Queensland

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[Hansard]

Legislative Assembly

THURSDAY, 4 NOVEMBER 1886

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY.

Thursday, 4 *November*, 1886.

Motion for Adjournment—extension of the Central Railway.—Warwick and St. George Railway.—Message from the Legislative Council.—Petition.—Question.—Motion for Adjournment—cost of duplicating the Brisbane-Ipswich Railway.—Question.—Formal Motion.—Burning of the barque "Rockhampton"—report from committee.—Employers Liability Bill—consideration of Legislative Council's message.—Gold Fields Homestead Leases Bill—adoption of report—recommittal.—Crown Lands Act of 1884 Amendment Bill—committee.—Adjournment.

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

MOTION FOR ADJOURNMENT.

Extension of the Central Railway.

Mr. FERGUSON said: Mr. Speaker,—I am not going to refer to the matter before the House, but I will take advantage of the motion for adjournment to bring a certain matter before the House—namely, the extension of the Central Railway from Barcaldine Downs direct to the Thomson River. I was not present when the matter was discussed some ten days ago in the House, but I happened at that time to be present at one of the largest meetings ever held in the Central district on this very question, and one of the most unanimous meetings ever held in any part of the colony, to protest and object to the deviation of the line from Barcaldine Downs to Winton. There were men from all parts of the district present at that meeting, and every resolution was carried unanimously, and copies of the resolutions were sent to each member of the Government. Every resolution was carried unanimously in favour of extending the Central Railway west as far as the Thomson River. Well, I am encouraged to speak now through what has fallen from the Premier himself. He has stated that the intention of the Government is to construct this Central Railway due west, or as near due west as possible, to the Thomson River, to a place approved of by nearly everyone, and, in fact, by all those who know the country. I am taking this action now in order to give the Government every opportunity of carrying out their wishes. To-day, with the hon. member for Barcoo, I paid a visit to the Chief Engineer's office to see the parliamentary plans of the extension from Barcaldine Downs to the Thomson River, and we found, on examining the plans, that the line strikes the Thomson at the very place where the Government wish, and at the very place which all the people in the Central district wish it should do. So that the plans and book of reference are prepared and ready to be laid on the table of the House, and they should be brought forward. I do not believe there is a member of the House who would object to this extension if the plans were laid on the table to-morrow, and not one person in the Central district would object. It is the wish of the people in the Central district that the line shall be extended, and, besides that, the question is a national one. No one wishes for a moment to deviate the line from Barcaldine Downs to any other point than that chosen on the Thomson River. And not that alone, Mr. Speaker, but the section is the easiest section of any railway that could be brought forward. There is not a single cutting to be made; it is simply surface work, and the line goes through good country. Up till lately the Central Railway went through very poor country, at all events the worst part of the country, until it reached a certain point west, and now that we have reached the rich land and the land we have always been striving to reach, it is proposed to deviate the line at the present terminus. This extension of 62 miles goes through rich downs, through level country, and if any settlement is to take place in any part of the country it must be about this portion of the line, and about the permanent water in the Thomson River. So that I cannot see any reason why the plans should not be laid on the table of the House. The deviation to Winton will never be accepted. No one wants it. I do not know a single person who wants the deviation all through the Central district. I have met with men from the Western country—I have come across every class of people—and I never heard a voice in favour of the deviation except perhaps one or two residents of Winton township, so that I cannot see that there should be any further delay. When we take into consideration that in about a month all the men employed on the railway will be discharged, the contractor will have to clear out of the district, and that it will be a great blow to the district at a time when it can least stand it, then it will be seen that the line should be gone on with. I think the Government should assist a district that has suffered more through the drought than any other in the colony. It is a district depending entirely upon the pastoral industry, and the pastoral industry has suffered, and suffered severely. As far as the paying of the line is concerned, I guarantee that next year this line will tell a different tale. There is not the slightest fear but that this extension will pay as well as any line passed this session, if not a great deal better. The country never looked better than it does at the present time. I have had conversations with several gentlemen who have been out there, and they all tell me that they have never seen a season in Queensland like the present; so that in the course of another year the returns on the Central Railway will show a great improvement. Indeed we need not fear, I think, but that in a very short time they will be the reverse of what they are now. As to the cost of carrying out the extension, I have no hesitation in saying that the 62 miles will be constructed for the price of one mile of railway passed this session, and I do not see any reason or excuse whatever why the Government should not be prepared to at once lay the plans of the extension on the table of the House.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS (Hon. W. Miles) said: Mr. Speaker,—I have not the slightest intention of discussing this question about the extension of the Central Railway. I am very gratified to hear the assurance of the hon. member that this line will shortly return a large sum of money in the way of receipts. I think the Government may be pardoned if they take a little trouble to ascertain which is the most suitable route for the extension of this railway. A surveyor has been sent out for that purpose, and I am expecting every day to get his report. I do not suppose there will be any delay whatever in the extension of this line. I might say, however, that there is very great room for improvement in the returns of the Central Railway. I shall not allude more particularly to that matter now, but will do so at the proper time. I am sure the hon. member's speech is the outcome of the harangue there was the other day at Rockhampton. The Government is, however, bound to protect the interests of the public, and they will always endeavour to get the best information they possibly can before expending any more money on the extension of a railway. I am, as I said before, expecting the report of the surveyor every day, and there will be no delay in carrying out the extension of this line.

Mr. MURPHY said: Mr. Speaker,—I accompanied the hon. member for Rockhampton to the Works Office this morning to make sure

that the plans and sections for the extension of the Central Railway line were ready, and I can assure you, sir, and the House that the whole of the plans are ready now for laying on the table of the House. The only reason that I could find in my inquiries why the Minister for Works does not lay these plans on the table is that he has got a surveyor jerrymandering all over the country—I believe "jerrymandering" is a word of the hon. gentleman's own coining, and I have adopted it—looking for a route from Barcaldine to Winton. I cannot understand what reason on earth the hon. gentleman has for diverting this line to Winton. If there were any colourable excuse for doing it—if the hon. gentleman could show us that by taking the line to Winton he would be in any way benefiting the country or the community in the West—I would be perfectly willing to hear him. But he has not shown any reason why it is necessary to divert the line, except, as he said the other day to a deputation, that he intended to take a course to Winton in order to prevent the railway from Townsville to Hughenden getting the trade that properly belongs to it—that if separation came about he wanted to be first in the field with a railway from Rockhampton to Winton. It would, however, be utterly impossible for a railway from Winton to Rockhampton to compete with a line from the same point to Townsville. I will read an extract from the *Townsville Bulletin* concerning the Winton trade, which puts the whole matter very concisely. It is as follows :—

"The recent statement of the Minister for Works that a deviation was projected from the present terminus of the Central Railway line to Winton, in order that the trade of that place should not be diverted from Rockhampton, has directed public attention to the great centre of the squatting industry, and caused public speculation as to the ultimate success of the scheme for the first time propounded by Mr. Miles. That gentleman, evidently, is well aware that the volume of the Winton trade with this port is steadily increasing, and as there has been no concession made by the Northern line, the rates being exactly the same as on the Central, it is evident that the sole reason for the increase is that Cleveland Bay is the natural outlet. Last year the Northern line carried 10,000 bales of wool; this year, notwithstanding the fact that the wool clip is much lighter owing to the drought, fully 15,000 bales will be conveyed to port. Next season, by which time the line will be open to Hughenden, the Bowen Downs wool, about 3,000 bales, which this season, hitherto, has gone *viâ* Rockhampton, will be carried by the Northern line, and the whole of the Mount Cornish wool will also be directed from the Central line. One station this year despatched the first portion of their clip *viâ* Rockhampton, but on representations being made by a Townsville carrying firm, sent the balance by the Northern line, and benefited considerably by doing so. The following figures with reference to the distance of Winton from the two ports may be found interesting. As the crow flies it is 170 miles from the present terminus of the Central line; to this has to be added 330 miles of line from the terminus to Rockhampton, and 24 miles from that place to the water's edge, making a total of 524 miles from Keppel Bay to the centre in dispute. From Cleveland Bay, Winton is distant 366½ miles; when the Northern line is completed to Hughenden, which should be early next year, 236½ miles will be open, extending from that place to water's edge. To this must be added the 130 miles, as the crow flies, which separates Winton from Hughenden. The latter place is 200 miles north of the present terminus of the Central line, and Winton is about equidistant on latitude, being 100 miles north of the terminus and 100 miles south of Hughenden. The extra distance of Winton from the coast by the southern route is explained by the fact that Keppel Bay is 250 miles east of Cleveland Bay. On clean wool the carriage for 366½ miles would be £6 3s. 7d. a ton, and according to the same rate 2d. per ton per mile, the 157½ extra miles of the southern route would raise the carriage to £7 9s. 5d. per ton. The border of the two colonies could be reached from Hughenden in about 100 miles, so that while the southern colony, by means of a border rate, might force the wool-growers in that colony to send their product by the Central line, it is clear that they have not the least chance of carrying any North Queensland trade, because if they extended their line to the border their mileage would be nearly 600 as compared with about 340 of the Northern line. That the deviation is quite a new scheme is evidenced by the fact that an official map of proposed extensions, issued some time ago, shows the Central line inclining slightly southward, a course which, at the nearest point, would be over 100 miles from Winton. In this map the Northern line is inclining northward. The future railway policy of the new colony, of course, yet remains to be shaped, but it would be hardly a wise proceeding were the plans of the Southern Government followed in this particular instance. If it were taken in a northerly direction, the lines running west from Cairns and south from Normanton would be interfered with. By taking an opposite course, the Cairns and Normanton lines will have plenty of scope, and the splendid south-western country, which otherwise would have to depend on the Central line, will be furnished with unquestionably the cheapest route to the coast."

I think, sir, that that extract puts the matter very clearly and very concisely, and I thought it only right to read it, though it might be somewhat wearying to the House, in order that it might be brought under the notice of the outside public, and give them a fair opportunity of judging of the action of the Minister for Railways in attempting to divert this railway from its present course towards Winton. It has also been stated, both inside and outside the House, that the further these railways are extended the worse they pay.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS : Hear, hear !

Mr. MURPHY : Now, sir, that may be true with regard to the Southern and Western Railways, because the section from Brisbane to Toowoomba would no doubt be better than any section beyond, as there is no such large centre of population as Toowoomba further along that line. There is no doubt, therefore, that the section from Toowoomba to Brisbane pays proportionately at a very much better rate than the whole length of the line from Dulbydilla to Brisbane. It is the same on the Northern line from Charters Towers to Townsville. No doubt that section pays a great deal better than the whole line from Hughenden to Townsville, because Charters Towers is a very large centre of population ; but that is no reason why railways should not be extended. The argument does not apply at all to the Central line, because there is no large centre of population on it ; the whole trade comes from the extreme terminus of the line. There is no point along the line where it taps any trade of any consequence ; the whole of the trade that travels over that line comes from the extreme western limit. Well, sir, to show you that this railway has been a progressive railway in the shape of profits ever since it was constructed, I will read a few figures. I will commence in 1877 ; it is no use going beyond that, because, previous to that, the line was a very short one, and there was very little traffic on it. In 1877 it paid 2¾ per cent. ; in 1878, 3 per cent. ; in 1879 there was a drought and it paid only 2¼ per cent. ; in 1880 it rose to 3¾ per cent. ; in 1881 it paid 4 per cent. ; in 1882, 4½ per cent. ; in 1883, 4¾ per cent. ; in 1884, 4½ per cent. ; and in 1885, 4½ per cent. In 1884 it was a trifle under 4½ per cent., and in 1885 a trifle over. You see then, sir, that as section after section has been added year by year, so the productiveness has increased ; so that this argument is a fallacious one so far as it applies to the Central line ; it is not borne out by facts. This railway is one of the most profitable properties the Government have, and I am sure that the more they extend it the more profitable it will become —profitable to the country not only as an investment of the money they borrow, but also in the way of developing the resources of the interior of this country. Now, sir, with regard to the most suitable route for this line : I think the Minister for Works will be making a

great mistake if he deviates this line one inch from the line as laid down by his own surveyors upon the parliamentary plans which are ready to be laid before the House whenever he chooses—that is the due west line to what is commonly known as the Fifteen-mile Waterhole on the Thomson. That waterhole is almost the only place at which the Thomson can be crossed without going to an enormous expenditure for bridges.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: You have told us that over and again.

Mr. MURPHY: Yes; but I am sorry to say that the Minister for Works is one of those gentlemen that you have to keep on telling the same thing over and over again before you can drive it into him, and I am determined to keep on at this Central Railway until I do drive it into him. I know I have repeated this before, and I must repeat it again, because we can get no satisfaction out of the Government with regard to this matter, and it is a very serious one. If they allow this session to pass over without laying these plans on the table of the House, it means that twelve months will be lost. The men employed on that line will be dismissed, the contractors will go elsewhere, and it will be fully twelve months before the railway can be proceeded with. The Minister for Works said the other day that he could proceed with this railway without the authority of Parliament. Now, sir, we do not want him to proceed without the authority of Parliament; we want to know where they are going with this line. It would be a dangerous thing for the House to allow any Minister to proceed with a line without having laid the plans and specifications on the table and got it authorised by Parliament. We are jealous in this matter, because we know that the Minister has this jerrymandering surveyor out there looking for a route towards Winton, and we consider that this line should be carried on in its due western course. What we are driving at is to have this due western line authorised, so that the Minister may be powerless to alter the route behind our backs.

Mr. LUMLEY HILL said: Mr. Speaker,—As one who knows that country, having lived in it for many years——

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I would like to know where you do not live.

Mr. LUMLEY HILL: And having a much better knowledge of it than any surveyor that the Minister for Works can send out, I can tell him that there is not the slightest engineering difficulty anywhere there except in crossing the Thomson, and this line, as projected, goes to the best possible crossing of the Thomson. If he wants to make the line to Winton, he can put a ruler down on the map, and run it along by that as soon as he gets across the Thomson; but it will be a most unjustifiable thing for the Government to attempt to draw the trade of Winton into Rockhampton when Cleveland Bay is something like 200 miles nearer. That trade will certainly go to Cleveland Bay; the Government might just as well try to make water run uphill. There is no engineering difficulty whatever in the country; there is not the slightest necessity for a surveyor to be sent out, because the line can be taken anywhere, due regard being had to the crossing of the Thomson, and that is the place of all others where the Thomson can be bridged and crossed. In my opinion the line ought to be deflected to the southward instead of to the north.

Mr. GOVETT said: Mr. Speaker,—I shall only say just a few words on this question, because I think from what has been said, and from what the Premier said, that there cannot be much delay about carrying the railway along to the Thomson—at all events I hope so. I would like to point out, as a reason why there should be no delay at the present terminus, that it is out on the high downs, where there is no water at all except what has been stored by the squatters. All the teams and travelling stock that come to the terminus, if it is to remain where it is now, would have to cross this dry downs country and use the dams that have been made by the pastoral tenants. There is a very great objection to that. If the line is made to the Thomson, travelling stock and teamsters bringing wool to the railway would find no inconvenience with regard to water, because they would be able to avail themselves of the natural water in the river, of which there is a permanent supply. Then, again, it would be very advantageous that travelling stock coming from further west should be trucked from the Thomson River, on account of the permanent supply of water which they would find there. I would point out that the question of providing facilities for travelling stock is so important to the pastoral tenants that they have already stored water on the high dry downs that lie between the Alice River and the Thomson.

Mr. STEVENSON said: Mr. Speaker,—I think we ought to have some statement from the Premier with regard to this matter, after the statement he made to the House the other night. The hon. gentleman ought at least to tell us whether he is of the same opinion now as he was then. It is worse than useless to keep people in suspense, as both he and the Minister for Works must know what they intend to do in the matter. It is advisable on many grounds that the new contract should be let before the present contract is terminated; and it is at any rate necessary that the people in the West should know the position they are in with regard to this line. The deviation talked of is a very undesirable thing, and will do no good whatever to that particular part of the country. Therefore, I hope the hon. gentleman will tell us at once what the intentions of the Government are with regard to the Central line.

Mr. NORTON said: Mr. Speaker,—I do not know whether the Government intend to give any direct answer to the question that has been put by the hon. member for Rockhampton, Mr. Ferguson, but the subject is one of very great importance to the Central district. I listened to the remarks of the Minister for Works in the hope that he would make a direct statement as to the intentions of the Government with regard to this particular line; but, so far as I can see, the hon. gentleman did not commit himself in any way. In 1884, this House, at the suggestion of the Government, agreed to extend the line 130 miles westward from its then terminus. Do the Government intend now to reverse the policy which they initiated in 1884 with regard to the trunk lines? They have reversed their policy in regard to one line in a most extraordinary manner, but that is no reason why they should reverse it with regard to the trunk lines into the interior. I cannot understand what objection there can be on the part of the Government to state what their intention is with regard to these lines, nor what their object can be in delaying the extension of this particular line. With regard to what fell from the Minister for Works, I would point out that, although the Central line has not been yielding such returns as the Colonial Treasurer anticipated a short time ago, that is not to be surprised at. If the extension is not carried out now the effect will be a still greater decrease in the revenue from it. But if it is carried out, as I understood the Premier to say last night it would be, to the Thomson River, at once, there

will be an immediate increase in the revenue in consequence of the work done at that end of the line. It is very desirable, therefore, that the line should be continued at once, and more especially because at the present time there are a large number of men who would be glad to get employment in that district. If the work is put off probably the Government will have to pay a higher rate when the contract is ultimately taken, whereas if tenders are called for now the contract would in all likelihood be let very much lower than at any other time, in consequence of the large number of men now there in search of employment. There is, therefore, every inducement for the Government to go on. So far as we can gather from what took place on a very recent occasion, it appears to be the opinion on both sides that the line should be extended, at any rate, as far as the Thomson. If so, I cannot help thinking that the sooner it is done the better. I see no object in the Government sending men "jerrymandering" about the country——

The PREMIER: That is not the meaning of the word at all.

Mr. NORTON: I do not know what the meaning of the word is—I suppose it is to be found in the "Slang Dictionary"—but it is a word that has been used by the Minister for Works on several occasions in that sense. The Government must have quite enough information as to the nature of the country beyond the proposed extension to enable them to make up their minds as to whether they intend to go on with the line or not. If it is to be gone on with, the sooner the better. It is only fair to the line itself that it should be continued, and it is only fair to the people out there, who would be glad to get work, that they should have an opportunity of getting it. I do not approach this question in a party spirit, because I think, from what fell from the Premier last night, that both he and the Minister for Works are disposed to carry on the work at once. If that is the case it is much to be regretted that the hon gentleman does not see his way to bring down the plans this session. I hope he will do so, and I hope the Chief Secretary will take the opportunity of assuring the House that the plans will be brought in before we separate.

The PREMIER (Hon. Sir S. W. Griffith) said: Mr. Speaker,—It would be far better if hon. members would subordinate their desire to embarrass the Government to the interests of their constituents. I do not think the interests of any constituency are served by such conduct as we have seen this afternoon. For my part, I do not feel pleased, or inclined, to go out of the way to oblige anybody who makes use of such tactics. I said yesterday, or the day before, that the Government intended to do a certain thing, and to-day hon. members get up and ask if I mean what I said. I object to that sort of thing. I am not at all disposed to give any further information demanded in that way. What I said last night was very plain, as well as on a previous occasion. Why, then, do hon. members get up this afternoon and want to know what we intend to do? We are bound by our pledges; no thanks to hon. members who take the course they have done. I do not think the suggestion of making a railway for the sake of the profits that will arise from traffic arising during the course of construction is a very wise one. We want certain information, and the Minister for Works is in daily expectation of receiving that information. It has not come to-day. I hope it will to-morrow or the next day. I have no further information to give at the present time.

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN said: Mr. Speaker,—I am sorry that the Chief Secretary should in any way lose his temper at what has taken place this afternoon. I am certain that the hon. members who moved in the matter have done it with the idea of conciliation—not with the idea of antagonism.

The PREMIER: I have every reason to know the contrary.

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN: Well, I have just as good, if not better, reason to know that what I am saying is true. Whatever the hon. gentleman's sources of information may be which gave him reason to know the contrary, they are not so correct as mine; I am quite certain of that. I know that the hon. member for Rockhampton in no way wishes to embarrass the Government. He believes, as I do, that the Government intend to make the line to the Thomson River, and as soon as they can; but why cannot they say so at once, and set the minds of the people in that district at rest? I do not think that the Government intend to deviate towards Winton. The idea is absurd, although the Minister for Works may, at the instigation of someone, have sent some surveyor to spy out the country towards Winton. Still, I think that is not a sufficient reason to come to the conclusion, after what the Chief Secretary said the other day, that they are not going on with the line to the Thomson River. The people of the Central district are very much exercised in their minds as to the stoppage of this railway, and very naturally so. We know that a great deal of the traffic, the business, and the labour of Rockhampton depend upon the Central Railway, and the people are naturally exercised in their minds, because their living depends to a large extent on it. It is said that the Government are not inclined to go on with this railway because it is not paying now. But this line is paying very badly because it has suffered more from the drought than any other line; and, therefore, it is paying worse in proportion than before. But the other lines are also paying badly. Even the Northern line is falling off. A decrease has appeared in the traffic of the Northern line for the first time in comparison with the same week in the previous year. That was shown in the last issue of the *Gazette*. When we find that in the Northern line, we cannot wonder that there is a decrease in the Central line; but I am quite sure the Government cannot intend that as a reason for stopping the Central line. The Chief Secretary agreed with me the other evening in the suggestion I made for pushing the line on to the Thomson River—if it stopped there. The Thomson is at a point about equally distant in the interior from Charleville in the south and from Hughenden in the north, and therefore the Central line might well be pushed on to the Thomson. As we have been informed by the hon. member for Barcoo and the hon. member for Rockhampton that they had themselves seen the plans and specifications in the Works Department, why should there be any difficulty in the Minister for Works bringing down these plans and laying them on the table of the House, instead of waiting for a report of a surveyor on a deviation towards Winton—a direction in which the line will not be taken? I think the Chief Secretary made a mistake in sitting on the high horse in this matter. It is a matter in which the whole country is concerned as well as the people of the Central district, though not so much, for the people of the Central district, as I have said, depend for their living on it. I agree with the hon. member for Barcoo in regard to the traffic on this line. We all know it is a terminal traffic; that the great body of it comes from the end of the line. Therefore nothing can be lost by extending this line to the

Thomson, because the traffic would come naturally to the terminus, and the advantage would be gained to the railway of 62 additional miles of traffic. Then there are the grand natural capabilities of the Thomson district itself. There is a large waterhole there with fine country round it, which I am certain the Minister for Lands may expect to be taken up for grazing farms if there is no agriculture. Therefore it is an advantage in every way to have this line pushed forward. All that the hon. member for the district wants is that the Government should give an assurance that they will bring forward the plans for the extension to the Thomson. If the plans are delayed for a few weeks longer it will then be too late. We know the difficulty of carrying plans at a late period of the session in the other Chamber. We know that some plans have been thrown out under the pretext, I might call it, that there was not sufficient time left to inquire into the necessity for making such railways. In this case the same pretext may be used if the plans are not brought down immediately; but I hope the Government will do better and table the plans next week, and get them passed as soon as possible. I am quite sure they will find no opposition from any members on either side of the House.

