

Queensland



Parliamentary Debates  
[Hansard]

**Legislative Council**

**THURSDAY, 30 SEPTEMBER 1886**

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## LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

*Thursday, 30 September, 1886.*

Message from the Administrator of the Government—assent to Bill.—Additional Sitting Day.—Acting Chairman of Committees.—Message from the Legislative Assembly.—Offenders Probation Bill.—Marsupials Destruction Act Continuation Bill.—third reading.—Local Authorities (Joint Action) Bill.—committee.—Quarantine Bill.—second reading.—Health Act Amendment Bill.—Gold Fields Act Amendment Bill.—committee.—Mining Companies Bill.—committee.—Opium Bill.—resumption of debate on second reading.—Mineral Lands (Coal Mining) Bill.—second reading.—Adjournment.

The PRESIDING CHAIRMAN took the chair at 4 o'clock.

### MESSAGE FROM THE ADMINISTRATOR OF THE GOVERNMENT.

#### ASSENT TO BILL.

The PRESIDING CHAIRMAN announced the receipt of a message from His Excellency the Administrator of the Government, conveying, on behalf of Her Majesty, the Royal assent to a Bill for facilitating sales, leases, and other dispositions of settled land and for promoting the execution of improvements thereon.

#### ADDITIONAL SITTING DAY.

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL (Hon. T. Macdonald-Paterson) said: Hon. gentlemen,—With the leave of the House I beg to move without notice—

That unless otherwise ordered this House will meet for the despatch of business at 3:30 p.m. on Tuesday in each week in addition to the days already provided by sessional order.

Question put and passed.

#### ACTING CHAIRMAN OF COMMITTEES.

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL said: Hon. gentlemen,—I beg to move that the Hon. F. H. Hart be appointed to act as Chairman of Committees during the absence of the Hon. D. F. Roberts.

Question put and passed.

### MESSAGE FROM THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY.

#### OFFENDERS PROBATION BILL.

The PRESIDING CHAIRMAN announced the receipt of a message from the Legislative Assembly intimating that the Assembly agreed to the amendments made by the Legislative Council in this Bill.

#### MARSUPIALS DESTRUCTION ACT CONTINUATION BILL.

##### THIRD READING.

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

#### LOCAL AUTHORITIES (JOINT ACTION) BILL.

##### COMMITTEE.

On the motion of the POSTMASTER-GENERAL, the Presiding Chairman left the chair, and the House went into committee to consider the message of the Legislative Assembly dated 24th September.

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL said the amendments and consequential amendments made by the Legislative Assembly were strictly of a formal character, and he therefore moved that the Committee agree to the amendment on their amendment in clause 31 and the consequential amendments made by the Legislative Assembly.

The HON. A. C. GREGORY said he had carefully gone through the amendments made by the Legislative Assembly. They affected the amendment made by him, and he found that they simply carried out the object he had in view in moving the amendment in clause 31.

Question put and passed.

On the motion of the POSTMASTER-GENERAL, the CHAIRMAN left the chair, and reported that the Committee agreed to the amendments of the Legislative Assembly.

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL moved that the Bill be returned to the Legislative Assembly with a message intimating that the Council agreed to the amendment on their amendment in clause 31 and to the consequential amendments made by the Legislative Assembly.

Question put and passed.

#### QUARANTINE BILL.

##### SECOND READING.

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL said: Hon. gentlemen,—If Queensland had remained stationary in its industries and population from the time of separation, there would be no proposal to amend the laws relating to quarantine; but the great development in our industrial progress, the increase of our stock and the large accessions which we have from time to time to our population from abroad, as well as in consequence of the annual increase, have brought us more into contact with every part of the world. Communication, being now almost altogether by steam, is more rapid and frequent than we could ever have dreamt of fifteen or twenty years ago. That progress is still going on, and hence it has been found during the past ten years—beginning about the time of the Cooktown rush—that the quarantine laws are most cumbrous—in fact, quite unwieldy—apart altogether from the excessive vagueness, which is most perplexing to those administering the law when occasion requires. It is therefore considered judicious that the law should be recast, modified, and added

