and I am glad to hear that his invention is to be put to the test. But taking into consideration the time the experiment will take, I believe it will be a long while before we shall see it carried out.

The PREMIER: Only a few months.

Mr. PALMER: So far the experiment on the Sandgate line, from the engineer's report, has proved highly satisfactory, and I look forward with great hope to this patent of Mr. Phillips's being put into operation. As to the objection raised by the member for Leichhardt with reference to the sleepers being so rigid as to cause deterioration or wear in the rolling-stock, I cannot see how that can have any effect, because the material of the sleeper itself is elastic, and the soil with which they will be packed will not be so rigid as to cause injury. The elasticity of steel sleepers is one great merit claimed for them. Now, as to the injury that may be done to the industry of obtaining wooden sleepers, pointed out by the member for Maryborough, I cannot see that any injury can be done to the people engaged in that business by the construction of a line of railway in the Gulf country with steel sleepers. He thinks it will take the bread out of the mouths of those people; but whether the line is constructed or not, they will have plenty to do in finding sleepers for the coastal railways. From my knowledge of the coast—which is as great as the hon. member's—I think they will have sufficient to do in that way to occupy all the time they will have. I have not the slightest hesitation in saying that the introduction of steel sleepers will in no wise interfere with the timber industry. The hon. member, in the estimate of cost which he gave, which varies considerably from that given by the engineers, did not allow for the transport of rails. The country has to pay for that just as any company would have to pay for the carriage of their goods; and indeed a large portion of the non-paying traffic which we see mentioned in the report of the Commissioner for Railways consists of the transport of material for the railways. According to Mr. Stanley's estimate, there is only a difference of 6d. between the cost of steel and wooden sleepers delivered at

Mitchell. I hope, if there are any reports from any of the engineers in regard to the utilisation of steel sleepers, the Minister for Works will have them printed or laid on the table of the House for the information of hon. members. I think, Mr Speaker, the discussion has resulted in some benefit. We have elicited a great deal of information on the question, and I therefore beg to withdraw the motion.

Motion accordingly withdrawn.

## PRINTING COMMITTEE'S REPORT.

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

Question put and passed.

## QUARANTINE LAWS AMENDMENT BILL.

On the motion of the PREMIER, the Speaker left the chair, and the House went into committee to consider the desirableness of introducing a Bill to amend the laws relating to quarantine.

The PREMIER moved that it is desirable that a Bill be introduced to amend the laws relating to quarantine.

Question put and passed.

The House resumed, and the CHAIRMAN reported the resolution.

On the motion of the PREMIER, the resolution was adopted.

## CROWN LANDS ACT OF 1884 AMENDMENT BILL.

On the motion of the MINISTER FOR LANDS (Hon. C. B. Dutton), the House, in Committee of the Whole, affirmed the desirability of introducing a Bill to further amend the Crown Lands Act of 1884.

The House resumed, and the Bill was introduced and read a first time.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS moved that the second reading be made an Order of the Day for Tuesday next.

Mr. LUMLEY HILL: Am I in order, Mr. Speaker, in moving that the second reading be postponed till Tuesday week?

The PREMIER: This is only a formal motion. A day will be fixed to suit the convenience of hon. members.

Question put and passed.

## SETTLED LAND BILL.

### CONSIDERATION OF THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL'S AMENDMENT.

On the motion of the PREMIER, the House went into Committee of the Whole for the purpose of considering the message from the Legislative Council in regard to this Bill.

The PREMIER said that in clause 13 of the Bill that House had reduced the proposed term of lease that might be made by a tenant for life, in the case of building leases, from sixty years to thirty years; in the case of mining leases from thirty years to twenty-one years; and in the case of other leases from twenty-one to fourteen years. The Legislative Council objected to the last reduction, and thought that a tenant for life should have the power to let land for twenty-one years. In cases of other than mining and building leases he was disposed to think that twenty-one years was too long. Things changed here so much and so rapidly that he really thought a tenant for life, who had only a temporary interest, possibly for a few years, in an estate should not be allowed to tie up the property for so long a period as twenty-one years. That was too great power to give him. He therefore moved that they insist upon their amendment.

Question put and passed.

On the motion of the PREMIER, the CHAIRMAN left the chair, and reported to the House that the Committee insisted on the amendment.

The report was adopted.

The PREMIER moved—

That the Bill be returned to the Legislative Council with a message, stating, that this House insist on its amendment, for the following reason:—Because, having regard to the rapidly changing conditions of the colony, it is thought inexpedient to allow a tenant for life to bind property for a longer period than fourteen years.

Question put and passed.

## SUCCESSION DUTIES BILL.

### CONSIDERATION OF THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL'S AMENDMENT.

On the motion of the COLONIAL TREASURER (Hon. J. R. Dickson), the Speaker left the chair, and the House resolved itself into a Committee of the Whole to consider the Legislative Council's amendment in this Bill.

The COLONIAL TREASURER said, in reference to the amendment of the Legislative Council in clause 3 of the Bill, he hardly thought it necessary to address the Committee at any length concerning it. The fact of the Bill being a taxation Bill should, of itself, have exempted it from amendment by the Legislative Council, so far as the manner, or time, or mode in which such taxation was levied was concerned. However, that matter had been very fully dealt with by the hon. the Speaker already, and also by the leader of the House; and he only regretted that the Legislative Council should have placed themselves in a position wherein it was necessary that the Legislative Assembly should insist upon their amendment or else lay aside the Bill. The Premier mentioned yesterday that it was undesirable that the Bill should be laid aside, the Government considering that the Legislative Council, in making their amendment, had not fully considered the consequences, or the position that they had taken up. It was supposed that the amendment was introduced without any intention to assail any of the privileges of the Legislative Assembly, which all past experience and constitutional practice had shown to be illegal. It was unnecessary that he should address them at any length, as the position of that House was so clearly defined and so well understood that the matter was really not open to debate. The Government considered it desirable that the Bill should not be laid aside, as it was a measure that, not only from a revenue point of view, but as one of general policy, should if possible be placed upon their Statute-book. Therefore, with a view of giving the Legislative Council an opportunity of reconsidering the amendment, which, he said, the Government believed they had not introduced with any intention of invading the privileges of that Chamber, he moved that the amendment in clause 3 be disagreed to.

Mr. NORTON said he could hardly think that the Legislative Council, in making the amendment, intended to claim a power which, he thought, had been pretty well decided they did not possess. But still the amendment was one which he thought ought to be made in this Committee; and it was quite possible that the Legislative Council

in making it wished to point out to hon. members of this Committee that they might not have been quite as exacting as the hon. the Treasurer wished them to become. He took the amendment more as a protest against the grasping tendencies of the Treasurer than anything else, because he could hardly believe that the members of the Legislative Council intended seriously to send in an amendment of that kind, thinking it would be accepted by that House. For his part he thought that when the Bill was in committee here they dealt too hurriedly with it. There were many cases where grandchildren were just as much entitled to consideration as the children of the testator, or the person by whose decease they benefited. He hoped that hon. members of the other Chamber had not fully considered what was likely to be the result of their action in the event of their insisting upon their amendment; but, at the same time, he did not think they would insist upon it, if the Bill were sent back from this House with—well, not a very pugnacious message. He was sure that if a temperate one were sent hon. members would see the necessity for the disagreement.

The COLONIAL TREASURER said that so far as the question of the policy of the amendment went, he considered that at present that was entirely outside the scope of their consideration; but since the hon. gentleman had touched upon the question, he had no hesitation in saying that it would be very unwise to adopt the amendment. Where should they draw the line? If they included grandchildren why not include great-grandchildren, or even go still further? It would render the measure, as one of revenue assistance, entirely futile, and therefore, on the policy of the amendment, he was at issue with the hon. gentleman. He had not taken up the time of the Committee in discussing it, nor did he desire to. They ought to consider merely the question of the Council introducing an amendment into a taxation Bill, which he did not think they had any right to do.

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN said that on the policy of the amendment he agreed with the hon. member for Port Curtis—that there were occasions when grandchildren were as much entitled to consideration as children.

The COLONIAL TREASURER: And great-grandchildren too, possibly.

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN said the idea was simply that they might be helpless without their parents. That was the idea of the Council so far as the policy of the amendment was concerned. He did not think they intended to claim any right to that which they knew now they had no right. That, he thought, had been dissipated entirely. If it were not a question of right, he certainly would advocate that the amendment be agreed to.

The PREMIER said the message the Government proposed to send back was to state that they disagreed to the amendment; to point out that the effect of it would be to reduce the amount of duties payable to Her Majesty in the case of property transmitted to grandchildren, and to say that under those circumstances the Legislative Assembly did not think it necessary to offer any reason for disagreeing to the amendment, conceiving that it has been made by the Legislative Council by inadvertence, and not with the intention of invading the undoubted privileges of the Legislative Assembly in respect of all Bills of Aid and Supply to Her Majesty. He thought that was the best way of dealing with the matter.

Question put and passed.

On the motion of the COLONIAL TREASURER, the CHAIRMAN left the chair, and reported to the House that the Committee had disagreed to the Legislative Council's amendment.

The report was adopted.

On the motion of the COLONIAL TREASURER, the Bill was ordered to be transmitted to the Legislative Council, with a message intimating that the Legislative Assembly disagreed to the Legislative Council's amendment in clause 3 of the Bill, because—

> The effect of the proposed amendment would be to reduce the amount of duties payable to Her Majesty in the case of property transmitted to grandchildren.
>
> Under these circumstances the Legislative Assembly do not think it necessary to offer any reason for disagreeing to the amendment, conceiving that it has been made by the Legislative Council by inadvertence, and not with the intention of invading the undoubted privileges of the Legislative Assembly in respect of all Bills of Aid and Supply to Her Majesty.

## QUARANTINE BILL.

### FIRST READING.

The PREMIER said: Mr. Speaker,—In accordance with a resolution of the House, I beg to present a Bill to amend the laws relating to quarantine, and move that it be read a first time.

Question put and passed, and Bill read a first time.

On the motion of the PREMIER, the second reading was made an Order of the Day for Tuesday next.

## DIVISIONAL BOARDS BILL No. 2.

### COMMITTEE.

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

Clause 134—"Books of account and inspection by persons interested"—put and passed.

On clause 135, as follows:—

> "The board shall in each year, not later than the thirty-first day of January and the thirty-first day of July, cause the accounts of the division to be balanced as to the thirty-first day of December and the thirtieth day of June immediately preceding such dates respectively, and after each such balancing the auditors shall audit such accounts as soon as conveniently may be. And the board shall, by their clerk, produce and lay before the auditors the accounts so balanced, with all vouchers in support of the same, and all books, papers, and writings, in their custody or power, relating thereto.
>
> "If the auditors, after due inquiry, are satisfied that all moneys received have been duly accounted for, and that all payments charged have been duly authorised and made, they shall sign the accounts in token of their allowance thereof, but if they think that there is just cause to disapprove of any part of the accounts, they may disallow any parts of the accounts so disapproved of."

The PREMIER said there was a verbal amendment necessary in the clause. On the second reading some question was raised as to whether the accounts should be made up yearly or half-yearly. The clause provided that they should be made up half-yearly, but he believed some hon. members entertained a different opinion upon that point. If any amendment was to be made in that respect it would come before the amendment he had to move.

Mr. CAMPBELL said he would like to ask the Premier what was the object of requiring a half-yearly balance? It seemed to him unnecessary, and it was an expensive matter to a poor board.