Mr. BLACK said: Mr. Speaker,—It seems somewhat surprising to me that the Government should have taken all the trouble of making surveys, getting the plans and specifications of the extension to the Thomson River, and everything complete—as complete as any plans laid on the table of the House—unless they were going to consider it along with the other railways. I am perfectly astonished at the Chief Secretary expressing and showing a feeling of irritation in regard to the hon. members for the Central district having brought this matter before the House. The hon. gentleman went so far as to say that there was an attempt to embarrass the Government, but I fail to see it.

The PREMIER: They understood me perfectly well.

Mr. BLACK: I think if anything of that sort was intended it is that the Premier wishes to embarrass the hon. members of the Central district with their constituents—that is, if there is any embarrassment in it at all. The members for the Central district are only performing their duty to their constituents in seeing that their interests are not neglected, especially in a case like this, where the line is nearly completed and where, if it is not carried further, it will necessitate a very large number of men being thrown out of employment. The hon. members who brought this matter before the House are deserving of the thanks of the country. I see no reason whatever why the Government—even if they should at any time see the necessity for diverting the line towards Winton—should not take it out to the Thomson and then from the Thomson to Winton. But the idea of extending the line to Winton that the Northern trade may be secured to Rockhampton has been proved to be erroneous. There will have to be far better grounds than that given before the extension towards Winton will be made at a future time. I hope now that the matter has been fully discussed, and when the Premier has admitted the necessity of continuing the line to the Thomson, that the Minister for Works will bring down the plans and specifications, which are all ready, and lay them on the table of the House next week, in order that this extension may be included in the schedule of Government railways to be passed this session.

Mr. FERGUSON said: Mr. Speaker——

The PREMIER: The hon. member has spoken.

Mr. FERGUSON: I wish to explain.

The SPEAKER: The hon. member can only speak with the indulgence of the House.

Mr. FERGUSON: I only wish to say two or three words. In moving the adjournment I had not the slightest intention of embarrassing the Government in any way. It never entered my head. I had a duty to perform to my constituents, and I think I should have been very much to blame if I had not performed that duty. And even now I cannot see any reason whatever why the Government object to laying these plans on the table.

The PREMIER: That is not an explanation.

Mr. FERGUSON: All I wish to say is, that I hope the Government will bring forward the plans in order that we may consider them this session.

Mr. PATTISON said: Mr. Speaker,—I am sure no member on this side has any desire to embarrass the Government; all they desire is to elicit information as to whether it is the intention of the Government to lay the plans and book of reference of the extension of the Central Railway on the table this session. All the Central members are alive to the importance of taking the Central line to the Thomson, and as the Government are certainly of that opinion, we want to know the cause of the delay. I think it has been shown conclusively by the hon. member for Barcoo that it would be worse than useless to take the line to Winton; and that is the opinion of the residents of the western portion of the Central district. Depend upon it that if we run the line to the Thomson, where there is a very fine reach of water, we shall soon have a centre of population that will throw Winton into the shade. Winton properly belongs to the Northern district, and the residents of the Central district have no desire to enter into a contest with the Northern district and try to take away the trade of a township that properly belongs to the Northern district. We are anxious, as far as possible, to protect the trade which properly belongs to the Central district, and we shall be able to do that if the Central line is extended to the Thomson. It has been questioned whether the Central district was fairly treated in having such a small sum set apart for railways on the Loan Estimates, but that small sum having been voted, let it now be expended. The plant is on the ground, and will be scattered about the country unless the work is commenced soon. The contractors will leave the district as soon as the present contract is completed, and we shall have a large number of idle men about. There are enough idle men about already, and there are sure to be more, because unless the Minister for Works will undertake to have the plans passed at the earliest possible moment they will not be passed till next session, and then the damage will be done; therefore the people of the Central district have good reason to complain, and the Government should see their way to lay the plans on the table this session. Some persons go so far as to say—I do not give this as my opinion, though to some extent I may think so, and possibly be justified in thinking so—some think that this is a sort of punishment for the people of the Central district sending members to the Opposition side of the House. Whether it is so or not is not for me to say.

The PREMIER: None of the residents of the Central district think that.

Mr. PATTISON: I believe a great number of the electors think so

The PREMIER: Only when they are told so by the members.

Mr. PATTISON: I am not aware whether they have been told or not; certainly, I am not the member who has told them yet, whatever I may do in the future. Let the galled jade wince; my withers are perfectly free on that score. But, as a matter of justice to the Central district, the line should be extended to where the Government think and state publicly it should go—namely, to the Thomson River. I have no desire whatever to embarrass the Government in regard to this matter, and I think I have shown valid reasons for my vote on all questions that have come before us. As a member representing a portion of the Central district, I desire to urge the reasonable claims of that district before this House, and I hope the extension of the railway to the Thomson will be carried out as speedily as possible.

Mr. SCOTT said: Mr. Speaker,—The Minister for Works made one direct statement when addressing the House, and only one, when he said that the Central Railway was in a very bad way. But it was only yesterday that I had a letter from a very old resident of the Leichhardt district, in which he says that for twenty years he has never seen the country looking so well as at present, and there is every reason to hope that the receipts from the Central line will soon exceed those of any previous period.

Mr. HIGSON said: Mr. Speaker,—I think after the resolution passed at the large influential meeting held recently at Rockhampton, which was attended by people from the surrounding and the Western districts, the reason given by the Government why the plans and specifications should not be laid on the table and the railway carried out at once is a very poor one. The reason is that the line does not pay. Why, if everyone gave up business just when it happened not to pay, everyone would be giving up just at a time when work should be pushed on in order to take advantage of the turning point. The country is turning round now, and I think that now is the time to go on with the work. We all know that the railway, so far, has passed through very bad country; and now it seems as if it is going to be stopped just as we get to the good country, in order to spite a few people on the opposite side; it looks like that anyway. I do not think any part of the colony has been treated so badly as the Central district. That district represents one-third of the colony, and what has it got? Nothing at all. As a matter of justice, at the present time, after five years' drought, and seeing that Rockhampton is depending on the Western trade, I think, instead of keeping us in suspense, the Government ought to make this one of the first railways to be constructed, instead of one of the last.

Question put and negatived.

WARWICK AND ST. GEORGE RAILWAY.

MESSAGE FROM THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

The SPEAKER: I have to report the following message from the Legislative Council:—

"MR. SPEAKER,

"The Legislative Council having appointed a select committee on the proposed line of railway from Warwick towards St. George, and that committee being desirous to examine James Campbell, Esquire, and James Lalor, Esquire, members of the Legislative Assembly, in reference thereto, request that the Legislative Assembly will give leave to its said members to attend and be examined by the said committee on such day and days as shall be arranged between them and the said committee."

The PREMIER: Mr. Speaker,—I beg to move that leave be given to the hon. members to attend the said committee if they think fit.

Question put and passed.

PETITION.

Mr. STEVENSON presented a petition from certain residents of Goondiwindi and district in reference to pastoral rents, and moved that it be read.

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

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

QUESTION.

Mr. LUMLEY HILL asked the Minister for Works—

If there are any outstanding claims made by the contractors, Messrs. Annear and Co., against the Railway Department?—and, if so, what is the amount, and how does the department propose to deal with them?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS replied—

An account for interest, etc., was presented to the Commissioner for Railways yesterday, 3rd instant, by Mr. John Thorn, one of the partners of the late firm of J. T. Annear and Co., showing a debit balance of £7,104 15s. 11d., which account it is not considered the Railway Department should entertain.

MOTION FOR ADJOURNMENT.

COST OF DUPLICATING THE BRISBANE-IPSWICH RAILWAY.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said: Mr. Speaker,—In accordance with the promise I made to the hon. member for Drayton and Toowoomba yesterday in connection with the return asked for by the hon. member respecting the cost of the duplication of the Brisbane and Ipswich Railway, I find, on making inquiry, that there was no estimate made by the Chief Engineer as to the amount required for that work. At the time the Government were framing their Loan Estimates the Chief Enginee was asked to give a rough estimate of the various amounts that would be required for the works the Government then intended to carry out. No survey had been made, therefore no detailed estimate could be given. There was £100,000 put down on the Loan Estimates for the duplication of the line, and the Government on their own authority reduced it to £85,000. It was impossible to give a detailed estimate because no survey had taken place, and therefore there is no estimate to produce.

Mr. NORTON said: Mr. Speaker,—I think the Minister for Works should have concluded with a motion when he made an important statement of the kind he has just made. The subject is one of so much importance that I think it ought to be discussed by the House.

The PREMIER: You can discuss it on the Estimates.

Mr. NORTON: I am quite aware of that, but I think the time a Minister makes such a statement is the proper time to discuss it. Therefore, I shall move the adjournment of the House.

The SPEAKER: The previous motion for adjournment having been negatived, the hon. member cannot now move it again.

Mr. NORTON: I think some other business has intervened since the last motion for adjournment was negatived. A petition has been read, a motion put from the Chair, and a question asked and replied to.

The SPEAKER: I find the hon. member is quite right.

Mr. NORTON: In regard to this particular question I must say I am exceedingly surprised at the statement now made by the Minister for Works. At the time these proposals were put before the House the Minister for Works stated distinctly that he believed the work could be done for the sum mentioned, £85,000.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: So I did,

Mr. NORTON: Well, sir, we had no reason to suppose that the Minister made that estimate entirely on his own responsibility. No surveys were necessary in order to enable the engineer to ascertain what amount was likely to be required for the work. The single line was already in existence, and the engineer could easily ascertain what would be required in the way of cuttings, embankments, bridging, the nature of the soil that had to be removed; in fact, every particular that was necessary to enable him to arrive at an estimate was in possession of the Government at the time. I think the least we could have expected from the Government at the time the House was asked to vote that sum of money was that we should have been told that no estimate had been made by the engineer. Yet now, when it is known that the work is going to cost double the amount we were led to believe in the first instance it would cost, the Minister for Works, in answer to a question put by one of his supporters, tells us that the engineer made only a rough estimate that it would cost £100,000, and that the Government reduced that to £85,000. If that is the way in which public works are being carried on, for which the money-lending public in England are asked to advance money to enable them to be constructed, the sooner it is put a stop to the better. I must express my very great surprise, sir, that in the first instance, when the Loan Bill was before the House, the Minister for Works did not make a distinct statement to the same effect that he has made now. I am quite sure that if he had done so members on both sides of the House would have hesitated before they consented to the construction of a work of which so little was known. One other matter to which I wish to refer, now that this question is before the House, is with regard to the work being carried out by day labour instead of by contract. The reason given for carrying it out by day labour at the time the subject was under discussion was that it was in order to enable the Government to have full control of the work, and as far as possible prevent any chance of accident. That was the only substantial reason given when a number of hon. members objected very strongly to the work being done in that way, and insisted that if done by contract it would be very much cheaper. I believe that if it had been done by contract it would have been done much cheaper than we were led to expect it would be, and certainly very much cheaper than it is being done. I myself have constantly seen the work that has been going on along the line, and can state that a great deal of unnecessary labour has been performed. I say that distinctly. Labour has been performed that I believe no contractor who knows his business would have allowed to go on. Whose fault it is I do not pretend to know, and in spite of the extra cost of the line and the day labour, there have been two very serious accidents. One happened at Goodna, when, apparently by a miracle, the engine and tender escaped, but a number of trucks were thrown off the bridge into the hollow below. Fortunately it was a goods train, not a passenger train. That accident happened simply from want of supervision; and again, the other day, when a special train was going to Ipswich—again apparently through carelessness—the train was run at such a rate from one line to the other that an accident which might have been very serious occurred. I refer to the matter now partly because the reason given for carrying out the duplication by day labour was that it would prevent accidents, and partly because of a letter which appeared in the paper a few days ago signed by the engine-driver, who was dismissed in consequence of the later accident. I do not know whether all the statements in the letter were true or not. It was very plausibly written, but I accept such letters with caution, because I know discharged servants put very plausible constructions upon acts which will not bear investigation. I refer to this matter because I hope the Minister for Works has asked for a report from the traffic manager giving him a chance of meeting the statements made. I cannot think from what I have seen of the traffic manager that he has been guilty of the charges which have been brought against him—charges of carelessness, charges of bad management and others, which, if true, would have exposed the travelling public to great risks. I hope the Minister for Works will inform the House whether the traffic manager has been asked to furnish a report in reply to the statements publicly made, and if so, I hope he will cause it to be placed on the table of the House, as it is a subject of the greatest interest not only to the travelling public but to many who do not travel on the railways but have friends who do, and who might through the alleged carelessness of the traffic manager be exposed to danger. I regret, in connection with the matter, that in the first instance the whole of the facts of the case were not put before the committee which was asked to vote the sum of £85,000. I regret that the work was carried out by day labour, and I hope, in connection with these accidents that have taken place, that the Minister for Works will take an early opportunity of informing the House of any explanation that has been made of the charges against the traffic manager. I move the adjournment of the House.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said: Mr. Speaker,—If the speech which has just been delivered by the hon. member had been delivered by any other member of the House there would have been some excuse for him, but the hon. member ought to know perfectly well that there is scarcely a railway that was ever passed by the House, the money voted for which was not exceeded. He must know that. He was Minister for Works for a short time, and I find that a sum of £54,153 will be required to meet unforeseen expenditure on the Mackay-Eton Railway, a line which was initiated by the Government of which the hon. member was a member.

Mr. NORTON: No; I called for tenders.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The hon. member called for tenders, but the deficiency was there all the same. If any other hon. member had got up and made such random statements I would have forgiven him, but the hon. member having been Minister for Works ought to know that the estimates of cost of all railways is always exceeded. Now, I would like to know how it was possible to make a detailed estimate of a work that had not been surveyed? A sum was put down, and I thought the work could be accomplished for that amount of money. With reference to the employment of day labour I shall be prepared to show, at the proper time, that the excavations have been done at a far less cost than if the work had been undertaken by contract, and not only that, but a better lot of workmen never were employed anywhere than in this duplication. There is another railway, the extension from the Ravenswood Junction, where a considerable deficiency occurs; and the hon. member must know that among all the railways that have been constructed—and they have cost £7,000,000—not one of them was completed for the estimated cost. With reference to the letter that appeared in the *Courier* from the engine-driver who was dismissed, the hon. member ought to know that when any such thing as that takes place the party who is dismissed has a grievance. The traffic manager furnished me with a report

completely upsetting the whole of the arguments of the engine-driver; but I did not think it was a wise thing to allow him to enter into a newspaper war. The hon. member should have waited until the evidence is printed and laid on the table of the House, as I am quite satisfied that it will fully explain the whole matter, and will show that the action taken by the department was such as the Government could not avoid, and was in the interests of the travelling public.

Mr. SCOTT said: Mr. Speaker,—I am somewhat surprised that the leader of the Opposition should have chosen the Ipswich and Brisbane line as an illustration of a line costing more than was originally estimated. He must know very well that it is quite impossible to get at the cost of the Brisbane and Ipswich Railway in any shape or form. The cost of the first line has never yet been ascertained by anybody, nor the way in which a great deal of the money that was known to have been expended was expended and how it went. Some years ago, Mr. Walsh, who was then a member of the Legislature, moved for a select committee to inquire into this particular line. The committee sat a great many times; they took a great deal of evidence, but the inquiry ended in nothing. They never ascertained what had become of the money, how much the line absolutely cost, or anything else, and it will be still more difficult now to ascertain what the duplication has cost, carried out in the way it has been. The Minister for Works referred to the difference in price between day and contract labour, and I think I can give one illustration of how it works. When the former line was being made, there was a cutting in the paddock in which I lived. At one end the men were working by contract, and were doing the excavation at 2s. 6d. per cubic yard, while at the other end the work was being done by labour at a cost of 12s. 6d. per cubic yard. This is a fact which can be very easily ascertained. I was on the spot at the time, and found out what the whole thing cost. This is simply an illustration of the difference between the cost of day labour and contract labour, more particularly on the Brisbane and Ipswich Railway.

Mr. NORTON said: Mr. Speaker, — If no other member wishes to speak on this subject, I have a few words to say in reply to the Minister for Works. The hon. gentleman expressed surprise that I should have brought this matter forward, because I have had an opportunity of knowing that all our other lines have cost more than they were estimated to cost. I know that perfectly well, but the cost of all the other lines, so far as I am aware, was estimated by the Engineer-in-Chief, and not by the Minister for Works. The estimates which were placed before the House, and upon which the House approved of lines, were the estimates of the Chief Engineer for Railways; and when the question of duplicating the line between Brisbane and Ipswich was placed before the House we naturally concluded that the estimate in that case also was the estimate of the Chief Engineer. Now, we are told that it was not, but that it was the estimate of the Minister for Works. It was with the supposition that the estimate was the estimate of the engineer that the duplication was agreed to, and also because the Minister himself told us distinctly that it would not cost more than £85,000.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: A person may be deceived.

Mr. NORTON: I can quite believe that, but I do not think the House would have accepted the estimate of the hon. gentleman as preferable to that made by the Chief Engineer. What is the good of an Engineer-in-Chief for carrying out railway works if his opinion is not to be taken and put before the House? That is what I would like to know. But there is another matter with regard to this line that has been overlooked by the hon. gentleman, and that is, that there had been a survey of the single line. It had already been made, and the depth of every cutting was known; the height of every embankment was known; the nature of the rock in every cutting was known; the amount of bridgework was known—in fact, everything that it was necessary to know in order to make an estimate was known, without a survey. All that had to be done was to go to the plans of the work formerly done on the single line, take the cost of that, and then ascertain the difference between the rates paid for labour and material at the time the first line was carried out, and with those data it would be a comparatively easy matter to determine the probable cost of the duplication. That is what we expected we had when the loan vote was before us, but it now appears that we merely had the surmise of the Minister for Works or of the Government. I do not know whether it was the combined surmises on the part of the Cabinet or whether it was the surmise of the Minister for Works alone that the duplication would cost £85,000. But it now appears that it will cost nearly double that sum. Then with regard to the object the Government had in view in carrying out the work by day labour, I have already pointed out that it has completely failed. Two serious accidents have taken place, and I am quite satisfied that the supervision of the work would have been just as good if it had been done by contract, and it would have cost nothing more than it is doing by day labour. Therefore I think the Minister for Works had no cause to complain when I expressed my surprise that the matter should have been put before the House in the manner in which it was placed before us by the hon. gentleman just now. The hon. gentleman accused me of having been concerned in railways which have cost more than the original estimate, and mentioned in particular the Mackay and Ravenswood lines; he blamed me because those railways cost more than the estimates. But I did not make the estimates. I merely called for tenders, and then gave the contracts when the tenders were sent in; so that I do not see that I am responsible for those lines costing more than the estimates. I do not think the hon. gentleman has made out a clear case. With respect to the letter published by Wilkinson, I do not wish to blame the traffic manager in the slightest degree. I have looked over the report which was laid on the table of the House a few days ago, and which is now in the Government Printing Office, and so far I can see there is every reason for saying that it appears to be a very reasonable report indeed. The evidence I have not had an opportunity of reading. The letter published by Wilkinson in the paper is also a very plausible one, and I think that in the interest of the department, as well as in the interest of the traffic manager, it is desirable, if the traffic manager has furnished a report in answer to the statements contained in that letter, that it should be published with the other documents. I hope the Minister for Works will lay that report on the table of the House at an early date. I should like to see the traffic manager completely exonerated from the charges made against him. So far as I know, Mr. Thallon has carried out his work well, and I should be very sorry indeed to see that there was any ground for the accusations which have been made, and I think the public are also of opinion that it is desirable that Wilkinson's charges should be shown to be without foundation.

Mr. ANNEAR said: Mr. Speaker,—In reference to this work I should like to hear from the Minister for Works, when the question comes up for discussion again, what has been the average cost of taking out the cuttings on the duplication of the line between Brisbane and Ipswich.

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN: Move for a return.

Mr. ANNEAR: There is greater expense and responsibility in carrying out a work of that kind and keeping the traffic open than in constructing a railway in the first instance. I claim to know something about such work; I believe I can price work of that nature pretty nearly as well as a good many men in the colony at the present time, and I would not dare—and I do not believe any contractor would dare—to undertake to excavate those cuttings, some of which are in rock 40 or 50 feet deep, at a schedule price of less than 5s. per cubic yard. And I would like to know if the work has cost that amount. The leader of the Opposition has spoken about a letter having appeared in the paper the other day from an engineer.

Mr. NORTON: No; an engine-driver.

Mr. ANNEAR: Well, an engine-driver. I do not think much notice can be taken of a letter of that kind, because when a man is dismissed, whether justly or unjustly, there is sure to be a complaint in the papers. I was in the colony when we began to make railways, and saw Lady Bowen turn the first sod at Ipswich of the first railway constructed in Queensland. I know pretty well—and I am sure you know, Mr. Speaker—the amount of money spent on the construction of the line between Brisbane and Ipswich; and I make this statement, that the whole of the work on the duplication has been done for 100 per cent. less than the first line cost; and when such is the case I do not think there can have been any reckless expenditure. I do not see how hon. members can say that the work is being done by day-work. I noticed that the whole of the sawn timber was contracted for, and that the whole of the sleepers were contracted for. The bridges were also contracted for; I remember seeing in the papers at the time that Overend and Co.'s tender to do that work was for £50,000. I suppose all those works were let to the lowest tenderer. Therefore I cannot see where there is so much day-work to increase the cost of carrying out the duplication. When it was first intended to duplicate the line between Brisbane and Ipswich, provision was made for putting new 60-lb. rails on one line. I do not know how it has come about, but what do we find now? That 60-lb. rails are being laid on both lines. That must run into a very large sum of money and greatly increase the cost beyond what it was thought it would be when the matter was first introduced. Now, I have travelled along the line a good deal, and I quite agree with the Minister for Works, and as I stated in the House when it was under consideration whether the work should be done by contract or day work. I know a good many of the gangers employed on the line, and I believe every man employed in the construction of that work has honestly and faithfully earned the money he received. I am sure that if the matter is fully gone into it will be found that the work has been carried out cheaper than any contractor would take it for, owing to the large amount he would have to put on to cover the risk there would be in a job of that kind.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said: Mr. Speaker,—With the permission of the House, I will just say a few words. The hon. member referred to the relaying of the line with new rails. I wish to say that the cost of relaying the old line has not been included in the cost of duplication; it has been paid out of revenue, and not out of loan.