to in the shape of provisions for circumstances such as have occurred from time to time in the administration of the present law, and for which the present law does not provide. This Bill will remove a difficulty in the administration of the laws in relation to quarantine, and render clear what has hitherto been at best very cloudy if not chaotic. The Bill will be seen by those who take any interest in the subject,—and there are many hon. members, I suppose, who have given much attention to the quarantine laws—I have not, and possibly may never have to revert to the subject again in my life,—but it will be seen that the Bill contains all that is known of the existing law that is worth keeping, and that it is, as a whole, built up from the quarantine laws of several countries. Fresh provisions are inserted to provide for the deficiencies found in the existing law, and, taking it all through, it will be found a wise measure, and one which will be extremely useful in the future, simple in its operation and administration. In a word, the complexity that has hitherto subsisted will be removed, and simplicity itself substituted therefor. I have very much pleasure in moving the second reading.

The HON. F. T. GREGORY said: Hon. gentlemen,—After the very clear and yet simple explanation given by the Postmaster-General, I do not feel called upon to detain the House more than two or three minutes, more especially as I plead guilty to the same want of knowledge generally with the hon. gentleman who moved the second reading. I have read the Bill carefully through, and, as far as I can see, there are no oppressive clauses in it, either belonging to the original quarantine laws or to the new provisions, which might be felt to press harshly upon shipping generally, or upon persons arriving by sea, who might be brought under its operation. That the quarantine laws should be clear and well defined is beyond all question. It is of the utmost importance that the law should be put in such a clear form that we should have no doubt when we read it as to its meaning. The quarantine laws are not intended to be read only by gentlemen of the legal profession, but to be easily comprehended by captains of ships and all those who are likely to transact business under them. I see nothing in the Bill but what meets that requirement, and, under these circumstances, I think it now only remains for this Council to go through the Bill clause by clause in committee, and not let anything slip through which we may wish to see again amended, and to consider any new provision which may be suggested. I have much pleasure in supporting the second reading.

The HON. J. C. HEUSSLER said: Hon. gentlemen,—I have no intention of objecting to this Bill. On the contrary, I shall support the second reading; but I hope that the Government will do their very best to provide proper quarantine grounds, where passengers can really live with some comfort. In former times it has been a great drawback to the colony that there were no proper quarantine grounds, and when ships were placed in quarantine, instead of the disease not spreading, many people were killed simply through improper housing. I recollect a case where the people had to live in tents in the heat of summer; there was no water, nothing for their comfort, and, as a consequence, half-a-dozen of them were killed. I hope that the Government will attend to these matters, and see that such occurrences do not happen again.

The HON. W. HORATIO WILSON said: Hon. gentlemen,—Anyone who takes the trouble to compare this Bill with the Act which it proposes to repeal will see how very excellent has been the recast of the measure, and how much

more easy it is to interpret. When we see that by section 38, copies of the Act are to be given to captains of vessels arriving from beyond the sea, it will be seen how very important it is that the Act should be as simple as possible. I may mention that the Bill was placed before the Central Board of Health for their approval, and it was very carefully examined with the old Act, and they were unable to offer any suggestions that would be improvements upon the Bill. I have carefully gone over it, and I think it is one that reflects great credit upon the drafter.

The HON. W. F. TAYLOR said: Hon. gentlemen,—The Bill before the House at present is one which, so far as I have been able to make out, is very necessary, and does away with a good many objections which formerly existed under the old regulations. There is one clause—the 6th—which I think is highly necessary, and it says that the date of quarantine of vessels is to be counted from the time of their leaving an infected port. The clause says:—

“Any such ship shall be liable to quarantine within the meaning of this Act from the time of the departure of such ship from such infected place, or from the time when such passengers or goods were received on board respectively.”