The PREMIER said he did not know that any particular reason could be given, except the advantage of knowing how the accounts stood. There was this to be said against the other view, that at

present the Government endowment was only paid in one instalment. He did not suppose that would make much difference. He supposed making a half-yearly balance would cause some additional expense, and he should not object if any member moved an amendment to leave out the second balance. Another question occurred to him as to whether the 31st January was not too close to the end of the year to make up the accounts.

The COLONIAL TREASURER said he was inclined to think that as the boards only received the endowment annually there was no necessity, at any rate at the present time, for a half-yearly balance, and they might provide that the accounts should be balanced as soon after the close of the year as possible, instead of fixing it at the 31st January.

The PREMIER said, as there did not appear to be sufficient reason for requiring two balance-sheets he should move the omission of the words "and the thirty-first day of July" in the 2nd line of the clause.

Amendment agreed to.

The PREMIER moved that the clause be further amended by the omission of the words "and the thirtieth day of June" in the 4th line of the clause.

Amendment agreed to.

On the motion of the PREMIER, the clause was further amended by the omission of the words "such dates respectively" in the 4th and 5th lines of the clause.

Clause, with further verbal amendments, put and passed.

On clause 136, as follows :—

"Any person interested in the accounts, either as a creditor of the board or as a ratepayer, may be present at the audit of the accounts, by himself or his agent, and may make any objection in writing signed by himself or his agent, to any part of such accounts."

The COLONIAL TREASURER said it had been represented to him by the chairman of one of the divisional boards that the clause was objectionable, since it would be inconvenient to allow persons to be present during the auditing of the accounts. There was a good deal to be said on both sides. If a creditor or ratepayer had reason to think there was any wrongful manipulation of the accounts, it might be advisable that he should have the right to be present. He would be glad to hear the opinion of hon. members on the subject.

Mr. BUCKLAND said he did not see the necessity for the clause. If there was anything wrong in the accounts, any person interested as creditor or ratepayer had his remedy.

The PREMIER : Where is his other remedy

Mr. BUCKLAND : The usual remedy. He thought the clause was unnecessary, and ought to be expunged.

The PREMIER said he remembered an instance not many years ago of a board not very far from Brisbane in which the right of a creditor, or ratepayer, or any one else interested in the good government of the division, to be present and see how the accounts were audited, would have been of very great use. It was not very far from the hon. member's electorate, he thought.

Mr. CHUBB said he was not present when clause 134 went through ; and it appeared to him that there was no provision in the Bill authorising ratepayers to inspect the rate-books.

The PREMIER : Yes; clause 212.

Mr. GRIMES said he did not agree hon. member for Bulimba that the clause ought to be struck out altogether. They might omit the words allowing any person to be present, but they should retain those giving any person the privilege of making an objection to the auditors in writing.

The PREMIER : How is he to find out anything to object to, if he is not present ?

Mr. GRIMES said he presumed the ratepayer had the privilege of inspecting the books at any time if he thought anything was wrong.

The PREMIER said the clause had to be taken in connection with those following, particularly clause 139, which provided for the finality of the accounts when they had been audited. They were then to be finally examined, and if passed were final against all persons whomsoever. They could only be audited again by direction of the Governor in Council. He did not think the power would be abused. The system had been in force many years under the Local Government Act, and had not been abused.

Mr. PATTISON said it was necessary, when auditors were going through the accounts, that they should not have the slightest interruption. If they were to be interrupted by ratepayers or other persons, how could they do their work properly ? It would be very difficult to get competent persons to act as auditors on such terms. Auditors needed peace and quietness while at their work.

Mr. McMASTER said he did not know how it might be in divisional boards, but in municipalities auditors certainly objected to being disturbed during the time they were at work. Although it was very proper that ratepayers should have access to the books at all reasonable timess, they ought to be prevented from doing so while the books were being audited.

Mr. FOOTE said he thought the clause a very safe one. There was no danger of the auditors being disturbed or interfered with in any way. The clause simply provided that ratepayers might be present during the audit, and make any objection they thought fit to make in writing. That meant, after the accounts had been audited. It did not give any ratepayer the right to interfere with the audit.

Mr. PATTISON said the first part of clause 138—

"The board shall cause every audited statement to remain for inspection at the office of the board"—

gave all the power that the ratepayer required. It enabled a ratepayer to take exception to any part of the audit, if he thought fit to do so. The work of auditing should be done calmly, quietly, and without interference.

Mr. CHUBB suggested that the better course would perhaps be to negative the clause, and to insert it in a different form after clause 138, giving the ratepayer or creditor the right to object to any part of the audit.

Mr. BULCOCK said that instances were not unknown in the colony where the auditing had been very carelessly done. An intelligent ratepayer who understood accounts would be of great service in cases of that kind, so long as he did not disturb the auditor in his work.

Mr. PATTISON said that in the event of there having been a contested election for the office of auditor, the defeated candidate might make himself very objectionable by attending the audit ; and a disagreeable man, with a lot of spare time on his hands, would gladly avail himself of the opportunity to do so.

The PREMIER said there was something in the objections that had been raised ; but although some of the auditors were elected by the ratepayers, a large number were nominated by the boards themselves.

Mr. PATTISON said he was not aware that such was the practice.

The PREMIER said it was a fact, nevertheless, that half the auditors in the colony were nominated by the Government on the recommendation of the boards. It was necessary that the ratepayers should see that the accounts were properly audited and checked. Inconveniences might arise under the clause, no doubt; but if it were negatived other and greater inconveniences might creep in. It was simply a question of the balance of inconvenience.

Mr. JESSOP said it would be very objectionable to auditors to be interfered with while at their work. If persons went into the room while the work was going on, they would not sit still; they would have something to say which would have the effect of disturbing the auditors.

Mr. PATTISON, for the reasons he had already given, moved that the clause be struck out.

Mr. NORTON said it was not necessary to move an amendment, as negativing the clause would answer the same purpose. There was a good deal in what had been said by the hon. member for Blackall. He did not see how auditors could be expected to do their work properly if they were to be subjected to continual nterruptions. It was well known that in some cases people would go into the room, not because they wished to see how things were going on, but because they were officious. He thought the clause was unnecessary.

Mr. GRIMES said he would not like to see the whole clause negatived, but he would certainly like to see a portion of it cut out. He thought they should omit the words "may be present at the audit of accounts, by himself or his agent, and."

The PREMIER said what the hon. member who had last spoken desired could be attained by adding to the 138th clause a provision to the effect that any such person—that was, a creditor of the board or ratepayer—might make an objection in writing to any part of the accounts referred to in the statement.

Clause put and negatived.

On clause 137, as follows :—

"Half-yearly statements, showing the financial position of the division as at the end of December and June, respectively, shall be prepared and laid before the board at its first ordinary meetings after the months of January and July respectively. Such statements shall be audited by the auditors, and shall contain an account of all moneys received and moneys paid by the board during the preceding half-year, and a statement of all rates made and contracts entered into during such half-year, and of all assets and liabilities of the division."

Mr. CAMPBELL said he thought several amendments were required in that clause to make it read with clause 135.

The PREMIER said of course only the yearly statement was to be audited. But was it not also desirable to have a half-yearly statement? He thought it was, so that the ratepayers might know what amount of rates had been received, what contracts had been entered into, and how the board had got on for the half-year.

The COLONIAL TREASURER said the reasons urged against clause 135 did not apply to that provision, which merely dealt with progress accounts, not the balancing of accounts.

Mr. MELLOR said he did not know what was the object of a half-yearly audit. The principal object they had in view was to avoid the expense of printing balance-sheets. At the present time the boards were compelled to advertise their balance-sheets in the *Government Gazette* and a local newspaper, which was a very considerable expense. He thought all that had been abolished with the yearly audit.

Mr. PALMER said he would like to know how often the public accountant was expected to examine the accounts of the Northern divisional boards? There had been some scandalous proceedings in connection with the auditing of accounts up north, and the way boards spent not only their money but public money as well. The accounts of some boards, such as the Maytown Divisional Board, for instance, had not been inspected for years.

The COLONIAL TREASURER said all the accounts of divisional boards were inspected once in twelve months. At any rate the Audit Office had been very active of late, and it was the intention of the department that all divisional accounts should be audited once every twelve months.

The PREMIER said that as the clause now stood it referred only to statements of moneys received and paid by the board, and of contracts entered into during the preceding half-year. He did not see any objection to it himself.

Mr. PATTISON: There was one fault in the clause. It said that half-yearly statements should be made and audited. The provision was imperative.

The COLONIAL TREASURER said he thought it was necessary to have half-yearly statements, to prevent the accounts from falling into arrear, and they would save a considerable amount of work at the annual balance. There were many reasons why the half-yearly statement of accounts should be continued.

Clause put and passed.

On clause 138, as follows :—

"The board shall cause every such audited statement to remain for inspection at the office of the board; and any ratepayer of the division or creditor of the board, or any person acting on his behalf, may, at all reasonable times during office hours, and without payment of any fee, inspect such statement and compare the same with the books and documents relating thereto in the possession of the board, and the clerk shall, on demand, give to any such person a copy of the statement on payment of the sum of one shilling therefor."

The PREMIER moved that the clause be amended by the addition of the words, "Any such person may object in writing to any part of the accounts referred to in the statements."

Amendment agreed to.

Mr. PALMER said he understood the amendment meant that any ratepayer might object in writing to the expenditure of the funds of the ratepayers.

The PREMIER: He can do that if he likes; he may object to anything improperly done.

Mr. PALMER said there was expenditure going on in many divisional boards to which he was paying excessive rates, and he objected to a great deal of their expenditure, but he had no means of remedying the matter. He never saw their accounts advertised in either the *Gazette* or the local newspaper.

The PREMIER: There is no law about it now.

Mr. PALMER said there was a great deal of money expended unnecessarily by boards, and ratepayers should have the opportunity of objecting and protesting against it.

Clause, as amended, put and passed.

On clause 139, as follows :—

"The accounts of the board, so balanced and audited, and either allowed or disallowed by the auditors, together with the said statement, shall be produced at the last-mentioned meetings of the board, or at some ad-

journment thereof, at which meeting all creditors and ratepayers may be present, and the accounts shall be then finally examined and settled by the board, and if the same are found just and true, they shall be allowed by the board and certified accordingly under the hand of the chairman of such meeting. And after such accounts have been so allowed and signed by such chairman, and also by the auditors hereinbefore provided, the same shall (except in the case of an audit by a special auditor or special auditors appointed by the Governor in Council) be final as against all persons whomsoever"—

Mr. PATTISON asked what power the ratepayers would possess at the meetings?

The PREMIER said the meetings would be public, and the ratepayers would be entitled to be present.

Mr. PATTISON said he took it that those entitled to take part in the meetings would be able to make motions and move amendments. It appeared to him to be a dangerous power to give ratepayers. They might upset the whole year's proceedings of the board.

The PREMIER said they could not interfere with the proceedings of the board. They could attend, and if anything scandalous came under their notice they might appeal to the Government to have a special auditor appointed. Ratepayers were entitled to be present at all meetings of the board.

Mr. PATTISON said he was aware that the meetings were open, not only to the ratepayers, but also to the general public; and he had no doubt that on the clause some ratepayers would build up a right to have a voice in the meetings, and take part in a sort of special general audit of accounts.

The PREMIER said the clause had reference to clause 135, and should be altered accordingly. He moved that the word "yearly" be inserted before the word "accounts" in the 1st line of the clause.

Amendment agreed to.