Question put and negatived.

QUESTION.

Mr. ISAMBERT asked the Chief Secretary—

Has the attention of the Government been drawn to the case of George Otto, who has been convicted and sentenced for cattle-stealing at Herberton, and who has been subsequently released?

The PREMIER replied—

George Otto was charged before the Herberton bench on the 27th August, 1885 (with two other persons named McKiernan), with being in possession of the skin of a bullock suspected to have been stolen. The prosecution was instituted under section 5 of the Cattle Stealing Prevention Act, 17 Vic. No. 3, which provides that where it has been proved that the skin of a stolen beast has been found in the possession of an accused person, the onus is on the defendant of showing that he came lawfully by it. Upon the hearing of the charge it was conclusively established that the hide of a stolen beast was found upon premises of which Otto was in charge, and that the brand had been cut out and concealed. Otto, before his apprehension, after having been informed that the police had taken possession of the hide, stated that he was in charge of the premises, and received payment for all beef sold, adding that he was responsible to one McKiernan (the father of the other defendants) for everything. No attempt was made by Otto or the other defendants to show that they came lawfully by the hide, and they did not, although invited to do so, call any witnesses. The only statement made by Otto before the bench was to the effect that the other defendants did not derive any pecuniary benefit from killing other people's cattle, as he and McKiernan (their father) took all the money. All the defendants were convicted, and upon the evidence the conviction was clearly right. But, upon further investigation, I satisfied myself that there were strong grounds for believing that Otto was really innocent, and that the beast had been taken, killed, and disposed of in his absence, and without any knowledge on his part that it had been stolen. The remainder of his sentence was thereupon immediately remitted.

FORMAL MOTION.

The following formal motion was agreed to:—

By the COLONIAL TREASURER—

That this House will, at its next sitting, resolve itself into a Committee of the Whole, to consider the desirableness of introducing a Bill to authorise the appropriation towards the construction of a line of railway from Bowen to Townsville by way of Ayr, of two sums of £150,000 and £100,000 authorised by the Government Loan Act of 1882 and the Government Loan Act of 1884 respectively to be raised for the construction of lines of railway from Bowen to Haughton Gap and from Bowen to the Coalfields respectively.

BURNING OF THE BARQUE "ROCKHAMPTON."

REPORT FROM COMMITTEE.

The CHAIRMAN OF COMMITTEES presented the following resolution from the Committee of the Whole:—

That an Address be presented to the Administrator praying that His Excellency will be pleased to cause to be placed upon the Supplementary Estimates for the current financial year the sum of £750 as compensation to the captain of the British ship "Rockhampton."

Mr. W. BROOKES moved that the report be adopted.

Question put and passed.

EMPLOYERS LIABILITY BILL.

CONSIDERATION OF LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL'S MESSAGE.

On the motion of the PREMIER, the Speaker left the chair, and the House went into committee to consider the Legislative Council's message.

The PREMIER said the only question to be considered now was clause 6, providing for compensation to seamen in certain cases. The Legislative Council insisted on their omission of that clause on the following grounds, as stated in their message of the 2nd November :—

"Because more suitable provision is made for the protection of seamen under the provisions of the existing laws relating to merchant shipping, and other enactments connected therewith, and because the clause omitted would render the owner liable for accidents resulting from causes over which he has no control."

He did not admit the validity of the argument; he did not think there was adequate provision in any other law for making the owner responsible for the negligence of his servant resulting in the injury of fellow-servants, being seamen. The question to be considered now was, whether it was worth while, for the sake of that clause, to lose the Bill altogether. He believed the Bill was incomplete without the provisions of that clause; but the laws in England and the other colonies were equally incomplete, and, upon the whole, he did not propose to lose a valuable measure merely because they could not have all they wanted. Under the circumstances, therefore, he thought the wisest course would be to move that the House did not insist upon its disagreement to the amendment of the Legislative Council.

Mr. NORTON said he agreed with the Chief Secretary that provision was not made in any other way which was equivalent to that clause; so far as he knew, there was no provision in any Act corresponding to the provision made there. He was exceedingly sorry that in another place a stand had been taken against that clause. From what had lately been seen there was a very evident disposition on the part of working men in the colonies to stick to each other, and he was inclined to think that the Bill would be regarded by them as a very insufficient one if the seamen were purposely left out. The workmen's unions would be much more disposed to stick to each other than the Premier was disposed to stick to that particular clause of the Bill. He was almost inclined to prefer that the whole Bill should be thrown out than that seamen should be totally excluded from participating in its benefits. It seemed to him manifestly unfair that seamen, who were exposed to dangers through the negligence of their employers, or those who acted for their employers, should be excluded; and there was very little probability of an amending Bill being introduced for a considerable time, giving them the same rights that were extended to other workmen. It was quite true, as had been pointed out by the Chief Secretary, that in Great Britain seamen had not the same advantages as other workmen in that respect, but he would remind the hon. gentleman that in the report lately drawn up by the select committee specially appointed by the House of Commons to inquire into the matter they distinctly recommended that seamen should derive the same benefits from the Act as were extended to other classes of labour. That ought to be borne in mind in considering the question. He should be sorry to see the Bill thrown out, but he believed that if it was allowed to become law without that clause there was very little probability of the seamen being brought under the Act for many years to come. No amendment would be brought in, or if brought in would be accepted, extending to seamen the same rights which were granted to others. Seamen had just as much right to be protected from the carelessness of their employers as other workmen. He regretted that the hon. gentleman had deemed it desirable to give way at that stage. He, at any rate, should be much disposed to disagree with the amendment, and to let the other House throw out the Bill if they felt disposed to do so.

Question put and passed.

The House resumed, and the CHAIRMAN reported that the Committee did not insist on their disagreement to the Legislative Council's amendment.

The report was adopted, and it was ordered that a message be sent to the Legislative Council in the usual way.

GOLD FIELDS HOMESTEAD LEASES BILL.

ADOPTION OF REPORT.

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

Question put and passed.

RECOMMITTAL.

On the motion of the MINISTER FOR WORKS, the House went into Committee of the Whole, for the purpose of reconsidering clause 26 of the Bill, and considering the introduction of a new clause to follow clause 21.

The PREMIER stated, before going into committee, that His Excellency the Administrator of the Government had seen the proposed new clause, and recommended it to the consideration of the House.

The PREMIER moved the omission of the words "not disqualified" in the proviso of the 26th clause, with the view of inserting the word "qualified."

Amendment put and agreed to.

On the motion of the PREMIER, a verbal amendment transposing the words "the time" was agreed to—the second proviso reading, as amended, as follows :—

"Provided nevertheless that the warden may extend for a further period of twelve months the time during which the mortgagee may retain possession of or sell the holding."

Clause, as amended, put and passed.

Mr. MELLOR moved the insertion of the following new clause to follow the last clause of the Bill :—

All rents and revenues received or collected under this Act shall be paid into a special fund to be kept by the Colonial Treasurer, and shall be expended in the construction of roads and bridges and other public works on the respective goldfields where they are raised, under the superintendence of the council of the municipality or board of the division, as the case may be, within which such goldfield or portion of a goldfield is situated.

That clause, he said, was in principle the same as a clause in the existing Act. It had been part of the regulations, in fact, since 1870, or for sixteen years. He thought it would be a great pity if the Government were to take away that source of revenue from divisional boards and local authorities at the present time. Some divisional boards could not carry on without it. On goldfields and the surrounding districts there was an amount of heavy traffic caused by the cartage of quartz, which made it more expensive to build and keep roads in repair than in other places. It would be a graceful act on the part of the Government to agree to the clause, and allow the thing to go on as before. It might be said that the rents from all Crown lands should go to the consolidated revenue. He believed that was the opinion of the Government, but the rents he wanted to get at were under the Mines Department, not the Lands Department. Moreover the land paid double revenue in a great many instances, so that land on and about goldfields paid relatively a higher rate than lands generally speaking. He was sure that if the Government did not grant that concession it would be a great

disappointment. A telegram had been sent to the hon. member for Gympie on the matter, and he had one himself from the Widgee Divisional Board. People on the goldfields would look upon taking the rents from the boards as repudiation of their just claims.

The COLONIAL TREASURER (Hon. J. R. Dickson) said that the conditions and circumstances of the country had changed since this clause was passed in the previous Act. With the local rating and the liberal endowment now paid by the Treasury upon the rates, the Treasury might very fairly look to receive all the rents and revenues due under this Bill. He was rather surprised that the hon. gentleman should consider that divisional boards on goldfields were justified in making such a claim at the present time, because if the principle were carried out to its legitimate conclusion all the other divisional boards in whose districts there were Crown lands producing metals or minerals would think they had an equally fair claim to the rents and revenues derived from similar sources to those referred to in the Bill under consideration. He did not believe in constantly nursing divisional boards beyond the legitimate assistance they had a right to claim from the Treasury, which hon. members would agree was of a liberal character at the present time, being in the proportion of £2 to £1. Therefore, he could not see that the rents and revenues derived under the Bill should go to the divisional boards, but he maintained that the Government might very fairly claim to receive them, and that the boards would not be very great losers, because the total amount received last year was only about £1,000, and that was derived from districts included in several boards. Again, if the clause were reinserted at the present time it would have a wider scope than before, because it would deal with fresh charges that had been made; and surely the hon. gentleman did not expect all the rents and revenues to be handed over to the local authorities in those districts in which they were raised. He thought the time had arrived when the rents and revenues in question might fairly go to the general Treasury; and the divisional boards should be content with the liberal treatment they received. He therefore trusted that the hon. gentleman would not press his motion. He could not see on what principle of fairness they could say that the mere accident of a goldfield being in a division should entitle that division to special privileges; indeed, the existence of a goldfield gave a considerable additional value to the rateable property in the division, and possibly enabled it to obtain a larger amount of endowment than a division not possessing any such advantage could receive. Taking all those matters into consideration, the Government were justified in not accepting the amendment.

Mr. BAILEY said the circumstances of goldfields' divisional boards were different from those of other boards. The traffic was very heavy, and the cost of maintaining roads very great, whilst the rateable property was not property which was capable of being rated highly. The miners had houses, but not such houses as were occupied by large storekeepers. Those properties could not be highly rated, and yet there was an infinite number of roads to be kept in good repair. Heavy traffic passed over those roads, and it was a serious matter for the divisional board to keep them in repair. Under the present system of rating they would find it almost impossible to do so—to the detriment of the goldfield and the great injury of everyone having to go over the road. The worse the road the greater the cost of carting, and that was a very important element on a goldfield. It seemed that the goldfields' divisional boards had possessed the privilege some years and had never abused it.

The PREMIER: How could they abuse the privilege of receiving money?

Mr. BAILEY said the money they received had been very well spent, and it had been to the advantage of the fields; and when they considered the enormous revenue derived from the goldfields—every claim and every man who worked in a claim—the concession might very well be granted. It was granted before, and was now being withdrawn. The divisional boards resented the withdrawal; they called it repudiation. He did not like so ugly a name as that, but he thought that the concession might be granted to boards on goldfields to assist them to keep their roads in such repair as would enable miners to work to as great advantage as at present.

Mr. MACFARLANE said he thought the hon. member for Wide Bay, Mr. Mellor, scarcely expected the Committee to support him. It appeared to be a new departure, though the hon. gentleman admitted that it was only a copy of an old law. They must remember, however, that the divisional boards got £2 from the Government for every £1 raised within the division, which was not the case sixteen years ago. If the amendment were carried the divisional boards on other goldfields would go in for the same thing; and if they once admitted the principle he did not see why it should not be extended to coalfields. Looking at the matter from a widely extended view, and considering that boards were already subsidised to the extent of £2 for every £1 raised locally, he could not support the amendment.

Mr. SMYTH said the passing of the amendment would be only a fair concession, seeing that homesteaders had to pay the extraordinary rate of 1s. per acre per annum for their land, which could be resumed at any time. The principal reason for introducing the clause into the original Bill was the existence of the heavy traffic in carrying quartz. Most of the drays carried from three to four tons each, and they cut up the roads in such a manner that the ordinary rates were not sufficient to make them passable. If the amendment were not carried, the result would be the extinction of one board at least. The Glastonbury Divisional Board had received £533 from homestead rents, and the money had been well expended, far better than money was expended on the roads fifteen or sixteen years ago, when they were under Government supervision.

Mr. NORTON said it was with great reluctance that he would do anything to dispossess miners of any rights they might have possessed; but he thought there was a great deal of force in the argument of the Colonial Treasurer. A great change had taken place through the passing of the Divisional Boards Act since the time the provision under consideration was adopted. But there was another reason why he thought the amendment should be rejected. The miners were, he thought, as liberal-minded a set of men as could be found in the colony, and when they came to consider that any concessions made to them in the manner proposed meant an increase in the general taxation of the colony, he was sure they would be willing to forego the retention of the small rights in question. The taxation of the colony had been considerably increased during the past two or three years, and there was every prospect of further general taxation, and under those circumstances he thought the miners would readily forego what advantages they derived under the existing Act, or the advantages they might derive under the proposed amendment. He was sure that they would not press it in the present condition of the country, if they knew that anything they might gain

would probably entail a loss upon the country, and perhaps necessitate additional general taxation.

Mr. MELLOR said, in reference to the altered state of things which some hon. members had pointed out, no doubt there was an alteration. The Government now gave £2 for every £1 raised by rates by divisional boards, but before they had to do the whole of the work. The Government were then making the roads of the colony without any special taxation, and now the colony contributed one-third of the money towards them, so that the alteration in that respect was not in favour of taking away that revenue referred to. The hon. member for Townsville, when in charge of the Bill in 1880, readily acceded to that portion of revenue being given to the divisional boards and municipal councils, and he (Mr. Mellor) thought it would be a great pity to take it away now.

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN said he was sorry he could not agree with the hon. member who had just sat down. He quite agreed with the hon. the Treasurer on the principle that the rents of all Crown lands should belong to the whole colony. He did not see why the rents derived from Crown lands on goldfields should go to the divisional boards of the district, and that the rents from Crown lands in the other divisions should go into the Treasury. The hon. gentleman had just said that, in 1880, he (Mr. Macrossan) readily agreed with an amendment of the kind now proposed. That was quite correct, and he could give a very good reason why he did so. In 1880 they had just passed the Divisional Boards Act, and for the purpose of conciliating the antagonism which at that time existed against the divisional boards system, the Government thought it was wise to grant that concession. That was the only reason why the Government did so on that occasion, and that reason did not exist now. The Divisional Boards Act was now working well, and was looked upon with favour by every part of the colony; therefore, there was no necessity for continuing the violation of the principle, which the amendment undoubtedly was, as they did in 1880. He was quite certain that the miners of the colony did not wish any exceptional favours to be given to them. They had never expressed any wish of that kind. All they asked for was fair play, and he thought that by the introduction of that Bill, doing away with the particular clause now proposed to be reintroduced by the amendment of the hon. member, they would have fair play so far as divisional boards were concerned. Therefore he was sorry he could not support the hon. gentleman. He should do so if he thought the miners of the country actually in justice demanded anything of the kind, but they did not. Roads on goldfields were no more difficult to make than roads elsewhere; in fact, as a rule, they were more easily made, as the surface was generally hard. The main roads were generally to the crushing machines, and he believed that all the divisional boards he was acquainted with had sufficient money to keep their roads in repair, without violating a principle that should not be violated. If they had not, let them ask the House for a special grant, and the House would then consider whether they were entitled to it or not. He certainly could not support the new clause, or rather old clause in a new form.

Question—That the proposed new clause stand part of the Bill—put, and the Committee divided.

AYES, 5.

Messrs. Smyth, Mellor, Isambert, Hamilton, and Bailey.

NOES, 27.

Sir S. W. Griffith, Messrs. Chubb, Dickson, Miles, Macrossan, Rutledge, Norton, W. Brookes, Govett, Lumley Hill, Adams, Black, Foote, White, Wakefield, McMaster, S. W. Brooks, Horwitz, Jordan, Murphy, Midgley, Dutton, Moreton, Kates, Brown, Salkeld, and Macfarlane.

Question resolved in the negative.

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

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

CROWN LANDS ACT OF 1884 AMENDMENT BILL.

COMMITTEE.

On the Order of the Day being read, the Speaker left the chair, and the House went into committee to further consider this Bill.

On clause 9, as follows:—

"The powers conferred by the forty-fourth section of the principal Act may be exercised with respect to any land, and as well after as before the expiration of two years from the commencement of that Act. And the provisions contained in that section limiting its operation are hereby repealed."

Mr. LUMLEY HILL said before the clause was put he should like to move the amendment of which he had given notice—namely, the omission of the 67th section of the principal Act. That was the clause which dealt with not mortgaging grazing farms, but he was perfectly certain that if grazing farms were to be a success, which he was very doubttul about, the occupants of them would have to be allowed to mortgage them, and be given the same facilities as leaseholders or tenants of the Crown, or persons in any other line of business.

The PREMIER: This is not the proper place for the amendment.

Mr. LUMLEY HILL said that was the most appropriate place that he could see in which to put it.

The PREMIER: It should certainly not come in until after this clause.

Mr. LUMLEY HILL said he did not know which was the best place.

The PREMIER: It would not be symmetrical to put it in here.

Mr. LUMLEY HILL said, as far as he could see, the amendment would come in very well before clause 9. They were dealing now with grazing areas, and he thought it was the proper place for the amendment. If the Chief Secretary would like it better anywhere else, where it would be equally forcible, he would withdraw it for the present. Would the Premier accept the amendment if it was inserted anywhere else?

The PREMIER: You may as well move it now and have done with it.

Mr. LUMLEY HILL said, as the Chief Secretary pointed out, he might just as well move the amendment and have it disposed of at once. He was perfectly well aware that the Chief Secretary had only got to ring the bell and go to a division, and all the townies would roll up and vote, although they would not know what they were voting for. "Sufficient for the day were the two guineas thereof," and they did not want to jeopardise the Government or embarrass them by voting against them, and give any facility to people who settled upon the land. He was perfectly aware of that. The Government had made up their minds that they would

not accept any amendments, and therefore it was waste of breath and time to endeavour to point out the exigencies of the case as far as the people who lived on the land were concerned. The Chief Secretary repeatedly, in the course of debate on the principal Act, complained that he received no assistance whatever from the Opposition in their criticisms. He (Mr. Hill), as an outsider at that time, was aware that in a very great measure that was true, and it was well known that the merits of a Bill after it came out of committee depended almost as much upon the Opposition, and the criticism it received from them when in committee, as upon the ability and intelligence of the framers of the Bill. He noticed that when amendments in favour of the pastoral tenant and for the benefit of the whole community were introduced and carried by the Chief Secretary's own supporters, who were anxious to keep him in power and help him along, the hon. gentleman came down the next day with a threat to those who had voted for the amendments that he would withdraw the Bill if they did not take away with the one hand what they had given with the other, and so they had skipped back into the fold, and the pastoral tenant was left as badly off as ever.

The PREMIER: He does not think so.

Mr. LUMLEY HILL said he did, and he (Mr. Hill) thought he was a pretty good judge of those matters. However, that part of the Bill was gone and passed.

Mr. DONALDSON called attention to the state of the Committee.

Quorum formed.

Mr. LUMLEY HILL said there were not many members present, and he supposed they had all made up their minds how to vote, although they might not know what they were voting about, or what effect their votes might have. It seemed to him that members did not very clearly understand the clause which he had referred to as desirable to expunge. The 67th clause of the principal Act read as follows:—

"If default is made in the payment of the money secured by memorandum of mortgage according to the tenor thereof, or upon the happening of any event which, according to the terms of the memorandum, entitles the mortgagee so to do, the mortgagee may—

(1) Enter upon and take and retain possession of the holding for any period not exceeding twelve months;

(2) Sell the holding by public auction after not less than thirty days' notice of the intended sale published in the *Gazette* and a local newspaper;

Provided that the purchaser must be a person who is not disqualified to be the lessee of the land under the provisions of this Act;

Provided nevertheless that the board may extend the time during which the mortgagee may retain possession of or sell the holding."