Under that clause it is quite possible for many vessels to perform full quarantine at sea in passing from one port to another, and the practice is only in accordance with that which prevails in England, where vessels going from infected ports, if over fourteen days at sea, are admitted to pratique at once, provided no sickness exists on board at the time. Under this clause, therefore, it will not be necessary to detain vessels coming from Batavia, because they can be placed in quarantine at Thursday Island, and continue on their voyage to Cooktown, when the fourteen days will then have elapsed. Under those conditions very many harsh restrictions will be removed which existed under the former Act, and vessels coming in with a clean bill of health, although from an infected port, will be admitted to pratique almost immediately. There is a word in the 12th clause to which I take exception, and that is the word “dispenser.” The clause says:—

“The surgeon, dispenser, or other medical officer, of every ship arriving from beyond sea shall truly answer all such questions as shall be put to him by such pilot or health officer.”

As a rule, very few vessels carry a dispenser, but I think if they do they always have a medical officer in charge. My objection to the word “dispenser” being retained is that it gives a sort of legal status to a person connected with one of the branches of medicine which ought not to be given. A dispenser, from his training as such, requires no knowledge of diseases, his duties being solely confined to the practice of dispensing medicines, and therefore I think the word might be omitted. It is quite superfluous, because I do not believe any ship will arrive in charge of a dispenser. If any person is in charge at all he will be a fully qualified medical practitioner, and therefore the word should not be retained because it might possibly give, as I have said, a sort of legal status to a class of individuals who ought not to have such status. That is the only point in the Bill to which I take objection. In other respects I think it is a great improvement upon the existing law.

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

On the motion of the POSTMASTER-GENERAL, the consideration of the Bill in committee was made an Order of the Day for Tuesday next.

## HEALTH ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

On the motion of the POSTMASTER-GENERAL, the Presiding Chairman left the chair, and the House went into committee to consider this Bill.

Clauses 1 to 9 passed as printed.

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL moved that the Chairman leave the chair, report progress, and ask leave to sit again.

The HON. W. HORATIO WILSON said certain suggestions were made by him yesterday on the second reading which required some consideration, and he had not had time to formulate them into amendments. It was also necessary that the amendments should be printed and circulated amongst hon. members; so that he was glad the Postmaster-General had seen fit to postpone the further consideration of the Bill.

Question put and passed.

The House resumed; and the CHAIRMAN reported progress, and obtained leave to sit again on Tuesday next.

## GOLD FIELDS ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

## COMMITTEE.

On the motion of the POSTMASTER-GENERAL, the Presiding Chairman left the chair, and the House went into committee to consider this Bill.

Preamble postponed.

Clauses 1 to 7 passed as printed.

On the preamble, the POSTMASTER-GENERAL moved that on the 4th line, after the word "from," the following words be inserted: "or otherwise not available for."

Amendment agreed to, and preamble put and passed.

The House resumed, and the CHAIRMAN reported the Bill with an amendment.

The report was adopted, and the third reading of the Bill made an Order of the Day for Tuesday next.

## MINING COMPANIES BILL.

## COMMITTEE.

On the motion of the POSTMASTER-GENERAL, the Presiding Chairman left the chair, and the House went into committee to consider this Bill.

Preamble postponed.

Clauses 1 to 16 passed as printed.

Preamble put and passed.

The House resumed, and the CHAIRMAN reported the Bill with amendment.

The report was adopted, and the third reading of the Bill made an Order of the Day for Tuesday next.

