

Queensland



Parliamentary Debates
[Hansard]

Legislative Assembly

WEDNESDAY, 17 JULY 1889

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY.

Wednesday, 17 July, 1889.

Petitions—endowment of Schools of Art—assessment on stock.—Printing Committee Report.—Motion for Adjournment—the Queensland mange.—Resignation of Member.—Vacant Seat.—Health Act Amendment Bill—committee.—Crown Lands Acts, 1884 to 1886, Amendment Bill—committee.—Adjournment.

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

PETITIONS.

ENDOWMENT TO SCHOOLS OF ART.

Mr. GOLDRING presented a petition from members of the School of Arts, Hughenden, having reference to the endowment now granted by the Government to Schools of Art, and praying that the House would afford such relief as it might think fit. The petition was similar to those previously presented on the subject; and he moved that it be received.

Question put and passed.

ASSESSMENT ON STOCK.

Mr. CASEY presented a petition from rate-payers in the division of Belyando, complaining of the proposed assessment on stock, and praying that the House would grant such relief as it might think fit; and moved that it be read.

Question put and passed; and petition read at length by the Clerk.

Mr. CASEY moved that the petition be received.

Question put and passed.

PRINTING COMMITTEE REPORT.

Mr. JESSOP, on behalf of Mr. Speaker, as Chairman, presented the third report of the Printing Committee; and moved that it be printed.

Question put and passed.

MOTION FOR ADJOURNMENT.

THE QUEENSLAND MANGE.

Mr. MURPHY said: Mr. Speaker,—There is a question that I wish to bring before the House, as it is a matter of urgency, and I shall put myself in order by moving the usual motion for adjournment. The matter I wish to bring before the House is one, I think, that at this time is very serious—I refer to the spread of the disease known as “mange.” My attention has been drawn to this particularly just now by an article which appears in the *Australasian*, a newspaper, which as hon. members know, is published in Victoria. The article is headed “The Horse Mange in Queensland,” and there are some statements contained in it that I do not think, in the interests of the stockowners of the colony, should be allowed to go without challenge or contradiction. I will read the article, which is not a very long one, so that hon. members may be in possession of the whole of the facts.

"THE HORSE MANGE IN QUEENSLAND.

"The disease which has become so prevalent of late among the Queensland horses, and which, for want of a better name, is known as "the mange," proves to be a much more formidable plague than the stockowners of the other colonies are aware of. Though its presence has been known among the Queensland horses since 1887, the only action taken by the Government has been the appointment of a board to make full inquiry into the origin and nature of the disease. This board, we learn, made a preliminary report, and there the matter ended. In the meantime the disease has spread with alarming rapidity, and has attacked all the other domestic animals, and even human beings. It appears to be extremely difficult to treat; indeed, no remedy is mentioned as being of any avail, and even the nature of the disease seems to be unknown. In an article on this subject which appeared in the *Ipswich Advocate* on May 29, the following pregnant remarks are made:—'Were the outside world to know the terrible plague we are fostering in our midst, there would be a simultaneous erection of barriers against all Queensland stock . . .

. . . While the disease was confined to horses alone it was surely a sufficient menace, and we should have strained every effort to stop it. But when we hear of it attacking sheep and cattle, and even the human subjects, it becomes a hundredfold more serious. As it is, a large percentage of the stock of the colony are suffering.' From the remarks made in the journal quoted, it is evident that the disease is of a very virulent nature and extremely contagious. The skins of the animals attacked became worthless for any industrial purposes. Mr. E. J. Stevens, M.L.A., is reported to have said:—'A ten-ton roller will not rid the hides of the corrugations brought on by the disease.' The journal already quoted states that it is not merely a skin disease, but that the flesh is affected to such an extent that it was impossible to stand near the carcasses of some animals that had been slaughtered after being attacked by the disease, owing to the intolerable stench. As an indication of the prevalence of the disease, the writer states:—'The number of horses and cattle in the Rosewood and Nanango districts alone suffering from mange is so great as to justify the Government in making special legislation on this very serious question, which threatens to be nearly as bad as the much-dreaded rabbit invasion.' We have received a letter on this subject from a professional gentleman who has been engaged for several months past in observing the nature of the disease and treating the animals attacked by it. He describes it as a very dangerous disease, and one that will not be easily stamped out. He fully bears out the statement made by the *Ipswich Advocate* as to the way the disease is spreading. He says: 'I have been over the greater part of Queensland, and fully two-thirds of the horses and a large percentage of the cattle and sheep of the colony are infected.' He believes that climate and food have nothing to do with this disease, which is equally dangerous to all animals. It is evident, from the statements we have quoted, that the disease is of an extremely dangerous nature, and highly infectious, or it could not have spread over such a large area so rapidly. It cannot be reassuring to Victorian stockholders to know that all kinds of stock may be brought into Victoria without let or hindrance from a colony over such a large portion of which so serious a disease rages, provided always the animals come to us by land. The Stock Department has of late shown extreme care to avoid the introduction of disease into Victoria by means of perfectly healthy sheep from Tasmania. Here is a real danger threatening not one but all descriptions of domestic animals. The real nature of this disease cannot be known too soon, and if it is half as dangerous as a Queensland journal and a veterinary surgeon state it is, ample precaution should be promptly taken to protect the live stock of this country. No time should be lost in official correspondence; the subject is of too great importance for any shilly-shallying. An expert should be sent to the districts where the disease is most prevalent to report as to its real nature, so that we may protect ourselves while there is still time."

An article such as that appearing in a paper like the *Australasian*, a journal which circulates widely in the pastoral districts of Victoria and New South Wales, and which has the largest weekly circulation of any paper in Australia, is sure to carry great weight. There is a danger that the other colonies may take action upon an article like that, and do serious injury to the stockowners and people generally of Queensland. Some of the statements in that article appear to us to be highly ludicrous. I do not think the

mange is in any way a dangerous disease, nor do I think there is any instance of its having attacked human beings, so far as we know, in this colony. We know that it has attacked horses to a large extent in this colony but not nearly to the extent stated in that article. That the disease is prevalent to a greater or less extent amongst horses there is no denying, and it has also attacked cattle. Only in one instance in this colony it has attacked a small flock of sheep which were travelled from Cambridge Gulf, away in the northern territory of Western Australia, down to the Fassifern district. So far as we can gather from the reports of the Chief Inspector of Stock, those are the only sheep that have been attacked by this disease in this colony, and they have since been butchered. At the present moment there is not a single sheep in Queensland affected with the disease, and the only sheep that have been affected were those which, as I have said, were brought into this colony from a neighbouring colony.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS (Hon. H. M. Nelson): There is no proof that they were affected with the mange.

Mr. MURPHY: As the Minister for Railways has said there is no proof that even those sheep were affected with the "mange." It may have been that disease, however, and we have the report of the Chief Inspector of Stock that those sheep were sold to the butcher and killed, so that there might be no danger of the disease spreading to sheep, if it is likely that it will attack sheep. So far as sheep are concerned, the disease is now extinct in the colony, so far as we can learn. What I brought this question forward more particularly for, was not only to correct the statements made in that article, but to impress upon the Government the absolute necessity for taking immediate steps to inquire into this disease. I do not mean that they should confine themselves to giving a reward to somebody for the discovery of a specific or remedy for the disease. What I suggest rather is that they should get some scientist like the Frenchmen we had here the other day who can use the microscope, and by microscopical examination determine the root of the disease. It is useless to attempt to deal with it in any other way. Mr. Gordon in his report says that a number of letters have been written to him by different persons who have asserted that they have discovered a cure for the disease, but after a trial those so-called cures have all failed. If the Government will invite some scientist from the neighbouring colonies, from England, or from some European country, to examine into this disease, there is no necessity that it should cost the country anything, as the money to reimburse the whole of the expenditure on account of an inquiry into this disease can be taken from the sheep account. That is a fund which has been established and provided by the stockowners of the colony for purposes similar to this—for the purpose of dealing with diseases in sheep or cattle. The Government can therefore do this with a free hand, and I am sure there is not a stockowner in this colony contributing to that fund who would object to a portion of it being devoted to the purpose of discovering the nature of this disease, so that if we can only discover a remedy for it the colony may be freed from the imputation under which it now lies in this respect. I beg to move the adjournment of the House.

The PREMIER (Hon. B. D. Morehead) said: Mr. Speaker,—The hon. gentleman, in rising, deprecated any criticism such as he referred to in the other colonies of what he considered a very small matter, but he went on unfortunately to say that he considered it a very important

matter, and so important that he thinks it requires a large portion of the Sheep Fund to discover some cure for the disease. This disease has existed to a greater or less extent for some years past, and did not escape the attention of the late Government, nor has it escaped the attention of the present Government. I doubt myself whether the evil is such a very great one. As has been said by the hon. member for Barcoo, there are a number of supposed cures discovered for it; and, in fact, anyone driving through the streets of Brisbane may see advertisements on the hoardings to the effect that the advertiser has discovered a sure specific for the disease. The attention of the Government has been directed to it, and the Chief Inspector of Stock was instructed to inquire into it, with the board that has been appointed of gentlemen, who, I think, are quite as good scientists in matters of this description as anyone we could import from the other colonies or from England. They have been asked to report upon the feasibility or otherwise of offering a reward for a specific for the disease. I say I do not look upon it as of a very alarming nature. The sheep referred to by the hon. member were only supposed to be affected with it, but there is no doubt that it is prevalent amongst horses to a greater or less extent. It has also affected cattle, but as far as I know, there is no necessity to absorb the Sheep Fund in bringing out some scientist to inquire into the disease. I think that gentlemen like Mr. Gordon and others who are on the board I have alluded to are quite competent to deal with the matter; and if they are not competent, they are men of sound common sense and knowledge who would at once acknowledge their incompetency and make a recommendation of the kind suggested by the hon. member for Barcoo. I think the statement read from the *Australasian* is a grossly exaggerated statement, and that there is not the least occasion for alarm. As a matter of fact, there is reason to believe that a remedy will be discovered very shortly, which will grapple with the disease, which after all is not destructive to stock—I do not say it is beneficial—without going to the extreme step suggested by the hon. member for Barcoo.