Now, he saw perfectly the reason. He was not in the House when the principal Act went through, or when that clause passed, but he saw plainly the motive which actuated the Minister for Lands and the Government at his back in the framing of that particular clause, and it was their anxiety to prevent the evil of dummying. In endeavouring to avoid Scylla they had fallen into Charybdis; and the effect of that legislation would be simply to debar those people who proposed to enter into that line of business from obtaining the usual business facilities of credit. Three-fourths of the business of the whole world, in every line of business, was, he supposed, carried on on credit; and why on earth, if that particular line of business were to be successful, should persons embarking in it be deprived of the facilities which were usually forthcoming from financial institutions to persons who were engaged in almost any enterprise? He could see plainly that it was the probable danger from dummying; but they must not fall into the mistake in that Chamber, that they had been verging towards for some time, of legislating as if all the people they had to make laws for were rogues or vagabonds—that there were no honest men in the world at all, or in that portion of the world they had to legislate for. Of course, he supposed anything he had got to say would not have the slightest effect. It was like talking to a stone wall or a stone fence to criticise the action of the Government. But what he wished to see was that the Land Act should have a fair chance of success as far as grazing farmers were concerned, and he contended that if they retained the provision which he proposed should be repealed it would not have a fair chance of success. If he wanted to see the Act come to grief in the shortest time possible he would not raise his voice to protest against that clause, because he knew perfectly well that it would be the one which would bring grazing farmers to grief sooner than anything else. A man never knew when he might want pecuniary assistance, and in embarking in an enterprise of that nature he would make out his calculations, as he (Mr. Hill) had done from time to time, as to the possibility of grazing farms being a financial success. He regretted that the figures, as he made them out, did not give him a very hopeful prospect of the enterprise. He took it that a man, to start an improved 20,000-acre farm, would require a capital of £6,000 or £7,000. He must conduct his business on a cash basis. By the time he had stocked his holding and conserved the water on his grazing farm he would be at the end of his tether, and then if anything hindered him getting in his clip of wool or draft of fat sheep, he would have nothing to pay wages with, or even to find the necessaries of life. He must have recourse to a financial institution, and what would be the result? The man would be asked what security he could give, and he would reply that he could give a lien over his live stock. That was practically all he was permitted to do, and it was really nothing. What financial institution in the world would advance, except at a very high rate of interest, any sum of money upon live stock with no place to keep them? The lessee could not depend upon keeping them on his grazing farm for more than twelve months, consequently he would have to pay an extra rate of interest for any outside assistance he wanted. Bad security meant a high rate of interest. Financial institutions only wanted interest for their money, and they were perfectly indifferent to the situation. They had no sympathies or anything of that kind, but looked at the matter from a business point of view. If they could advance with safety to their constituents upon four, or five, or six grazing farms adjoining one another, with the view, if one of them did not pay, of making four farms into two, or of bringing the whole four under one management, it might be a profitable enterprise. But they were debarred from doing that by the 67th section of the principal Act. Supposing A, B, C, and D were under advance to a financial company and all their farms adjoined, if A and C made failures the financial company might desire to give their properties to B and D, or they might find it necessary to consolidate the whole four into one farm in order to make them a success. But as the law now stood, if A made a failure the financial company lost its money and had to replace A with another person under precisely similar circumstances, and he would run the same risk and chance of making a failure also. He was looking at the question now from

a political economist's point of view, and from a financial point of view, and he maintained that it was absurd that those restrictions should be placed upon capital, and that it should be prevented from being brought into the country to improve the land, and employ labour for the common good of all, because people in the towns would not prosper or thrive if the people in the country were not doing well. That was what he was anxious to see. He was not directly interested in the matter himself; he had not even a 40-acre paddock, but he could see clearly from an experience of over twenty years in the pastoral districts that the Act as it stood would have the most disastrous results as regarded the financial situation of the colony. The Chief Secretary had told him that plenty of the pastoral tenants were perfectly satisfied with the amendments which had been made as regarded their position under the Bill. Well, they got a twenty-one years' lease with one hand, and with the other the security of their improvements was taken away. The amendment was couched in such artful phraseology that he himself had hardly fathomed the meaning of it yet; but he took it that the squatters mentioned by the Chief Secretary accepted the fact that they had twenty-one years to work out their improvements, and they would work them out. They would not put up any fresh ones, and they would not take any trouble as they got towards the end of their lease to keep them in good order. The amendments that had been introduced might suit the old-fashioned squatter who would never make any improvements, but they would not suit the men who had made costly and really valuable improvements. He had no wish to detain the Committee, and he supposed the matter was a foregone conclusion, as the Government intended to oppose the amendment. They would not suffer the Bill to be amended in any way by people who wished them well, who wished as much success as possible to be got out of the Bill, and who could see clearly that as it was it was utterly unworkable, and would have a most damaging effect upon the prosperity and revenues of the colony. He moved the following clause to precede clause 9 :—

The 67th section of the principal Act is hereby repealed.

The CHAIRMAN said he could not put the hon. member's amendment before clause 9, as clause 9 had been put.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS (Hon. C. B. Dutton) said he would withdraw clause 9 for the present.

Clause 9, by leave, withdrawn, and proposed new clause put.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS said he must admit that the hon. member for Cook was very consistent in the views he always expressed, and all his amendments had one object — to give capital an unrestricted opportunity of acquiring all the land it wished throughout the country. The clause the hon. member proposed to repeal was the clause which made it impossible for any man to dummy grazing land except at such a risk as no reasonable or sensible man would incur. Remove that clause, and the pastoral tenant could acquire as many grazing farms as he liked, covered by a so-called mortgage. Now, he had no doubt the hon. member knew that perfectly well; it was the object the hon. member desired to bring about. The hon. member was one of those who believed that capital should have an unrestricted fling wherever it pleased, and acquire as much as it wished without regard to the interests or prosperity of the mass of the people of the country. He trusted the Committee would block the hon. member effectually in any attempt of that kind. The hon. member said there were no opportunities for the grazing farmer to raise money to carry on his business as a grazing farmer under such a mortgage as he could offer a money-lending institution. Now, he (Mr. Dutton) entirely dissented from that view. He would admit that no money-lending institution would be inclined to go as far, probably, as the banks and other money-lending institutions had gone in their dealings with squatters, to the misfortune and detriment of the squatters themselves. Had there been any restriction on the amount of money they could borrow, it would have been a fortunate thing for the squatters of the country as well as for the country generally. The hon. member said money could only be borrowed on the live stock of the farm. Did the hon. member mean to say that a lease for thirty years of a grazing farm of, say, 20,000 acres—a going concern, with all the improvements on it—was not a marketable asset? It could be sold and bought readily—more readily than any squatting tenure in the country. If not, there could be no success for it at all, and it would not be brought into existence. The hon. member also said that the Government had shown a desire generally to put so many difficulties in the way of selectors that they could not go into the money market and raise money to start the concern. He (Mr. Dutton) did not think it was desirable that anybody should go into the money market wholly to get money to start a thing of that sort. No one would be foolish enough to lend money to men who had not something of their own to start with. Their undertaking should be gauged by the amount of capital they could command themselves before they asked anybody else for assistance. If a man had only a small amount of money he had better restrict himself to 5,000 acres, or 10,000, or 15,000, depending upon the capital he could command. Once he got the thing started as a going concern he could offer a money-lending institution a tangible security for the money he wanted to borrow. If that would have the effect of restricting the amount of money that could be borrowed as compared with what pastoralists had been able to borrow before, it would be a very good thing for the grazing farmer himself if he had not judgment enough to keep within moderate and prudent bounds. Not that it was the business of legislation to do that for him; but if it had that effect, as the hon. member for Cook said it would have, nothing but good could result. Any man could get ample money to carry on his concern if he had a fair amount to start with. He did not think, therefore, that there could be any sound objection to the clause the hon. member proposed to repeal. It was a very effective safeguard against dummying, which hon. members on the other side, when the principal Act was passed, were never tired of saying would be so easy. The more he thought of it the more convinced he was that no man would be foolish enough to attempt dummying on the only security he would have. It was too great a risk for any man to run, and would not be attempted by any man who could see the dangers that were attached to it. The removal of the clause would give such men full scope to do as they liked. He, if a lessee, with that clause away, would take care to secure every acre of the resumed part, and by so doing he would entirely block settlement. He hoped the Committee would regard the question from a proper point of view, and would clearly understand that what the hon. member was always striving for—and it was the drift of his present proposition—was to remove the difficulties in the way of dummying.

Mr. MURPHY said he was satisfied that his hon. friend, the junior member for Cook, was perfectly honest in his convictions on the matter. The hon. member was not, he believed, actuated by any sinister motives, and there was no reason whatever why the Minister for Lands should have gone out of his way to accuse him as he had done.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS said the hon member for Barcoo was misrepresenting him. He never accused the hon. member for Cook of dishonesty. He had merely represented the hon. member as holding certain opinions which were opposed to those held by him and by the Government.

Mr. MURPHY said the Minister for Lands certainly led the Committee to infer that the junior member for Cook was acting in the interests of dummiers, and that he wanted to repeal the clause in order to give free scope to dummiers and capitalists, whom the hon. gentleman looked upon as rogues and vagabonds to be guarded against. He (Mr. Murphy) did not take the same view of the question as the hon. member for Cook. The Bill itself threw open the door to dummying so widely that the restrictions which it did contain ought not to be lessened. He was even inclined to think that still further restrictions should be imposed, so as to prevent any chance whatever of dummying. The pastoral tenant certainly did not want to dummy, nor to see the door thrown open to dummying. They were not at all afraid of the real *bonâ fide* selector. What they were afraid of were dummiers.

Mr. DONALDSON: And "boss-cockies.

Mr. MURPHY: And "boss-cockies"—a Victorian term, which meant a dummier, not one of the poorer sort, but the dummying capitalist. The "boss-cockie" was as yet unknown in Queensland, but he would come to light under the present Bill. It would be found easy enough to evade the restrictions contained in it, which he certainly hoped would not be made less than they were at present. He should therefore vote against the motion of the hon. member for Cook.

Mr. LUMLEY HILL said that, with regard to the accusation of the Minister for Lands that he had brought forward the motion to facilitate dummying, he might say that he had never had anything to do with dummying in his life. He had never even pre-empted, nor been the owner of land in large areas; he was never a cormorant or a land-grabber. An acre or two, properly situated—say in Queen street or thereabouts—was the "dart" for him. His object was to see capital introduced into the colony and employed on the land. The colony wanted money as well as men. Although the Minister for Lands seemed to look upon advances to pastoral tenants and grazing farmers as a perfect curse, he believed the hon. gentleman had benefited from them as well as he himself had. He (Mr. Hill) had always used his credit pretty well, and he found that the banks and financial institutions had plenty of restrictions of their own without any unnecessary impediments being placed in their way. Money spent on the land was reproductive both to the borrower and the lender, for without capital the land could not be utilised; without money and labour put into it, it would be of no earthly use. That was the reason why he wished to facilitate and encourage in every way the employment of private capital on the lands of the colony. Everything could not be done by State aid. The Government certainly borrowed largely and spent largely, but they did not seem to consider how they were going to pay the interest or repay the principal. The idea of the Government seemed to be that "The State may borrow, but nobody else shall;' but if the country was going to live on State loans alone they would find themselves in a very queer place before they had done. He was not surprised at the criticism of the hon. member for Barcoo. No doubt that hon. member would not care to see grazing farmers near him; but he (Mr. Hill) wanted to see men living upon the land, and improving it, and having a chance of success given to them. He had no sympathy with the class known as "boss-cockies," who made a living by levying blackmail on leaseholders; but great facilities were afforded to them by the Bill. The Minister for Lands might think the Act was perfectly plain, and that the restrictions against dummying were so great that no one would venture to indulge in it. But he (Mr. Hill) could see loopholes in it fast enough, and he could see how, if there was any chance of its being, from a financial point of view, successful, dummying could be carried on to a very considerable extent under the Bill. However, he did not suppose the Minister for Lands would see it. But the pride must have been a good deal taken out of the hon. gentleman about his fine new theories, and the experiment he had undertaken in the nationalisation of the land. They were going to have it in 40-acre blocks, at all events. He was thankful he was free from the reproach of having been in the Assembly, either on one side or the other, at the time the original Act was passed. It was the most impracticable Act ever passed by any assembly of intelligent people in the world. The present was the second amending Bill brought in, and he should like in every way in his power to make it so thoroughly amended that it would really have a good effect and become a useful Act. But he saw it was not to be.

Mr. W. BROOKES said he must confess that his own impression, after hearing the junior member for Cook, was, that every time he rose to speak on the subject under discussion he injured his case more than he had any idea of. He seemed to be the incarnation and impersonation of self ishness, and his very frequent protestations about having no interest of his own to serve, and of having no axe to grind, only confirmed the impression that he had. He (Mr. Brookes) really did not know what would satisfy that hon. gentleman and those who thought with him. He seemed to think that everything should proceed on the system of unlimited borrowing. He (Mr. Brookes) would like to know how much was owing now on squatting properties. He would be bound that they owed two or three times as much as the public debt of the colony.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: No, no!

Mr. W. BROOKES said he would be bound they did.

Mr. MURPHY said they did not owe more than they could pay.

Mr. W. BROOKES said he was not going to say they owed more than they could pay. All he knew was that they were never satisfied with borrowing. The horse-leech was nothing to them. And now they were complaining because capital was shut up. Why, if they had the whole of the capital of the world to come and go upon they would want more.

Mr. MURPHY said they would make a good use of it.

Mr. LUMLEY HILL said they would make it reproductive.

Mr. W. BROOKES said that the theory of the hon. member for Cook was a miserable, wretched theory; he was quite confident of that. The hon. member was an English gentleman, and he must know the method on which the

agriculture of England and Scotland was conducted. When a man went to an English landlord to take a farm, he would like to know how that landlord would receive the man if he said "I have no capital, but I am going to borrow some." Did the hon. gentleman not know, did they not all know, that the landowner would not let any farm to anybody unless the tenant was prepared with ready money to the amount per acre of at least £10 or £12?

Mr. BUCKLAND: Quite correct!

Mr. LUMLEY HILL said the hon. the junior member for North Brisbane was misrepresenting him. He had stated that a man going on one of those grazing farms required £6,000 or £7,000, and it was only when that money was exhausted that he would have to have recourse to financial institutions. He did not say that he was going solely on credit; not for a moment.

Mr. W. BROOKES said that the hon. junior member for Cook made his case still more rotten, because he assumed that the man who went in for one of those grazing farms would lose his capital and stick fast unless he could go to some bank or financial institution which some persons regarded as sent down from heaven to bless mankind. He (Mr. Brookes) would like to know if that was a theory that would bear examination. Did the hon. gentleman suppose that everybody who took a grazing farm with a capital of £6,000 must find himself at a deadlock and be obliged to go with bended knees to some financial institution? Those financial institutions the hon. gentleman would like to see spread all over the country to enable him to borrow another £30,000 or £40,000. He (Mr. Brookes) much preferred the theory of the Minister for Lands. There was some common sense in it, because it did give some little credit to the industry, frugality, and economy of a man. If they took the theory of the hon. the junior member for Cook it did not give any such credit; it did not presuppose such a thing as economy, but that when a man got on to a grazing farm he was to be sustained all through by the hope that when cleaned out there was more money for him if he only knew where to borrow it. He (Mr. Brookes) objected to that system as a very poor one. He thought that the Minister for Lands was unassailable in his theory: that it was a great security to the lessee of the lands that he should not be able to borrow at an unlimited rate. There was no gainsaying what the Minister for Lands contended, that grazing farms with leases of thirty years were a great advantage and a great good. What more did a man want? He (Mr. Brookes) was afraid that the hon. the junior member for Cook was not so disinterested as he tried to make out. He thought the hon. member must be an agent, and that he had got a finger in the pie. He wanted to put, not his own claws, but the claws of the financial institutions, on the lands of the colony. The weakness of the hon. gentleman's theory was borrowing. It should be the object—it was the object—of the Land Bill to check borrowing. They knew that the progress of the squatting interest had been lately stopped by the fact that they could no longer borrow as they had done. Men who had a little money bought a station, and made a deposit, and then borrowed large sums to pay the balance.

Mr. LUMLEY HILL said he did not know that.

Mr. W. BROOKES said he thought the hon. gentleman knew everything. What! did he not know that?

Mr. LUMLEY HILL said he certainly did not.

Mr. W. BROOKES said that everybody else knew that that was the ordinary way in which squatting had been conducted in the colony. The number of men who had gone into squatting and had worked their way from being shepherds to opulence by knowledge, and industry, and economy, they might count on their hands.

Mr. LUMLEY HILL said that was what he did.

Mr. W. BROOKES said that the number of squatters who had embarked their little all as a cash deposit, and then borrowed an enormous sum from the banks, and paid during good years a large amount of interest every year, only to be burst up with the first drought and to be turned adrift in the world—the number of those was legion. He was glad to hear the hon. member for Barcoo say what he did, although he and the hon. the junior member for Cook ran pretty well as Siamese twins, with a wholesome difference between them, and the balance was in favour of the hon. member for Barcoo on the present occasion.

Mr. DONALDSON said there was no doubt that the amendment would give great facilities for getting assistance from financial institutions, but it would also open the door to wholesale evasion of the law. It was generally charged against squatters that they were always prepared to take advantage of any land Act; but whilst he was desirous, as a squatter, of seeing them treated well by giving them a good lease, fair tenure, fair and moderate rentals, he did not advocate the law being made in such a way that it could be evaded. If the amendment were carried, there would be great danger of holdings being taken up by "boss-cockies," as they were called in another colony. A man would take up 20,000 acres, and employ several dummies to take up the adjoining blocks, and thus he might have a station larger than many existing runs. He would not be able to use them properly, and after a few years one or more would be forfeited; then he would put in other dummies, and the thing would go on *ad infinitum*. The clause would be of great assistance to deserving persons if it were passed, but unfortunately it would be taken advantage of by another class of persons if passed in the present form. When the principal Act was under consideration, he frequently pointed out that, while he was desirous of seeing the pastoral lessees treated fairly, it was necessary to frame the Act so as to settle a population on the land, and he should be sorry to assist in passing an amendment which he feared would be abused in the manner he had indicated.

Mr. NORTON said he thought it was a pity that borrowing was not more restricted, but he thought the Colonial Treasurer was responsible for the discussion to a large extent, on account of some remarks contained in the Financial Statement he made in 1884. Those remarks led to the conclusion that the Government were not unfavourable to grazing lessees borrowing. In connection with that, there was a great deal of discussion at the time the Bill of 1884 was under discussion in committee. The question arose whether leaseholds would have any commercial value, as pointed out by the Minister for Lands just now. He appeared to think that they would have a considerable commercial value; but it was restricted by the 59th section, which practically limited the number of persons who might become lessees to a very few. He, Mr. Norton, rose particularly to refer to the objection financial institutions had to being compelled to sell a lease within so limited a time. The time was limited to twelve months, which might, however, be extended; but when an extension was asked for it might not be granted; and he was led to understand that they would not make advances on properties with such a title.

The Chief Secretary might set a question at rest in regard to the position taken up by the mortgagee when he advanced money on a holding. There were many people outside connected with financial institutions who were under the impression that the mortgagee who advanced money on a grazing holding must take the position of the holder of the lease, and was not allowed to hold any other leasehold as mortgagee in the same district, or within 25 miles of the holding on which he advanced the money. A statement from the Chief Secretary on that point would relieve many people from a great deal of uncertainty.

The PREMIER said the 66th section of the Act carefully provided that—

"A memorandum of mortgage shall have effect only as a security for the sum of money intended to be secured by it, and shall not take effect as an assignment of the lease."

So that the mortgagee was in no sense in the position of the lessee. The lessee remained the lessee, and the mortgagee had only power to sell under his mortgage. The hon. member said there was some difficulty in consequence of the limit of time within which the sale must be made; the Act provided that possession must not be retained longer than twelve months except by leave of the board, otherwise the facilities for dummying would be obvious—a man might take possession as mortgagee, and keep a holding as long as he liked. He was aware of the disadvantages arising from the mortgagee being compelled to make a forced sale — disadvantages affecting not only the particular mortgagee, but also the man who wanted to borrow money on the security of his holding—but those disadvantages were uncertain, and they had to be weighed against the disadvantages which were obvious and certain—namely, the facilities for dummying. The question was fully discussed in 1884, and the provision was as good as it could be made. He therefore hoped that the Committee would dispose of the amendment and go on with the Bill.

Mr. NORTON said he did not see how any amendment could be made in regard to the forced sale of a holding without allowing dummying to come in.

Mr. BLACK said the arguments in connection with the clause were pretty much the same on the present occasion as when the original Bill was going through committee. Very little fresh matter had been introduced, and he could not see how the Government, without abandoning one of the chief principles of the Bill, could possibly assent to the omission of section 67 of the principal Act. If that were agreed to, it would necessitate the omission of the 53rd section, by which no one was allowed to hold more than one grazing farm of 20,000 acres or more than 1,280 acres of agricultural land in any one district of the colony. That clause would have to be altered also. But it had always seemed to him a very extraordinary anomaly that although the Government professed to place so many obstacles in the way of a selector holding more than those areas, the Act gave him power to hold as many 20,000-acre blocks as he liked in different districts of the colony. All he had to do was to take up 20,000 acres in one district and repeat the operation all through the different districts of the colony.

Mr. DONALDSON: No.

Mr. BLACK: As long as the areas of 20,000 acres each were not nearer than twenty-five miles, and had a distinct dividing line between them, he could hold as many as he liked, but only one in each district, and 1,280 acres of agricultural land; so that however good the intention of the Government might be in trying to prevent selectors from holding more than one area——

An HONOURABLE MEMBER: You are quite wrong.

Mr. BLACK said he was certain he was not. In connection with the matter under discussion they could not speak from the experience of the past -- they could not say positively whether the mortgaging clause had had any injurious effect up to the present time, because unfortunately, from bad seasons, combined with other causes, the Land Act had been such a terrible failure that no one wanted to select land or put themselves in the position of being able to mortgage. The issue put by the hon. junior member for Cook—and he thought rightly put—was, that as the Government had shown their intention to abandon some of the principal conditions of the Land Act as originally introduced, they might be inclined to go a little further and concede the omission of the clause in question. He had no doubt the time would come when that clause would have an injurious effect, but without remodelling the whole Act he did not see how the Government could possibly assent to the amendment.

Mr. BROWN said that to hear some of the speeches made on that and similar Bills one would suppose that the introduction of capital into the colony was a positive calamity, and that it was the duty of the House to not only keep capital out, but to prevent people engaging in different enterprises from borrowing. That seemed to him a very extraordinary theory to advance. He thought the duty of the House was to legislate so as to encourage the influx of capital in every possible way. He thought there was a great deal of force in the remarks of the hon. member for Cook with regard to providing facilities for people to borrow money on grazing farms; but he would still advise the hon. member not to press his amendment now, because it was impossible for the Government to assent to it without submitting to a vital alteration in the principal Act, which, of course, they could not do. He therefore thought it was not advisable to press the amendment at that stage, and on that account he could not vote for it.

Question—That the proposed new clause to precede clause 9 stand part of the Bill—put and negatived.

On clause 9, as follows:—

"The powers conferred by the forty-fourth section of the principal Act may be exercised with respect to any land, and as well after as before the expiration of two years from the commencement of that Act. And the provisions contained in that section limiting its operation are hereby repealed."

Mr. NORTON said at the time the principal Bill was introduced the Government did not propose survey before selection, but while the Bill was in committee an amendment was proposed by an hon. member who was not now in the Chamber, by which the principle of survey before selection was adopted. The Minister for Lands assented to the amendment after some consideration; and although it was decided before the Bill was finally passed that selection before survey should be allowed upon certain conditions for two years, it was understood that after that time expired the principle of survey before selection would be adopted generally. He did not know whether the hon. the Minister for Lands had given any very strong reasons why that principle should be departed from now. He should like to hear something from him on the subject.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS said, in the working of the Act, the 44th section had been of very great assistance to the department, without

being any drawback or obstruction; that free selection before survey would be in those districts that were practically free from alienated land. When the leaseholders who chose to come in under the amended Act got the extended tenure provided by it, their runs, or the resumptions from their runs, would, of course, be liable to the operation of that clause, and it would work very well in this way: The commissioners who had now to report upon the runs for the purposes of division gave such accurate descriptions of the country, as well as the position of the improvements upon the resumption, the position of permanent water, dams, and so on, that it was very easy for anyone to lay off a grazing area under section 44. The plans showed with great accuracy the different points where blocks touched upon creeks; and other well-defined natural features of the run were shown, as well as the position of the improvements and water; and the consequence was that grazing farms could be taken up without incurring the expense of survey before it was actually required. That was one reason why it was intended to make the provisions of the 44th section of general application.