The PREMIER said there was to be a yearly balancing of accounts and a general audit. In addition there was to be a half-yearly statement or summary of the financial condition of the division. The yearly auditing was to be done in January. He moved that the words "as aforesaid" be inserted after the word "audited" in the 1st line of the clause.

Amendment agreed to.

On the motion of the PREMIER, the words "any written objections made by ratepayers or creditors" were substituted for the words "the said statement," and the words "first ordinary meeting" for the words "last-mentioned meetings"; and the words "after the month of January" were inserted after the word "board" on the 4th line of the clause.

The PREMIER said, with respect to the next part of the clause, the evident intention was, that after a man had made an objection he would be allowed to appear before the board and substantiate it, but it was not very clearly expressed. It would be better to amend the clause so as to read, "at which meeting any person who has made any such objection may be heard in support thereof." It would be simply an appeal to the board about anything supposed to be improper in connection with the accounts. Considering that when the accounts had been once settled they could not be investigated except by special audit, the board ought to hear any argument addressed to them by ratepayers. He moved the omission of the words "all creditors and ratepayers," with a view of inserting "any person who has made any such objection may be heard in support thereof."



Mr. PATTISON said the amendment woul certainly give the ratepayers and creditors some standing, but he did not see any good that would result from that. If hon. members would turn over the page and look at the clause referring to special audit they would see that everything was provided for, and not only was a penalty provided for wilfully or corruptly misapplying moneys, but the penalty was to be deducted from any money payable by the Treasurer to the board. He thought that was ample protection. It appeared to him that the clause, as proposed to be amended, would cause interference with the members of the board. They knew very well that there were always some persons who were ready to make matters as unpleasant as they could. He was pleased to say that few people objected to be taxed under the Divisional Boards Act, but still there were a few who objected to be taxed, and these were the people who would make themselves very objectionable if such a power was given to them. The board would examine the accounts, and would satisfy themselves of their correctness; then the creditors and ratepayers had power to examine them, and then, on top of all that, was inserted a provision for special audits to be made. Surely that was sufficient to justify one in thinking that the accounts must be correct after passing through so many stages, and he could not agree that the power proposed to be given to the ratepayers should be given. The board would satisfy themselves as to the correctness of the accounts, and he did not think it was likely that anything the ratepayers might say would have any other effect than prolonging the discussion.

The PREMIER said the presence of a ratepayer might avoid all necessity for a special audit. If it were pointed out to the board that they were going wrong or doing something which might involve them in difficulties, they would probably listen to the arguments of the ratepayer and save the necessity of a special audit and all the necessary expense and trouble. What was the use of allowing a written objection to be made if the objector could say nothing in support of it? A special audit was a very costly thing.

Mr. PATTISON said he was quite aware of that; but he could see a difficulty. Supposing a ratepayer objected to the audit, and made the board believe that the objection was good, what was the remedy? The accounts could not be referred back to the same auditors, but a special audit would have to be made.

Mr. McMASTER said he did not think the hon. member wished to burk examination of the accounts.

Mr. PATTISON: Certainly not.

Mr. McMASTER: If a ratepayer was to be allowed to have his say at a meeting of the board he ought to be limited in the same way as members of the board. There were some people, as had been said, who made themselves very objectionable, and they might keep the board sitting a whole afternoon quibbling about a very frivolous matter. If the ratepayers had permission to examine the accounts, that was all that was necessary. No board would object to that.

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

On clause 140, as follows:—

"The board shall every half-year cause an abstract of the accounts, certified as aforesaid, to be prepared, and shall cause the same to be published in the *Gazette* and in some newspaper generally circulating in the district. And a copy of such abstract shall be kept by the clerk at the office of the board, and shall be open to be inspected by any ratepayer or creditor of the board during office-hours"—

Mr. CAMPBELL said it seemed to him that the clause would put the board to a great deal of unnecessary expense in causing an abstract of the accounts to be published in the *Gazette*, or some newspaper circulating in the district. The expense of advertising amounted to a considerable sum. He thought that expense might be avoided.

The PREMIER said the expense was not very much for advertising twice a year, and it was very desirable that the ratepayers should know how their accounts stood.

Mr. NORTON: Hear, hear!

Mr. PATTISON said the ratepayers were entitled to know how their accounts stood, and there was no other way than that proposed in which it could be done, unless they were printed and circulated generally. He thought the proposed system was a much cheaper method of doing it. He quite agreed with the clause as it stood.

Clause put and passed.

On clause 141, as follows:—

"The Governor in Council may, from time to time, appoint a special auditor or special auditors to examine the accounts of a division for any period not exceeding two years before the date of the appointment. And the board of such division shall, by the clerk, produce and lay before the auditor or auditors so appointed all books and accounts of the division for such period, and all vouchers in support of the same, and all books, papers, and writings in its power relating thereto.

"Seven days' notice in writing shall be given to the chairman and clerk of any such intended examination."

Mr. BULCOCK said the time fixed in the latter part of the clause was, he thought, too long. The books ought always to be in such a state that two or three days only would be necessary. Having such long notice might tend to make the clerks keep the accounts carelessly. He moved that the word "seven" be omitted with a view of inserting the word "three."

Mr. ADAMS said he was of opinion that the time mentioned by the hon. member opposite would be too short. Sometimes the chairman of a board might live where the mails would take some time to reach him, and it was therefore possible he might not receive the notice in sufficient time to make the necessary preparations. He thought seven days was not too long.

Mr. PATTISON pointed out that the clause said the auditor should be appointed "to examine the accounts of the division for any period not exceeding two years before the date of the appointment." The audit was not of the accounts of the board for the time when the audit was ordered; it was for those of the past.

Mr. FOXTON said he could bear out what had been said by the hon. member for Mulgrave. He knew a board where the chairman lived about forty miles from the board office, and it would be exceedingly inconvenient if notice were served on him only three days before there was to be a special audit. In the country districts seven days was little enough.

Mr. PALMER said he knew a place where the chairman lived 100 miles away from the board office. The hon. member for Mulgrave had made a very sensible suggestion. Of course the rule did not apply to all parts of the colony alike.

Amendment disagreed to, and clause passed as printed.

Clauses 142 to 152, inclusive, passed as printed.

On clause 153—"Board charged with control of necessary public works in division"—

Mr. PATTISON said there was a matter on which he would like some explanation, and perhaps that was the time to endeavour to get it. That day he had received a letter from the chairman of the Gogango Divisional Board, calling his attention to the clause about fencing new roads. The Committee had not come to it yet, but it appeared that there was a clause which provided that if the Government had a new road opened up for any public purpose the board had to fence it. Now, the board might not require the road, and why should the expense of fencing that new road be thrown by the Government on to the board?

The PREMIER: Where is that clause?

Mr. PATTISON said he referred to clause 159 relating to the fencing of land. In the case of a selection, in which there was a reserve for a road, and a fence round the whole selection, that road was for public purposes, and if it were carried through, the board would have to fence. That was the objection the board he represented took to it. If the land were excluded from the selection by the selector before he started to fence, then there could be no objection—if he fenced the proper quantity of land. But where he had included within his fence the area left for the road, it would come very hard upon a board to fence that road when carried through. That was his objection. In the case of a 640-acre selection, eight acres were usually left for a road; that eight acres was enclosed within the fence, and if a board found it necessary to open up that road they would have to fence through the land.

Mr. ADAMS said he thought the clause was a wise one, and he congratulated the Premier upon having inserted it. It said—

"That the board shall not be charged with the construction, maintenance, or control of any highway, road, bridge, ferry, wharf, or other necessary public works which the Governor in Council, by proclamation, excepts from the jurisdiction of such board."

In the Local Government Act it said that a board should not be charged for the maintenance of a public or a main road; but it did not define what a main road was. He knew at the time that Act was going through that the people in his district thought it a very great boon indeed; but when they looked to see what a main road was, they saw it was not defined. The Government had to define it, and the Government declined to do so. In the present Bill he found that a main road was defined—

"A road is a main road ordinarily used for traffic of wheeled vehicles from one town or centre of population to another town or centre of population, or from a town or centre of population to a port."

Mr. NORTON: You cannot find them in the country.

Mr. ADAMS said it was a wise provision, and he certainly congratulated the Government for having put the clause into the Bill.

The PREMIER said, with respect to the objection of the hon. member for Blackall (Mr. Pattison), he did not think that the difficulty would arise. The 159th section only provided for cases where the board itself made a road through enclosed land, and he really thought that if a board made a road through enclosed land they should fence it, unless they could come to terms with the selector. In many cases the selector might prefer to have a road right through, with licensed gates at each end. The question did not arise under that clause; and with respect to main roads he thought they had better discuss them when they came to clause 155.

Mr. PATTISON said he thought they had better discuss it now. No man had a right to fence land that was not his own, and if a board, exercising undoubted authority, thought fit to open up a road through a selection he thought they would be justified in taking the fence down. By the clause as it stood now, the board would be compelled to erect another fence.

Mr. FOXTON said he understood the hon. gentleman. He referred to selections the descriptions of which frequently spoke of the total area, exclusive of so many acres reserved for public road purposes. It was quite impossible for a selector, if he fenced his land, to fence it without fencing in that particular area, because it was not defined; it was an undefined area somewhere within his selection. The selection might be 320 acres, while, as a matter of fact, he had perhaps 340 acres, twenty acres of which were reserved for public road purposes; but they were not defined. Surely it would be a very great hardship if a man had fenced his selection, though it should contain 340 acres, for a board, or any other authority having power to define where that road should be, to open that road and compel him to fence it, he not having previously known where the road was going.

Mr. PATTISON said the board might not be acquainted with the fact; they might not know where the road was to be, and therefore a selector should call upon the board before he fenced to define it, so that there might be no confusion.

Mr. NORTON said he believed that in the case of large selections there was a certain reservation for roads—so many acres reserved for roads—but those roads were not defined, and they had to be laid down afterwards, if they were used at all. A man had his boundaries given to him, and instead of having 5,000 acres he might have 5,100 acres, the 100 odd acres being reserved for roads which might be required at some future time. Of course the board, it was presumed, had some right to reclaim that 100 acres for road purposes, if it became necessary; but it would be very hard upon the selector when the land had been conveyed to him merely with the reservation, but without any roads being marked upon it, or a hint given as to where a road was likely to be, to have a road run through his land without it being fenced. At the same time, it would be hard upon the board to have to fence it. It would be hard upon both parties.

Mr. McMASTER said he thought that in that case the greater hardship would be upon the single individual, the selector. If a road was opened it would be for the public good, and the public ought to fence it. It would be very unjust to ask the selector to fence a road that would be made for public convenience, and the board, having the funds of the public at their disposal, ought to fence it.

Mr. NORTON said he thought the fault was in the system which allowed extra land to be included in the selection.

The PREMIER: That is an objection to the nature of things.

Mr. NORTON said it might be an objection to the nature of things; but he objected when the things were like that. It was utterly bad in principle to give a man so much land, and then throw in so much more which he might have the use of for ever—which might never be claimed.

Mr. FOXTON said he would point out, in reply to that remark, that the fact of reserving an area for road purposes prevented a selector, or person having property, from claiming compensation when roads were resumed up to that area. It avoided an evil which would be greater than that which the hon. gentleman wished to avoid.

Mr. PATTISON said he thought it would be well that all surveys made should be submitted to the board. The board should have the right of judging where was the place for a road. That was a suggestion made to him, and he thought it a proper power to concede to the boards.

The PREMIER said there was a provision in clause 174 for consulting the board before a road was opened, and he thought it a very proper provision, as the opening of a road imposed the burden upon the board of maintaining it.