## OPIUM BILL.

## RESUMPTION OF DEBATE ON SECOND READING.

The HON. J. D. MACANSH said: Hon. gentlemen,—The previous speakers seem to be divided in opinion as to the effect the Bill will have. Some say that it will decrease the revenue by £20,000 a year, while others are of opinion that it will not have that effect, inasmuch as it is a Bill to prevent the sale of opium to aboriginals and natives of the Pacific Islands, and not for the purpose of preventing its use by Chinamen. I have read the Bill very carefully. I find that the title is "A Bill to impose restrictions on the sale of opium and to prohibit its sale to aboriginal natives of Australia and the Pacific Islands," and the 2nd clause defines

opium. The 3rd clause prohibits the sale of opium by all persons except chemists and those who have obtained licenses. The 4th clause provides that licenses shall be granted by a police magistrate, on condition of proof being made to him in open court that the sale of opium is necessary, and that it is for medicinal purposes only. It therefore appears to me that the Bill will entirely prohibit the sale of opium except for medicinal purposes, and consequently that the revenue will suffer by £20,000 per annum. I believe that £21,000 is the amount of duty hitherto received on opium, but as some is imported for medicinal purposes the probability is that the loss of revenue will be £20,000. The question is whether we can afford to lose that amount of revenue and what we shall have in exchange for that large amount. The Chinese are almost the only consumers of opium. The Hon. J. Taylor has expressed the opinion that the Bill is another blow at the Chinamen and a bid on the part of the Government for popularity. I think the hon. gentleman is too apt to impute sinister motives to those who happen to differ from him. I attribute it to a much higher motive, and I think their popularity rests on a much higher foundation.

The HON. J. TAYLOR: Hear, hear!

The HON. J. D. MACANSH: The Government, ever since they have been in power, have done their best to pass measures for the good of the whole community and not for the aggrandisement of any particular class; and so long as they do that I think they will continue to be popular. I have had a good deal of experience with Chinamen, having employed them as shepherds, labourers, gardeners, and cooks, and I will say that they are very good workers, patient, painstaking, and, as a rule, they perform their work faithfully and well. But there is another side to the question. I think it will be admitted on all hands that they are about the most immoral and degraded people on the face of the earth—that is, those who come to this country—and if we by passing this Bill can in some measure put a stop to the immorality of Chinamen it will compensate us for the loss of revenue. It has been clearly proved by medical men that the smoking of opium has most deleterious effects; that it degrades those who have become slaves to the habit both physically and mentally, and that it has the effect on Chinamen of making them the most immoral people in the world. It may be said that many of our own people are immoral and degraded, and why should we throw stones at the Chinamen? I believe that Chinamen are immoral to a degree that is shocking even to the most immoral of our people, and that they have vices unknown to Europeans. Why should we encourage people to come to this colony who make our own people worse than they are now? If the effect of this Bill will be to drive the Chinamen out of the country, or prevent any more coming to it, I think it will be one of the best Bills passed this session. I have much pleasure in giving it my support.

The HON. G. KING said: Hon. gentlemen,—The supply of opium to our aboriginal natives and the kanakas in payment of wages cannot be too much deprecated. It is essentially wrong; it is engraving Chinese vices upon vices into which we have already initiated them; therefore no punishment can be too severe for those who do that, but the whole question would be met by clause 6 of the Bill. To go beyond that would be putting the whole colony under an interdict because of the iniquity of some who do wrong. Hon. gentlemen will recollect that some years ago—in 1882, I think—there was a great controversy about the opium question. It