Mr. CASEY said: Mr. Speaker,—I trust now that the attention of the Government has been directed to this disease amongst stock it will not be allowed to drop out of sight. The Premier has said it is not nearly so serious a matter as the writer in the *Australasian* would make out; but it is of a sufficiently serious nature to command serious inquiry, because it depreciates the value of horse stock in Queensland by 20 per cent. at the least. In the case of the firm with which I am connected, the horses would be worth 30 per cent. more in Brisbane if this disease was not in the colony. With regard to the supposed attack of mange amongst sheep which appeared in the Fassifern district, as it occurred close to where my firm has some sheep, I naturally took some interest in the matter. I do not believe from the inquiries I made that the disease was mange at all. It was simply the result of long continued travel and starvation. I do not think it was the same disease as that which attacks horses and cattle; and I think any newspaper article which declares sheep here to be affected by mange is not only untrue, but may depreciate the value of stock in other parts of the colony. Therefore I put that on one side. But I think the board appointed by the late Government to inquire into the disease did not arrive at any satisfactory conclusion. They discovered that the disease consisted of a vegetable fungoid, but did not tell us how to get rid of that vegetable fungoid; and they concluded their labours by simply giving a

new name to an old disease. If the Government would take some active steps, either by means of the present board or by some other means, to discover a remedy for the disease, they would be conferring a great benefit on the stockowners of the colony.

Mr. STEVENS said: Mr. Speaker,—I think this matter is a very important one indeed. To my knowledge the disease extends over the whole of the coast districts amongst horses and cattle, and is getting worse every year. I do not know how long the board appointed to inquire into the disease has had the matter in hand, but if they do not arrive at some satisfactory conclusion very soon, I think some more skilled persons should be empowered to deal with the subject. It is a matter of considerable importance, not only to stockowners but also to farmers, because there is hardly a farmer in the coast districts whose horses have not the disease more or less. It renders them more or less unfit for work, besides being a serious disadvantage in other ways; and the Government might fairly consider the matter further. I am glad to hear that the gentlemen who have been named are considering the subject; and if this debate does nothing else it will have the effect of letting the country know that the matter is being dealt with. If the southern colonies take the same view as the *Australasian*, it will be a serious disadvantage to the stockowners of the colony. We get our stock into Victoria subject to considerable taxation, and if we are subjected to any further disadvantage it will mean a great amount of loss. With regard to the remarks put into my mouth by the writer in the *Australasian*, I can only say that I know nothing about them. I could hardly say that it would take a ten-ton roller to take the corrugations out of the hide of an animal that had the disease, because, though I have seen live animals with the disease, I have never examined the skin of one that has been killed. I do not know who can have been the author of those remarks.

Mr. PALMER said: Mr. Speaker,—The letter read by the hon. member for Barcoo contains an exaggerated idea of the extent of the disease. It says that two-thirds of the horses of the colony are affected, and I consider that a most exaggerated statement. Another statement is that a very large number of cattle are affected: that also is very much exaggerated. I have never seen any cattle in the colony with the true mange disease. As for the stench arising from the cattle when killed, I think that is more than exaggerated. Ten years ago I saw a mob of cattle from the Barcoo affected with ringworm disease—part of the hair came off—but, from that day to this, I have never seen any disease in cattle approaching what is known as horse mange. As for sheep, I have neither seen nor heard of them being contaminated with horse mange. With regard to the cure, I know the Government referred the question to the French scientists who were recently in the colony, to see if they could discover some remedy, but their time was wholly taken up by their investigation into pleuro-pneumonia, and, when that was finished, they were recalled, or they would have taken the matter in hand. I am sure the Government will not lose sight of the matter, but will take the first opportunity they can get, when any scientific gentlemen come to the colony, of having the disease thoroughly investigated. As far as the disease itself is concerned, it is merely the appearance of the horse that it affects; it does not affect his working. I have seen horses come in from the bush, where they have been isolated for months. They have come in rolling fat, fit for

boiling down, but with scarcely a hair left on them; their condition could not be better. I repudiate the idea that cattle have been contaminated to that extent.

Mr. PAUL said: Mr. Speaker,—I think the hon. member for Barcoo has acted wisely in bringing this matter forward. I believe the article in the *Australasian* was written, not only from a mistaken idea with regard to mange, but also with regard to the disease in horses in the Western country. I believe the article was not written because of the existence of mange, but because of the disease in horses which appeared some time ago at Birdsville, which has been inquired into by the Inspector of Stock. It has been proved, however, that that disease out West can be cured by chemical applications. The Chief Inspector of Stock had three or four horses brought down from the West and treated by Mr. Irving, and in two instances he cured the disease that was a much more alarming disease than the mange; and I think this article in the *Australasian* has been written under a misconception in regard to the virulency of the disease. This article was evidently written under the impression that the mange was the disease which had broken out at Birdsville, which has been effectually treated by Mr. Irving, the veterinary surgeon. The hon. member for Barcoo was very wise in bringing the matter forward.

Mr. SALKELD said: Mr. Speaker,—I think this matter is much more serious than the hon. the Premier seems to think from the remarks he has just made. I quite agree with the hon. member for Warrego in regard to the report of the board appointed to examine into the matter; but I certainly doubt very much whether the case mentioned as to sheep having had the disease is true or not. I do not think it is. So far as I can gather, I do not think that the disease affecting sheep is the horse mange. I may mention that although I have seen horses attacked by mange all over the district of West Moreton, I have never seen a case where it has attacked cattle. I am informed that such cases have happened; but I have never seen one. I believe that the general impression has been that the board that was appointed to report into the matter have discontinued their investigations. I asked the question of the Chief Secretary some time ago, and was surprised to find that they had not continued their investigations; but from what I understand from what has fallen from the Premier this afternoon, those gentlemen are continuing them. This is a very serious matter, because the disease appears to be a permanent one; it does not seem to go away. It may go away during the cold weather, and it may be abated by some particular treatment; but it always comes back again. As soon as you cease treating the disease it returns again, as bad as it was before, in a very short time. It seems to abate during the winter, and come on again in the spring and summer. I may also mention that I have heard—I do not know whether my information is correct or not—that the disease has been traced to out West near Birdsville, and that it was introduced there by Indian camels from South Australia. It is a disease to which camels in India are subject. I do not believe this is mange at all. I think the disease is mistimed, and, so far as I can learn, the real difficulty in connection with the matter is that no one can really determine the nature of the disease. The board do not appear to be thoroughly aware of it at all. They give the indications; but they are not aware of the nature of the disease, and are at a

loss to know how it can be cured. I have tried many remedies myself, and have found that they have abated the disease; but it has come on again. Several things are reported to be cures, and they seem to be successful for a time; but when the summer comes, the disease comes on again as badly as before. I hope the Government will follow this matter up, because the mange does not seem to be like many diseases that go away; it goes away and comes back again. In the settled districts of the colony a large number of horses are affected by it; but I have never met with any cases where cattle have been affected. It is a cause of great loss and inconvenience to many people.

Mr. MACFARLANE said: Mr. Speaker,—This question of mange in horses seems likely to take up the time of the House as the invasion of rabbits did some time ago, but I do not rise to speak about that. The mover in this matter this afternoon said that there seems to be no cure for the mange; but I have been told by an hon. member of this House that whisky is one of the very best things for curing it, and if that is the case we cannot do better than cure diseases in men by leaving whisky alone, and applying the whisky to the cure of mange. Two good purposes would then be served—we should cure both men and horses. I think it is the duty of every hon. member who has any information upon this subject to give it to the House. I may say that I have eight or nine horses, and some years ago three of them took the mange; but the horses have been cured. How it was cured I cannot tell. It was not by using whisky. It was a wash used by the person in charge of the horses, and he prevented them rubbing themselves against posts or trees or anything of that kind. He completely isolated the animals, and would not let them near any of the others, and the consequence was that the mange disappeared from those horses. We have not had any cases for the last two years. I make these remarks to show that, with proper care and attention, it seems possible that this disease in horses may be cured.