Clause put and passed.

On clause 154, as follows:—

"When a river, creek, or watercourse is so situated that at any place one bank thereof only is within the district of a division, the Governor in Council may, by proclamation, order and declare that any ferry across such river, creek, or watercourse, at such place, and the approaches thereto, and so much of either bank of the river, creek, or watercourse, at such place as may be necessary for the convenient construction and use of such ferry, and proper approaches thereto, shall be under the control of the board of such division."

Mr. GRIMES asked why the ferries should not be under the control of the joint boards?

The PREMIER said that in ordinary cases it would be convenient that the ferries should be under the control of joint boards, but there had been cases where it would be inconvenient. The laws on the subject at the present time were defective. There was the case of the ferry between the Bulimba and Booroodabin Divisions, and between Maryborough and Granville. The only way to deal with them now was under the United Municipalities Act, which was unworkable. Under the Local Authorities (Joint Action) Bill, at present under consideration in another place, the matter was also dealt with; still, notwithstanding those provisions, he thought it would be convenient to retain the clause before them. It might be found convenient to exercise the power conferred by it, and no harm could be done by retaining it. He did not think the power was likely to be exercised in many cases. There might be a case of a ferry in which the seat of the board on one side of the river might be a very long way off, and it would be inconvenient to place the ferry, in such a case, under the joint control. He had hesitated a good many times as to whether it would not be better to strike out the clause, but he thought that it would be better to leave it in. The power had been seriously wanted on more than one occasion; and however perfect the Local Authorities (Joint Action) Bill might be, it would be better to retain the provision and it could be used if necessary.

Mr. NORTON said that when he read the clause first he thought it provided for an undesirable power to give the Government to compel any one board to take charge of a ferry. He believed, however, that there were cases that rendered such a clause necessary. The Government were not likely to exercise the power unless they were compelled to do so, and only after very full consideration.

Mr. MELLOR said the clause made no provision as to boundaries in the case of a river. As a case in point, he might mention that the Gympie Municipality was bounded by the bank of the river on which it was situated, and the whole of the river was in the Glastonbury Division. The whole of the tailings were allowed to run into the river, and it was urged that the tailings should not be allowed to run into the river. It was considered a nuisance by a member of the Glastonbury Divisional Board, and it was evident, he thought, that in a case of that kind the boundary should be in the centre of the river. It seemed very hard that in a place of that kind, where there was a large population, they could not have some control over the watercourse. They might wish to make a place for bathing purposes, and he thought something was wanting in the clause in that respect.

The PREMIER said there was ample power given to alter boundaries. The Local Authorities Joint Action Bill dealt with the subject, and the provisions of that Bill, with those of the Bill before them, were together sufficient to deal with all cases of that kind.

Clause put and passed.

On clause 155, as follows :—

"If—

(1) A road is a main road ordinarily used for traffic of wheeled vehicles from one town or centre of population to another town or centre of population, or from a town or centre of population to a port; and

(2) Such road is not less than thirty miles in length; and

(3) The area of rateable land within ten miles on either side thereof for a distance of not less than twenty miles is less than one-twentieth part of the whole land within that limit; and

(4) The total rates raised or leviable from rateable land within those limits are less than five pounds per mile for a distance of not less than twenty miles along such road;

the Governor in Council may relieve the board or boards of the division or divisions within which such road is situate from the obligation to construct and maintain any part of such road with respect to which the conditions herein numbered three and four exist, but may, nevertheless, entrust the board or boards with the expenditure of any moneys appropriated by Parliament for the construction, maintenance, or repair of such road.

"No road shall be excepted from the jurisdiction of a board unless the conditions in this section set forth exist with respect to it."

Mr. PALMER said this was a very important clause, and referred, he supposed, to a main road to be kept in order from the consolidated revenue. He believed the road from Port Douglas to Herberton was one of those main roads.

The PREMIER: Yes.

Mr. PALMER said as that was so, he intended to apply for a subsidy for the maintenance of the continuation of the road from Herberton to Georgetown. Looking at the conditions of the clause, he considered that road would come under it.

The PREMIER: It would.

Mr. PALMER said he was very glad to hear it.

The PREMIER: It does not follow that you will get any money for it.

Mr. PALMER said there was £6,000 on the Estimates for expenditure on main roads, and he was making timely application for some of it, on the principle of first come first served. He did not know of any road that would better warrant government expenditure upon it, or would better justify the demand for that expenditure. He hoped the members for the district would support him in that.

The PREMIER said they were not considering just now what moneys were to be voted for main roads, or for any particular road. The question before them was whether the clause was capable of amendment; he did not see that it could be altered very much. There was some difficulty in defining a road which a board ought not to be called upon to make; but really a road of the kind described in the clause was one that a board ought not to be called upon to make, and he did not think the definition could be improved. They might alter the length, or make some different provision with respect to the area of rateable property along a road, but he believed the clause would be found to work in such a way as to apply only to the roads it was really intended to apply to; such roads as the roads from Cairns to Herberton, Port Douglas to Herberton, Cooktown to the Palmer, Tewantin to Gympie, and one or two others—roads where there was really little or no rateable property on either side—and it was not a fair burden to impose upon the divisional boards to ask them to make those roads.

Mr. NORTON said the hon. gentleman had quoted some roads that would be known as main roads.

The PREMIER: I mentioned all that occurred to me at the time.

Mr. NORTON said that he had tried to find out at the Lands Office what would be the main roads, and he had only been told of the road from Cooktown to Maytown, and it was further distinctly stated that the road from Port Douglas to Herberton was not a main road.

Mr. MELLOR said the Chief Secretary had stated that the clause would be applicable to the road from Tewantin to Gympie.

The PREMIER: I said I thought so.

Mr. MELLOR said he would like to see the clause altered so that it would be applicable to that road. It was really a main road, and the maintenance of it was a very great expense to the divisional board, and he might mention that the principal traffic on it was for Government purposes. In that district there were very large timber reserves—he thought, as much as eighty square miles in extent. The timber in the Wide Bay district gave more revenue to the Government than that in any other part of the colony. Some was drawn down to Noosa or Gympie, which cut up the roads tremendously, so as to make them almost impassable. He did not suppose there was a road in the colony, except perhaps in the isolated case of the road from Cooktown to Maytown, which answered all the conditions required by the clause. The clause ought to be altered so as to make it applicable to the other roads which had been mentioned. They might lessen the distance to twenty-five miles, and connect the subsections by "or" instead of "and." He did not think it was a fair principle that the Government adopted—that of giving one-third or one-fourth towards the cost of bridges on main roads. In the Widgee Divisional Board, which he represented, they had financial separation. One subdivision was heavily in debt, and had lately borrowed £1,000 from the Government for the purpose of constructing bridges; and another subdivision had plenty of money, so that it was proposed to strike an 8d. rate instead of 1s. Well, it would be very unfair to give the first subdivision only the same assistance for making bridges on main roads as was given to the other. He trusted the Minister for Works would take the matter into consideration. The subdivision of which he had spoken was promised assistance some years ago in building a bridge over Six-mile Creek, but when application was made to the Government, they offered to give only one-third towards the cost of construction. The subdivision was too heavily in debt to undertake the work with only that assistance.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said the applications from Wide Bay alone would swamp the whole vote.

Mr. MELLOR said he did not believe a single farthing of it had gone to the Wide Bay district. Any application they made had always been resented.

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN said that when the Divisional Boards Act was passed in 1879 it was found to work unfairly in some parts of the colony, because of the unequal circumstances of the different boards. In 1882 the then Government brought in a proposition to meet the difficulty, but it was rejected, and the clause now before the Committee was adopted in its place

to meet such cases as those which had been mentioned by the Chief Secretary. He certainly was under the impression that all those roads, except the one from Tewantin to Gympie, were excepted roads. He did not see what the Lands Department had to do with the matter; they might be asked the distance between centres of population, but they had nothing more to do with it. The amount of rateable property was found from the divisional boards. He was surprised to learn from the hon. member for Port Curtis that he found, on application to the Lands Department, that the only excepted road was that from Cooktown to Maytown; he felt certain that the roads from Port Douglas to Herberton, from Normanton to Georgetown, and from Georgetown to Herberton, came under the title. He quite agreed with the hon. member for Wide Bay that there were certain divisional boards in the colony that really could not bridge the rivers on roads between centres of population. It was rather hard that those places with only a small amount of rateable property should be placed on an equal footing with other parts that were thickly populated, and had roads and bridges made many years ago—before the Divisional Boards Act came into existence. When one of those bridges made many years ago at the expense of the Government required repairing or renewal, the Government subsidised it on exactly the same scale as other places where there were no bridges at all. He thought the Minister for Works ought to take those things into consideration, and make the bridges in such cases without calling for the subsidy he had mentioned the other day; he had quite enough money on hand at present to do so. The bridge mentioned by the hon. member for Wide Bay—the Six-mile Bridge—was, he believed, promised by the late Government; but he was not quite certain. If the people were heavily in debt, and the amount of rateable property was so small that they could not make the bridge, he did not see why the traffic should be stopped so long as the Minister for Works had £50,000 or £60,000 at his disposal, which he was spending in districts that did not deserve it so much as the one mentioned.

Mr. NORTON said that what the Lands Department had to do with the matter was with regard to the boundaries of the land. The road the hon. member for Wide Bay had mentioned — the Tewantin to Gympie road—was certainly rather a difficult one for the Widgee Board to have to deal with. It was a long road, sandy and swampy; there was very little settlement along it, and it was very expensive to keep in order. But it must be borne in mind that there was already a railway running from the coast to Gympie; and of course they would like to be connected with Noosa as well as with Maryborough. But there were other divisions that needed help quite as much as Widgee, and whose incomes were quite as small. He could quite understand the hon. member trying to get something for that road, although they had already had a grant of something like £500 for it.

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN said he remembered going to inspect that road while he held office as Minister for Works, in company, he believed, with the district inspector. He went to inspect the Six-mile Bridge, and believed he made a promise of some kind with respect to it. He saw the necessity for the work, and also that the board had not really the means to make such a bridge as was required. The approaches to the bridge would cost quite a third as much as the bridge itself; and the hon. member for Wide Bay had a very good claim on the Government for assistance.

Mr. LUMLEY HILL said the definition of a road in the clause—namely, "a road ordinarily used for traffic of wheeled vehicles"—would not apply to the roads in the district he represented, although a great deal of traffic passed over those roads that were not used by wheeled vehicles. He referred more particularly to the road from Cairns to Herberton, along which wheel traffic was impossible. If the words "wheeled vehicles" were retained in the clause, that road would be debarred from receiving any assistance from the Government. It was a road which most essentially required such assistance. It was sixty or seventy miles in length, and excepting within ten miles of Cairns, where it was all easy enough, there was no rateable property at all. The board might keep that part of the road in order which went through rateable property, but they could not possibly do so with the other part; and if the Government did not help, the road would be blocked. Postal communication was also kept up by that road.

An HONOURABLE MEMBER: But you are having a railway built.

Mr. LUMLEY HILL said the railway was not completed, as was the case with Gympie, and it would take a year or two before it reached Herberton. The road from Port Douglas to Herberton was also in a frightful state of disrepair, and would require a good deal of money to put it into anything like working order after the recent heavy rains that had fallen.

Mr. McMASTER: Wait tell you get separation.