originated in Exeter Hall, and was taken up by the Lord Mayor of London, and innumerable pamphlets were published on the subject. I read several of them on both sides of the question at the time. A very able pamphlet was written by Sir Rutherford Alcock; another by Sir Alexander Arbutnot, and a very able pamphlet also appeared on the other side by Mr. Storr Turner. Now, those gentlemen, who had lived in the East, maintained, and it was also maintained by medical men, that opium in moderation to the Asiatic is no more than an ordinary stimulant of spirits or tobacco to the European, and I think one of them said that the natives of Benares and some other districts all smoked it in moderation, and that it kept off malaria; also that the custom was prevalent in China to the same extent in moderation, and that it was considered almost a necessity in many parts of China, in those swampy malarial parts, to keep them in health. But that excesses exist there is no doubt; those excesses, however, exist also in European countries, where the use of alcohol and other stimulants is abused. It is not the use of God's mercies, but the abuse, which is the evil, and therefore you cannot legislate in this wholesale manner on a matter in which so many vital interests are concerned. Why deprive the Chinese, who smoke opium in moderation and do not make beasts of themselves, of that which is a comfort to them? I do not think we have a right to do that. The revenue question I will not touch upon at all. If the Legislative Assembly think they can afford to lose the revenue, I do not question their right to do that, but we might as well say that because there is drunkenness and demoralisation, therefore Bass's and Allsopp's and all the breweries and distilleries in England should be shut up. You cannot introduce measures for such a purpose; they react in a different way, and as much evil is caused by extreme legislation as by remissness. I shall vote for the second reading, but I hope some hon. gentleman abler than myself will take the Bill in hand, in order that it may be moulded into a more liberal shape. I have no desire to screen those who demoralise the unfortunate blacks by supplying them with opium, but I do not think the whole of the colony should be placed under an interdict because of the iniquities committed by those people. The Bill is altogether too extended in its application.

The HON. W. FORREST said: Hon. gentlemen,—I am entirely in harmony with the remarks of the Hon. Mr. King. I should like to see clause 6 retained and nearly everything else struck out, but I am afraid that, even if we pass clause 6, it will be found that we are tilting at windmills. In the Publicans Act there is a clause prohibiting anyone from selling spirits to aboriginals, but the aboriginals seen in the streets of Brisbane are more frequently drunk than sober. I consider it most scandalous to teach aboriginals the use of opium in any way, and I should like to see a measure passed which would have the effect of punishing people who offend in that respect, but the rest of the Bill will chiefly affect Chinamen. Does the Postmaster-General think he is going to circumvent the wily "heathen Chinese"? He must be a man of great faith in the efficiency of laws if he does. Nothing in the Bill will prevent Chinamen from getting opium, because the result will be that they will smuggle just as much as they want, and the colony will lose the revenue. As far as the Bill affects Chinamen it is simply sentimental legislation, but as far as it affects aboriginals and kanakas I should like to see it tried. When the Bill gets into committee I shall vote for any amendments giving effect to my views, or if it is proposed that the

Bill be read a second time this day six months, I shall support that motion. I may point out that there is no restriction at all upon selling laudanum, and any chemist will tell you that he sells twenty times as much laudanum as opium, and if people addicted to the use of opium are unable to get that drug, they will have to fall back on laudanum. It is a most imperfect Bill. I have taken some trouble to inquire into the difference between opium and laudanum, and I think I am correct in my statement. I feel sure that if it is passed in its present form it will have little or no effect, and I shall not support the measure.

The HON. F. H. HART said: Hon. gentlemen,—If this Bill was brought in simply for the purpose of prohibiting the sale of opium to aboriginals and the natives of the Pacific Islands, I do not think any hon. member would oppose it, because we must all be of opinion that it is a disgrace to white men to supply opium to the aboriginals; but when it goes beyond that, what does the Bill amount to? Simply a prohibition of the sale of opium to Chinese, because as a rule white people do not use it. There may be some white people, as pointed out by the Hon. Dr. Taylor the other night, who are degraded enough to give way to the habit; but they are only a very small proportion. Nearly all the opium that comes into the colony is used by the Chinese, and if the Bill is passed the 3rd clause will make it utterly impossible for the Chinese to get it. If I thought that the passing of this Bill would have the effect of preventing the Chinese from coming here at all, I could see some reason for it, but it will not stop the Chinese from coming here. They will come in spite of any measure we pass, and if they come, and cannot get opium in the legitimate manner by paying duty, they will get it in another way. You won't dodge a Chinaman—he will get it somehow. I think the Hon. Mr. King alluded to the fact that with Chinamen opium-smoking is almost a necessity, just as much as tobacco-smoking is to the Europeans; and it is a curious thing that we have a corroboration of his statement in the petition received by this House from the Chinese merchants of the city in almost exactly the same words. When the Chinamen are once here, I do not see why we should put a restriction upon them in regard to the use of opium any more than against Europeans in regard to the use of tobacco. It was suggested by the Hon. Mr. King that the Bill should be altered in committee, but I do not see how it can be altered, unless the whole of it is excised, with the exception of a portion of clause 6. If the first portion of clause 6 is retained down to line 36 of page 2, and that portion excised down to the 41st line, the remainder being left in, that would meet everything in regard to the sale of opium to aboriginals. I shall not go into the question of the revenue, though my opinion is that we are not in a position to throw away £20,000 a year. If it is thrown away now, there will probably have to be fresh taxation next year. I think the Chinamen here ought to be made to contribute to the revenue either directly or indirectly; for they will have opium whether they pay the duty or not, and this Bill lets them off paying the duty. We all know that opium-smoking is a very degrading vice, but the question is whether it is more degrading than drinking to excess. I think it is trying to draw a very fine distinction, and I would like hon. gentlemen to reflect whether in the interests of the colony we shall be acting wisely in allowing this Bill to pass.