Mr. NORTON said the commissioners' reports the hon. gentleman referred to must be much more accurate than those he (Mr. Norton) had seen, which would be of no assistance whatever to anyone wishing to take up land. In fact, it could not be done except in cases where there were well-defined points to start from here and there. But to lay off anything like a large portion of a run from the description given in those reports would be impossible. He was not going to object to the clause; the Government were welcome to it as far as he was concerned.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS said the hon. gentleman's knowledge of the commissioners' reports was probably confined to the coast districts, where he (Mr. Dutton) was prepared to admit they were not so valuable, as the country was generally broken, and so diversified in feature that it was impossible to give an accurate description from merely riding over it. In his previous remarks he had referred particularly to the inland districts. It could be done with great accuracy there, but it could not be done on the coast; but even on the coast in some portions it could be done very fairly, and, in fact, had been done. In the interior there were such things as marked trees—marked when the runs were surveyed—and those might well be used as defining the position of the starting point, which was really all that was wanted.

Mr. DONALDSON said on the second reading of the Bill he pointed out that the clause seemed to contain an insidious attempt to do away with survey before selection, and that was then denied, but he found now from the statement of the Minister for Lands that it was a bold attempt to do away with survey before selection. Well, on two previous occasions the question had been decided by large majorities that they were to have survey before selection. Since that time attempts had been made to have selection before survey. Those attempts had been defeated, and now, for the third time, a similar attempt had been made. He could not agree with the Minister for Lands as regarded the locating of the land on maps. The commissioners' reports might be very faithful so far as the description of the land went, but with regard to fixing improvements on the land, or having starting points from which surveys could be laid down, that was perfectly absurd. He had seen a good number of the commissioners' reports, and he ventured to say there was hardly an instance—especially in the case of large runs—where the survey could be laid down with any kind of accuracy whatever either with regard to improvements or description of country. He had lived for a long time on stations, and notwithstanding that he was a pretty fair bushman, he would not be able to describe country sufficiently well to be able to have it marked down on a map. Even to a practical mind, he knew it would be a matter of impossibility unless one's ideas were confined to a very small area. In the case of large runs, he ventured to say that after the land was surveyed the description would not agree with the statement made by the lessee or overseer living on the run. Now, there was no doubt that survey before selection had at one time prevented selection going ahead, because the surveys took some time to complete, but that time had passed away. They had now a larger number of selections surveyed than there were applicants for, and therefore the time had come when surveys could be made far in advance of settlement. Survey before selection was one of the greatest safeguards they could possibly have, and he was certain that the Minister for Lands in his inmost heart agreed with him. He must be satisfied that it was the great safeguard against the clashing of interests, and prevented a great amount of ill-feeling. As such it was regarded when the principal Act was going through, and he was surprised and astonished that any attempt should now be made to do away with it, which, to a certain extent, meant retarding settlement. They had hundreds of thousands of acres surveyed ready for selection. It was all ready for the selector. It had been proclaimed open for selection, but unfortunately the land had not been taken up in large quantities. One great argument in favour of survey before selection was that the country was divided in such a way that one person could not monopolise the best portions of it; and he felt convinced that if the Minister for Lands and the surveyors laid down hard-and-fast rules they would fall into the gravest blunder. Persons who did not know the key of the position would take up the very best selections, as marked on the map; but perhaps a tank or a waterhole which would be shown on the map to be in a certain position would not be in such a position, and the lessee of the run, or some person who knew the country, would take up land in such a position as would deter others from selecting. Another argument used when the Act was going through was that in the case of large waterholes it would be possible to make them serviceable to four or more selections, for it was well known that with selection before survey one person could appropriate the whole of the available water. He was certain that they came to a right conclusion at the time they passed the clause providing for survey before selection, and he was perfectly satisfied that the present clause had emanated from the Minister for Works, who was constantly referring to that section of the Act. He had accused the hon. member for Darling Downs, Mr. Kates, on several occasions of having introduced a clause that had blocked settlement. Now, he would ask the Minister for Lands if he conscientiously thought that survey before selection had had any such effect? He certainly was not desirous of seeing any clause introduced into the Bill for the purpose of doing an injury to the country, but he was satisfied from his own experience what the effect of doing away with the clause would be. It would cause a great deal of quarrelling between lessees and selectors; it would cause the eyes of the country to be picked out, leaving what was left perfectly useless. If land was surveyed before selection every selector knew what he was going to take up, and the land could be so divided as to be made the best use of. It

was not in the interest of stopping selection that he was opposing the clause, and he felt that if he allowed the clause to pass without protesting against it he should not be doing his duty.

Mr. KELLETT said they had had a very full discussion on the subject when the Act was passed in 1884, and he considered at the time that survey should take place before selection. He thought that was intended to apply particularly to grazing areas, and the alteration made last session in the 44th clause was a very advisable one. He was perfectly satisfied that in the outside districts where there were large grazing areas likely to be taken up it would be the greatest mistake for the Government to allow the land to be selected before it was surveyed, and the hon. member for Warrego was perfectly right in saying that nothing would give greater facilities to the pastoral leaseholders to pick the eyes out of the country. The lessees were bound to make use of those facilities, and as soon as the clause was passed it would not be very long before they showed the Minister for Lands what they could do. It was always intended that when those areas of 5,000 or 20,000 acres, as the case might be, were cut up, a fair amount of good and bad land should be taken together. The eyes of the land and the waterholes would be picked out, and the rest of the land left useless, as no grazier would have it. The intention at the time the principal Act was passed was to prevent that; and he believed the amendment passed last session was advisable. He thought it would be better to extend the principle all over the country. It had been remarked that a lot of those farms that had been surveyed were ready for occupation, and possibly when the system was generally understood—and he believed it to be a good one, and likely to continue—they would be taken up. Whether they would be taken up or not, persons should not be allowed to go and "peacock" all over the colony. He was afraid that the part of the Bill which referred to grazing areas, which he thought very useful, would be very much damaged if that clause passed at all.

The PREMIER said the 44th clause provided only for cases where it was "practicable to divide the land into lots without actual survey, and to indicate the position of such lots by means of maps or plans, and by reference to known or marked boundaries or starting points." The hon. member was speaking as if the present was a clause to do away with the principle of survey before selection altogether.

Mr. DONALDSON: The Minister for Lands said it would.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: I said nothing of the sort.

The PREMIER said if hon. members confined themselves to the provisions of the Bill it would be better. The hon. member for Stanley had objected to the provision of the clause referring to grazing farms. That was a different matter, and, if desirable, it could be altered so as to deal with agricultural areas.

Mr. NORTON said he thought that if the Premier had a practical knowledge he would have been a little more chary in supporting that clause as it stood. It was very easy to mark on plans and maps where those divisions would be, but he would defy any man to go on to a run and find out the places. He might find possibly one or two of the points. Probably he might find a gum-tree where two branches of a creek met. There was another matter which attracted his attention. It was rather important in connection with that clause that if they allowed it to pass they would have to amend the provisions of the 57th clause The holder of a grazing farm under that clause must in three years have the whole of it fenced; but he could not go on to the land as laid out on the map, and be able to pick out the boundaries and fence it within that time; so that the time allowed for fencing must be extended to three years after the survey was made. That involved another amendment in the principal Act. Under the old Act he had known land selected and occupied for four or five years before the surveyor was sent to it, and it would be the same, he believed, with regard to that clause, because if the land applied for was in an outside place surveyors would not go to it if they could help it, simply because it would not pay them to do so. If they got a number of selections to lay out in the one neighbourhood they could afford to go there, as they could make a good thing out of it; but they would not go to any out-of-the-way place if they could help it, and the probability was that the land would not be marked off till after the selector had found the way to the place, and occupied the land for two or three years. If that clause passed that alteration would have to be made—that the occupier should not be compelled to fence his selection until three years after the survey had been made, when he could put up his fences on the proper boundaries.

Mr. MURPHY said if the Committee had taken the wrong reading of the clause—or if that side of the Committee had done so—the Minister for Lands was responsible for it, because he had certainly told them that it really meant selection before survey; and therefore the Premier, in taxing them with not reading the Bill properly, must charge his colleague, as it was not their fault at all, but that of the Minister for Lands, who had misled them. The Minister for Lands as a practical squatter, and as a man who knew——

An HONOURABLE MEMBER: Not a scientific squatter?

Mr. MURPHY: Not a "scientific squatter," but still he gave him some credit for some amount of practical knowledge in regard to squatting. However, as a practical squatter he must know that it was impossible for any commissioner going over a run to plot down on a map, without actual measurement, any belt of scrub on a run. He would not put it down on a map, he would guarantee, within miles of its true position. Neither would he put in tanks or dams, or even a creek that he rode across, within miles of where they really were. He would defy him to do it. There was hardly a run in Queensland—except those perhaps where a "feature" survey had been made—where the surveyor could mark the improvements on the map correctly. The surveyor simply went over it and marked a few trees, and with his wheel made a rough kind of measurement of the boundaries of the run, but he would not be able to mark the land within miles of its true position, How was it possible for a man like a dividing commissioner, then—and he had had some experience of how a dividing commissioner was able to do his work—however conscientiously he worked, to know what particular block of a run he was on? He defied him to know unless he was told by the pastoral tenant or his employés what portion he was on. It was impossible for him to know from his own knowledge, particularly on a run of over 500 square miles. And as to putting a tank down within miles of its position he could not unless he got the map belonging to the tenant to guide him, whether he was prohibited from asking the lessee for information by the Minister for Lands or not. As the survey was done in the office they would find that some blocks of country would include all the scrub, and other blocks would include all the good land; some blocks would include all the water, and other

blocks would have none. The consequence would be that by taking up a block here and there with water on it, or a block here and there containing all the good country, any man—whether the pastoral tenant or whether a selector—could practically command the whole of the rest of the country. If the Committee passed that clause in its present shape, that would be the result. He was very glad to hear the Premier say that he thought it might be applied only in agricultural areas. That would to some extent meet the difficulty; and it might even apply to larger areas. He was quite certain it would throw open the door to wholesale dummying if that clause was passed in its present shape.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS said there was no doubt the clause would give great facilities for the occupation of the country. As to its being more applicable to agricultural than to grazing land, he denied that altogether. It was specially applicable to grazing areas, and that was what it was wanted for. He did not wish to keep it dark at all, and would tell hon. members opposite straight what it meant.

Mr. DONALDSON: You denied it just now.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS said he did nothing of the kind. He had said it was to deal with grazing areas, and not agricultural areas. Those were the men within their reach, and they could bring surveyors to bear upon them. The agricultural land, as a rule, was in small pockets up and down the creeks, and they could not deal with it under the 44th section with any accuracy, for many of those creeks were not accurately surveyed. The grazing areas could be surveyed in the outside districts of the colony. In dealing with the resumption of a run, for instance, the Land Board might recommend that certain portions only of that run should be thrown open to selection, and not that the whole should be thrown open at once. They might recommend certain portions to be opened to selection under the 44th section, and as soon as the clause before them became law they would then have to refer to the commissioner's reports, and might possibly have to send a surveyor to make an inspection, and he might ride over the country and chain it, or perambulate it, if he found it necessary, and he would then send in a design of a certain number of grazing areas of whatever size was thought best. He would send in a design for recommending either that the areas should be dealt with under the 44th section, or that it would be desirable to deal with them by survey in consequence of certain conditions rendering it necessary to divide the country in a particular way. As to the statement made—that it was impossible for a dividing commissioner to be able to state or mark on a map where permanent waterholes were on a creek, he did not agree with that statement at all, because he was perfectly satisfied they would be able to put on a map, within a distance of half-a-mile, any well-known waterhole on a run on any surveyed creek.

Mr. MURPHY: There are lots of creeks not surveyed.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS said that most of them were surveyed.

Mr. MURPHY: None of them are surveyed.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS said they were all surveyed where there were permanent waterholes in the Western country. He called it surveyed, though it was possibly perambulated; but at all events the marked trees and blocks were there, and in almost every instance could be found, and the position of those permanent waterholes could be marked on a plan with very fair accuracy indeed. When a line was laid down to a waterhole two or three miles long, and it was necessary that the line should cut through the middle of that waterhole, if a man was out half-a-mile one way or the other it was quite possible that the surveyor, when he went out to survey the boundary, would take his survey from that point. They must be content with such accuracy as could be attained under the 44th section until a survey could be made of the boundaries. A surveyor would have sufficient latitude to enable him to make the line so as to make a fence the boundary of two selections until it could be determined accurately by survey.

Mr. PALMER said there was a very great discrepancy between theory and practice, when the theory given by the Minister for Lands was that they might take and run lines from any river so as to accurately define the boundaries of the country. He knew the practice was that they might follow up a river that had already been surveyed by Government surveyors, and they would not be able to find where the boundary of a run was even where the trees were marked every mile. He had endeavoured for several years to find the boundary of his own run, but he could never find it. He could never find the marked tree from which to start, and had never been able to follow the boundary of the run although it was gazetted. That was the practice. After that he could not see how a plotting survey on a surveyor's plan would be sufficient to enable anyone to find the boundaries of the country. The difficulty chiefly arose on account of the existence of clause 57 of the Act, which provided that the selector must fence his run within three years. He might be anxious to begin the work of fencing at once, but unless the country was accurately defined his labour would be thrown away. If there was that difficulty which he mentioned in finding the boundaries of pastoral leases where they were not particular to half-a-mile either way, how was the agricultural or grazing selector going to define the boundary of his selection accurately, so that his labour and fencing might not be thrown away? The division of blocks of pastoral leases could not be settled accurately, and how were the boundaries of agricultural or grazing selections to be accurately defined by a plotting survey? They should very carefully consider the power given under the clause to do away with survey before selection. He did not suppose there was any country in the world where progressive and successful settlement had gone ahead as much as in the United States, and there settlement had always been upon surveyed lands. It would be a good thing for the colony if they could only get the same settlement as they had in the United States, and he hoped before long they would initiate the principle that had been so successful there; and one part of their principle was survey before selection, though, if carried out, it should certainly be carried out very differently from the way in which it had been and was being carried out in this colony. Take New South Wales, for example, on the other side, where they had selection before survey. Had there ever been a country where there was so much ill-feeling, so much cross action, and so many fees for lawyers as there had been in New South Wales on that account? There had even been bloodshed over it in many cases of disputed boundaries where there had been selection before survey. The same thing was going on there still, and it had hindered settlement in that colony; the pastoral industry had been very much hampered by selection before survey, and the selector also was not in a very much better position. That was why he said they should study the clause very carefully.

Mr. KELLETT said the Minister for Lands had stated that the creeks in the outside districts were so well defined that there would be no difficulty in marking off grazing areas. He wondered at that remark coming from the hon. gentleman more than from any other member of the Committee, and for the reason that, from his knowledge of the working of his department, he must have known what had been going on in the case of a district over the whole of which there had been settlement for the last twenty years. Take, for instance, the Kennedy district, which he knew a good deal about. It had been settled, and there was stock all over it for the last twenty years, and the hon. Minister for Lands must know that at the present time he was sending out men to decide whether certain creeks were 5 miles north or 5 miles south of a certain place.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: That is not the Western country.

Mr. KELLETT said that was not the Western country, but the same thing happened in the Western country. If the hon. gentleman was so anxious to defend the Western country he could give him an instance there. The Thomson River was a very large river there, and it had been originally surveyed by one of those rough surveys by a late commissioner, but when the proper survey came to be made the Thomson River was found to be several miles away from where the first survey had shown it to be, and the consequence of the mistake was that it upset the boundaries of all the runs in the district. It was three or four years before that mistake was settled. The man was a practical surveyor himself, but he did not go about surveying that country with his wheel in a practical way. One surveyor was sent up, then a second, and he believed even a third before the commissioner would admit that they were right, and that the river was miles away from the place where he had located it. And that kind of thing had occurred in all parts of the colony. He was perfectly satisfied that no commissioner riding over a block of country, and taking five times as long to do it as anyone else could afford, could define the boundaries of the land satisfactorily. He was further of opinion that the provision would stop *bonâ fide* settlers going on to the land, because a man would not even know whether his humpy was on his own land or not. Another selector might come along at any moment and say, "This is my block." It had also been well remarked that evening that a man was only allowed three years in which to fence his holding, and that if survey before selection was permitted that period of three years should not commence until the land was properly surveyed. But even if the clause was amended in that way, he was satisfied that there would be so much trouble and delay, especially in the cases of men who took up grazing areas in rather isolated positions, that settlement would be retarded. It had been very properly pointed out that they could not get surveyors, unless there were salaried officers in the employ of the department, to divide the land in something like decent time, and people did not want to wait a year or two before they could carry on their operations with any degree of confidence. He, therefore, thought it would be wise for the Committee to carefully consider the matter before passing the clause. Let there be no feeling in the matter, because members on the other side had spoken on the subject, as was often the case, but let hon. members use their common sense, and those who did not fully understand the subject get their information from those who did. Let them not allow the Minister for Lands to rush another of his fads upon them, simply because it was part and parcel of the Land Act. There were so many alterations being made in that Act now that the hon. gentleman need not be upset because it was proposed to make another useful alteration in another part of the Act. The whole matter required grave consideration. The suggestion made by the Premier just now with reference to an amendment to the effect that the provision should not apply to grazing farms, would, if adopted, be a great improvement in the Bill.

The PREMIER said he believed it was extremely undesirable to allow selection before survey in grazing areas, but nearly all the discussion had been on some imaginary provision which was not in that Bill.

Mr. MURPHY: The Minister for Lands says it is.

The PREMIER said hon. members had all been talking about something which was not practicable, but that clause dealt only with cases in which the thing was practicable.

Mr. DONALDSON: Who is to be the judge?

The PREMIER said a run was divided, and it was only so far as it applied to the resumed parts of the run that the clause had any application. When the run was divided a description of the resumed part was published in the *Gazette*. If they were to believe what hon. members said it was quite impossible to know where it was, and nobody could have the remotest idea where the boundary was.

Mr. DONALDSON: Certainly not.

The PREMIER: Of course they did, but if their argument was correct the work of the Land Board was a farce.

Mr. DONALDSON: Not at all.

The PREMIER said their arguments proved too much—that nobody knew where his own run was, where it began or where it ended. Because the hon. member for Burke could not find a particular marked tree, he argued that it was impossible to say where the boundaries of a run were. That argument proved too much altogether. The clause applied to the resumed halves of runs, and probably, in many cases, the runs would be fenced. Of course that would not be so in all cases, but, as he had already pointed out, the clause only dealt with cases to which it was practicable to apply its provisions. Hon. members were speaking of other cases in which it was not practicable. Take a case in which it was practicable—a case in which between the resumed half of a run and the leased half, or between two runs, there was a river or fence or some other well known feature, would it not be quite possible on maps to show that river or fence? It was not of the slightest consequence that it was not absolutely correct with respect to latitude and longitude. People knew where the river or the fence was, and if a line were taken 5 miles west from the starting point along a fence, then 5 miles south, then 5 miles east, that could be shown on the map just as well as by pegs on the ground. He knew that there were many parts of the colony where that could not be done, but hon. members should address themselves to cases where it could not be done instead of to cases where it could be done. He dared say that members would get up and say that it could not be done in mountainous or scrubby country. He knew that very well. But he also knew that there were miles of country where it could be done just as well as they could sell land in the suburbs of Brisbane by showing the position of the allotments on a map. It made no difference whether they marked off 30 feet or 36 feet or 5 miles from a known point. When they had the trigono-

metrical survey of the colony finished they would have a survey to work to, but they had not that at the present time. That clause was one which would facilitate settlement, and it appeared to be the clause which met with the strongest disapproval of the present Opposition.

Mr. DONALDSON: No.

The PREMIER said he was loth to believe it; but it was a provision which could not do the slightest injury, and it was most strenuously opposed. If it was possible to define a particular area of land on a map without actually driving in pegs at the corners of the ground, why in the name of fortune should it not be done? What magic was there in driving in pegs at the corner? Supposing a particular piece of land was an island, unless they drove pegs in all around it was not to be allowed to be taken up. That was the argument.

Mr. DONALDSON: You are trying to make it ridiculous.

The PREMIER said hon. members seemed to think there was some magic in driving in pegs. He saw no magic in it. If there was a marked tree or the junction of two fences or paddocks, he thought that might be taken as a starting point just as much as a peg; and the fact that a surveyor had not been over the land did not make the slightest difference in identifying that particular piece of country. It was only in cases where it could be done conveniently and practically that the clause applied. If it could be done why should it not be done? The only answer hon. members gave was, that there were cases in which it could not be done; they talked about a different thing altogether.

Mr. DONALDSON said when the Premier understood a thing he could make it very clear, and when he acted as a special pleader he could mystify the Committee. They never used the absurd argument which the hon. member would lead the Committee to imagine they had advanced, that the line dividing a run was frequently an imaginary line, and that no one could find the boundary. He knew cases in which it would be very difficult to define the boundary.

The PREMIER: You are talking about cases in which it cannot be done.

Mr. DONALDSON said the hon. gentleman had attempted to force it down their throats that they had said no one would know where the line was.

The PREMIER: Not at all; I said sometimes you can tell; you say, sometimes you cannot.