Mr. HODGKINSON said: Mr. Speaker,—On this subject of mange I have had some personal knowledge; I have suffered from it myself. When the camels were introduced into Victoria in the year 1860, they were suffering severely from mange, owing to the fact that they had been confined on ship-board for such a long time, and had not become acclimatised. Every man on Burke and Wills' expedition who had any connection with those camels at all caught that disease from them. Of course, it does not remain very long on a human subject, because in all cases, so far as I have read on the subject, the mange is caused by a species of acarus. I know myself that the mange has been in existence in this colony from the very first time in which white people visited it. Any man who is at all familiar with the blacks, knows perfectly well that the dogs around the blacks' camps are invariably affected with mange, and they always have been. The very first travellers who spoke of the blacks have mentioned that particular fact. Although the blacks are fond of their dogs, still they become so diseased that they are perfectly hairless from the attacks of mange. But why is that? Simply because they are half starved; and it is not impossible that the mange from which horses and cattle suffer arises from a similar cause. I ask the question: Is it not probable that the disease may be intensified from the severe drought the country has been afflicted with during the last seven years? I know the disease was in existence amongst stock thirty years ago, and little as my practical knowledge is in regard to squatting, I know perfectly well that the disease

existed amongst stock as long ago as that. I would ask hon. members if they ever saw a horse that was properly groomed suffering from the mange?

Mr. MURPHY: Yes.

Mr. HODGKINSON: Properly fed and properly groomed? We have had the mange in the North for years; and so far as my personal experience goes, it invariably disappears as soon as a horse gets into good condition. I believe that the true secret of this disease, as in all other diseases of a parasitic nature by which animals are afflicted, is to be found in the poverty of the blood, or it may be produced by unfavourable conditions of acclimatisation or by bad feed. We must remember that it is a very catching disease, and that where stock are travelling about and coming in contact with diseased animals, they are very liable to extend the progress of the disease. I have never seen sheep suffer from the disease, though I do not, of course, say they do not, but I have seen horses and dogs and camels afflicted with it. I have never seen, with the exception which I have alluded to, human beings afflicted with the disease. I attribute it to a great extent to poverty—poverty of blood caused by the extreme drought to which the colony has been subject. There is no doubt, however, that at its origination, at any rate, it can be cured by treatment with proper ointment.

Mr. CASEY: The very fattest horses get the disease.

Mr. HODGKINSON: No doubt there are many conditions in which the disease is found, but I can assure hon. members, from my own knowledge, that it did exist in the colony thirty-seven years ago.

Mr. GOLDRING said: Mr. Speaker,—Speaking from my own experience, I think the very worst features of the disease are set out in the *Australasian*, and that the writer in that paper has certainly exaggerated the matter. I can assure the hon. member for Burke, who has just sat down, that stable fed horses suffer from the disease as well as bush fed horses. I have known horses of my own, which have always been stable fed, suffer from the disease, while other horses in the same stable have not been attacked. Therefore I conclude that the disease is not contagious. In the district which I have the honour to represent there are some hundreds and thousands of both sheep and cattle, and I have never heard of a single case in which either sheep or cattle were attacked by the mange. The disease seems to be restricted entirely to horses, and there does not, even among them, appear to be any fatality connected with it. The horses are easily cured, or apparently so, if properly looked after. There is a wash composed of bluestone and some other chemicals, and, if applied to a horse when first attacked, the disease is very soon cured. A horse suffering from the mange never, so far as I am aware, loses flesh, but it can be worked every day the same as any animal that has not been attacked by the disease. I coincide with the remarks that have fallen from the hon. member for Carpentaria to the effect that the paragraph appearing in the *Australasian* has very much exaggerated the matter in every way. Certainly, so far as I know from experience in my own district, the disease is never transferred from horses to human beings. Men who have been daily attending horses suffering from mange have never been any the worse for it. I really do not see how the disease can be contagious. There appears to be nothing in it more than the disfigurement of the horse; the animal loses its hair, but it does its work just the same as any other horse that has not got the mange. No doubt, as has been said, it depreciates the value of the horse owing to its

appearance, but the horse works all right. However, as the matter has been brought up in Victoria, and is likely to prove detrimental to this colony, I think it is advisable to act on the suggestion which has been made, and have the subject carefully investigated.

Mr. PLUNKETT said: Mr. Speaker,—I think the thanks of the whole of the community are due to the hon. member for Barcoo for having introduced the matter to the notice of the House. A great deal more attention ought to be paid to the matter that has been given to it in the past. The Premier does not seem to realise the vast amount of injury that may be done, in fact is being done, by the report of the existence of this disease here being circulated in the other colonies, and if anything was wanted to make the loss greater it is such an article as that which has been read by the hon. member for Barcoo. About twelve months ago a board was appointed to investigate the case, and since then we have had a report informing us that they thought it was a vegetable fungus which caused the disease. But no suggestion has ever been made as to how we should get rid of it. I think more attention should be paid to the matter, and that a cure should be found as quickly as possible. If a cure is not discovered by the board, then I should be glad to see the suggestion of the hon. member for Barcoo adopted—namely, that scientific men should be obtained to investigate the matter, and explain the cause of and the remedy for the disease. At the present time a very large part of our stock, both fat and store cattle, is taken to Sydney and Melbourne, and if the report goes forth to the world that they are infected with disease it will tend very much to decrease the number taken from here to those markets, and that would be a very serious thing for stock-owners all over Queensland. I hope the Premier will hurry the board to make a report.

Mr. LITTLE said: Mr. Speaker,—I understand something about mange. I should be very proud to see the Government take the matter in hand and stamp out the disease. I hope the members of the Government will not be offended with the suggestion that I shall make. We have lately had a royal commission to inquire into the depression in the sugar industry, and a royal commission to report on the condition of the Civil Service. I would suggest that the Government should appoint a couple of mining members, say, the hon. member for Kennedy, Mr. Lissner, and myself, to form a royal commission; that the commission should proceed—accompanied by a shorthand writer—to the place where mange is found to exist, and bring down a report to the Government, and then let the Government stamp out the disease.

Mr. CAMPBELL said: Mr. Speaker,—This is a much more serious matter than some hon. members seem to think. In view of the article which the hon. member for Barcoo read from the *Australasian*, a paper which is very widely circulated throughout the colonies, and considering that a very large portion of our stock is sent over the border, it will be necessary, I think, to take some action to allay the fears of those people on the other side. But I did not so much rise to speak on that point as to relate some little experience that I have had in connection with this matter. There have been a very considerable number of persons in the district which I have the honour to represent who have cured the mange in horses most effectually by using a little coal tar and gas water, obtained from the gasworks. I have spoken to several who have used it, and they have told me that it has most effectually cured the disease in their horses. Although that seems

to be a very simple remedy perhaps it will be worth the while of the board, whoever they are, to make further inquiries and test the remedy; it might prove effective.

Mr. DUNSMURE said: Mr. Speaker,—I only rise to correct a statement made by the hon. member for Burke, who said that he considered this disease infectious. I do not believe it is either infectious or contagious. I have had a pair of buggy horses for some time, and one of them has been affected by the mange for the last four years, while the other, constantly working alongside him, with the rugs frequently changed at night, has never shown the slightest sign of it. That is, I think, a pretty sure sign that the disease is not contagious.

Mr. GANNON said: Mr. Speaker,—I can bear out what the hon. member for Maranoa has said with regard to this disease being neither infectious nor contagious. I have a pair of ponies which are known to be great mates, and their rugs also are often changed, and one of them has had the disease a number of years, and the other has not had it at all. That seems to be proof positive that the disease is neither contagious nor infectious. The hon. member for Woothakata has suggested that a royal commission should be appointed to report on the disease. I sincerely trust, from what I notice in a parliamentary paper just laid before us, that we shall have rather fewer commissions in the future than we have had in the past, if they are to cost as much money as the last three have done. While on the motion for the adjournment of the House, I should like to have some information as to how the payments are made to members of royal commissions. I notice that the commissioners appointed to inquire into the circumstances under which certain labourers were introduced into Queensland from New Guinea were paid at the rate of so many hundred pounds each; the members of the Civil Service Commission were paid at the rate of so much per day; and the members of the Sugar Commission were paid so many hundred pounds each. There seems to have been some queer kind of work about this. Two commissions pay their members a lump sum, while the third received so much per day. I think it well to mention this matter, because these commissions have cost the colony a very large amount indeed—altogether between £6,000 and £7,000.

Mr. HUNTER said: Mr. Speaker,—Surely the House is not going to start a fresh debate on the subject of the royal commissions. We have heard enough now without occupying any more time. The hon. member for Barcoo, the other day, told us of a society in the colony which had for its particular object the improvement of the breed of horses. He spoke about that association as the racing parliament of Queensland. I think the best thing we can do is to refer this question of mange to the racing parliament of Queensland, who seem to know more about horses, to be greater authorities on the subject, and to have more control over these matters than we have.

Mr. NORTH said: Mr. Speaker,—The hon. member who has just sat down knows more about the game of threepenny nap than he does about stock. I have tried, as much as any man in Queensland, to cure mange, and I have been satisfied for a time that the disease has been cured; but next season it has broken out again in the same horses. I have never seen anything that will effect a permanent cure. As to funds, I think cattle men would be quite willing to contribute their share out of the Brands Fund, along with the sheep men, to discover something to cure this disease. It is a far more serious thing than some hon. members seem to think.

In my electorate I do not think you could be positively certain that two-thirds of the horses have not got the mange. I am also certain that it is getting amongst cattle to a serious extent. On looking through my cattle a short time ago, I found a good many bullocks suffering from it; cattle which a few months ago were quite fat had altogether lost their condition and become quite poor. I hope the Government will take this matter up, and see if some remedy cannot be found for the disease.