The HON. F. T. BRENTNALL said: Hon. gentlemen,—The question just now before my mind is this: What is the principle embodied in

the Bill now before the House? I take it that the principle is that using opium for other than medicinal purposes is a vice and is injurious. If that be not the principle of the Bill, then the Bill can have very little useful object, and if that be the principle of the Bill it is a little beside the main question to discuss the revenue, or the rights of any particular race. I have been disposed to wonder whether hon. gentlemen wish to take the Chinese under their special protection. Some of them seem to have rather a weakness for Chinamen, would indulge them to a very considerable extent, would grant to them this particular indulgence for which they seem to have a weakness. They would allow them to have to any extent this drug, which, according to statements made here, especially by the Hon. Dr. Taylor, is injurious taken in the quantities in which we know it is taken. There has been plenty of evidence in the city of Brisbane of the pernicious effects of opium-smoking, not only upon Chinamen, but also upon Europeans. If it be a vice—and the Bill assumes that it is a vice—to use opium for any other than medicinal purposes, it surely is within the province of the Legislature to check, if possible, the spread of such a vice. It has been stated here this afternoon that it would be a disgrace to this colony to allow opium to be used extensively by the aborigines of this colony. Is there any greater disgrace in the aborigines of this colony indulging in a luxury than in the Chinese who are in this colony indulging in the same luxury? I cannot see the difference. And if we have an abhorrence of the aboriginals of this colony falling into the habit of opium-smoking, why should we look upon it as a virtue—as something to be esteemed—when Chinamen use and derive comfort from this drug? It has been said that it is as necessary to them as tobacco is necessary to Europeans. Well, I have yet to learn that tobacco is necessary to Europeans. I regard tobacco-smoking as a luxury, and nothing more. It may occasionally do a little good to a man who has an affection of the throat, but beyond that I believe it is simply a luxury—a practice for which there is no necessity whatever. If Chinamen come here, I take it that they must submit to our laws, and that if it be the opinion of the Legislature of this colony that opium-smoking is a very bad thing, they must submit to its prohibition. If they venture to obtain and use opium in spite of law, then they must be prepared to take the consequences. I certainly do not like to hear it said here time after time, as has been said, that we Europeans—we Queenslanders—are certain to be circumvented by these wily Chinamen. If we have not as much acuteness and sagacity and capacity for self-protection as Chinamen, it is quite time we had, and I think our civilisation ought to have carried us to that point by this time.

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL: Not near it.