Mr. LUMLEY HILL said he supposed that that neglect was one of the reasons why they were clamouring for separation. He took that opportunity of calling attention to it because so very few people there knew what was wanted in the North. It was only by calling attention to it on every possible occasion that they could possibly be expected to know. He wished the hon. member for Fortitude Valley would travel round those districts, and take a few of his Brisbane and Ipswich colleagues with him. It would open their eyes and enlarge their ideas very much, and perhaps induce them to support the movement for separation. He moved that the clause be amended by the omission of the words "of wheeled vehicles."

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said that, with regard to the roads in the Cook district, no less than £16,000 had been given to the boards there for the roads from Cooktown to Maytown, Port Douglas to Herberton, and Cairns to Herberton. The Port Douglas Board used a good deal of their share of the money in trying to survey a line of railway from Port Douglas to Herberton. While engaged in that survey the surveyor's horse happened to die, and the board actually gave £15 by way of recompense. That was the way they used the money given to them by the Government to repair their roads. It was about time to put a stop to things of that kind. The divisional board of Maytown divided £500 amongst themselves somehow or other, and it was his belief that if the matter had been properly dealt with they would have been prosecuted. That was how the money had been misapplied, and he felt great reluctance to give them more. With reference to the Wide Bay district, at least half-a-dozen applications had been made to the Government for bridges in that district, some of which would cost about £40,000 to build. How could the Government entertain propositions of that sort? He was prepared to admit that the Six-mile Bridge, which was on the main road, was in a very bad state, and that some assistance ought to be given to put it in order. Applications had been made for portions of the vote of £100,000 from all parts of the colony. If

the Government had a mint of money they could not supply all the wants of the boards. He had had a great deal of trouble over the matter. He had endeavoured to distribute the money as fairly as he possibly could, but wherever a divisional board thought there was a chance of screwing money out of the Government they were never done asking for it. Application after application was made to him, and he was determined now not to pay any attention to them. The Government were, however, very desirous, where a case of necessity was shown, to give what assistance they could, and he had no doubt some assistance would be given to put in repair the Six-mile Bridge on the Gympie road.

Mr. MELLOR said a promise had been given by the late Minister, and he was now glad to hear the hon. gentleman say that he would give the matter consideration. He (Mr. Mellor) had in his hand a copy of a letter sent to the Minister by the board, which showed that it was not an extravagant request they made. But before reading it he might state that the bridge was really in a most dangerous state, and there might be an accident on it any day. It was situated on the main road travelled by the coach from Brisbane to Gympie. The letter he referred to read as follows :—

"Widgee Divisional Board,
"Gympie, 20th August, 1886.

"The Hon. the Minister for Works, Brisbane.

"SIR,—I have the honour by direction to acknowledge receipt of your letter of the 3rd instant—No. 86-808 Lands—relative to the state of the Six-mile Creek Bridge, Brisbane road, and to state in reply that the board has already constructed two large bridges in the subdivision; that the board has incurred a heavy debt in consequence, and is unable to construct the bridge referred to with the assistance mentioned in your letter without going still further into debt. I am also desired to state that this district has not yet received any portion of the £100,000 loan vote for works of the nature referred to; and the board respectfully requests that you will be pleased to reconsider your decision in the matter and grant them a subsidy which will enable them to proceed with this very necessary work.

"I have the honour to remain,
"Yours obediently,
"JAS. G. KIDGELL,
"Divisional Clerk."

Then he had received a letter himself enclosing the foregoing. It was as follows :—

"Widgee Divisional Board,
"Gympie, 20th August, 1886.

"M. Mellor, Esq., M.L.A.

"DEAR SIR,—I have the honour to enclose copy of a letter forwarded to the Minister for Works, praying him to reconsider his decision with regard to giving a subsidy of £200 only towards the construction of the much needed bridge at Six-mile Creek, on the Brisbane road. You are aware of the facts in connection with the case, and also of the heavy debt already incurred by subdivision No. 1, and I am requested to ask you to use your influence with the Minister to obtain a grant of at least £400 towards the work, in which case the board would probably be encouraged to find the remainder.

"I have the honour to remain,
"Yours obediently,
"JAS. G. KIDGELL,
"Divisional Clerk."

That was the way in which the board approached the Minister. He did not know whether the hon. gentleman referred to that bridge when he said there was one bridge which would cost £40,000, but he thought that must be the Maryborough bridge. Another bridge for which money had been asked he (Mr. Mellor) knew could not be constructed for less than £5,000. He thought it was only right that when boards were in difficulties and could not raise sufficient money to carry out necessary works, and when there was so much land locked up in reserves—timber reserves—which could not be rated, but from which the Government received a large revenue by way of royalty on the timber, the boards should receive some assistance from the Government. They had to maintain the roads which were cut up by the heavy traffic of timber waggons carrying four or five tons.

Mr. BUCKLAND: Put on a wheel-tax.

Mr. MELLOR said they had a wheel-tax, but it yielded comparatively no revenue.

Mr. WHITE: Widen the tires.

Mr. MELLOR said that could only be done at tremendous expense. He would like to see that clause altered. He supposed the hon. member for Cook, in proposing that they should leave out the words "of wheel traffic," meant the clause to include roads used by pack-horses. He (Mr. Mellor) thought it would be very much better if the clause was made to read "that the road should not be less than twenty-five miles in length," instead of "thirty miles" as now provided; also, that the word "and" at the end of subsection 2 should be omitted, and the word "or" substituted, so that the conditions might be singular, and that the whole of them should not be required to be complied with.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said it was very little use amending the clause, as no provision was made on the Estimates for the purposes mentioned in it.

Mr. LUMLEY HILL said that with regard to the charge levied against the Port Douglas Divisional Board for expending moneys in looking out a new route for the Government railway—in getting what was considered the best survey for a railroad to Herberton—he was not at all sure that the board were not justified in applying their funds to that purpose. It would have been a saving to the country if they had been successful in demonstrating what they believed. They did not succeed; that was perfectly evident; but they expended the money in making the survey, because they considered that the surveyors who had been sent up by some Government or other—he believed it was the previous Government—were wholly incompetent. They employed surveyors themselves in endeavouring to point out to the Government which was the best ascent of the range between the coast and Herberton. If they had succeeded in finding an easy route, it would have been a benefit to the ratepayers and to the country, but because they did not succeed they were charged with having fraudulently administered the funds entrusted to them. He did not think they did very much harm in that way. With regard to "working out the dead horse," that was another matter altogether. He did not think that could be justified in any kind of way. But he really could not see why the main road between Cairns and Herberton—and it was an important main road—should be shut out by that clause because no wheel traffic went over it.

Mr. GRIMES said the hon. member surely was not serious in proposing his amendment. It appeared that the words were necessary to distinguish between a road and a cattle track. If they cut out the words "wheeled vehicles" applications would be made for money to be spent on bush tracks and cattle tracks. He hoped the amendment would be withdrawn.

Mr. LUMLEY HILL said he was thoroughly serious in moving the amendment. An immense amount of valuable trade went over that road, which no wheeled traffic had ever gone over yet. The road between Cairns and Herberton was a main road, and one of the principal means of communication between the tin district and the coast. If the hon. member had never heard of it he could only pity his ignorance.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS said that nobody knew better than the hon. member for Cook that roads did not want making for pack-horse traffic. If the scrub was cleared, that was all that was necessary. In reference to the suggestion of the hon. member for Wide Bay, Mr. Mellor, an amendment such as he suggested would have the effect of making every road or track in his (Mr. Dutton's) district a main road, and the board would be able to claim the Government subsidy in every case under the 4th paragraph. The same remark applied to most of the country districts in Queensland.

Mr. GRIMES said he knew a little about the track from Cairns to Herberton. The hon. member would see, however, that the Committee could not legislate specially for that track; for if they struck out the words "wheeled vehicles," with a view of including that among the main roads of the colony, hundreds of other cattle tracks would be able to be brought in under the definition. That particular track was a mule track, he believed.

Mr. LUMLEY HILL said he could not understand the position taken by the Minister for Lands, who said there were any amount of tracks in his district that would be regarded as main roads if the clause were amended. What expenditure of money did they require? He repeated that the opening up and keeping open of the track from Cairns to Herberton had cost, and was costing, a great deal of money. A great deal of Government money had been expended on it, and the last time he crossed the range the track was in extremely bad order. It wanted widening, and the scrub wanted clearing to a considerable extent on each side; and it cost a good deal to cut down that dense jungle and clear it off. He did not know what the hon. member for Oxley knew about the track.

Mr. GRIMES: I know a little about it.

Mr. LUMLEY HILL: Have you been there?

Mr. GRIMES: I have been over part of it.

Mr. LUMLEY HILL: What part of it?

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Question!

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN said he thought the hon. member for Wide Bay might be satisfied with the implied promise given by the Minister for Works in regard to the Six-mile Bridge, without trying to amend the clause in the direction he wished. Such an amendment would give the clause too wide a scope. The Minister for Works had promised to take into his special consideration the building of the Six-mile Bridge, but he hoped the hon. gentleman would not apply the rule he had laid down when replying on a former occasion to the hon. member for Wide Bay—that the Government would contribute one-third or one-fourth only of the amount required for bridges, leaving divisional boards to contribute the other two-thirds or three-fourths. That was a rule that might be applied in the older settled districts where there was plenty of rateable property and the roads had been made at great expense years ago, before the Divisional Boards Act came into operation; but in districts where little or no Government money had been spent, and where there was little rateable property, the Minister for Works might very fairly exercise his judgment in dispensing the money he had in hand for the purpose. The hon. member did not like to do anything that would lay him open to the charge of favouritism, but if he confined his special consideration to districts such as had been described, hon. members would not judge him unfairly, but give him credit for trying to do his best under the circumstances. He advised the hon. member for Wide Bay not to press his suggested amendment.

Amendment put and negatived, and clause passed as printed.

On clause 156, as follows:—

"The Governor in Council may, from time to time, by proclamation, place under the temporary or permanent management and control of a board, any public reserves, public works, buildings, erections, machines, implements, wells, reservoirs, or other things, which have been commenced, constructed, purchased, or provided for out of moneys appropriated by Parliament. Provided that the Governor in Council may alter, vary, or rescind any such proclamation."

The PREMIER moved the insertion of the words "or any" after the word "reserves."

Amendment agreed to.

Mr. MELLOR said he would like to have seen something more definite in reference to reserves. There had always been an uncertainty about the reserves in divisions. Some were vested in the boards and some were not. It had been thought by some boards that power should be given to them in reference to the conservation of timber, and that was a matter that might be taken into consideration by the Government. He thought that if anything were done in reference to the conservation of timber it should be done under the management of the divisional boards, because it could be done by them better than by the central Government. It was not long since a resolution bearing on that matter was passed by the Widgee Board, and he thought it his duty to bring it under the notice of the Government. The following letter, dated the 26th July, was sent to the Colonial Secretary by the secretary of the board:—

"SIR,—I have the honour, by direction of the Widgee Divisional Board, to respectfully request that you will be pleased to take the necessary steps to place in the hands of the board a sum of money to be expended by the board in the conservation of the various timbers of the district, and for replenishing timber on the worked-out reserves in the district."

He (Mr. Mellor) was asked by another letter to give that his support, and it was a matter that might be taken into consideration by the Government. He had no doubt the matter in the future would come prominently before the people again; but now that the Divisional Boards Bill was being passed he thought some provision should be made whereby the divisional boards would be able to deal with the question. He knew plenty of worked-out reserves which it would well repay the State to replant, and no better investment for loan money could be found.