Mr. LUYA said: Mr. Speaker,—I merely rise to corroborate the remarks of the hon. member for Burke, by saying that I saw the mange thirty years ago in New South Wales, amongst horses, in the valley of the Hunter. It disappeared in a most mysterious manner. It caused exactly the same disfigurement to horses as it is doing here. One horse would be attacked, and its mate running alongside it would escape, exactly the same as here. While kept in the stables some horses would appear to be effectually cured, but when they were turned out it reappeared. My attention was drawn to the disease about the year 1858, and it lasted till 1863, when it seemed to pass clean away.

Mr. AGNEW said: Mr. Speaker,—I am glad to see that the Premier is going to take some further action in this matter. My attention has been more than once drawn by the constituents in my electorate to the serious nature of this disease, and it seems to have been conclusively proved that it not only attacks horses that are grass-fed, but horses that are stable-fed as well. In one particular instance that was brought under my notice, the horse was owned by a most humane man, was well cared for, well fed, and in good condition. It was seized with the disease three years ago, and although the owner made every effort to eradicate it he had not succeeded. He thought several times he had succeeded, but it was only for a time, and only a few days ago he drew my attention to the fact that it had again broken out. Too much importance cannot possibly be given to this matter, and I am glad to hear from the Premier that he intends to do whatever lies in his power to investigate the cause and cure of the disease.

Mr. MURPHY, in reply, said: Mr. Speaker,—I do not think I need apologise to the House for having introduced this important subject, although the junior member for Burke has seen fit to read me and the House generally a lecture for wasting time in this way. I do not think we are wasting time. This is a subject that is of a great deal more importance to the community than the Mining Companies Bill over which that hon. member wasted so much time last night. It affects two of the largest and most important industries—the pastoral and the agricultural—in the colony. Both the farmers and the squatters are likely to suffer heavily from the ravages of this disease, if it is not checked. It is first of all absolutely necessary to find out the cause of the disease and then we may be able to find a remedy for it. It is no use hon. members saying that a remedy has been found, and that they have cured horses. There has been no remedy found yet. It is all very well for the Premier to treat this subject in a light and airy way.

The PREMIER: I did not treat it in a light and airy way.

Mr. MURPHY: And to say that a board had been appointed, and had done this, that, and the other. I have the report of that board in my hand, and will show what their recommendations are. They simply amount to nothing. They have discovered that this disease is caused by a vegetable parasite. It is not the disease the hon. senior member for Burke refers to; that is caused by a live insect

similar to that which causes scab, itch, or the mange that is so common amongst dogs and other animals. It is a different disease altogether, caused by a vegetable parasite, a disease which, so far as these experts have been able to discover, has its seat in the roots of the hair. The other diseases I have mentioned are only to be found in animals in low condition, but when this disease broke out in our horses originally they were very fat. It was shortly after heavy summer rains; we had a fine spring of green grass; the horses were in very high condition, and it was then that this disease first made its appearance amongst them. If it were caused by an insect, such as that described by the hon. senior member for Burke, it would be very easy to treat it, much easier than it is to treat this vegetable parasite, about which we know nothing. What I want the Government to do is, to get the services of some scientist who understands the use of the microscope. There is at present no man in the colony who understands the use of the microscope.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Plenty.

Mr. MURPHY: I have no hesitation in saying so. There are only a few men in the world who thoroughly understand the use of the microscope, or know what they see when they use it. Any man can look through a microscope, but it does not follow that he may know what he sees. He does not understand the life of an insect, if it is a strange one to him. It requires men similar to those who were here the other day, men who have been brought up to that particular profession, to understand the use of the instrument. As a matter of fact, when those gentlemen were here we had not a microscope in the colony fit for them to use, and the Government had to import one specially for them. When we had not a microscope here fit for that purpose how could we possibly have the men who know how to use it? I do not want to magnify this evil in any way; there is no need to magnify it, because I do not think its ravages are doing any very great amount of injury at the present time, but still it is slowly, but surely, spreading amongst our stock. I only wish to impress upon the Government the necessity of taking further steps to see if they cannot find out the root of the disease and discover a remedy for it, and not trust merely to the recommendations of a board, who no doubt are doing their work, so far as they can, ably and well, but who show by the concluding paragraph of their report that they have not the least idea of what this disease is. Under the heading, "Subjects for further inquiry," they say:—

"I. Whether any particular condition of vitality in the affected animal is favourable to the development of the pathogenic operation of the parasite; and if such a condition exists, what then is the nature of this condition, and on what does it depend, and how can its presence be done away with.

"II. If no such condition can be found, are there other conditions favourable which do not discover themselves by producing a changed vitality, afforded by—(a) the state of the weather during any period of time; (b) a peculiar character in the soil dependent on its physical or chemical state; (c) a change in the constitution or nature of the fodder dependent on the influence of circumstances a and b acting singly, successively, or in concert.

"III. Can any light be thrown on the origination of the disease in the colony.

"IV. What is the life history of the parasite considered apart from its relation to the animal in which it occasions disease, and the action of bodies or conditions on its destruction, or the retardation of its development; is it naturally brought under the influence of these. Solution of these questions would throw light (1) on its method of producing disease; (2) the duration of its inert stage after brought in contact with a body capable of taking the disease; and (3) the precise nature of curative and preventative remedies.

"V. The limit to which this disease in stock is contagious, and whether it can be conveyed to human beings, and *vice versa*."

"VI. Prognosis of the disease."

This shows that they have not yet started on their way to the discovery of this disease. They do not know what it is, where it came from, whether it is contagious or infectious, whether human beings are affected by it; and they have found no cure for it. It is no use relying upon a board like that. I want the Government to get some expert to investigate the matter, and I am quite sure the board will agree with me that this course is absolutely necessary to enable them to fathom this disease. With the leave of the House I beg to withdraw the motion.

Mr. DRAKE said: Mr. Speaker,—Before the motion is withdrawn, there is one statement made by the hon. member for Barcoo which I think should not be passed over without notice. That is, that there is no one here capable of using the microscope. I do not know exactly what he means by that, and I am not competent to judge whether a man is capable of using the microscope or not; but the statement made by the hon. member in proof of his assertion does not appear to prove it at all. He said that there is no first-class microscope here, or was not until recently, but surely that does not prove that there is no man here capable of using the microscope. I only mention this because I know that the Government analytical chemist is constantly in the habit of employing the microscope. It is necessary that he should use it almost continually, and I think it unfair that a general statement should go abroad that there is no one in the colony capable of using that instrument.

Motion for adjournment, by leave, withdrawn.

RESIGNATION OF MEMBER.

The SPEAKER said: I have to report to the House that I have received the following letter from Mr. Lyons, the hon. member for Fitzroy:—

"Minto, Toowoong,

"July 17th, 1889.

"To the Hon. A. Norton, Speaker of the Legislative Assembly of Queensland.

"Sir,—I have the honour to inform you that I hereby resign my seat for the electorate of Fitzroy, in the Legislative Assembly of Queensland, and place such resignation in your hands to be laid before Parliament.

"I have the honour to be, Sir,

"Your obedient servant,

"B. LYONS."

VACANT SEAT.

The PREMIER said: Mr. Speaker,—I beg to move—

That the seat of Robert Lyons, Esq., hath become, and is now, vacant by reason of the resignation of the said Robert Lyons, Esq., since his election and return to serve as a member of this House for the electoral district of Fitzroy.

Question put and passed.

HEALTH ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

COMMITTEE.

On the motion of the PREMIER, the Speaker left the chair, and the House resolved itself into a Committee of the Whole to consider the Bill.

On clause 1, as follows:—

"This Act may be cited as the Health Act Amendment Act of 1889, and shall be read and construed with and as an amendment of the Health Act of 1884, hereinafter called the principal Act."

Mr. DRAKE said he hoped the Government would see their way to give a little more time for the consideration of the possible effect of the Bill. The discussion upon the second reading was a very meagre one, and it was not until the leader of the Opposition had spoken very

near the end of the debate that it was known that he had initiated and drafted the Bill. He considered that there was a great deal which deserved consideration in the Bill, more especially by members who represented suburban constituencies. As he had said on the previous night, he sympathised thoroughly with the difficulties that had been thrown in the way of the Municipal Council of Brisbane; but at the same time, in a conflict between the Municipal Council of Brisbane and the outside authorities, consideration should be shown to the position of those outside bodies. They were representative bodies just the same as the Municipal Council was, and the rights of the people they represented should be very carefully considered in dealing with a matter of that kind. Of course now that they had been informed that the Bill was really initiated by the leader of the Opposition, and supported by the strength of the Government, any idea of opposing it would be useless—it would simply be madness; but, at the same time, he appealed to the hon. gentleman at the head of the Opposition—who, in addition to representing the city of Brisbane, might be taken to be the representative of the people of Queensland at large—he appealed to that hon. gentleman that, as that Bill went through, he would see that the rights of the local bodies outside the city were not overlooked.

The PREMIER said that the Government intended going on with the Bill. He thought that the intelligence and legal knowledge of the hon. member for Enoggera might have enabled him to grasp the contents of the Bill. It only consisted of five clauses, and the whole purpose and need of the Bill had been fully discussed some fortnight before. The Bill was drafted on the lines agreed to then by both sides of the House, and if the hon. gentleman did not possess the knowledge necessary to understand the Bill, the majority of the members of the Committee understood its intention. Both the purpose and the intention of the Bill had been agreed to by a majority of hon. members, and he thought the proposal of the hon. member was only delaying a measure, the importance of which they were all agreed upon. The Government could not accept the proposition of the hon. gentleman.