Mr. DONALDSON said the Premier had made the statement that the clause was opposed for certain reasons. He denied that it was opposed for those reasons. There were a good many things to take into consideration. First of all, roads were required which had to follow the contour of the country. How often had the divisional boards been mulcted in large sums of money through having to resume roads through private lands? He would grant that if all the roads and main lines were laid down first, then the perambulator would do for the connecting lines. The Minister for Lands knew perfectly well that all those perambulating lines were unreliable; the hon. member must have had great experience of that since he came into office. Certain points were set down as being a certain distance apart, and on the strength of that runs were taken up; but when they afterwards came to be accurately surveyed, in hardly one instance was the quantity of country supplied to the holders. Even in the district where the Minister for Lands had lived, there was a run which was supposed, for thirty years or more, to run back to a dividing watershed; but on survey it was found that the watershed was fifteen miles back, instead of six, as had been imagined, and the consequence was that it caused litigation between the pastoral tenants. They would have the same thing between selectors if selection before survey were allowed. He had asked the Minister for Lands, but the hon. gentleman carefully avoided answering the question—perhaps he forgot it—whether there was not more land surveyed than there were selectors for? Was there any demand for selection before survey? Was there any block to settlement in consequence of the land not being surveyed? If there were any such demand, and if the land could not be surveyed fast enough, then there would be some justification for the clause. He was satisfied that the clause could be used in the most dangerous way to the country—he did not say to the pastoral lessees, because their land was actually resumed, and, perhaps, the sooner it was taken from them the better. He looked at the matter from a national point of view. He did not want to see one selector pick out the eyes of a run and block settlement, or the squatter, through a friend, take up a selection which might be the key to settlement, and so secure all the rest of the run. The Minister for Lands was well aware that that sort of thing could be done. They had seen the errors of the past, and they should avoid them in the future. The surveys with the perambulator were not correct in the first instance, and so gave rise to litigation between neighbouring squatters in consequence of the runs overlapping. It was all very well to go and mark out like a chess-board so much land; but if a selector coming from Victoria went away to the Barcoo, would he be able to find where a selection was without a mark to guide him? He (Mr. Donaldson) had had difficulty in finding even well-surveyed land, and he thought he could hunt out surveyed land as well as anybody. A 20,000-acre selection was some six miles square; a man could not see from one side to the other, and possibly when he thought he was on his own land, he would be on neighbouring land taken up by someone else. There was another difficulty that presented itself. At present before land was thrown open to selection, certain rentals were fixed, and that was very satisfactory; for an intending selector could see the quality of the land, and judge whether the rental was a fair one or not. But if the clause were passed, how would the board fix the rental beforehand? Would they take the resumed part of a run and put the same rental on the whole of it? Did not everyone know that some parts of the land would be worth four times as much as others? The State would either lose by the board putting on too high a rental, and so blocking selection, or the board would err on the other side, and put on too low a rental, letting someone pick up the cream of the country for almost nothing. How were they to avoid those difficulties? Surely there was a very good law at the present time—one that had not deterred settlement—and the extension of the 44th section was not demanded by intending selectors. He thought that there would be no opposition to continuing that section for a couple of years, or more, if necessary; but to extend its operation over the whole colony, as the Minister for Lands intended doing, would be a great injury to all parties concerned. He had pointed out several difficulties, and as the Minister for Lands was going to follow him, he would ask that hon. member to answer two questions. Had the present system deterred settlement, and how was the hon. member going to adjust the rentals of land selected before survey?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS said the hon. member had no objection to the selector of agricultural areas taking up land with all the difficulties imposed by the 44th section—almost insuperable difficulties in his case as compared with the grazing areas. The hon. member had no compunction for that man; it was only the grazing area man who had any difficulty in finding the area he wanted to occupy.

Mr. DONALDSON: Will you allow me to explain——

The MINISTER FOR LANDS said the hon. member could speak afterwards. The hon. member wanted to know if there was not more land surveyed than was actually required for occupation. Yes, there was; but it must be remembered that there were only certain portions of country available to deal with by survey, and he would like to have some other portions of country to deal with without the expense of survey under the 44th section.

Mr. DONALDSON: Who pays for the survey?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS said the cost of survey would then only be incurred for the man who really required it, who selected the land right off. The hon. member scouted the idea of being able to fix any point on a creek which had been surveyed with the perambulator. Now, in a traverse survey with the perambulator the trees were marked, and the positions of the junction of large creeks were given with more or less accuracy. Take the case of a creek running through the centre of a run, while the run was divided by a line crossing the creek at right angles. The division line would always be found to start from some known or fixed point on the creek, either a marked tree, or the junction of a creek, or a certain number of chains up or down from that particular point. Thence they had a starting point; and there would be half-a-dozen starting points equally good, any one of which would do to fix a base line for the farms. He quite admitted that in the back country in many places there were runs that could not be dealt with in that way—where there was no accurate starting point to commence from. With anything like a reasonably fair description of country on any known creek or river, a man with any bush knowledge could easily determine the position of the land he wished to select. There were other points also on the line where he could pick it up without necessarily going to the point from which it started. He could verify it at different points, and determine his position within a very short distance—if within a mile it would be sufficient for a large grazing farm.

Mr. DONALDSON: But that would not be near enough if the selector wanted to erect a boundary fence.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS said permission to do that would not be given until the land had been properly surveyed. The clause did not give what hon. gentlemen were pleased to call free selection before survey; it fixed them to a certain portion of the resumed part of a run, and would give facilities for settlement in places where it would not pay to send surveyors at present to make actual surveys.

Mr. DONALDSON said the Minister for Lands had misrepresented him in saying that he did not object to land being selected in that way in grazing areas. His remarks applied to land which was so well known that it would be impossible to make any error about it. He would remind the hon. gentleman that he had not replied to his other questions.

Mr. MURPHY said that under the Bill a selector could not fence until the survey was made, and he might have to hold the selection for months and even years before he got it surveyed. They knew how pastoral tenants had to wait years and years after their applications were sent in before the surveys were made, and the same thing would happen to the unfortunate selector. Up to that time he was almost a trespasser upon the land. Most serious complications would arise under the clause, and they were only doing their duty in pointing the fact out to the Minister for Lands. They had been twitted with having done nothing whatever to improve the 1884 Act, and they were trying to do all they could now to prevent the Government having to bring in another amending Bill to correct the errors that would be brought about by that very clause. He did not wish to lie under the imputation of not having pointed those errors out—errors which would be found to be very grievous ones before very long. The Chief Secretary said it would be as easy to mark off the resumed portion of a run into 5,000 or 10,000 acre blocks on paper as it would be to mark out on paper a 40-acre suburban paddock into 16-perch allotments. So it might be, but he would ask the Chairman, who was conversant with the business, how the purchaser of a 16-perch allotment, so marked off on paper, was to tell which was his particular piece of land? There would be continually overlapping boundaries, and it would lead to no end of litigation between the different selectors. It should also be remembered that improvements had to be paid for, and it would be impossible in the case of contiguous selections, if near a boundary, to decide which selector was to pay for them. He was surprised that an hon. gentleman with the practical experience of the Minister for Lands could not see how very easily the clause would give rise to complications of that kind.

The PREMIER said he did not understand the sympathy of hon. members opposite for the poor selector who would be embarrassed by having to wait a little until his selection was surveyed. Sympathy for the one poor selector who was likely to be so embarrassed was to prevent any selectors from selecting until all the land was surveyed and all the pegs put in. Such sympathy was misplaced.

Mr. NORTON said the remarks that had been made against the clause were not misplaced. There had been a good deal of misconception about the application of the clause, but it had been considerably cleared away by a remark of the Minister for Lands. He (Mr. Norton) was under the impression that when land was marked off on a map a selector, on selecting any part of it, would be able at once to occupy it. That was why he suggested that if the clause was passed in its present form an extension of time should be given to the selector for the completion of his improvements and fencing. Now, they were told by the Minister for Lands that a selector was not to be allowed to occupy the land he had selected until it had been surveyed: the license to occupy could not be given until that was done. If such was the case, would it not be better to omit the section altogether and let the selector indicate what land he wanted surveyed? It would save a great deal of trouble and do away with the objection there was to selection before survey. He put it seriously to the Minister for Lands to adopt the suggestion that had been made, so that when a man wanted to take up a selection a license would be issued to him, and he would be satisfied that the land surveyed for him was the land he was to have.

Mr. LUMLEY HILL said that really the clause seemed to him a very incomprehensible one. The Chief Secretary said it amounted to free selection before survey.

The PREMIER said he did nothing of the kind; he said the very opposite.

Mr. LUMLEY HILL said that the Minister for Lands led them to believe that it was to be free selection before survey of those grazing farms, and the Chief Secretary said it was not. For his (Mr. Hill's) part the great merit of the Act consisted in having a survey before the people went on to the land: letting people know where they were going to, and what rental they were to pay. It was impossible to have the rental assessed until the land was surveyed. For two, three, four, or five years they would have no rights; they would not be able to put on improvements, as they might erect a valuable reservoir for water just off their boundary. No man would spend a considerable sum of money in improving property until he knew he was safe and that it was on his own ground. He knew that some hundreds of those grazing farms had been already surveyed and were waiting for selectors to come. If they had been all rushed up as fast as they were surveyed there might have been some excuse for the Minister for Lands to say, "Give me additional facilities for meeting the demands of selectors." But they knew that nothing of the sort had occurred, and that there were plenty of selections already surveyed, and only waiting for selectors. There was no demand whatever for additional facilities in the way of dispensing with survey. Another question was that which cropped up when the Bill was last under discussion—namely, the subject of roads. It was a most important matter that roads, more especially the main stock roads, should be thoroughly determined and surveyed, and ample width left along them. All those selectors would require roads and access to their selections, and that would be part of the surveyor's work. He maintained that the clause was a wholly unnecessary clause, calculated to lead to confusion and litigation, and to bring people into active conflict with one another. Under that clause, selectors would be fighting, not only with the lessees, but with one another; no end of squabbles would occur, no end of bitterness, and no end of feuds. For his part he believed the Government would do very well to withdraw the clause, and leave the Bill as it stood.

Mr. KATES said he was very glad to hear that, after all, the principle of survey before selection had a number of admirers in the Committee. When the amending Bill was introduced it was given out that survey before selection was to be done away with altogether, It was spoken of in the Press as wiped out altogether from the Bill. He was glad to hear a different story from the Chief Secretary. When the present Act was introduced in 1884, it was generally agreed that the 44th clause was a good one. The only objection raised at the time was that they would not have enough surveyors to survey the land, and it was suggested that they could get surveyors from New Zealand and other colonies. He maintained that if they only got the land selected and disposed of as fast as they could survey it they would have reason to be satisfied. It had been pointed out that in New South Wales the system of selection before survey had been the cause of much harm; and he was informed that in America survey before selection had resulted in a great deal of good. He did not see why they should depart from the principles of survey before selection altogether. They had proof of the evils of general selection before survey in various parts of the country. They knew that in previous years the best pieces had been "peacocked," and the land had been left for the general public on ridges, in scrubs, and tops of ranges, while all that could be avoided by the principle of survey before selection. He did not believe in feature survey or pointing out a selection on a map. A selection under that system might be determined in a scrub or a waterhole. Another matter was that if they went on with the Water Bill it would be necessary to reserve all lakes and lagoons for public purposes, and for selectors in general. By feature survey it might be possible that all lakes and lagoons would be lost to the public.

Mr. MURPHY: Hear, hear!

Mr. KATES said that the principal advantage of survey before selection, which he pointed out when the Bill was passing through the House in 1884, was that the surveyor would lay out the main roads. They would also get a description of the lands surveyed, so that anybody who came to the Lands Office, and asked for a piece of ground, would be told, "Number so-and-so contains so many acres—so much arable land, so much timber land, so much grass land; it is so far from a school, so far from a township, and so far from a railway." In fact, the selector would have everything before him, and all that he would have to do would be to go on the land and start operations at once. There was no doubt, as had been pointed out so often, the principle of survey before selection was the best part of the Act. Who was opposed to it? He believed that some members of the Government thought that selections were not taken up fast enough. But the long drought must be considered. In time of drought people would not take up selections. But things were changed; there were better seasons and better grass now, and it was quite possible that selections would be taken up much faster than hitherto. He was sure it would be advisable, and he hoped the Government would see their way clear, to introduce the principle of survey before selection in its entirety. It would be a great advantage to the incoming people and to the country at large. If they went back to selection before survey thousands of acres would be made useless to the country, and they would lose thousands of acres in nooks and corners which would not be selected, but be put on one side. With survey before selection, selectors would have to take up the good, the bad, and the indifferent with advantage to themselves and to the country at large. He did not know whether any hon. gentleman would move an amendment, but he thought the best thing would be for the Government to negative the 9th clause, and fall back on the principle of survey before selection, which had done a good deal of good in other parts of the world, and would do a great deal of good in the colony.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said that according to the hon. member for Darling Downs, Mr. Kates, the principle of survey before selection was the proper one, because a large quantity of bad land remained unselected when land was selected before survey. Did the hon. member suppose that a man was going to take up bad land because it was surveyed? He had not the slightest hesitation in saying that the greatest blot on the Act of 1884 was put on it by the hon. member when he introduced the principle of survey before selection, and that was evident from the mere fact that every squatter on the other side agreed to it. One would suppose, to hear the hon. member, that selection before survey was never heard of before it existed in Queensland; but he would point out that it existed long before in New South Wales, though he was free to admit that it worked badly in that colony, because there was free selection all over the colony. In Queensland a certain portion of the land was resumed for settlement, and

selection was confined to the land resumed for that purpose. The whole thing was in a nutshell. The squatters looked upon selection before survey as being a disturbing element.

Mr. DONALDSON: You have no right to say that.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said he would like the hon. member for Darling Downs to point out the bad effects of selection before survey under the Act of 1868. The bugbear of the whole affair was that selection before survey was likely to disturb the pastoral lessees, and they would do everything in their power to prevent it. It was extremely refreshing to hear the hon. member for Cook talk of the interest he took in the welfare of the selector. He was particularly anxious to see that the selector was protected in every possible way. He was afraid that he would put up improvements, and that they would be removed by-and-by. He (the Minister for Works) always had a suspicion of such anxiety coming from that particular quarter. There was always something wrong about it, and, in his opinion, the pastoral lessees were anxious only to protect their own interests and not those of the selector. He always felt a suspicion when hon. members got up and asserted that they were not acting in their own interests but in the interests of the selectors. He should like to see free access, free selection before survey——

Mr. LUMLEY HILL: All over the world?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Yes. The hon. member's argument was that the land must be surveyed to prevent the best land being taken. Did he mean to say if a man was offered scrub land before it was surveyed that it would not be acceptable to him? The fact of the matter was that some hon. members endeavoured to embarrass the Government in every possible way, and cause them to expend a large sum of money on the survey of land which possibly would never be taken up.

Mr. MURPHY: Hear, hear!

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Hear the scientific squatter! He did not profess to be a scientific squatter, but he had been scientific enough at all events to make it pay.

Mr. MURPHY: A waterhole squatter.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said it was no use for the hon. member for Cook to get up and plead for the selector. Nor was it any use for the hon. member for Warrego to do so, with all his anxiety and sincerity for the welfare of the selector. Let hon. members leave the selector to himself; he would take care that he selected the best land to be had.

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN said there had been a long and interesting discussion on free selection before survey, and survey before selection; but he thought the speech they had just heard was the least likely to advance the interests of the Bill. The chief argument the hon. member had used in favour of selection before survey was that all the members on the Opposition side were in favour of survey before selection. He supposed that if the Opposition were in favour of selection before survey the hon. gentleman would be just as much opposed to that. The hon. member accused the hon. member for Darling Downs of having put the biggest blot on the Bill of 1884; but he (Mr. Macrossan) did not think that was so. The Bill was a Bill of blots when it was introduced, and it contained many blots when it became law; but he thought the hon. member for Darling Downs had removed one blot. The Minister for Works also said the principle of survey before selection was taken up unanimously by the Opposition. So it was by the Government. They accepted the amendment without a division, and the only argument against it was used by the Minister for Lands, who was afraid there would not be enough surveyors to survey the land quickly enough for the selectors. There had been two years to do the work in, and surely there ought to be enough surveyed now.

Mr. PREMIER: That is a curious sum in arithmetic. How do you make it two years?

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN said it was not far short. But it was not necessary that that Bill should have become law before the Minister for Lands made arrangements for the employment of surveyors; in fact, he was advised to advertise for them in New Zealand some time before the measure was passed. The Government were sure of passing that Bill, because they knew that their majority would pass it—along with the £10,000,000 loan. They knew that one would help to pass the other; and if the Minister for Lands had been sufficiently in earnest he could have got as many surveyors as he required. A country had been mentioned as being the most advanced in the world in the way of selection; but in that country the position of the squatters was different from their position in Queensland.

The PREMIER: They have no title.

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN said he might tell hon. gentlemen that it was from that class that the term "squatter" had come into use in Australia—a class that went before survey and took up land. Those people took up land 30, 40, or 100 miles, on their own responsibility, in advance of survey; and when the surveyor came up to that part of the country each squatter had the first chance of taking up the land he occupied at the upset price. That was what a squatter was in America—he was actually a selector before the land was surveyed. But the land was all surveyed and occupied a long way ahead of actual selection, and that was found to be the best system. People were not scattered over the whole territory; they were concentrated; they had the benefit of schools, roads, and railways, and they were not obliged to take up any bad land. The best land was always taken up first, and the inferior land left for future generations. He was not a squatter, and he had no interest in squatting, but he believed that survey before selection was the best system for the country, because it had proved the best system in America, and the opposite system had been proved to be an extremely bad system in New South Wales, whilst the experience of the system in Queensland had not been very favourable. There was an extreme conflict of opinion between the Minister for Lands and the Chief Secretary with regard to survey before selection, which he thought should be cleared up before they proceeded any further. While he was sitting at the table about an hour and a-half ago, he heard the Chief Secretary say he did not think the clause should be made applicable to grazing selections, but that it might be made applicable to agricultural areas. The Minister for Lands got up within twenty minutes or half-an-hour afterwards and said that he was not going to make any disguise of his feelings in the matter. It was for grazing areas that he wanted it. Which of the two systems was the correct one? Which system was to be applied if the clause became law? He should like to know what they were after. If it were not to be applicable to grazing areas, the gentlemen on his side of the Committee, who had been arguing against it, were wrong; and if it were to be applied to grazing areas in the wholesale way that the Minister for Lands had intimated, the Premier was wrong; he had made a mistake. It was better that the Ministry should come to a

conclusion themselves as to the application of the clause before they asked the Committee to approve of it. That was his opinion, and he would say no more than that he believed in survey before selection, and should vote for it if it went to a division.

The PREMIER said the hon. member misunderstood what he said just now. He followed two hon. members who had advocated different views: one entirely objected to selection before survey under any circumstances, and the other said he did not see any objection to it if it were confined to agricultural areas. He (the Premier) said that if that were the point it had better be raised by moving an amendment to limit the clause to agricultural areas; but he did not say he thought that would be a desirable amendment to be carried. He did not think it was. They had been fighting against shadows all the evening. He had endeavoured once or twice to point out that the clause was intended to deal with cases in which the thing could be done conveniently and practically. Hon. members were arguing that it ought not to be done in cases where it could not be done conveniently or practically.

Mr. DONALDSON: We asked who are to be the judges?

The PREMIER: Who are to be the judges as to whether land is agricultural land or pastoral land?

Mr. DONALDSON: The Land Board.

The PREMIER: Yes, the Land Board. Somebody must be the judge. There might be some ambiguity in the clause from its not being formally limited by the same words that were used in the 44th section of the principal Act. He would move, as a formal amendment, that the following words be inserted, after the word "land" in the 2nd line: "as to which it is practicable to divide it into lots without actual survey, and to indicate the position of such lots by means of maps or plans and by reference to known or marked boundaries of starting points." That made no difference to the intention of the clause; but it was better to clear up any doubt. He would move the amendment, and then he thought they might settle whether, under any circumstances, they thought selection might be allowed, not before survey in the sense in which hon. members used the term, but whether selection might be allowed without compelling a surveyor to go over the ground and mark each corner with a post 3 feet high, when the actual known boundaries and starting point were sufficient to enable it to be done without it. They had been two hours and a-half talking about that, and he now moved the amendment he had mentioned.

Amendment put.

Mr. BROWN said he wished to say a few words on the subject before the clause was amended, although his remarks would apply to the amended clause as well. He thought that indiscriminate selection before survey all over the colony would be very injudicious; but at the same time he agreed with the Minister for Lands to a certain extent, that all selection before survey should not be stopped. They knew very well that they had a valuable class of selectors all along the coast and in the settled districts — the homestead selectors — who had had obstacles in their way during the past two years, in certain portions of the colony. The homestead selector, so far as he knew, was now able to select land along the southern part of the coast, and he thought that that class of selector should still be allowed to select before survey. He considered that it was waste of money for the Government to go and peg off a large number of those small selections. It would be much better to allow the homestead selector to take up a selection before survey. He did not think it was at all desirable that the same principle should be applied all over the colony. There were very good reasons for grazing farms not being brought within the proposition; but he certainly thought that homestead selectors within a certain distance from the coast, or from a line of railway, should be allowed to select before survey.

Mr. PALMER said he would point out where he thought the amendment would work indifferently. So far as he could see, the amendment referred only to starting points, wherever they might be. But they must recollect that there was another point, and that was where the division was to go to — the other end of the line. If they took the very best compass they could get, and attempted to run a line direct from one point to another in a certain direction, they would find it would be very difficult to do so. Unless the two ends of the line were marked, they would be a long way out. The amendment provided for starting points merely, and unless there was another given point to go to, so as to draw a straight line between them, there was certain to be some difficulty in defining where the boundaries were to be.

Mr. MURPHY said he could readily understand that there would be a desire on the part of the Government to pass the clause if there was any immediate necessity for it—if there was not sufficient land surveyed to meet the requirements of grazing selectors. But there were dozens and dozens of grazing farms in his district, and there were no selectors to take them up. In fact, there were more surveyors there than there were selectors. The only people who had selected in his district were the surveyors who had been sent up to survey the land. Every public-house was full of surveyors, drinking and walking about —looking for work and unable to get it, because the Minister for Lands, finding that the Act had been a failure so far as grazing farms were concerned, had stopped all surveying. There were any number of surveyors waiting for work, and as soon as the areas at present surveyed were taken up, there were plenty of surveyors in the colony to go on with the work of surveying grazing farms for men who were looking for them.

Mr. LUMLEY HILL said he would like to know from the Minister for Lands if it was a fact that he had stopped the surveyors from going on with surveys in the Mitchell district, and that they were all now out of employment, and, as the hon. member for Barcoo had said, drinking at public-houses. He did not know how the Minister for Lands could expect that land would be taken up before survey, if he found that he had so many selections surveyed already that he was obliged to stop the surveyors from going on. Was that a fact or not? If it were the case, what was the use of amplifying the facilities for men to select in a dubious kind of way? The Minister for Works seemed to think it was very suspicious that he (Mr. Hill) should take any interest in the selector. He took an interest in all people who lived upon the land—a great deal more sound and substantial interest than the men who were solely accustomed to living in towns did, men who knew nothing of the conditions of either selectors or squatters, and who were simply in that House to back up the Government. There were other difficulties selectors laboured under which he would point out at the proper time. Selectors and pastoral tenants combined were at the bottom of all the prosperity of the colony. The

people in the towns could not live without the people in the country, and therefore it behoved everyone who understood the business to do the best they could in order to make laws which would offer every inducement and facility for people to go upon the land and occupy it—he did not care in what form it was.

Mr. GOVETT said he felt confident that a *bonâ fide* selector would prefer to have the land he wished to occupy surveyed before he went upon it, because there was nothing more trying to such a man than to settle upon a piece of land thinking he had got a good selection, and to find some twelve months or two years afterwards that he had been occupying land which another man had already got. He felt perfectly certain that none of those selectors, even men who knew the country, could go and take up land before survey without making very great mistakes. And not only that, but other men would come and sit down on the same land, and say they had got a right to it. What was the selector to do in a case of that kind? His grass had been eaten up by another man's stock and he had no remedy; all he could do was to wait until the land was surveyed. As some hon. members had remarked, it would have to be surveyed some time, and as the selector paid for the survey when it was made, he could not see any reason why the land should not be surveyed before it was selected. When the Act of 1884 was passing through he happened to ask the Surveyor-General about that very matter—if he thought surveyors could be got to survey the land fast enough for selection—and that gentleman said the department would have no difficulty in organising a staff of surveyors to survey the land faster than it could be taken up.