The PREMIER said he was disposed to think that the conservation of timber was a national and not a local work, and that it would not be desirable to entrust it to divisional boards at present—until a much better scheme than they now had for preserving and replanting timber reserves was in existence. There might also be danger of divisional boards using the reserves as a means of obtaining revenue if they found themselves in difficulties. The matter was one that urgently needed attention, and the Government hoped to give it attention as soon as possible. As to reserves, they could not lay down an absolute rule that all reserves should be vested in boards. As a general rule they were, and as a general rule they ought to be; but, of course, there must be some exceptions.

Mr. PATTISON said in a great many instances the reserves were simply a nuisance. They were so misused that they often were a positive nuisance to the ratepayers. All reserves should be vested in the boards. They did not ask that for the purpose of deriving a revenue, but so as they could be kept under proper

control and properly used. Another suggestion that had been made was that all reserves should be reduced to 640 acres in extent. When they came to consider the noxious weeds clause they would see that the boards were to be obliged to destroy all weeds on public reserves, but unless they were under the control of the boards it would be hardly fair to expect them to destroy all noxious weeds. The Government might with advantage cancel some of the reserves, as they were often used by cattle-planters and horse-thieves, and were of no use to the ratepayers or public.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS said he might inform the hon. member that all camping and water reserves were under the control of the divisional boards, but the power they wanted was the right to lease them. He did not think that that was a desirable thing to do, because if the boards were allowed to do that the reserves would get into the hands of one person, and would be of no use to the public. Some of the boards had assumed the power, which they did not possess, of leasing the reserves, and thus the travelling public were deprived of their use.

Mr. PATTISON said there was no desire on the part of the Gogango Board to lease reserves. He might mention, however, that one reserve thirty miles out of Rockhampton was simply used by one man—Mr. P. F. Macdonald. It was not used by the travelling public, and he knew many instances in which cattle had been driven off that reserve by Mr. Macdonald and his servants.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS said the divisional board of Gogango had been told that they could exercise control over that reserve, and keep it from being used exclusively by Mr. P. F. Macdonald or any other squatter. If they did not exercise that power it was their own fault, and not the fault of the Government.

Mr. MELLOR asked if divisional boards really had the power of leasing reserves? It had been done in many instances.

Mr. PALMER said he thought the ideas of the hon. member for Wide Bay in reference to forest conservancy were well worth considering, because if the Government could not see their way to introduce that most needed reform, and there was no chance of their doing it this session, he fancied that some of those reserves in districts which were specially adapted to timber-growing—such as the Wide Bay district—should be placed under the control of the divisional boards. In districts like that the timber growth might well be conserved, as the commencement of a national system of forest conservancy. He admitted that forest conservancy was more of a national work, and should be carried out by a system something like that adopted in South Australia, where a special Act was in force for the purpose; but, as a commencement, he did not see why the hon. member's ideas should not be carried out.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS said if water and cattle reserves had been judiciously selected, they were certainly not suitable for timber-growing. Usually, places where grass grew were not places where timber thrived.

Mr. MELLOR said the hon. gentleman ought to know that there were plenty of timber reserves that had been worked out, and from which a very good revenue had been obtained. If they were replenished they would be a constant source of revenue. If some of these reserves were cared for and the young growth was protected, in ten or twelve years there would be a good crop again.

Mr. NORTON said if the divisional boards were given control over the timber reserves they would want something out of them. He did not think the profit would go to the State. He would like to ask the Minister for Lands, referring to the cultivation of timber, whether any money was being expended in Frazer's Island just now.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: No.

Mr. NORTON said then he did not think there was very much chance of the Government undertaking the replanting of forests. Some thousands of plants were put in on Frazer's Island, and if that had been abandoned there was not much probability of the Government replanting elsewhere. He thought it really important to deal with those reserves as soon as it could be done for the purpose of protecting the growth of timber.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS said he had not been quite right when he said that no money was spent in the Frazer Island reserve. A ranger was kept there in charge of the plantations, and he used his spare time in extending the plantations. His chief duty, however, was to preserve the plantations from bush fires or anything that might prove destructive to them. In reference to the growth of young timber in worked-out reserves, not so much planting was required as closing and fencing them. That was a very effective means of preserving and conserving the timber. Any other regular system of planting and weeding out the superabundant growth of young trees in all the reserves of the colony would involve an enormous expenditure. It was very desirable, no doubt, but would take a great deal of money. The only effectual means open at present was to close the reserves as soon as the mature timber had been taken out. By doing that the small timber was allowed to mature and kept from the destructive operations of timber-getters, who frequently, in spite of the rangers, took out far too small trees.

Mr. NORTON said the hon. gentleman was quite right when he said it would be useless to talk of replanting the whole of those worked-out reserves. The plants came up naturally; in fact, so thickly that they choked one another by thousands. They would always find timber-getters taking out timber which they ought not to take, and the reserves ought to be protected as much as they could be.

Mr. MELLOR said it was not sufficient merely to shut up the worked-out reserves.

Mr. NORTON: Not always.

Mr. MELLOR said he knew where there were thousands of acres of cedar scrubs which were not reserved, which the Government did not know the position of, and therefore did not preserve. If divisional boards had the power they might preserve those scrubs, or recommend their preservation to the Government.

The PREMIER: They can recommend now.

Mr. MELLOR said that if the reserves were placed under the control of the divisional boards they might replant them. Great destruction was going on in the cedar scrubs, not reserves, by the cutting down of small timber. He knew places on the Mary River which, if they had been reserved, would now have been worth £100,000 to the Government, and more than that.

Mr. BUCKLAND said that, seeing divisional boards were not to be allowed to lease reserves or get any rental out of them, when the Government resumed the reserves the board should be compensated by the Government, by valuation made at the time, for any outlay made by the boards in fencing, constructing dams, wells, or any other improvement. That would be only reasonable.

The PREMIER said the effect of that would be that the Government would be afraid to put anything in charge of the boards, because they might be committed to unlimited expenditure. Parliament might be trusted to deal justly with cases of that kind when they arose.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS said that cases had recently occurred in which wells had been put down in a reserve by a board. When it was found desirable that the reserve should be resumed for selection, the improvements made were protected. The incoming tenant paid for them, and the money was handed over to the board.

Mr. SHERIDAN said it was really time that a department of forest conservation should be established in the colony. He knew Frazer Island very well, and the plantations that had been made on it. Some little good had been done by transplanting trees, but immense good might be done by thinning out the trees. Millions of them were smothering each other. This was not confined to Frazer Island, but round about Maryborough where there were millions of cedar and pine. If an attempt were made to thin out the trees an immense source of wealth would be derived from them to the country. He hoped that in the near future a department of forestry would be established. In South Australia even, poor though it was, they had a magnificent forest conservancy department which devoted itself to the conservation of the forests. In America the expenditure by the United States for the conservation of forests was enormous. In the early days they thought that the best thing was to clear off the timber, but they had found out the mistake of that. The Bureau of Forest Conservancy was the most important one in the whole of the United States, and more attention was devoted to it than to any other. He did hope the Chief Secretary would carry out his resolution, and establish a department for the conservation of the forests of the colony.

Clause, as amended, put and passed.

On clause 157, as follows :—

"The board may, and, if required to do so by the Governor in Council, shall, assume the management and control of any reserve, park, or commonage within the district"—

Mr. CAMPBELL asked if this clause provided for boards taking possession of commons now in the hands of trustees or municipalities? His reason for asking this was that in the Gowrie Division there were two large commons—one known as the Drayton Common, and the other as the Toowoomba Common. A road ran through these commons for several miles, and the Gowrie Board received no rates from them though the board was called upon to keep the road in repair. The Toowoomba Municipality received the fees for the cattle that were pastured on them. That municipality had placed the fees to a fund which they had no means of applying, and it was therefore accumulating. They could not expend it out of their boundary, and consequently it was a serious loss to the Gowrie Board and no benefit to them. He had spoken to the Minister for Lands about the vesting of those commons in the Gowrie Board, and he had promised that they should be vested in the board; but up to this time they had not been. The town council of Toowoomba positively refused to part with them, and the Gowrie Board would be compelled to refuse to maintain the roads if the commons were not vested in them.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS said the hon. member was scarcely correct in what he said about the promise. The promise he made was that if the trustees were prepared to give up the commons they should be vested in the Gowrie Board; but they had positively refused to do so.

The PREMIER said that the question of the hon. member had suggested another one to him, and that was whether, by the clause as it stood, a board might not claim to turn the trustees out of a reserve. He thought it would be better to omit the words "may and" in the 1st line and insert the word "shall." It would remove any ambiguity.

Amendment agreed to.

On the motion of the PREMIER, the word "shall" in the next line was omitted.

Clause, as amended, put and passed.

On clause 158, as follows :—

"A board may take land for the purposes of this Act under and subject to the provisions of the Public Works Lands Resumption Act of 1878"—

The PREMIER said he thought the clause required altering slightly. It was not sufficiently definite. He proposed to omit the words "take land for the purposes of this Act," and add the words "take any land required for enabling the board to exercise any of the powers conferred upon it by this Act."

Amendment agreed to.

Clause, as amended, put and passed.

On clause 159, as follows :—

"When a board diverts or alters a street or road, the sides of which are fenced, or opens a new street or road through enclosed land, or takes away a fence for the purpose of widening a street or road, the board shall cause to be made substantial fences on the sides of the street or road which were before fenced, or on both sides of such new street or road if it is opened through enclosed land, or upon the side upon which the fence is so taken away; and shall keep such fences in repair for a period of one year"—

Mr. PATTISON said he could only repeat what he had already said. The clause was manifestly unfair. He need say no more. If the Premier thought that it was fair, there was an end of it; but he thought it was decidedly unfair that a board should be called upon to fence a road which was made for public convenience, and which had been fenced in by the owner of the selection without his having any legal right to do so. That was his objection to the clause, and he thought that some suggestion might be offered by which a selection should be submitted to the board before the fencing was erected, which would save a great deal of trouble. If those were the only terms upon which boards could make roads through selections, they would be careful to make as few roads as possible.

Mr. NORTON said he thought that, so far as possible, the reservation of land for roads in selections ought to be avoided. In most of the settled parts of the country they knew pretty well where roads were likely to be required. He was sure that about here they ought to know, and he believed that in the neighbourhood of Rockhampton, where the country was settled, the surveyors ought to know what roads would be required, and they ought to make provision for them. In cases where there were reservations made for roads, the surveys ought to be kept by the board. If it were proposed to reserve so many acres for road purposes, they ought to know at once where those roads would go, because a selector, taking up a considerable piece of ground, might want to put his head-station, or some other improvements, in a place where a board might think it desirable to take a road. In cases of that sort the selector would have either to remove his improvements or have the road taken right through them. There was another matter referred to in the clause, and that was, provision was made for putting up fences, not only where roads were carried through selections, but where fences had been put back other fences had to be put up, and they must be

substantial fences, even where those removed were unsubstantial. He thought that all that could be asked was that the fence to be put up should be as good as the one removed. Under the clause, if new roads were made, the board would have to put up good fences on both sides, and where an old fence was pushed back the board was bound to put up the best fence it could. If it were as good as the fence it had shifted, that was all that ought to be required.

The COLONIAL TREASURER said he did not think that in a new country like this it was possible to say where a road would be required. It was impossible, with the present progress of settlement in the country, to say where a road would be required in the early future. It might possibly stop the settlement of the country very much to have to state where future roads would be required. To judge by surveys in the past, the roads might be made in inaccessible places, and new roads would have to be formed where, at an earlier period, it might be thought they would not be required. It was better to allow new roads to be formed as required, and even if the boards had to provide the cost of fencing them, it would not, he thought, be a very heavy matter.