Mr. DRAKE said that he thought he could grasp the scheme of the Bill, and understand it, but at the same time he said that it was hasty legislation. They had had a lesson read to them before about second reading debates, and the debate on the second reading of that Bill justified—if anything could—the remarks made the other day by the Vice-President of the Executive Council. A more meagre speech than that of the hon. gentleman who introduced the Bill had probably never been made. He understood the legislation, but he said that it was hasty legislation. The country knew nothing about it, and he did not see why legislation of that kind should be rushed forward. He did not think the hon. gentleman at the head of the Government was quite justified in adopting a tone such as he had adopted to hon. members of the Opposition. The hon. gentleman enjoyed the special privilege of bringing in a Bill that he knew was well drafted, and he knew that he had got the leader of the Opposition behind him. The hon. gentleman was like a mouse with a piece of string tied to its tail. He was very active with one end of the string, but the other end was in the hands of the leader of the Opposition.

The PREMIER said he was very sorry that he should have trodden on the tail of the hon. member, and he thought it would be better to go on with business.

Clause put and passed.

On clause 2, as follows:—

"When under the provisions of the 44th section of the principal Act a local authority undertakes or contracts for, or has undertaken or contracted for, or proposes to undertake or contract for, the removal of house refuse from premises, or the cleansing of earth closets, privies, ashpits, or cesspits, the Governor in Council may authorise such local authority to use any land situated either within or beyond the district as a place for depositing and disposing of such refuse, or the contents of the closets, privies, ashpits, or cesspits so cleansed. But such use shall be subject to such conditions as the Governor in Council may from time to time prescribe."

The PREMIER said it was considered doubtful, on reconsideration, whether they were not giving too much power to the Governor in Council and to local authorities by that clause, and he would therefore move, as an amendment, the insertion of the words "of which it is lawfully possessed and" after the word "land" in the 13th line.

Amendment agreed to.

Mr. McMASTER said, before the clause was finally passed, he would like to know whether the clause gave local authorities power to acquire land in fee-simple.

The PREMIER: It is not compulsory.

Mr. McMASTER said he wanted to know whether a local authority could purchase from a private individual. Under the Acts under which local authorities at present worked they had no power to acquire property outside their own boundaries; but he wanted to give them that power. He believed that the local authorities would not object so long as the Governor in Council had the power of saying whether the land was suitable or otherwise. As he had pointed out on the previous day, a local authority might acquire land that was at present worthless for cultivating purposes; but if they judiciously applied the nightsoil, in a few years it would become very valuable for agricultural purposes. They could then lease the land for the purpose of reducing the expense of the scheme.

The HON. SIR S. W. GRIFFITH said he did not think the clause affected that question at all, and there might be doubt as to whether a local authority would be justified in spending money for that purpose. It would be very difficult to prevent them from doing so, and he did not know of anyone who could raise the question as to whether they could purchase the land. It would require a very careful consideration of the Health Act and the Local Government Acts to determine that point. The Bill did not propose to deal with that subject, but he thought the suggestion of the hon. member was good, and that it would be just as well to remove all doubt. He would move the addition at the end of the clause of the words, "Any local authority may purchase land for the purposes aforesaid." They could then buy land, but the clause would not give them power to obtain it compulsorily, which he did not think would be a desirable thing.

Mr. MACFARLANE said a difficulty would arise if a local authority were to purchase land and the Governor in Council refused to sanction the land as being a fit place to bury nightsoil. That might be a difficulty.

Mr. McMASTER said the local authorities would be perfectly willing to submit the matter to the Government at first.

The PREMIER: They must do so.

Mr. BUCKLAND said that if the amendment was passed a local authority could buy land for that purpose in the division of another local authority, and he thought there should be some limit as to the distance within which they should be allowed to purchase land outside the boundaries of their own division. What was the case

at present? The Stephens Divisional Board had within their division the nightsoil depôt of the South Brisbane corporation, and he thought there ought to be some clause to confine local authorities to their own boundaries in the purchase of localities for that purpose.

Mr. HODGKINSON said that if there was any restriction placed upon the choice of localities for that purpose, the object of the Bill would be defeated. There were really two parties to the Bill in the united cities of North and South Brisbane, who were troubled with the great question as to where to deposit the nightsoil. The objectors to their action would be the representatives of the suburbs surrounding them. No one knew at present which suburb would be selected for the depôt, and the consequence would be that every suburban representative would be up in arms, and try to restrict as much as possible the power which the Government wished by the Bill to confer upon the people of Brisbane as a whole, as represented by their corporations. If they were to be restricted in the selection of a site for the depôt they might just as well put the Bill in the waste paper basket. The object of the Bill was to enable the corporation of Brisbane to deal with that matter as they thought best in the interests of the general public, even though their action might inflict some hardship upon a small section of the public. The object of the suburban representatives would be to fetter that action as much as possible so as to continue the obstacles which now existed, and which the Bill was intended to remove, as to the disposition of the nightsoil.

Mr. DRAKE said he could not agree with the hon. member for Bulimba that a limit should be put upon the distance from a local authority's division at which a nightsoil depôt should be selected. It was to the interest of the suburban divisions that the corporation of Brisbane should take the nightsoil as far away as they could, and it would be more satisfactory to them if they could take it away to the Warrego or Gregory districts.

The PREMIER said he did not think there was any necessity for the proposed amendment, as the Local Government and Divisional Boards Acts gave local authorities power to buy land outside their own boundaries. There were plenty of instances in which local authorities had acquired quarries outside their own boundaries. Clause 14 of the Divisional Boards Act, he thought, gave the necessary power. It said:—

"The board of every division shall be a body corporate, with perpetual succession and a common seal, and shall be capable in law of suing and being sued and of purchasing, holding, and alienating land, and of doing and suffering all such other acts and things as bodies corporate may by law do and suffer."

The HON. SIR S. W. GRIFFITH said that did not settle the question. That gave local authorities the power of holding land, but did not give them the power to spend their money for the purpose of purchasing land for the purposes dealt with in the Bill.

The PREMIER: The word "purchasing" is used in the clause.

The HON. SIR S. W. GRIFFITH said that clause gave local authorities a legal existence for the purpose of holding land, but in order to purchase the land they must spend money. The clause only got over the technical difficulty, and enabled corporations to become landowners, but the question remained whether their money, which was raised for the special purposes defined by the Local Government Acts, could be expended in the purchase of land for the purposes of the Bill. It was a question whether there was not sufficient power given under the Local Government Act

and the Divisional Boards Act to expend money for the purpose, but he was not quite sure of it, and he thought it was worth their while to settle the question by a few words in the Bill when they could settle it in that way.

The PREMIER said he would not object to the amendment if it made the matter more clear, but he pointed out that in his opinion they were quite safe without it, as the necessary power was given under the Divisional Boards Act.

Mr. HYNE said it struck him on the previous night when the Bill was before them that some amendment of the kind was necessary in the clause, and he had thought that the power to resume land, or to compel the sale of land for the purpose, was necessary. The amendment proposed by the leader of the Opposition was all very well in its way, but supposing he was the holder of a site peculiarly adapted for the purpose of a nightsoil depôt, there was no power given a local authority to compel him to surrender the land. It was a difficult question, and might be studied from many points of view; the question of drainage, for instance, should guide local authorities in the purchase of land for that purpose. He would like to know the Premier's opinion upon the amendment he had suggested.

The PREMIER said he did not believe in those compulsory clauses. He could not conceive the possibility of there being only one suitable piece of land, within a reasonable distance, available for that purpose. He thought it would be a very dangerous power to give a local authority the right to go in and say, "This is the piece of land we want, and we will have it."

Mr. HYNE: At a valuation.

The PREMIER said a valuation did not always represent the value of a property to the holder. In dealing with a matter of that sort, he thought the area of selection was not at all likely to be limited, and the difficulty raised by the hon. member was not at all likely to occur. If it did occur, it would be a case for special legislation.

Mr. AGNEW said he was afraid the power given to local authorities by the proposed amendment would give rise to difficulties. They might first of all purchase a piece of land, and then find that the inhabitants of the district objected, and he did not know that any power was given to compel them to waive their objections.

The PREMIER: Clause 4.

Mr. AGNEW said he thought the proposed amendment might be extended so as to provide that land might be purchased for that purpose with the consent of the Governor in Council.

The PREMIER: They cannot use it for that purpose without the consent of the Governor in Council.

Mr. AGNEW said that if they could not use land without the consent of the Governor in Council it would be as well to say that they could not purchase it for that purpose without the consent of the Governor in Council.

The PREMIER said the hon. member must see that the obtaining of the consent of the Governor in Council to the use of land for that purpose would necessarily precede any action taken by a local authority for the purchase of such land. They were not likely to purchase land for that purpose when they would not be allowed to use it for the purpose. They would, of course, commence at the beginning and not at the end.

Mr. McMASTER said that no local authority would be foolish enough to purchase land for such a purpose without knowing well that the

inhabitants of the district would oppose it and be a constant annoyance to them, and they would consequently, prior to purchasing the land, ascertain whether, in the opinion of the Governor in Council, the land they proposed to purchase was suitable for the purpose and in a suitable locality for the establishment of a depôt.