The HON. F. T. BRENTNALL: Then we must see if we cannot get a few more sagacious detectives. There is another aspect of this question that has just been referred to by the Hon. Mr. King. At the present time there is a great deal of condemnation of the action of the British race with regard to the question of supplying opium to the Chinese. It is a stigma upon the British race, that for the mere sake of revenue they have forced at the point of the sword and at the mouth of the cannon this opium upon the Chinese race. I think there can be very little doubt that that has been the case. The opium war is a matter of history, and if it be a fact that at the present time Chinese themselves—those who are not given to indulging in this luxury—

look upon the insistence by the Imperial Government as an injustice, why should we attempt to commit an equal injustice here? Rather let us show our disapprobation of the indulgence in this filthy, vicious, and injurious vice. I would like, before closing, to read a short extract from a speech which was delivered not long ago by a Chinaman, in China, and which is reported in a paper published in China:—

“If all European nations would act up to their profession of right, they would find that China would meet them in a friendly spirit. England has not done this. Individually, I admire the English; but, as a nation, they are to blame for much of China's misery. England has enforced opium upon us, and she enforced it with bayonets and cannon. Opium is the curse of China. We see men daily who have fallen from high positions. What has been the cause? Opium. And this cursed drug has been foisted on us by Christian England. There are those in England who have striven to stop the opium traffic, but the Secretary of State for India tells them to either pay the revenue of India, or permit opium to be sold to the Chinese. Some think that we are striving to keep out foreign opium, so that the native product can be sold. No, the native product will be stopped when the import of the foreign drug is abandoned.”

That is the opinion of a Chinaman who is evidently intelligent and patriotic, and we propose to do here what that Chinaman deprecates. Now, I do not think for a moment that the object of the Government, in introducing this Bill to the Legislature, is any other than a desire to arrest the progress of a habit which has become a vicious one, and is likely to do a considerable amount of harm. If it be so evil a practice that we will not allow our aborigines or Pacific Islanders to indulge in it, and take precautions to prevent them injuring themselves with it, I really fail to see how the habit can be considered to be creditable on the part of Chinese or any other class of men in the community. On that ground I very strongly deprecate the support which has been given to this habit on the part of Chinese by some hon. members this afternoon. I think we must let these people understand that our laws are passed, first of all, to protect the people who are living in the colony, and, in the second place, they are passed to be kept, and it will be at serious peril if they attempt to defy the law. I do not think for one moment the Bill has been brought in, as some hon. members say, for the sake of courting popularity with the white people through the persecution of the Chinese. I do not think that any member of the Government had any such idea in his head. I give the Government credit for better and higher motives, and I believe the object is to protect Chinamen as well as aboriginals from an indulgence which is a disgrace and a danger to themselves.

The HON. A. J. THYNNE said: Hon. gentlemen,—I simply wish to say that the arguments which the Hon. Mr. King has used have carried conviction to my mind, and I believe it would be doing a great injustice if at the present time we were to deprive the Chinese, who are making a moderate and proper use of opium and its extracts, of an opportunity of obtaining it simply because a few Chinamen abused it. It seems to me we are now in exactly the same position as if it was proposed to introduce into this colony the Maine liquor laws, which would prohibit the sale of liquor to any person within the colony except upon medical advice. I think the two proposals would be exactly on the same footing. I can claim that I was one of the first members of this House who made a complaint about the supplying of opium to the blacks, and I quite agree with that part of the Bill which deals with that subject.

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL: That is the least important part of it.

The HON. A. J. THYNNE: Then, if the hon. gentleman considers that is the least important part of the Bill, I think the measure should have been framed on different lines, and framed in such a way as to show to everyone what the exact intention of it was, because upon reading the preamble I certainly should attach no more importance to other parts of the Bill than to the part to which I have alluded.

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL: There is preamble.

The HON. A. J. THYNNE: Well, then, the title. According to the title it is a Bill to restrict the sale of opium, and to prohibit its sale to the aboriginal natives of Australia and the Pacific Islands. I think I need say nothing more except that I object to the principle of the Maine liquor laws being introduced into this colony, whether it is applied to liquor, to opium, or to anything else. I must dissent from the views expressed by the Hon. Mr. Brentnall with regard to the opium trade. That is a very large subject, and I think he has not given an exactly accurate account of it, and all I can say is that I do not think his typical Chinaman would be a safe guide to follow. I will not detain the House any further, but will content myself by voting against the second reading of the Bill.