Mr. NORTON said that where roads had been laid down improperly the fault might generally be attributed to the Survey Office neglecting to compel surveyors to carry out their instructions. He had known of surveyors carrying out a survey along a well-made road, and deliberately taking their line across the well-formed road right into a swamp, where it would cost £200 or £300 to make a road. It was against the regulations that any surveyor should do that under any circumstances, and if surveyors exercised proper discretion, and it was insisted upon that they should follow their instructions, the complaints about roads being surveyed in inaccessible places would not arise.

Clause put and passed.

On clause 160, as follows :—

"The materials of all public highways, roads, streets, bridges, culverts, ferries, wharves, and jetties, and all things appurtenant thereto, shall belong to the board of the division."

The PREMIER said he had an amendment to move in the clause. He moved the insertion of the words "not excepted from the jurisdiction of the board" after the word "jetties," because, if they were excepted from the jurisdiction of the board, they should not belong to it.

Amendment agreed to.

On the motion of the PREMIER, the clause was further amended by the omission of the words "of the division," at the end of the clause.

Clause, as amended, put and passed.

On clause 161, as follows :—

"For the purpose of any law now or hereafter to be in force relating to the impounding of cattle, the board shall be deemed to be the proprietor of all roads and bridges within the district."

Mr. BUCKLAND said the clause referred to the impounding of cattle. Would it not be as well to provide that the appointment of poundkeepers should vest in, and be under the control of, the boards?

The PREMIER said that question had been brought under his notice two or three times, and he was not sure that it would be better. The Impounding Act required altering, no doubt; but it was a question whether it was desirable to alter it in the Bill before them or to bring in an amended Impounding Bill.

Mr. CHUBB: There would have to be a pound in every division.

The PREMIER: As the hon. member said, there would have to be a pound in every division, although one was often enough for several divisions. On the whole, he did not see his way to alter the present system.

Mr. PATTISON said it would give an undue power to boards. The boards themselves impounded cattle, and if the hon. member's suggestion was adopted they would be impounding cattle in their own pounds.

The PREMIER: They might make a profit out of it.

Mr. PATTISON: Yes, they might make a profit out of it, and he very much doubted whether some boards would care about having such duties imposed upon them.

Mr. NORTON said the subject had been brought under his notice too. Some of the boards wished to have the power, and some did not, and he did not know how they were to please them all. In some cases there was great difficulty in getting a person to keep a pound. In some divisions they could get no one to keep a pound, and if the boards had the power spoken of they could employ one of their own servants to attend to the pound in conjunction with other work. It was a matter, however, that required considerable consideration, and could not be decided off-hand in a night.

Mr. GROOM said there was another matter in connection with the subject which did not appear to have occurred to hon. members. That was that at present the unclaimed poundage money was sent to the hospitals; and in the case of some of them it formed a very important part of their revenue. Suppose that they placed the pounds under the control of the divisional boards, those charitable institutions would lose that money at once.

An HONOURABLE MEMBER: No.

Mr. GROOM: Would they not? He thought the divisional boards at the present time had a tendency to take all they could get, and he was afraid if that power were given to the boards very few benevolent institutions would get any of the poundage money. He had seen a cheque for as much as £800 handed over to a hospital which had been received from the Treasury on account of poundage fees.

Mr. NORTON: Not often.

Mr. GROOM: Not often, but still he had seen a cheque for that amount handed over. The unclaimed poundage money dealt with in that way formed a very important item of revenue in some of those institutions, and they should certainly hesitate before they gave the power to divisional boards to take that money. He believed that the present plan of appointing poundkeepers was a very good one. At present, the local poundkeeper was appointed by a bench of magistrates, and they would take very good care that he was a good man. No man could go to them and say, "I wish my brother to be appointed poundkeeper, and I want you to vote for him." In exercising that particular power, the bench of magistrates were always impartial, and he did not know of any appointment in which it was more necessary to have strict and rigid impartiality than in the appointment of a poundkeeper. The system in force at present—with the Colonial Secretary as Minister in charge, and the appointment resting with a bench of magistrates—was, he considered, the best system they could have.

Mr. NORTON said it was true that if some of the boards got the money they would not give it to the hospitals; but the difficulty was, that in many cases the impounding fees were so small, or there was no hospital in the district, and the

boards thought they were as much entitled to the money as anyone else. The impounding fees in some places were so small that it was difficult to get anyone to take charge of a pound. Cases of that kind came under his notice in which sometimes the district had a poundkeeper and sometimes it had not. It was pointed out that if the boards could get all the fees, instead of their going to the hospitals, they would be able to appoint a poundkeeper. However, the alteration was one that he did not think the Committee should consent to.

Mr. BUCKLAND said that, in justice to the divisional boards, he thought it right to mention that in nearly every board in the suburbs of the city, at all events, not only did the members of the board subscribe, but a donation was given to the local hospital, and every man was supposed to allow so much a month from his pay as a subscription to the hospital; so he did not think the boards could be charged with being anxious to appropriate the pound fees.

Clause put and passed.

Clauses 162 and 163 passed as printed.

On clause 164, as follows:—

"Compensation for any damage sustained in consequence of the exercise of any of the powers contained in the two last preceding sections may be recovered before any two justices in a summary way"—

The PREMIER said it had been suggested to him that an appeal should be allowed from the decision of the justices. He therefore proposed to add to the clause the words "the board may appeal to a district court from any order made by the justices under this section."

Amendment agreed to.

Mr. CHUBB said the right of appeal should also be given to the other party, in case the justices awarded too little. It was too late to amend the amendment now, but the Premier might make a note of it.

Clause put and passed.

Clauses 165 and 166 passed as printed.

The PREMIER said it had been suggested to him that power ought to be given to the boards to fix the level of the streets. It would not do to compel the boards to do so, but there was no reason why they should not do so if they liked. It was a great advantage to people when building to know certainly where the level was to be. He therefore proposed to introduce a clause adapted from the Local Government Act, but not in the same form. Under that Act anybody could call upon the municipal council to fix the level, and when the level was fixed, compensation could be claimed if it were departed from. The clause he proposed was as follows:—

The board may, if it thinks fit, fix the permanent level of any street or road in the division, and if after the level of any street or road has been so fixed the level of the ground in such street or road is altered by the board, except in conformity with the level so fixed, the board shall be liable to make compensation to all persons injuriously affected by such alteration. Such compensation may be recovered in any court of competent jurisdiction.

Mr. CHUBB said he could see the difficulty in divisions, where the roads were not made, of compelling the boards to fix the level; still there were cases where it was only right that the board should fix them. Take, for instance, the shire of Booroodabin, where it joined the city. Why should it be compulsory to fix the level on one side and not on the other? He knew a case where application to a board to fix the level was refused on the ground that they had not the necessary instruments; the real reason being that they did not want to do it. He thought they ought to be compelled to do it.

Mr. FERGUSON said he understood the proposed new clause to mean that if a board was called upon to fix the levels it might decline to do so if it chose.

The PREMIER: That is so.

Mr. FERGUSON said that in a division near a centre of population, such as Woollongabba, for instance, the gas company or the waterworks board might want the permanent levels fixed in order to lay down their mains. It would be very inconvenient and expensive if the board declined to fix the levels, and the company found, twelve months after laying their mains, that they had to lower or raise them at their own cost. Exception should be made in the case of boards near cities. It was very important to a gas company or a water board that they should know at once where to put down their mains, and not have to alter them afterwards to suit the board. It would be no trouble or expense to a board to do it at once, and would save a lot of expense afterwards.

The PREMIER said it would not do to say that every board "shall," when asked, fix the levels, nor was it practicable in the Bill to make a distinction between boards. Perhaps the difficulty would be best met by moving the insertion, after "may," of the words "and shall, if required by the Governor in Council."

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

On clause 167, as follows:—

"The board may establish tolls, rates, and dues upon or in respect of any road, market, bridge, ferry, wharf, or jetty belonging to or under the control of the board, and may erect toll-gates, toll-bars, or other works necessary for the collection of such tolls, rates, and dues.

"Such rates or dues may be imposed in the form of taxes or charges upon vehicles passing over the roads of the division."

Mr. MELLOR said he hardly thought it wise to place so great a power in the hands of divisional boards—a power which might be used very oppressively—especially by divisions surrounding municipalities.

The PREMIER said the clause was taken from an Act passed in 1884, the object being to obtain some sort of contribution from those who used the roads and who were not ratepayers in the division.

Mr. PALMER: Do I understand that this clause authorises boards to erect toll-gates over roads?

The PREMIER: They may, if they please.

Mr. PALMER: Then, what between the divisional boards and the Colonial Treasurer, I pity the unfortunate people. It is too serious a matter to contemplate.

Clause put and passed.

Clause 168 passed as printed.

On clause 169, as follows:—

"The board may, from time to time, cause to be made, altered, or improved such main or other sewers and drains as may be necessary for the effectual draining of the district or any part thereof, or any house or houses therein, and also all such reservoirs, sluices, engines, and other works as may be necessary for cleansing such sewers and drains, and if necessary may carry such sewers through and across any underground cellars or vaults, or under any road, doing as little damage as may be.

"If for making, altering, or completing any such sewers or drains it is found necessary to carry them into or through any enclosed or other lands, whether within or without the district, the board may carry and make the same into or through such lands accordingly, making compensation to the owners or occupiers of such lands for any damage which they may sustain thereby; and the board may also, where practicable, cause such sewers or drains to communicate with and empty themselves into the sea, or into any river, or may cause the

refuse from such sewers or drains to be conveyed, by a proper channel, to the most convenient site for its collection and sale for agricultural or other purposes as may be deemed most expedient, but so that the same shall in no case become a nuisance.

"Compensation for any damage sustained in consequence of the exercise of the powers conferred by this section may be recovered before any two justices in a summary way."

Mr. NORTON said the words at the end of the 2nd paragraph, "for agricultural or other purposes as may be deemed most expedient," were not wanted, and moved that they be omitted from the clause.

Amendment put and agreed to.

The PREMIER moved that the clause be further amended by the addition of the following words:—"Either party may appeal to a district court from any order made by the justices under this clause."

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

On clause 170, as follows:—

"Any expenses incurred by the board in respect of the making of drains from any house or building within the district, which is not drained by some sufficient drain or pipe communicating with a public sewer, or with the sea or a river, to the satisfaction of the board, shall be repaid to the board by the owner of such house or building, provided that the amount so to be repaid shall not, without the written consent of the owner, exceed one year's rack-rent of such house or building."

Mr. FERGUSON said there was a clause similar to that in the Local Government Act.

The PREMIER: This is taken from the Local Government Act.

Mr. FERGUSON said it was not exactly the same as the provision in the Local Government Act. According to that statute, the proprietor or owner of land received notice to drain his property in accordance with the system of drainage carried out by the local authority, and if he did not do it within a certain time the council did it at his expense. He thought the proprietor should have the option of doing the work himself, as he could very often do it cheaper than the local authority, and if he declined to carry out the work, then the board should have power to do it at his cost.

The PREMIER: This clause is exactly the same as that in the Local Government Act.

Clause put and passed.

On clause 171, as follows:—

"The board shall, during the construction, alteration, or repair of any of the roads, sewers, drains, or works, vested in or carried on by them, take proper precaution for guarding against accident by shoring up and protecting the adjoining houses and land, and shall cause such bars or chains to be fixed across or in any such roads to prevent the passage of persons, carriages, and animals, while such works are carried on, as to the board shall seem proper, and the board shall cause every sewer, drain, or other works, during the construction, alteration, or repairs thereof by them, to be lighted and guarded during the night, so as to prevent accidents.