Amendment agreed to.

Mr. POWERS said he did not rise with the intention of proposing the amendment he suggested on the previous day, because he did not think it would work. He wished, however, to propose an addition, which he thought would meet with the approval of hon. members—namely, that the Governor in Council might order any local authority to discontinue the use of any such land, if, in the interests of the public, it was deemed desirable. Localities that were sparsely settled at the present time might be thickly settled in a few years, and what would be a suitable place for the purposes of the Act now, might in five years time be altogether unsuitable, and it might be desirable in the public interest that the local authority should move on. As it was proposed to give local authorities power to buy land, it would be just as well to let them know that they would have to discontinue the use of any land they purchased when it became desirable in the interests of the public that they should do so.

Mr. SALKELD said he thought some amendment such as that suggested by the hon. member for Burrum was necessary, because the authority given to buy land conferred a sort of vested right, and it would be as well to stipulate that any local authority must move on when required to do so in the interests of the health of the locality.

The PREMIER said that, as far as the large centres of population were concerned, if such an amendment were carried it would not put them much further forward in the object in view. The city of Brisbane, for instance, might secure a place some distance in the country, and in a few years might be subjected to the same system of almost persecution as in the past. He thought the 4th clause provided for what the hon. member had in view. That clause gave power to the Governor in Council, when it was shown that a nuisance had been created in any neighbourhood, to cause the nuisance to be abated by means of an action at the suit of the Attorney-General. He thought that quite sufficient power was given to prevent any danger to the public health.

Mr. MORGAN said there was no doubt that the Bill was the outcome of the difficulty into which the city of Brisbane had got in relation to its sanitary affairs. It was described, however, as a Bill that would meet the requirements of the whole colony, and it would do so to some extent, but he feared that it might lead to a good deal of trouble. It might remove the difficulty that existed in the metropolitan area so far as the city was concerned, but it would give rise to endless trouble in some of the suburban divisions; and he very much feared that trouble would arise in the country districts also, where the water supply was, in many cases, obtained from running streams. A local authority might select a site for the deposition of nightsoil and other offensive matter on land which drained into a running stream from which a community lower down might draw its water supply. Of course the Government would have a very keen eye to those matters in the neighbourhood of the metropolis, but he feared that no such watchfulness would be exercised with respect to more remote districts, and it might be a very difficult matter to move the Government to take action against a local authority in an outside district which was doing an injustice to a neighbouring community

in the manner he had suggested. However, he presumed that they would have to trust to the Government in the matter. He believed there would have been no necessity for the Bill, even so far as Brisbane was concerned, if the whole question had been considered as it had been considered by the municipalities of the Southern colonies. What was to prevent the municipality of Brisbane from collecting its nightsoil daily or nightly in vans, which could be taken to the central railway station, placed bodily on the rolling stock, and taken by special train at night to, say, a point on the Pine River.

Mr. AGNEW: And poison all the people living along the line.

Mr. MORGAN said it did not poison people in other colonies, and he did not know that people in Queensland were more susceptible to smells of that description than their neighbours in the South. He did not think there would be the slightest offence, except the imaginary one to which the Premier referred the other day, in dealing with the matter in that way. The matter could be taken by rail to the Pine and from the railway line it could be taken by tram line to the centre of a thousand-acre reserve and there buried; and the boxes could be taken from their frames and sluiced there. There was no doubt that the nightsoil would have to be taken from Brisbane by rail. It would not be taken by river, and he did not think the city of Brisbane would be allowed, for the sake of convenience or saving some expense, to inflict an injustice on any rising suburb in the shape of taking the nightsoil away by tram line. There were plenty of open places within easy reach by rail from the city where that refuse could be deposited, and deposited nightly, without inconveniencing anybody along the route or in the neighbourhood of the depôt.

The PREMIER said the hon. member appeared to forget that one of the greatest difficulties in dealing with the matter was intended to be met by a clause in the Bill. The danger he referred to was that a municipality or a divisional board might be served with an injunction taken out against them by an individual. The municipality of Brisbane was prevented by an injunction of the Supreme Court from taking the faecal matter away by the railway line.

Mr. WATSON said he had considered the matter, and thought the Bill was a very good one. He did not think it was necessary to hamper themselves by over-legislation; he would like to see it as free as possible. He had been interested in the question for years, and had made himself acquainted with the schemes adopted in Melbourne and in Sydney. He had come to the conclusion that the remedy which would do for Melbourne would also apply to Brisbane. In Melbourne they did not pollute Hobson's Bay by rushing all the nightsoil into it as they did in Sydney, where it was all deposited in different little bays in the harbour. For the whole year they had to keep dredges at work in those bays lifting that matter out again, and polluting the whole harbour to an extraordinary extent. He was extremely sorry when the nightsoil was deposited in Moreton Bay, and felt confident that there were many other places where it could be put. In a few years, as Brisbane progressed, they would be able to adopt the method they intended adopting in Melbourne, which was that of carrying it, as was done in Edinburgh, to pieces of soil and forcing it by water through the land, which would therefore be manured. The depôt was shifted about for miles and miles. He thought the 4th clause was a very good one, and would like to see it passed intact. There

was no doubt that the time would come when carrying the matter away by rail would be very expensive; but he did not believe the hon. member for Warwick intended that the present railways should be used for that purpose at all.

Mr. MORGAN: Yes.

Mr. WATSON said he thought the hon. member meant that there should be a railway for that express purpose. It would not be nice for passenger traffic to be accommodated in the manner that scheme would entail.

Mr. MURPHY said those trains would not carry passengers.

Mr. MORGAN said they would be special trains.

Mr. WATSON said there was a better method than that altogether, one by which all the matter could be used for manure.

Mr. AGNEW said he looked upon any scheme that might be propounded for the disposal of nightsoil at present to be altogether of a temporary nature. He thought the ultimate result of their endeavours to dispose of that matter would be that they would adopt the wise example set by the Adelaide people and go in for sewage farms. Those who had built homes, and who lived with their wives and families along their railway lines, would not like to have their property depreciated in value, or the health of their families endangered by the droppings from the waggons on the sleepers of the railway line. It was far better to his mind that the nightsoil should be carried by water. There were several islands in the Bay that were quite suitable for temporary purposes until they had initiated a proper scheme, which they would have to do sooner or later. He hoped that whatever scheme was initiated, they would not endanger the lives of people, or depreciate the value of property along the railway lines.

Mr. McMASTER said surely the hon. member for Nundah did not believe that a local authority would be mad enough to convey nightsoil in pans or waggons without bottoms. He had just remarked that there would be droppings all along the line, which would poison the families living in the locality. It was too absurd to talk like that. When the Municipal Council of Brisbane endeavoured some time ago to have the nightsoil taken by rail to the Pine River, they were negotiating with the Railway Department to have trucks specially fitted up for that purpose and for nothing else, and to have air-tight pans conveyed on those trucks. Supposing the train passed by at about 3 o'clock in the morning, if the hon. member came ten minutes afterwards he would not know that such a train had passed by. He thought the amendment proposed by the hon. member for Burrum would leave the local authorities in very much the same position in which they were at present; they would be always in danger of an injunction being issued against them. When the Brisbane Municipal Council commenced to use the Kedron Brook dépot there were very few inhabitants there, but they kept up a constant agitation to have that dépot removed. No doubt if a local authority did secure a piece of land, it was just as possible that people would come and settle close by, and would follow it the same as they followed graveyards. Immediately a burying ground was selected people surrounded it with their houses. One or two individuals would get up an agitation and annoy the Government, and the Government, to get rid of them, would give the local authority notice to move on. There was ample power in the 4th clause to prevent the Government from allowing any

nuisance, and the Government would take care that no local authority allowed any nuisance to exist. He did not think it at all likely that any local authority, particularly a municipal council, would select a portion of ground close upon their own boundaries. As for the nuisance caused to the inhabitants, many applications had been made by the inhabitants of places near Brisbane to give portions of their land for the depositing of nightsoil; but the difficulty was to get it there, and if they did get it there someone else might obtain an injunction against them. The amendment proposed by the leader of the Opposition, with the 4th clause as it stood, would make the community perfectly safe.

Mr. AGNEW said he was much obliged to the hon. member for Fortitude Valley for informing him that it was not the intention of the municipal council to carry nightsoil in trucks without bottoms. He (Mr. Agnew) based his arguments on the manner in which the nightsoil was carried at the present time. The hon. member anticipated that there would be no danger or risk to the health of anyone by a train passing along the line in a hurry, but he (Mr. Agnew) knew that anyone passing the Quay street wharf once a month had just as much as any ordinary being could stand. He did not know that any precautions would prevent the danger to health that he anticipated, and he sincerely hoped that the railways of this colony would never be used for the purposes suggested by the hon. member for Fortitude Valley.

Mr. DRAKE said he did not see how the amendment of the hon. member for Burrum could do any harm. It simply gave power of revocation to the Governor in Council. If the stuff was to be deposited on land, it should be done in such a way that it would become an advantage instead of a disadvantage. Of course the municipal council would not want to carry it further than they could get a convenient place for it at the start, but as population increased it would be necessary, not only in the interest of the public, but also in the interest of the council, to go further on, and he thought the Governor in Council should have the power to say, "Well now, as population is springing up around this place, you must go further on and deposit the stuff somewhere else;" so that it might be used for fertilizing first one district and then another further on. In that way it seemed to him that the objectionable matter might be used for useful purposes.