Mr. LUMLEY HILL said he would like an answer from the Minister for Lands as to whether orders had been given to the surveyors—whether they had been stopped going on with the actual survey of grazing areas in the Mitchell district. He should also like to get some information from the hon. gentleman as to how many grazing farms had been surveyed. He thought it would be very useful information for the Committee.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS said no surveyors had been stopped up to the present time. They were carrying out the instructions they had already in hand. Whether they would receive fresh instructions in that district had not yet been determined.

Mr. LUMLEY HILL: They are going on still?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: Yes.

Mr. LUMLEY HILL: Can you give the Committee any idea how many grazing farms have been surveyed?

Question—That the words proposed to be added be so added—put and passed.

The PREMIER said he thought the words "and the provisions contained in that section limiting its operation are hereby repealed" were too vague. He therefore proposed to insert after the word "operation" the words "for a period within two years after the commencement of that Act."

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

Clauses 10, 11, and 12 passed as printed.

On clause 13, as follows:—

"When the lessee of a holding becomes entitled under the provisions of the seventy-third section of the principal Act to a deed of grant of the land in fee-simple, all sums of money which have been paid in respect of the rent of the holding for the ten years next preceding the time when he becomes so entitled shall be credited to him in part payment of the prescribed price, and the amount to be paid by him in respect of such price shall be reduced accordingly"—

Mr. KELLETT said he thought there was a slight error or defect in the clause. It said—

"When the lessee of a holding becomes entitled under the provisions of the seventy-third section of the principal Act to a deed of grant of the land in fee-simple, all sums of money which have been paid in respect of the rent of the holding for the ten years next preceding the time when he becomes so entitled shall be credited to him in part payment of the prescribed price."

He did not see that the words "ten years" should be used at all. Under the Act of 1868 men were often not able to pay their rents in consequence of bad seasons, and the time was frequently extended. Periods for payment were suspended from year to year, and the consequence was that it took longer than ten years to pay the rent. If that could be done in the case of grazing areas, he did not see why it should not be applied to other land. At the end of ten years the extra assessment was put on, and if the holders did not elect to pay during the ten years they had to pay the whole of the principal sum, but at the same time an opportunity was given of still making a freehold of the land, and the holders of the land would be credited with the sums they had already paid. He moved as an amendment the omission of the words "for the ten years next preceding the time when he becomes so entitled."

The MINISTER FOR LANDS said he must say that he was very much in sympathy with the proposition made by the member for Stanley, but there was some difficulty about it, because it would be necessary to provide, at all events, that the lessee should be a continuous resident on the land. The clause might be altered, but not exactly in the way proposed. He thought the concession would be a good one. It would be appreciated by the selector, and any man who had resided on his selection for such a number of years ought to be treated well, and ought to have the land on the easiest possible terms. The great object of the Act of 1884 was to secure *bonâ fide* settlement on the land, and when they found men residing on selections for a number of years, and likely to continue to reside on them, the easiest terms that could be given the better.

The PREMIER said the hon. member proposed to leave out the words "for the ten years next preceding the time when he becomes so entitled." Well, the effect of that would be that all the rents from the commencement of the lease would be credited as part of the purchase money although the condition of residence might not have been performed by personal residence at all. To that extent the amendment would not be a good one, but he did not see any reason why a man or his predecessor who had lived for a term of ten years on his selection so that he became entitled to buy it, should not be allowed to go on living there—although he might not be able to pay the purchase money then—and the rent be credited as part payment of the purchase money when he was able to pay it. He did not see any objection to that. The lessee would be in this position: He would always be able to sell to another man who would come and live on the holding and transfer the right of purchase to him. The right of purchase might be acquired by one man or two or more successive men. That he thought could be carried out by inserting the following after the word "entitled" on the 11th line: "all sums of money which have been paid in respect of the rent of the holding for the ten years next preceding the time when he becomes so entitled, and

all sums paid in respect of the rent of the holding for any period immediately preceding such period of ten years, during which the condition of occupation is performed by the personal residence on the holding of the lessee for the time being." If a man wanted to wait after these ten years, and if he remained on the land for five years after, or for a longer time, the time during which the payments in rent would be allowed to go towards the purchase money would date from the beginning of his residence.

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN said he quite agreed with what the Premier had stated, but he was surprised that the Minister for Lands should sum up the proposed amendment in the way he did. The amendment of the hon. member for Stanley would only apply to a man who had become entitled to the deed of grant, and therefore he thought the amendment suggested by the Premier was unnecessary. The hon. member wanted it to apply where a man had resided continuously, or his predecessor, for ten years, in which case, as was already provided, the deed of grant would become due. The amendment of the hon. member for Stanley was less wordy than that of the Premier, and was equally to the point.

The PREMIER: No.

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN said the Premier, as a lawyer, might see more meanings in it than he could, but being an ordinary layman he could see the plain meaning of it. The hon. member omitted all reference to the ten years, because the occupier would not come under the amendment until the land had been continuously held for the ten years by himself or his predecessor.

Mr. KELLETT said, with all due deference to the Premier, he thought his amendment was a very short way of coming at the same thing as the hon. gentleman desired to get at. If they looked at the 23rd clause of the principal Act, they would see that it said :—

"Whenever in the case of a holding in an agricultural area, the condition of occupation hereinbefore prescribed has been performed by the continuous and *bona fide* residence on the holding of the lessee himself, or of each of two or more successive lessees for the ten years next preceding the application," etc.

So that he must have lived, either himself or some successive lessee, for the ten years next preceding, or he could not have any right at all. If he was entitled to the right of the freehold provided he could pay up, he asked that he should be allowed to go on leasing it if he could not pay up, and that the rent he continued to pay should go as part of the purchase money. He thought that the amendment he proposed was the simplest way in which to deal with it.

The PREMIER said he would point out what the hon. member's amendment would mean. Suppose a man took up a selection and resided upon it by bailiff for ten years——

Mr. KELLETT: No, no!

The PREMIER said he was showing the effect of the hon. member's amendment. If a man took a selection and resided on it by bailiff for ten years, he would then, under the amendment, get the right to the fee-simple.

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN: Why should he not?

The PREMIER: Because the Government did not think he should. That would be the effect of the amendment, and it made a very great difference.

Mr. KELLETT: He cannot live by bailiff on it.

The PREMIER said he could under the hon. member's amendment. He would take an extreme case. A selector took up land that had been occupied for forty years by bailiff and lived on it for ten years, and he got credit for the whole fifty years' rent as part of the purchase money.

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN said he did not know why he should not.

The PREMIER said that was not what the hon. member intended to propose. It was very difficult to give effect to what was wanted in the clause. He had tried a good many times before that evening to give effect to it.

Mr. MACFARLANE said he thought the concession proposed to be given by the amendment was rather more than the Committee would be inclined to give if they considered for a moment what it meant. What was to become of the Treasury? As the amendment stood, homestead selectors who got a lease for so many years might run on for twenty or thirty years. The rent fixed was supposed to be something like a fair interest on the country's money; and if they gave the concession asked for, the moneys paid as rent for the lease would go towards the purchase of the selection, as long as the selector continued to reside upon the land, and it would then be to the interest of every homestead selector not to pay up and purchase the land at the end of the ten years, but to hold it under lease as long as possible. He thought that if the freehold selector was allowed the rent for the ten years to go towards the purchase money it was a very great concession indeed, and if they gave more than that they would be sorry for it some day. They would have a very great number of those selectors, and very little money coming in at all to the Treasury.

Mr. KELLETT said the clause did not apply to homestead selectors at all, so that the hon. member was all wrong in what he had stated. The amendment simply provided that at the end of ten years, when a man was entitled to a deed of grant, if he had the money in his pocket to pay for it; but if, because of bad seasons, such as they had lately, when, as the Minister for Lands knew, he himself was obliged to give men a longer time in which to pay their rents, the lessee would be able to hold on to his land, as the money he paid in rent would go towards the purchase money. Would it not be hard, when a man went on to the land, and lived on it continuously for a time with the intention of making it his home, that he should never be able to make a freehold of it, simply because he was not able to purchase it at the end of the ten years? If he resided on the land for that time with the intention of making a freehold of it, and put up improvements on it, that would show that he was a *bonâ fide* man, and there could be no question of dummying in such a case. They should try and encourage people to go on to the land, and not make it difficult for them to do so. A man might say, "Ten years is a good long time to stay on the land; but I want it to be my home, and the home of my children. I have but a small rent to pay, and I will make good improvements upon it and put a comfortable house upon it, as I prefer to lay out my money in that way instead of paying up the principal at once." It would be very hard if, because such a man could not find the necessary money at the end of ten years, he could not get the land at all.

Mr. ADAMS said that he had risen to speak before, but the Premier had got up at the same time. He had waited to hear his explanation, and other members had got up afterwards, and he went out disgusted. He was sorry to say that when he returned to the Chamber he found that two clauses had been passed in the mean-

time, upon which he had something to say. One thing was certain—that the clause, as it stood at present, allowed the Land Board to impose 50 per cent. upon the selector.

The CHAIRMAN: That is not the question before the Committee. Clause 13 is the clause before the Committee.

Mr. ADAMS said clause 13 provided that "when a lessee of a holding becomes entitled under the provisions of the 73rd section of the principal Act to a deed of grant of the land in fee-simple, all sums of money which have been paid in respect of the rent of the holding for the ten years next preceding the time when he becomes so entitled shall be credited to him in part payment of the prescribed price," etc. He did not think that, because a man was not able to pay for a selection at the end of ten years, he should be compelled to pay an extra amount of rent. It would be greatly to the advantage not only of the Treasury but the country generally, if the clause was modified in such a way that whatever rent a man paid during his tenure should be credited to him as part payment of the purchase money. If a man took up a selection, it did not matter whether it was 640 or 1,280 acres, and settled upon it, he was a useful colonist, and should be encouraged to keep it by being allowed whatever rent he paid to be taken as part of the purchase money. If the Minister for Lands would accept an amendment of that kind he would be enabled to settle far more people on the land than he would under the clause in its present form. He was sorry he had been absent from the Committee, because while he was absent two clauses were passed in which he had intended to propose amendments.

Mr. PALMER said he was very glad to hear the sentiments which had fallen from the hon. member for Stanley. He quite endorsed them. It was a great pity they had not had more members of the same opinion when the Land Act of 1884 was going through the Committee. He recollected that he was laughed at when he stated that that measure was intended to make the acquisition of freehold very difficult. The Minister for Lands was the first to laugh at him, and then the Premier. Now they found members on the other side who were coming to see that the acquisition of freeholds should not be made difficult, that no more obstacles should be thrown in the way of obtaining freeholds than were necessary to prevent dummying. As far as residence was concerned, he thought that ten years' residence on a farm should be sufficient in itself to entitle a man to the land, and he would then have dearly earned it. A man who resided on a selection for ten years deserved so well of the country that the land might well be made a present to him without any further conditions whatever. Except in a few favoured spots, it was not an easy thing to make a living on the land, and they should not, therefore, throw any difficulties in the way of settlement. Instead of the Minister for Lands laughing at hon. members when they pointed out difficulties, he should be the first to encourage settlement, whereas, instead of that, the hon. gentleman had done more than anybody else to discourage settlement.

Mr. DONALDSON said if he understood the amendment aright he hardly thought it went quite far enough. As the clause now stood, if a man resided upon the land for ten years and fulfilled the conditions of occupation, at the expiration of that period he would be entitled to all the back rents as part payment of the purchase money. Supposing a man was not in a position to take advantage of that provision because he was unable to pay the balance of the purchase money, then his land would be revalued and the rental increased, as the price was fixed every ten years. Yet at the expiration of that period he might have fulfilled all the conditions. He would like to see the clause amended so that all future payments should be credited to the lessee as part of the purchase money.

The PREMIER said that was exactly what they wanted to do. He thought the difficulty in framing an amendment arose from the words at the commencement of the clause—namely, "when the lessee of a holding becomes entitled." That would look as if it meant that an application should only be made at the end of ten years. He thought it would be better to amend the clause so as to read in this way:—

> When the lessee of a holding applies to take advantage of the provisions of the 73rd section of the principal Act entitling him to a deed of grant of the land in fee-simple, all sums of money which have been paid in respect of the rent of the holding for any period immediately preceding such application, during which the condition of occupation has been performed by the personal residence on the holding by the lessee himself, or of each of two or more successive lessees, shall be credited to the lessee in part payment of the prescribed price, and the amount paid by him in respect of such price shall be reduced accordingly.

The application to purchase the land as a freehold could be made at the end of ten years, but not sooner. It might, however, be made at the end of fifteen or twenty years.

Mr. DONALDSON: How about the future payments?

The PREMIER said that whatever rent was paid during the time the lessee or his predecessor lived on the holding would be credited to the lessee in part payment of the purchase money. It would be no use for a man to apply to purchase the land unless he had the money to pay for it, and he was not bound to make the application at the end of ten years. He might wait for twelve or fifteen years until he had the money to pay the balance of the purchasing price, then all the back rent would be credited to him. That was, of course, what the hon. member wanted. He would ask the hon. member for Stanley to withdraw his amendment, in order that he (the Premier) might propose the one he had just indicated.

Mr. KELLETT said that with the permission of the Committee he would withdraw his amendment.

Amendment, by leave, withdrawn.

Mr. DONALDSON said he did not quite understand the proposed amendment. The clause now provided that at the expiration of ten years a man would be credited with the sum of money paid in respect of the rent of the holding, as part payment of the price of the land. But he had already pointed out that at the end of that period the rent might be increased twofold, and the man might be placed at a great disadvantage. Supposing he had not the money to pay the balance of the purchasing price?

The PREMIER: Then he need not pay it.

Mr. DONALDSON said it was not a case of he need not, but he could not pay it. If the lessee had fulfilled the conditions of occupation, then all future rents paid after the expiration of the ten years should be credited to him as part of the purchase money.

The PREMIER: That is exactly what the amendment provides.

Mr. DONALDSON: I cannot understand it in that way.

The PREMIER said he had tried to explain it. He would read it again—"When the lessee applies to take advantage of the provisions of the 73rd section of the principal Act entitling him to

a deed of grant of the land in fee-simple." That application might be made any time after ten years; but the hon. member seemed to think that the lessee could only make application at the end of ten years, although he was not able to pay the purchase money then.

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN: The rent will be increased at the end of that time; that is the point referred to by the hon. member for Warrego.

The PREMIER said he thought the rent ought to be increased, but the increased rent would go as part payment of the purchase money. He thought it was very small interest indeed to pay on the purchase money. It was only something like 2½ per cent.

Mr. DONALDSON said he was rather obtuse. Probably he had not made himself clear to the hon. gentleman, but he could not quite understand the explanation given. What he wished to point out was, that if a man took a holding for ten years, at the expiration of that time, if he had to pay 17s. 6d. an acre, he could pay it down and get his title-deeds. But if he had not the money the Land Board might fix his rental during the next period at 6d. per acre, and fix the value of the land at £2 an acre—supposing it to be £1 during the first period.

The PREMIER: It could not be more than 30s. during the second.

Mr. DONALDSON: Then the man would only get credited with half-a-crown, and he would have 10s. put on the upset price of his land. What he wished to see was, that if a man had fulfilled his conditions, and signified his intention of buying the land when he was able to pay, the back rents should be credited to him, and also the future ones.

The PREMIER said the thing to do in that case would be to pay the 17s. 6d. and borrow 25s. What the hon. member wished was, that because a man could not pay for the land at half its real value they should therefore make him a concession.

Mr. DONALDSON said his object was to provide that when a man had complied with all the conditions, the back rentals as well as the future should go towards paying the balance of the purchase money. The same law existed in New South Wales with some modifications.

The PREMIER: What about interest?

Mr. DONALDSON said that under the Act of 1861 there was interest charged at the rate of 5 per cent., but under the Act of 1876 there was no interest. But surely if a man proved his *bona fides* by ten years' residence, they could afford to be liberal.

The PREMIER said that what the hon. member's proposition amounted to was that if a man, at the end of ten years, did not care to pay the purchase money, instead of paying the Government any interest, he should continue to pay a sum equivalent to about 1¼ per cent., and that that should go towards payment for the land at a reduced price. That was more liberal than anything he had ever heard of anywhere else.

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN said the hon. member approached the question in a sordid spirit, not with the idea of encouraging settlement, but with the idea of getting as much money out of the selectors as he possibly could. The hon. gentleman said there was no such liberal land laws anywhere else. The hon. gentleman had not studied the land laws of other countries if he thought that. The land laws of more countries than one were more liberal.

The PREMIER: Where is one?

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN: The United States of America is one; Canada is another.

The PREMIER: 160 acres; this is 1,280.

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN said a man could buy 640 acres at a dollar and a-quarter an acre in the States and had not to wait ten years to get his land; he could get 160 acres for nothing; simply paying for the survey and residing for five years. Yet the hon. member said our land laws were more liberal than any others. They were not so liberal. The proof was that America got people from Great Britain and Ireland and all parts of Europe, while this colony had to send Agents-General and lecturers to Great Britain, and pay so much per head to bring the same class of people out here who went to America at their own expense.

Mr. PALMER: And stay there when they get there.

On the motion of the PREMIER, the clause was amended to read as follows:—

When a lessee of a holding applies to take advantage of the provisions of the seventy-third section of the principal Act entitling him to a deed of grant of the land in fee-simple, all sums of money which have been paid in respect of the rent of the holding for any period immediately preceding such application, during which the condition of occupation has been performed by personal residence on the holding of the lessee himself, or of each of two or more successive lessees, shall be credited to the lessee in part payment of the prescribed price, and the amount to be paid by him in respect of such price shall be reduced accordingly.

Clause, as amended, put and passed.

Mr. KELLETT moved that the following new clause be inserted to follow clause 13 of the Bill:—

Any lessee of a holding in an agricultural area under the sixth subsection of clause fifty-eight of the principal Act may come under the provisions of clause seventy-three of the principal Act, and all sums of money which have been paid in respect of the rent of the holding shall be credited to him in part payment of the prescribed price, and the amount to be paid by him in respect of such price shall be reduced accordingly.

Section 6 of clause 58 of the principal Act provided that a lessee should occupy the land continuously and *bonâ fide* during the term of the lease, and that such occupation should consist of the continuous and *bonâ fide* residence on the land of the lessee himself, or some other person who was the actual and *bonâ fide* manager or agent of the lessee who was himself qualified to select a farm of the same area and class in the district. The effect of the proposed new clause would be to enable men who were earning their livelihood in towns to take up a farm, either for themselves to settle upon afterwards, or for such of their sons as preferred an agricultural career. There could be no dummying under it, because no man would dummy when he could not get the fee-simple under ten years. Many such men would not care to undertake the drudgery of fencing and clearing; they would prefer to put somebody on the land to do it for them, and no one could go on the land except a man who was qualified to take up a selection. He could not see that any reasonable objection could be taken to the proposed new clause.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS said the hon. member had only looked at the proposed clause from one point of view—namely, the wish that some men felt to acquire land for agricultural farms as freehold while residing in towns, and sending a bailiff to occupy it. That was not at all a desirable thing. It was utterly opposed to the spirit of the Land Act, and indeed to the spirit of any sensible land law, if occupation and settlement were aimed at. It might work well enough in a few instances, as where a father was desirous of getting an agricultural farm and

putting it in order for his son to occupy; but it would be liable to the grossest abuses. Any man in a town who, from his position, was able to obtain certain information, might take up the choicest pieces of agricultural land and occupy them by bailiff, until he was able to dispose of them at a great profit. The real object of sensible land legislation was to enable people to settle on the land and work it themselves, and it would be unfair to allow townspeople to come in and compete with them for the choicest bits of land in the country, holding them not for the purpose of *bonâ fide* farming, but to make money out of them by selling them to someone who would work them. It would be a very grave mistake to accept the proposed new clause, and should oppose it.

Mr. NORTON said he was surprised at the speech the Minister for Lands had just made. He had thought the hon. gentleman was getting reformed in his ideas, but now the old Adam had broken out as strongly as ever. He (Mr. Norton) failed to see why a man who lived in a town should be prevented from selecting a piece of land outside the town where he could retire and devote the mellow part of his life to agricultural pursuits.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: So he can.

Mr. NORTON said it was a very desirable thing to encourage, and he hoped the hon. gentleman, when he came to think over it, would accept the proposed new clause. It was a most reasonable clause, and one which would help to popularise the Bill.

The PREMIER: Yes, amongst a certain class.

Mr. NORTON said the hon. gentleman need not put his back up, for he would have to do a great deal more to popularise his land legislation before very long. When he talked about popularising the Blil, he did not mean to make concessions which were of no earthly use except to give people rights which they ought not to have, but to induce people to take up land who would become the owners of it—to enable men to take up land who would put it to a good use. He thought that would be a convenient time to refer to another matter about which he wished to ascertain the feeling of the Committee before making a definite proposal. From the tone which had been adopted by his hon. friend opposite until just now, he began to feel every prospect of his acquiescing in the proposal. A short time ago he received a letter from a gentleman with whom he was very well acquainted. That gentleman had a suburban freehold of 9 acres which he used as an orchard; and this was what he said:—

"I have 9 acres freehold suburban land which I am cultivating as an orchard. But I need more land for keeping horses and cattle for cultivating and manuring the orchard. Under the present Act I cannot select land without residence conditions, but, of course, it is necessary to keep a person on the orchard to protect the fruit. Now, I think I ought to be able to select an agricultural farm without being handicapped by having to keep a man on it; as it is required for *bonâ fide* uses."

Now, he thought that was a proposal which was well worthy the consideration of the Minister for Lands. That man—and there were many others like him—was putting his freehold land to the best possible use—the cultivation of fruit. He was sure that above all things—he did not except agriculture—they ought to encourage fruit cultivation in Queensland. It was only a short time ago that a gentleman from the United States, who had been over a great portion of California, visited the Hunter River district, in New South Wales, and expressed surprise that in a district where fruit could be cultivated to such good purpose no effort was being made in that direction. He pointed out the great profits made by fruit culture in California, and he convinced the people of the Hunter River district that by utilising the land for that purpose they would be able to derive a large profit over present returns and find employment for a large number of men, and would be doing a work which was in all respects beneficial to the country. That was a system which they ought to encourage in Queensland, but he was sure that any one who went in for the cultivation of fruit knew that 9 acres was not enough, and that it was necessary he should have some other place to keep the stock required for cultivation and other purposes. He mentioned that in order to ascertain the feeling of the Committee. The case he had mentioned was a *bonâ fide* one, and the gentleman referred to was doing his best to make the most of the land.