"Every person who takes down, alters, or removes any such bars or chains, or extinguishes any such light, without the authority or consent of the board, shall be liable to a penalty not exceeding five pounds."

The PREMIER said there was a verbal error in the clause which he proposed to correct by inserting the word "board" instead of the word "them," in the 3rd line.

Amendment agreed to.

Mr. CHUBB said that clause was intended to prevent accidents, and provided a penalty for removing or extinguishing a light. The removal of lights from such works as those mentioned in the clause was a very serious matter, and might lead to accidents. A tram-line was being constructed at Breakfast Creek Bridge, and nearly every night the lights placed at the works were removed or stolen by some larrikins. He thought the penalty for such an offence might be made a little more severe than was specified in the clause, and he would therefore suggest that the word "five" in the 2nd paragraph should be omitted, with the view of inserting the word "ten."

The PREMIER said he saw no objection to that, but before the amendment was moved there was another matter to which he wished to refer. It had been suggested to him that, besides accidents from roads being unprotected, a great deal of injury might be done to property by damming water back, and things of that sort. He thought that might be remedied by inserting, after the word "accident" in the 4th line, the words "and preventing any injury to the adjoining land." He moved that amendment.

Amendment agreed to.

Mr. CHUBB moved that the word "five" in the 2nd paragraph be omitted with the view of inserting the word "ten."

Amendment agreed to, and clause passed with further verbal amendments.

Clause 172 — "Expenditure of votes may be entrusted to board"—passed as printed.

On clause 173, as follows:—

"The chairman may order the burial of any destitute person who dies within the district, and may defray all necessary expenses of such burial out of the divisional fund"—

Mr. PALMER said the duty of burying destitute persons who died within a division had hitherto devolved on the police.

The PREMIER; This is not a new provision; it is in the Act of 1879.

Mr. PALMER said he would like to know what constituted a destitute person? A person might die on the roads without any means on him, and yet be worth money. The Curator of Intestate Estates ought to have a finger in that little pie. Whose duty was it to bury a destitute person—the duty of the police or the divisional board?

The PREMIER said the clause authorised the chairman of a board to defray, out of the divisional funds, any expense incurred in burying a person found dead on the road. Would the hon. member send a policeman from the nearest town, perhaps 200 miles, to bury the man?

Mr. PALMER: They do it.

The PREMIER said they did it sometimes. He knew the power given by that clause had been exercised occasionally, and he thought the provision a very useful one.

Mr. NORTON said he also thought the clause a very useful one. He had known a good many cases of burial by the police, and they always picked the softest spot but did not dig very deep. He knew of one instance in which a body was buried in a hole in the bed of a river. Some dirt was shovelled over it, and the body was washed out by the next flood.

Clause put and passed.

On clause 174, as follows:—

"*Opening and Closing Roads.*

"When it is proposed, except upon the application of the board, to open or close a road within the division under the laws in force for the time being relating to opening or closing roads, the following provisions shall, notwithstanding anything contained in any Act to the contrary, have effect, that is to say:—

(1) At least two months' notice in writing shall be given to the board by the Minister charged with the administration of the Department of Public Lands and by the persons desiring such road to be opened or closed.

(2) Such notice shall specify a time within which the board may lodge objections against the opening or closing of such road.
(3) Every objection made by the board against such opening or closing of a road shall—
(*a*) Be under the corporate seal of the division;
(*b*) Contain a statement of the reasons upon which such objection is founded; and
(*c*) Be transmitted to the Minister aforesaid for presentation to the Governor in Council within the time specified in the notice.
(4) On consideration of the objection the Governor in Council may make such order in respect thereof as he deems expedient."

Mr. MELLOR said the clause appeared to give the Minister for Lands power to open up roads without the consent of boards.

The PREMIER said the clause required the Minister for Lands, before opening a road under the powers conferred on him, to give the board notice, in order that they might make objections. The clause placed no liability on the board except that when the road was opened they must keep it in order.

Clause put and passed.

On clause 175, as follows :—

"*Licensed Gates.*

"When the occupant of any land within a division desires for the purpose of enclosing the same to include within the enclosure a public road which passes through the land or separates it from the land held by any other person, he shall notify by advertisement published once in the *Gazette*, and not less than twice in some newspaper generally circulating in the district, that he intends to apply to the board of the division within which the road is situate for a license to erect a fence across such road, and in the advertisement shall give a clear description of the road and the description of gate which he proposes to erect, to admit the passage of persons travelling along the road (which gate shall not be less than sixteen feet wide), and the last publication of such notice shall be not less than one month nor more than two months before making the application."

Mr. GROOM said he thought that if there was one Act on the Statute-book which required amendment it was the one relating to fences. The present Fencing Act was passed in 1861, when the conditions of the colony were widely different from what they were now; disputes were constantly arising at the present time, and the magistrates in several districts were sorely puzzled to know what to do, because the Act defined a fence to be a three-rail fence in suburban lands, and a four-rail or a paling fence in town lands. At the present time there were wallaby-proof fences costing £50 and £60 a mile, and wire fences; and the question arose as to what was a fence that would keep out sheep or cattle. In the country districts the matter was becoming a very serious one, particularly with regard to the resumption of land by the Crown. Where a portion was divided into paddocks intersected by wire fences, the question arose as to whether the selector who took up the land should pay or whether some allowance should be made to the pastoral lessee from whom it was resumed. All those things were cropping up just now, and constituted a really serious difficulty. The phraseology of the Act of 1861 was enough to confuse any magistrate. In those days there was what was called a board of lands and works.

The PREMIER: No. That was copied from the Victorian Act.

Mr. GROOM said that the phraseology of the Act was totally inapplicable to the present condition of the colony, and if the Impounding Act of 1863, mentioned by the Premier, required amendment, the Fencing Act of 1861 undoubtedly required to be altered in such a way as to suit the present condition of the colony. Of course the amendment could not be made in the Bill before the Committee, but he drew attention to the matter now in order that the Premier, who possessed a genius for the work, might next session bring forward a Bill to amend the Fencing Act. By doing so he would confer a great boon on the colony generally.

Mr. MELLOR said he considered the clause a very wise provision.

Clause put and passed.

Clauses from 176 to 185, inclusive, passed as printed.

On clause 186, as follows :—

"1. A board may cause the extirpation and destruction of any noxious weed or plant growing within the district, and for that purpose may, subject to the following provisions, enter upon and dig and break up the soil of any unoccupied Crown lands, public reserves, or private lands within the district.

"2. It shall be the duty of the board to extirpate and destroy any such weed or plant found existing upon any reserve under the control of the board.

"3. Before exercising the powers hereinafter in this section conferred the board shall, by a by-law passed for that purpose, declare such weed or plant to be a noxious weed or plant, and to be a nuisance within the meaning of this Act.

"4. When any such noxious weed or plant is found existing upon any public reserve not under the control of the board or upon any rateable land within the district, the board shall cause to be served upon the occupier or person in charge thereof, or, if there is no occupier or person in charge, upon the owner, except in the case of unoccupied Crown lands, one month's notice requiring him to extirpate and destroy the weed or plant.

"5. If at the expiration of such period of one month the weed or plant has not been extirpated and destroyed, the board may forthwith enter upon such reserve or rateable land, and extirpate and destroy any such weed or plant that may be growing thereon.

"6. Any reasonable expense so incurred by the board in extirpating and destroying any such weed or plant shall be a charge upon the land on which it existed, and shall be recoverable—
(*a*) If the land is a public reserve, from the trustees or other persons in charge thereof; or, if there are no such persons in charge, then from the Treasurer; or
(*b*) If the land is rateable land, from the occupier thereof; or, if there is no occupier, then, except in the case of unoccupied Crown lands, from the owner;
in the same manner as by this Act rates due and in arrear may be recovered from the occupiers or owners of rateable land.

"7. The cost of abating any such nuisance upon unoccupied Crown lands shall be defrayed by the Treasurer out of funds appropriated by Parliament for that purpose."

The PREMIER said he did not expect to finish the clause that evening, but he moved it formally because it would be convenient if hon. members would say formally what objections they had to it. He might say that the Government proposed to amend the 7th subsection by altering the extent of Crown lands which the board might deal with. He did not know whether there would be any other amendments, but it would be convenient for hon. members to briefly indicate the main objections they had to the clause.

Mr. PATTISON asked how the Chief Secretary proposed to keep Crown lands clear? The clause would be of little use unless unoccupied Crown lands were kept clear.

The PREMIER said of course the Government would not allow the boards to dip their hands to an unlimited extent into the Treasury.

Mr. PATTISON said perhaps they would allow the Crown ranger to do the work. It must be done by someone.

Mr. PALMER said the great difficulty would be to determine what were noxious weeds. What had formerly been termed noxious weeds had been the salvation of cattle around Brisbane. A

divisional board in his neighbourhood would have legislated, in their own way, against the *Sida retusa*, but he advised them not to do so, and he believed they were not sorry that they had taken his advice. It had proved to be a valuable fodder, especially in dry seasons. At the same time, it was a very troublesome thing in gardens. The same might be said of couch grass. The common Scotch variegated thistle, too, was a few years ago in New South Wales considered a noxious weed, and the people thought they were utterly ruined because they had their fields covered with it, but now it was considered a valuable fodder, and indeed was cultivated as a fodder plant.

An HONOURABLE MEMBER: What about prickly pear?

Mr. PALMER said the prickly pear had a great many commendable qualities, but people were ignorant of them.

Mr. PATTISON said an amendment had been suggested which would provide for keeping roads clear, and it had been proposed that the owners on each side should do it. That might not be a very popular amendment, and he might not be very strong upon it himself, but it had been suggested.

On motion of the PREMIER, the House resumed, and the CHAIRMAN reported progress.

The PREMIER moved that the Committee have leave to sit again on Tuesday next.

Mr. PALMER said: Might I ask the Chief Secretary if it is his intention to go on with the second reading of the Land Bill on Tuesday next?

The PREMIER: I will tell you in a moment.

Question put and passed.

## ADJOURNMENT.

The PREMIER said: I move that this House do now adjourn. On Tuesday next we propose to take—first, the Quarantine Bill, which is almost a formal Bill, I believe—at all events as far as the second reading is concerned. The Land Bill will stand next on the paper, and I do not see why the second reading should not be passed, as it is a Bill that is easily understood. It will be circulated amongst hon. members in the morning. If it should not be proceeded with on Tuesday—if it will suit hon. members' convenience that it should not be—then we will go on with the Divisional Boards Bill. I may mention that the Quarantine Bill does not alter the present law, I think. But the present law is not intelligible—to me, at all events. Every time I have to read it it takes me a quarter of an hour to understand what it means, and then I am not quite sure. The Bill is simply intended to clear up some serious doubts that exist upon the subject. That is how the business will stand on Tuesday, and we propose to take Supply on Wednesday.

Mr. NORTON said: With regard to the Land Bill, there seems to be some doubt on the part of some hon. members whether they will be prepared to go on with it on Tuesday. I would suggest to the Chief Secretary that the Minister for Lands should move the second reading of the Bill on Tuesday, and we can ascertain in the meantime whether hon. members will be prepared to go on with it. It is better that it should be introduced, and then, if there is any occasion to do so, the discussion can be postponed to a future day.

The PREMIER: If that is the general desire, I have no objection to follow that course.

The House adjourned at twelve minutes to 10 o'clock.