Mr. HYNE said he would like to ask the hon. member for Burrum whether the last two lines of the 2nd clause did not provide for his objections.

Mr. POWERS: No.

Mr. HYNE said that clause stated that "such use shall be subject to such conditions as the Governor in Council may from time to time prescribe." He presumed that if the Governor in Council had power to prescribe conditions they might also prevent a municipal council from depositing nightsoil in any dépot.

Mr. SALKELD said the last two lines of the 2nd clause provided that the Governor in Council might prescribe conditions, but that was a different thing to prohibiting the using of a place altogether. If a corporation purchased land with the approval of the Governor in Council for the purpose of using it as a manure dépot, that would, to a certain extent, give them a kind of vested right which could not be taken from them without compensation. The Bill would apply to places far away from Brisbane, of which the Government might have no personal knowledge, and if

they made a mistake in granting permission to use a piece of land for a manure depôt, they ought to have the power to correct that mistake in the interests of the public. The effect of the amendment would very likely be that local authorities would purchase areas of land sufficiently large for their purposes, instead of buying small pieces of land and using them in such a way that they would become a nuisance to people living in the neighbourhood. The land chosen for such a use should be poor sandy soil. With regard to carrying the soil by rail, of course if it was done in a slovenly way it would be a very great nuisance, but as the Governor in Council had power to prescribe the conditions under which it should be carried, they would, no doubt, make such regulations as would prevent any nuisance arising.

Mr. BARLOW said when he spoke on that subject before, on the motion for the adjournment of the House made by the leader of the Opposition a few days ago, he mentioned the case of the sewage farm in Adelaide, and an hon. member, in a little bit of harmless pleasantry, asked him whether he had been to windward or leeward of the farm. He could say that he had been on both sides, and he could assure hon. members that there was no offensive smell. He firmly believed, as he stated the other day, that that was the true solution of the difficulty. He fancied the proper course for a local authority to pursue was that indicated by the hon. member for Fassifern—namely, to buy large pieces of land. In connection with the subject he might mention that the hon. member for Fortitude Valley, Mr. Watson, and himself spent about an hour with, he supposed, one of the ablest men in Australia—he meant Mr. Fitzgibbon, the town clerk of Melbourne—and he propounded to them a plan, which was in his mind, and which had been talked over, of having this matter under a large united trust something like the Traffic Board in Brisbane. It was quite certain that it would be an intense hardship on any local authority if they made arrangements for the establishment of a manure depôt, and then had to be hunted out by an order of the Governor in Council, or by operation of law. There would be nothing so good as to buy a sufficiently large area of ground, and he took it that if they sold or leased any portion of it they would do so on the condition that the lessees did not raise the question of the manure depôt being a nuisance. That seemed to him to be a solution of the difficulty.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS (Hon. M. H. Black) said he had heard the sewage farms at Adelaide referred to on several occasions, and he thought it was only right that members should not be misled by what they had heard as to the innocuousness of those farms. He had visited one of those farms at the beginning of the present year with the Minister for Public Instruction, and a more abominable place he never visited. So far from there being no aroma from it, he could say, and he was quite certain the Minister for Public Instruction could substantiate his statement, that he would not like to live within a mile of it, and if that sewage system was to be established in Brisbane it had better not be within three miles of any ordinary habitation. He did not fancy that that system would be a solution of the difficulty in a tropical climate like that of Queensland. He believed himself that nothing short of a thorough water system, carrying the material a very long distance from Brisbane, would be effectual. Certainly the sewage farm at Adelaide must be about the most abominable nuisance, to those residing within a few miles of it, that he could possibly imagine.

The HON. SIR S. W. GRIFFITH said it seemed to be assumed by many persons that the water system was the only one suitable to Brisbane. A water system, of course, might carry the sewage matter into the sea; and if it did that it perhaps would not do any harm. But in towns a considerable distance from the sea, the matter must be taken to something like a sewage farm. There was no land within a reasonable distance of Brisbane to which sewage could be taken and spread over a considerable area. He had every reason, moreover, to believe that the system had been found to be a failure in Europe, and only lately in England there had been two or three cases before the courts of complaints made against the local authorities with respect to sewage farms. On the Continent great doubts were expressed about that system. At Berlin the first result was that the land produced excellent crops, but that state of things did not last long, as it was very soon found that the quantity of sewage deposited on the farms was far more than the soil could absorb.

The PREMIER: The very same effect has been produced at St. Helena.

The HON. SIR S. W. GRIFFITH said it had been stated that the sewage matter from eight persons was as much as an acre of land could absorb if it was to be used for ordinary purposes. That would indicate an enormous area for the sewage of a place like Brisbane. His own belief was that a system separating the fluids from the solids, and disposing of the solids by some means with the aid of fire was the only system that would really work. That was being done now in Manchester, and in some parts of Europe. In Holland and other places they had what was called the pneumatic system, which he thought was much less expensive than water and quite practicable. The pertinence of those remarks to the amendment before the Committee lay in the fact that in carrying out the operations the local authority might have to expend a good deal of money in erecting works and plant on the land; and it would be inconvenient, to say the least, if they were liable to be suddenly told that they had to go elsewhere. As to their creating a nuisance, the system must be worked in such a way that it would not create a nuisance. There was a very good rule applied in courts of justice, that a man who goes to live alongside a nuisance must not complain of it. Those evils must exist somewhere, and if they were put in places where they would not do any harm at present, and people went there afterwards, it would be their own lookout, unless the works were conducted in such a way as to cause a general nuisance. For the present, at any rate, the local authorities should not be terrified from doing what may be necessary to do the work in the best manner, perhaps by fire, through fear that some day or other pressure would be brought to bear upon the Government to withdraw their sanction to use the land. That might be done. They could easily conceive of some very influential persons interested in neighbouring land—say, a powerful syndicate who wanted to cut it up—bringing pressure to bear on the Government which would be very undesirable.

Mr. BARLOW said that with regard to the sewage farm at Adelaide, his own experience there was exactly as he had already related to the Committee. What had been stated by the leader of the Opposition as having happened at Berlin was perfectly true. It was a well-known fact that if sewage was applied in a reckless manner it soured the land. At the Adelaide sewage farm they had a system of filter beds. The filter bed he saw cost, he believed, £10,000. If filter beds were to be made by any local authority it would

be necessary for them to have a permanent occupation of the land. By the aid of the filter beds the solid matters were converted into a *poudrette*, a substance exactly like black soil. On the day he was present, he saw the whole process through, and as far as he could judge there was nothing offensive about it. Everybody looked healthy and well. The railway workshops were in the immediate vicinity of the place, and people were living all round it, and when he asked the manager of the sewage farm especially about typhoid, he was told that there were twenty-nine men working there in various capacities, and that they had had no fever or sickness of any kind. The Minister for Lands must have seen the place under unfavourable circumstances. For his own part he should not have the slightest hesitation in buying up the land round the sewage farm, and trying to make a good thing out of it.

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL (Hon. J. Donaldson) said the experience of the hon. member was quite different from that of himself and his hon. colleague, the Minister for Lands. They visited the place in February last, and he must say that a more disagreeable odour he never smelt in his life. They were not aware at the time that they were approaching the sewage farm, but a long time before they reached it they knew what it was. They made some inquiries as to whether the stench was always there, and they were assured that it was. If £10,000 had been spent on the filtering beds, it was certainly not enough. It would require £20,000 or £30,000 to keep down that odour. So far as the sewage of Adelaide was concerned, they deserved every credit. He had never been in any city that approached Adelaide in cleanliness. But that was quite a different matter from the sewage farm, and he did not know of any place about Brisbane where a sewage farm could be carried on under similar conditions. It formed a portion of a large reserve. There was certainly a railway station there, and the employes had to live near it; but as far as he and the Minister for Lands were concerned, nothing gave them greater pleasure than to be able to leave it on that occasion.

Mr. DRAKE said that with reference to the remark of the leader of the Opposition about a nuisance springing up, and the people inconvenienced by it not being able to obtain an injunction because they went to the place after the establishment of the works, it should be borne in mind that the nuisance might arise from the extension of the sewage farm. A large piece of land might be bought, and people might go and live on the borders of it. There might be no nuisance at the time, but as the town increased in size, and the council began to use a larger area for the purpose, what he might call the stink radius would be increased, and would inconvenience those people. Under such circumstances the Government might feel themselves justified in saying that the operations were being conducted too near a populous part of the country, and ought to be shifted to some place more remote.