Question—That the Bill be now read a second time—put, and the House divided:—

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Question resolved in the negative.

MINERAL LANDS (COAL MINING)  
BILL.

SECOND READING.

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL said: Hon. gentlemen,—I think a few minutes will suffice to enable me to tell you the nature of the Bill now in your hands. It is one which will give facilities to those persons who are desirous of prospecting for coal—facilities which the subsisting law does not afford. The Government think that more encouragement should be given to persons who are disposed to search for the black diamond, as it is often called, and we have now arrived at a stage of our history when great demand exists and is increasing for coal. It is one of the most important industries in any country under the sun, and it is believed the provisions of this amending Bill will give such facilities as will bring about that which is desired in many settled parts of the colony. Clause 2 provides for granting licenses to occupy Crown lands in areas of not more than 640 acres for the purpose of searching for coal, and these licenses, as will be seen, may be renewed by the Minister for the time being. It is not necessary that I should describe the details of the Bill as to the rent to be paid, the mode of getting the license, the renewal of the license, and so forth, but it is as well that I should point out that under clause 7 special privileges are given to those who discover new coalfields at a greater depth than existing ones. Of course, this Bill refers simply to coal, but should any other minerals be found within licensed areas, then an additional

rent will be payable in respect to that particular section of land where they are found. Under clause 8 the Minister may dispense with what are termed the labour conditions, and that is very desirable in view of prospectors running short of funds, and for other reasons. On the whole, the measure is a very simple one, and contains the requisite provisions to give a chance to those who, knowing of likely coal country, are disposed to give their time, labour, and money towards discovering and developing new coalfields. I move that the Bill be now read a second time.

The HON. F. T. GREGORY said: Hon. gentlemen,—I have very few words indeed to say on the second reading of this Bill. The title of the Bill should be "A Bill for the encouragement of coal-mining," for that is its real object. The main features of the Bill are such as have my hearty approval, and the only point that will require a little consideration when we get into committee is with regard to whether there are not too great facilities given to people to circumvent the direct object for which the privileges of mining will be granted by license from the Government, and take advantage of their grants to the detriment of the other interests of the country. But no doubt the Ministry of the day will make such regulations as will preclude the possibility of such a thing. It may be necessary to make a slight alteration in committee to deal with the point I have mentioned. Having said so much I do not think I need detain hon. gentlemen any further.

The HON. A. C. GREGORY said: Hon. gentlemen,—The Bill before us, generally speaking, will be a very useful measure, but in committee we will have to make some amendments. In the first place, in clause 2, it will be seen that any person applying for a license must have the license granted to him, and there is no discretionary power in the hands of the commissioner. Then the conditions of holding the license are such as to permit the holder to use the ground for purposes quite distinct from coal-mining. He may depasture stock on it; he may cultivate it, cut timber upon it, and use it for different purposes, and the result of that would be that any person who wished to block up 200 acres of land against any other person could do so at the cost of £5. The commissioner cannot refuse to grant the license according to the present provisions of the Bill, and any person could quietly squat down and block up 200 acres of land. Of course he may be removed at the end of the year; but then he can do the same with another 200 acres. Then we come to another part of the Bill referring to the discovery of coal at a depth of not less than 600 feet. Unless some careful provision is made with regard to that, we shall find persons who have already been at work and have made deep mining profitable, take up the adjoining land, strike coal at a depth of 600 feet, and then claim to have the royalty reduced to a minimum. Those are the two points that require careful attention when the Bill is in committee. In other respects I think we may fairly look upon it as a very useful measure.

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

On the motion of the POSTMASTER-GENERAL, the consideration of the Bill in committee was made an Order of the Day for Tuesday next.

ADJOURNMENT.

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