The PREMIER said the suggestion of the hon. gentleman referred to the subject of an amendment given notice of by the hon. member for Stanley, Mr. White. It was quite impossible to provide for every case of a man who had 10 acres and who wanted more. Every man who had an allotment probably would like another or to enlarge the allotment he had got. The amendment of the hon. member for Stanley really dealt with the question to which the hon. gentleman referred, for it provided that where a man was a *bonâ fide* occupant of country land he might take up a selection within 10 miles of that land. With respect to the amendment of Mr. Kellett, there was no doubt it would popularise the Act in more senses than one. It would popularise it in the same sense as the Act of 1876 was popular. It would be popular with those persons who speculated in country land and would reintroduce the system of speculation in country lands by dummying. Anybody could take up land, the conditions were so simple; but giving the fee-simple of country lands was by the principle of the Act to be a reward for actual settlement, and not for taking up land for speculative purposes.

Mr. NORTON said that argument was all very good so far as it went, but here they had a man doing his best to turn the land to good account, and in order to still further turn it to good account, he wanted to take up more land outside the town.

The PREMIER said the amendment of the hon. member for Stanley, Mr. White, dealt exactly with that.

Mr. NORTON asked if the Premier agreed with that amendment?

The PREMIER said when they came to it it would be discussed.

Mr. NORTON said he hoped when it did come under discussion the Government would give it their best consideration, and not be guided by the Georgian theory, which the Minister for Lands had reproduced that evening, and which he thought that hon. gentleman was getting rid of.

Mr. LUMLEY HILL said it seemed to him that the Government were determined to have it exactly all their own way, and that they would accept no reasonable amendments.

The PREMIER said they did not intend to accept any amendments which would defeat the principle of the Act.

Mr. LUMLEY HILL said they knew that the Government had the power, and they might as well let the thing slide. But they had a duty to perform to their constituents. They would have to go before their constituents before long, and if

they had not demonstrated the weak points of the Land Act they would meet with a pretty cool reception from them. The country, as a whole, was not satisfied with the Bill of 1884.

The PREMIER: We have heard that so often!

Mr. LUMLEY HILL: Yes, very often, and it would have some effect in another year or so. He had the utmost anxiety to guard the Government from that effect. He felt perfectly certain from his own knowledge, not only of the pastoral community, but of the agricultural community and selectors, that nobody liked the Act as it was. It wanted material alteration. Even the Government admitted that by bringing in session after session amending Bills. And yet they would follow the bent of their own inclination, and not accept amendments from even their own friends like the member for Stanley! No amendment was to be accepted except just what the Government chose to bring in themselves.

The PREMIER: Only good ones.

Mr. LUMLEY HILL said they were to believe that the only good ones were those the Chief Secretary framed. Those were the ones that had to go down; they had to swallow those for they would not get anything else. He (Mr. Hill) was anxious to see people in the towns have facilities afforded to them for acquiring a piece of land in the country where they could go and rusticate in old age. Why should not old colonists who had been working and slaving the best years of their life in towns not have the opportunity of acquiring a piece of land where, when past business and anxious to give it up, they might spend their old age in improving the country and making it reproductive? He would much rather see the taxpayers in the colony have facilities for acquiring land than that it should be locked up and held in reserve for posterity, or for immigrants from the old country, who were to have additional facilities and opportunities which old colonists were not to be allowed, for fear they should make use of the land for speculative purposes. He could easily understand that people who had spent the best years of their lives in town would be anxious to secure for themselves a rural retreat where they could spend the last years of their lives in peace and quietness, away from the giddy throng and the busy hum. He should support the amendment, which he considered a very good one.

Mr. W. BROOKES said the hon. member for Stanley would bear with him when he said that the advocacy of the hon. member for Cook condemned his amendment.

Mr. LUMLEY HILL: Hear, hear!

Mr. BROOKES said it completely killed any disposition in him to support the amendment. He did not like to say that, because he believed the hon. member for Stanley really meant well; but the advocacy of the hon. member for Cook was sufficient to make any reasonable man suspect it. The Minister for Lands said the amendment opened the door for speculation. So it did; and that was why the hon. member for Cook supported it. He wanted to let his bosom friends, the capitalists and financial institutions, come in. He knew perfectly well that he was talking pure bunkum when he spoke of the retired tradesman seeking a retreat from the busy haunts of man, in order that he might dig with a spade and cultivate fruit. It was such pleasant nonsense that there must be something behind it. He knew perfectly well that, Act or no Act, there were many ways by which persons who made fortunes could get into the country and have their suburban retreats. The amendment of the hon. member for Stanley was opposed to the principle of the Bill. The object of the measure was to settle people on the land—people who would work the land.

Mr. NORTON: To place strangers on it—an imported population?

Mr. BROOKES said the amendment would open the door to the worst form of dummying. It would not do to legislate on the assumption that everybody was an honest man; they must provide against unscrupulous persons. The Minister for Lands was right when he said that thousands of people would take up land under the amendment with no other object than to sell when the opportunity came.

Mr. KELLETT: And wait ten years?

Mr. BROOKES said they would wait any length of time. What was ten years?

Mr. LUMLEY HILL: You will find out.

Mr. BROOKES said the omniscience of the hon. member for Cook appeared to be equal to his desire for the welfare of the human race.

Mr. LUMLEY HILL: Hear, hear!

Mr. BROOKES said the hon. member knew all about the squatter, the agricultural selector, the miner, the working man and everybody else. He would tell the hon. member, in a friendly way—and he hoped the hon. member would take the hint in the spirit in which it was given—that the less he talked in that style the more the Committee would be able to trust him.

Mr. LUMLEY HILL said he seemed in some unaccountable way, for which he was very sorry, to have provoked the animosity of the hon. member for North Brisbane.

Mr. BROOKES: Not animosity.

Mr. LUMLEY HILL said the hon. member looked upon him as almost as bad as a coolie. He appeared to have divided his cooliephobia with his animosity to him and any idea he had of bringing foreign capital or inducing capital to the colony. Capital was a thing that was very badly wanted, and he thought from his experience in the country districts he was better qualified to talk upon the Land Bill, at all events, than the hon. member for North Brisbane, who, as far as he knew, had very seldom been beyond the gutters in his own street. If the hon. member talked about fiddles or pots and pans he would give him best. He would not attempt to argue the question, because the hon. gentleman knew a great deal more about those subjects than he did; but as far as pretending that he knew, or had anything like the same opportunity of judging of the effects or the application of the Land Act, that was simply ridiculous. He (Mr. Hill) was brought up on a farm in the old country, and had spent the best years of his life in the country in rural pursuits, and claimed to have some knowledge of them. He did not want to lead the Government into any trouble or embarrassment; but wanted to see them make the best laws for the general advancement and prosperity of the community, knowing perfectly well that his own welfare was wrapt up in the general prosperity of the country.

Mr. KELLETT said his idea in moving the clause, or making any amendment in the Bill, was to make it a little bit popular in the country, and the Government ought to know it, and they did know it, but they did not like anything they put their fingers on to be altered. He gave them credit for a certain amount of intelligence. He gave the Chief Secretary credit for a lot; but that hon. gentleman had not time to study all those little matters with which he (Mr.

Kellett) was intimately acquainted. The clause applied only to agricultural areas and not to grazing-farm areas. It was the agricultural areas only. That was the principle of the Act of 1884 when it came into the House first. There was to be no freehold at all; but that was altered after a great deal of fighting. Then they went a little further in the right direction, and that night they were going a little further still in extending the time. He wanted to go a little further again, and, little by little, make the Act workable, and settle people on the land. There was nobody in that Chamber who met so many agricultural settlers from all parts of the colony—from the Darling Downs and West Moreton—and knew the feelings of all of them as he did; and none were satisfied. They could not get one man in a hundred in favour of the leasing system. He wished to see the leasing system confined to the grazing areas pure and simple. He was satisfied if the Hon. Minister for Lands called for a vote in the agricultural districts, not one man in a hundred would agree with him. That was his anxiety, and hon. members knew it, as he had told them previously. He tried to do something, so that those men would not say "Here is your Land Act; we will not have the leasing system. We will put someone in power who will give us what we want." He was trying to do that as quietly as he could, without making any fuss about it. The Minister for Lands would not move at all; they could not get a budge out of him. That hon. gentleman knew his Act was not popular, and he said "I do not care whether it is popular or not, or when the elections come. It is nothing to me; I am not likely to be in the House again, and I am not going to be worried about it." That was the principle the hon. gentleman seemed to be acting upon—not making the best of a bad bargain. It was only in the agricultural areas alone that they wanted the principle extended, and he was not satisfied that it would settle a lot of people on the land. The hon. member for North Brisbane was getting very tiresome in trying to be the mentor of the hon. member for Cook. Indeed, that hon. member required a mentor sometimes. The hon. member for North Brisbane said when the hon. member for Cook said a thing there must be something wrong; but that was not a very good argument. He wished to have people settled upon the land which was not settled upon at present. He was certain that in the agricultural districts, it would not do to have one farm freehold, and one leasehold, as there would be two different Acts working in the same districts.

The PREMIER said he would correct one error that the hon. gentleman had fallen into. Clause 73 of the Act they were talking about was clause 68 of the Bill of 1884, the only change being the insertion of the 2nd paragraph, which dealt with old titles under the Act of 1876.

Mr. WHITE said he envied the Minister for Lands the abuse which he succeeded in getting so often about the Land Act. He would be proud if he could draw down upon himself from members of the Opposition such a quantity of abuse.

Mr. DONALDSON: We do not think you are worth it.

Mr. WHITE said there had been a great deal said from time to time about the principles of the Act being destroyed. Some of the principles had been destroyed over and over again, some very many times, according to the description of some hon. members. He thought there were some hon. members who were not very clear about the principles of the Act.

Mr. NORTON: Are you?

Mr. WHITE said he had understood the Act from the first. He considered when he read it over that the framer had one main object in view, and that object was to stop the alienation of land in large quantities. That was what he considered to be the principle of the Act, and he did not see that that principle had been infringed yet in any degree whatever. He was not clear about the amendment of his hon. colleague, and could not see his way to vote for it.

Mr. DONALDSON said it was getting very late now, and as there were very few members in the Committee to discuss the question he trusted the Government would adjourn it. They could hardly get through the whole Bill that night.

The PREMIER: We do not expect to. We will adjourn when we have disposed of this clause.

Mr. NORTON said he thought on a question like that the Government might just as well adjourn. They were reduced to about twenty members, and had the whole of to-morrow clear. There was no private business whatever.

The PREMIER: It is not convenient to go on with the Land Bill to-morrow.

Mr. NORTON: We will take it on Tuesday.

The PREMIER: We propose to adjourn as soon as we have disposed of this clause.

Mr. NORTON said it was a very important clause, and a number of members knew nothing about its coming on.

Mr. LUMLEY HILL said he objected to the intermittent way in which the Land Bill debates were being conducted.

The PREMIER: Whose fault is that? You have been indulging in such floods of talk.

Mr. LUMLEY HILL said they never got two consecutive days at the Bill. The Government were not very fond of it, or they would have brought it in at first, and gone straight through with it. Such an important Bill ought to have been brought in at once and continued until it was finished. He did not care whether it took two or three days, or a week, or a month; but it should have been gone on with, in consecutive order, right through from start to finish. As it was, they had had two or three days at first, and then an intermission of a week or two, during which everybody forgot everything about it, and now it was brought on again, and was going to be adjourned and passed on until some time next week or next month, or some indefinite period. He hoped the Premier would see his way to go on with the Bill to-morrow.

The PREMIER: You ought to have finished it to-night.

Mr. LUMLEY HILL said he did not see how the Premier could have expected to have finished such an important Bill that night, when they made such slow progress with it before.

Mr. KELLETT said he thought that at that late hour the Government might very fairly consent to adjourn the further discussion of the question. He considered it a very vital matter. He believed that Ministers had not looked at or thought about the clause until that evening, and if they considered it between now and the next day the Bill came on for discussion they might see reason to change their opinion respecting it. It was, he repeated, a matter of vital importance, as the Government would find out yet.

Mr. DONALDSON said he merely wished to point out that if a division were taken now it would not represent the true feeling of the Committee. If the clause were deferred until

the next day he should not speak upon it. He had no strong feeling about the clause at all, but he would like to see the opinion of the Committee taken fairly upon it. Many members had gone away; they did not think that the Committee would get so far with the Bill as they had done, or they would have remained. Whether the debate was continued or not he was not going to speak upon the question again.

Mr. NORTON said he did not think there was likely to be much discussion about the clause if it were postponed. For his own part, he did not wish to discuss it any further. But it was a matter upon which the welfare of a large number of people depended, and he thought it quite possible that upon consideration the Government might be disposed to accept the clause. They did not always see the full bearing of an amendment in a moment.

The PREMIER said under no circumstances could the Government accept the amendment. That was perfectly well understood. The Government must take the responsibility of their land policy, and if an amendment of that kind was introduced into the Bill, there was an end of it. Let that be perfectly understood. The hon. member for Stanley had known his opinion on the subject for some time past.

Mr. McMASTER said the argument of those hon. members who wanted to adjourn did not seem to him to hold water, inasmuch as the leader of the Opposition said he was not going to discuss the amendment any further if an adjournment took place; the mover of the amendment said he was not going to discuss it further.

Mr. KELLETT: I did not say so.

Mr. McMASTER: I understood you to say so.

Mr. KELLETT: Then you understood what I never said.

Mr. McMASTER: Well, the hon. member for Warrego, Mr. Donaldson, said he would not discuss it; the hon. member for Cook, Mr. Hill, said he would not discuss it.

Mr. LUMLEY HILL: I did not say that.

Mr. McMASTER said, at any rate, hon. members who were present did not want to discuss the clause further when the Committee met again; and he had simply to say that those members who had left the Chamber had no intention of discussing it, or they would have remained. If they were not there they ought to be there. Hon. members who were present had remained to do the business of the country, and he said it was a hardship to keep them there while other members had gone to their quiet homes. Yet those hon. members who did not wish to discuss the matter further, wanted the Committee to adjourn simply for the convenience of those members who were not present. He contended that if they had the interests of the country at heart they would have remained and done their duty.

Mr. NORTON said he did not know whether the hon. member thought hon. members of that Committee were going to submit to be dictated to him. He did not think they had the slightest idea of being dictated to by that member.

An HONOURABLE MEMBER: Who is "that member"?

Mr. NORTON: The member who had just spoken, who represents the Valley.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Why don't you address him properly?

Mr. NORTON said he thought the Minister for Works ought to set him the example. When that hon. gentleman wanted to pose as a moral reformer he had better set the example himself. When he saw one hon. member opposite standing up with his cane in his hand he reminded him very much of his old dominie at school. He remembered when he was at school and the dominie stood up with his cane in his hand how they used to tremble; but although he had great regard for the hon. member opposite, yet he did not tremble before him. He had great regard for the Minister for Works, but he did not tremble before him, nor did he fear the hon. member who was so anxious to dictate to them what they ought to do. The Committee had drifted into a sort of hole-and-corner meeting, many hon. members, supposing the clause would not come on, had gone away. It was all very well to talk about members going away to their quiet, comfortable homes; but some of them lived four or five miles away; they had not conveyances of their own to take them home, and if they did not catch the public conveyances they would have to walk, or pay for a cab, and it was not everybody who could afford that. If the hon. member who had dictated to the Committee thought hon. members were going to be dictated to by him he was very much mistaken.

Mr. McMASTER said he considered he had quite as much right to speak as the hon. the leader of the Opposition. He had every due respect for that hon. gentleman, but he had stated that at that late hour, and as several hon. members had left the Committee, they ought to adjourn the debate. He (Mr. McMaster) had said that those hon. members ought to have remained, and he now repeated it. The hon. gentleman also stated that he did not intend to speak on the question again, and yet he wanted to adjourn. What for? Simply to allow those hon. members who had gone away to their homes to have an opportunity of discussing the question. But he would say again that it was their duty to have remained and done so. There were members in the Committee now who had to go four or five miles to their homes, but they had remained to do the business of the country, and it ought to be proceeded with. He was very much obliged to the leader of the Opposition for the manner in which he had just spoken of him, but he (Mr. McMaster) was responsible to his constituents, and he should have his say whenever he thought he had a right to speak, and if he was out of order he should expect the Chairman to call him to order. He did not attempt to dictate to the Committee, but he maintained that he had a right to speak.

Mr. LUMLEY HILL said he thought they might as well come to a division at once. The Chief Secretary had told them that if the Government were defeated on that question the Bill would be withdrawn.

The PREMIER: Yes!

Mr. LUMLEY HILL: Therefore there was no doubt that the Government would not be defeated on the question.

The PREMIER: I hope not.

Mr. LUMLEY HILL said he must protest against the Government adopting that method of getting their measures through—with threats that the whole Bill would be withdrawn if some amendments brought forward by their own supporters, and which had very strong arguments to back them up, were passed. That was legislating in a very forcible and very high-handed manner, and he did hope that the Chief Secretary would see his way as much as possible, in the future, to avoid that kind of legislation. They had had the preliminary part of the Bill shoved down their throats in the same kind of way, and now there was a repetition of it. If it was to be continued, upon his word, the process would become rather sickening.

The PREMIER said what he had done in stating the course the Government would pursue, in the event of the amendment being carried, was simply the course which every Government was bound to adopt. If the hon. member would read the history of responsible government in any part of the world, he would find that there were occasions when it was necessary for the Government to say what was proposed to be done, and if a private member —no matter on what side of the Committee he sat—proposed to take an important matter of policy out of the hands of the Government, the Government were responsible for it. They could not pass a Land Bill any more than they could pass a Customs tariff that they disapproved of. Supposing the Government brought down a freetrade tariff, and hon. members wanted to convert it into a protectionist tariff, the Government could not accept that. They must stand by their own policy, and as far as he was aware it was usual for a Government in such cases to say plainly what their intentions were.

Mr. BLACK said to hear the Chief Secretary talk the public would really think that the Government were not abandoning their land policy. Why, how much of the original policy introduced in the Bill of 1884 would remain? The whole policy was abandoned from one end to the other. They were now going to begin to sell land by auction, and if that was not an abandonment of a chief principle of the Act of 1884 he did not know what was. That was the fundamental principle of the Bill given up, and then in connection with that the Minister for Lands asserted that he believed the country would become so enamoured of the leasing principle that they would not consent to the sale of town lands, but insist upon them being leased also. The Opposition had often been twitted with not having assisted the Government to make a better Land Bill, but now when a really good and sound amendment—an amendment which would popularise the Act—was brought in from the Government side of the Committee, it was treated in the same way as all others. His idea was that they should let the Land Act remain as it was. It was about the worst Act the colony ever had; it had been unsuccessful from every point of view, and the Government could not point to any one principle in it that was popular. He did not see any use in talking longer on the subject. If the question went to a division he should vote in favour of the amendment, but there was not the least chance of its being carried. If the Government supporters were looked at, it would be seen that they were not people who might be generally supposed to know anything of the working of an amendment of the kind proposed. What did the hon. member for North Brisbane, Mr. Brookes—a gentleman who had assumed the rôle of mentor to every hon. member who differed from him—what did he understand about the Land Act? What on earth did he know about anything outside of Brisbane? He was always abusing the capitalist and speculator, but had he done a single act which tended towards the advancement of the country? What had he done? He had kept a shop in Queen street, and he had done well out of land speculations.

Mr. BROOKES: Mr. Fraser,—Is not that personal?

Mr. BLACK said the hon. member had the reputation of having done so, and he did not look upon him as any authority upon Queensland matters generally.

Mr. KELLETT said he saw the feeling of the Chief Secretary was against allowing the amendment to be properly discussed. He asked for an adjournment; it had been refused, and he would ask no more. He had tried to point out to the Government, both privately and in the House, where amendments might be made which would make the Bill a little popular in the country, and the Chief Secretary knew very well that a good many of his suggestions had been accepted and had been considered as being worthy of attention, but when he made another suggestion for further improving the Bill it was rejected. Well, every suggestion that had been made inside the House had been treated in the same way, and that was what he called child's play. As each amendment was proposed they were told it affected the principle of the measure, and they were threatened time after time that, if an amendment was carried, the Bill would not be proceeded with. That was not the proper way of arguing at all. That was not the way in which a man of the Premier's intelligence should treat hon. members. That was mere bounce, and he was astonished at the hon. gentleman. If there was any great principle at stake, well and good, but there was none on the present occasion. The very same principle was already in the Act, yet because he proposed to go a little further he was told it would affect the main principles of the Act. Now, the sooner the Government altered the whole Act the better, for they could not do any good with it; they could do nothing with it; the country would not have it, and it would have to be altered. That position had better be accepted by the Government. Under the Act they would have all sorts of holdings alongside of one another, jumbled up in the most extraordinary fashion. They would have a 50-acre leasehold, and then a grazing farm, and then a freehold all alongside of one another, and they would have to repeal half-a-dozen Acts before they could get right again. They would have applications coming into the office that could not be understood, and the Under Secretary would be found sitting in his chair with a pile of papers before him which either meant nothing or could not be dealt with. There was no doubt in his mind that at the next general election whatever party came into power would have to bring in a new Act, and if the present party came back they would be pledged to do so.

The PREMIER said the hon. member was not quite just. Various amendments had been made in the Bill, and a very valuable amendment was made in the last clause on the hon. member's own suggestion. Every reasonable suggestion that was made would have full consideration; but when it came to vital principles the Government were bound to say whether they would accept the amendments or not. The hon. gentleman knew the Government would oppose his amendment. He had given him clearly to understand that the Government could not accept it under any circumstances.

Mr. KELLETT said just before the amendment was moved he was speaking to the Chief Secretary, who asked what his amendment was. The hon gentleman up to that moment did not know anything about it.

The PREMIER: That was the first time I found out that the amendment was intended to carry out that view.

Mr. KELLETT said he could not carry the amendment, and it was no use trying. He had done his best, and finding there was no chance of carrying it, he would let it go.

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

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

ADJOURNMENT.

The PREMIER said : I move that this House do now adjourn. After the consideration of the introduction of a Bill of which the Treasurer has given notice, it is proposed to proceed with Committee of Supply to-morrow.

Question put and passed.

The House adjourned at half-past 11 o'clock.