Mr. POWERS said before the amendment was put he wished to say that the arguments he had heard against it had not convinced him that it was wrong, but it appeared that a majority of the Committee were against it. One very large argument used against it was that a large amount of money would have to be spent in dealing with the matter—but they were not now dealing with any scheme of that kind—which would require expensive works, such as were likely to be necessary at some future day. They were simply dealing with a Bill of a few clauses, to enable local authorities to get out of their present difficulties, but if they gave those authorities power to go on any lands they

thought fit, they would not be so choice in their selection of a place near town, as they would be if they knew that they could be ordered off. They would then probably take a larger extent of ground and go further away from settlement, so as to be sure they would not be interfered with; and the Government who had not the backbone to resist the demands of a few people, would never have the backbone to fix the site in the first instance. There would be just as much pressure brought to bear in regard to fixing the place as there would be in the removal of it, unless it was done *sub rosa*. He considered the Government of Queensland would be sufficiently strong to bear against any pressure that might be brought against the removal of a site if it were necessary. As to any future scheme that was proposed to be carried out, they could deal with that when a measure was introduced for that purpose. In the meantime they were simply dealing with the removal of nightsoil to places where it would be buried a few feet; and if the amendment had no other effect it would cause people selecting sites to select them where they were not likely to be interfered with. But if they passed the clause, without limiting the four corners of the statute, authorising local authorities to hold the land for an indefinite time, if any injunction were brought the judge would hold that if they wanted to take away that authority they would also have inserted a clause whereby it could be withdrawn.

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

Clause, as amended, put and passed.

Clause 3—"Places may be used"—passed as printed.

On clause 4, as follows:—

"No injunction, restraining order, or other order restraining a local authority from conveying any such refuse or other matters aforesaid to any place the use whereof is authorised by the Governor in Council under this Act, or from depositing the same thereon, or from there disposing of the same by burying, burning, desiccating, or otherwise, nor any order controlling a local authority in the manner of such conveyance, deposit, or disposal, shall be made, except in an action at the suit of the Attorney-General."

The HON. SIR S. W. GRIFFITH said a verbal alteration was required in the clause. The words "injunction, restraining order, or other," were unnecessary; he therefore moved that they be omitted.

Amendment agreed to.

The HON. SIR S. W. GRIFFITH said some exception might be taken as to whether the words used were sufficient to apply to an order of the Supreme Court. He therefore moved that the words, "by any court," be inserted after "made," in the 9th line.

Amendment agreed to.

Mr. BUCKLAND said he thought they had made a very wise provision by inserting the words "burying, burning, desiccating, or otherwise" treating refuse and other matters, because he was certain that, sooner or later, it would be found necessary to compel local authorities to cremate rather than bury nightsoil. They had heard already what sewage farms were like in the Southern colonies; he had seen them in England himself, and knew that people living within one, two, or three miles of them often found them a great nuisance. If they were a nuisance in a climate like that of the old country, he was certain they would be worse in a climate like that of Queensland; and he only hoped that provisions would be introduced into the Bill, making it compulsory for local authorities to cremate instead of burying nightsoil, as was done at present.

Clause, as amended, put and passed.

On clause 5, as follows :—

"Nothing in this Act shall deprive any person of any right to claim and recover compensation from any local authority in respect of any actual damages or injury sustained by him by reason of any nuisance caused by a local authority in the exercise of the powers conferred on it by this Act."

Mr. McMASTER said on the second reading of the Bill he stated that he should want some information as to the effect of the words "damages or injury." That clause overrode all the rest of the Bill, and, as he pointed out yesterday, there were persons who would believe they were injured if a death occurred in their family, although they might be a mile away from the dépôt. He would like to hear the opinion of the Premier upon that question, as those words would enable any person who felt aggrieved, or who thought he had suffered injury by a dépôt being in the neighbourhood, to bring an action.

The PREMIER said he was sorry to say that he had not heard what the hon. gentleman had stated. Did the hon. gentleman seriously intend to omit those words?

Mr. McMASTER said that he had stated that if the word "injury" were to remain in the clause, a person living a mile or two away from a dépôt, in the event of someone in his family taking fever, which might really have been contracted elsewhere, might attribute it to the dépôt, and insist upon getting damages. He did not object to actual damages done, but the word "injury" would cover a case such as he had mentioned. There would be ample safeguards if that were omitted, and only the word "damages" used.

The PREMIER said that he did not think that any such case as that suggested by the hon. member was likely to happen. It was not at all likely that claims for damages would be made for such an exaggerated reason as that which the hon. member had instanced. If that were to be allowed, where would it stop?

Mr. McMASTER said he would propose an addition to the clause, although he did not know whether the Committee would accept it or not. He would suggest that power should be given to the Attorney-General to give permission to claims being made. He would propose that the following words be added to the clause :—

But such person shall not commence any suit, claim, or action until having first obtained the consent of the Attorney-General to such suit, claim, or action.

That would not destroy the value of the clause, and clause 4 provided that no injunction could be got without the consent of the Attorney-General.

The PREMIER said the hon. gentleman's amendment would destroy the right of individual action; and it was intended that where a direct damage or injury was sustained that right should be preserved.

Mr. McMASTER: I shall not press it.

The HON. SIR S. W. GRIFFITH said it would not do any harm to leave out the words "or injury," and on consideration he thought they had better be left out. The point had not occurred to him before, but a man might say that he had suffered injury because a right had been infringed. If a right had been infringed there would be a technical injury, and the person might be entitled to ls. damages. He might bring an action, get no substantial compensation, and yet put the local authority to considerable expense. If the words "actual damages" were retained, then if actual damages had not been sustained, the person suing would not get a verdict at all. The point was a purely technical one, but the words "or injury" might give rise to some such argument as he suggested. It

would not do any harm from the point of view of giving compensation to anyone really injured if those words were left out. He thought the possible argument which he referred to would be a very absurd one for a court to uphold, but if the words "or injury" were left out a man would not be entitled to bring an action if a mere technical right had been infringed. If the words were left out there would be no room for the ingenious argument he referred to being used.

The PREMIER said he thought they had gone quite far enough in the way of protecting local authorities, and the words had better be left in.

Mr. BARLOW said he would ask if any right of action would accrue provided that the local authority carried out the provisions of the 2nd section—

"But shall be bound in such conveyance, deposit, and disposal to cause no greater nuisance or annoyance than is necessary."

He presumed that if they did that there would be no right to bring an action under the 5th section.

Mr. McMASTER said he asked that the words might be left out owing to what fell from the Chief Secretary the other night, when he said that there were certain parties who would go into a witness-box and give their oath that there was a nuisance when no nuisance really existed. As he had said, if a member of a family died after having contracted fever it might be said that that was an injury, although the existence of the dépôt had not really caused the fever.

The PREMIER said any person making such a complaint would have to satisfy the court that the facts were as he stated, and an action at law would be an expensive luxury for him if his statement was not correct.

Mr. McMASTER said a man of straw might begin an action against a local authority who would have to bear the whole cost of the action. He thought the words "actual damages" were sufficient.

Mr. FOXTON said the right of injunction was taken away by the Bill, and it was quite competent for any man of straw to bring an action now against anyone for anything, if he chose to do so. In view of the peculiar circumstances surrounding the question it was quite possible that a number of residents in a district, finding themselves deprived of their present right to go for an injunction, might combine to put up a man of straw for the purpose of annoying and worrying the local authority. He certainly thought there might be some injury without actual damage, but there could scarcely be actual damage without injury. A man could scarcely suffer actual damage without having suffered injury. A man who had suffered mere nominal injury might be able to put the local authority to very considerable expense, although he was a man of straw and put up by a number of residents who would combine for the purpose of doing, as far as they possibly could, what they were entitled to do at the present time.

Mr. POWERS said that if injury was done to a person in any part of the country through the operation of the Bill it was the duty of Parliament to see that that person had means of protection, and that was what was intended by the clause. So far as bogus actions were concerned, a Bill had already passed its second reading which contained a clause providing that such bogus actions should be tried in an inferior court. That was the best way to get rid of bogus actions. If a man had an injury done him under the Bill they had no right to deprive him of the right to recover damages for it.

THE HON. SIR S. W. GRIFFITH said it was right that a man should recover compensation for actual loss sustained, and the clause would provide for that without the words "or injury." It was a highly technical point, and rather difficult to make understood. He would give an illustration: A plaintiff might sue a defendant for a breach of contract or for non-fulfilment of a contract, and though the plaintiff might lose nothing by it, and might in fact be better off than if the defendant had carried out his contract, nevertheless, he would be entitled to a verdict for a shilling. Take another instance. He might trespass upon a man's ground. He might jump over his fence and walk across his land, and by doing so he violated a legal right and so did that man an "injury," and he was entitled to bring an action against him, and he would get a farthing damages probably. In the same way an ingenious person might contend that the erection of works for sewage purposes might do him an injury in that sense, and if he recovered a farthing the defendant would have to pay his own costs. That risk would be removed by leaving out the words "or injury," and to do so would not interfere with the protection of private persons. He thought the words had better be left out, and he would therefore move their omission.

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

The House resumed; the CHAIRMAN reported the Bill with amendments, and the report was adopted.

On the motion of the PREMIER, the third reading of the Bill was made an Order of the Day for to-morrow.

CROWN LANDS ACTS, 1884 TO 1886, AMENDMENT BILL. COMMITTEE.

On the motion of the MINISTER FOR LANDS, the Speaker left the chair, and the House resolved itself into a Committee of the Whole to consider this Bill in detail.

On clause 1—"Preliminary"—

THE HON. SIR S. W. GRIFFITH said he was going to take advantage of the opportunity afforded by the first motion made in Committee on the Bill, to say a word with respect to a statement made by the Minister for Mines and Works on the second reading of the Bill. That hon. gentleman had announced to the House that, before the general election of 1883, some big squatters had subscribed a large purse which had been used freely before and during the election to secure the return to power of the party he (Sir S. W. Griffith) had the honour to be leader of. He had interjected at the time the statement was made that he did not know anything at all about it. He had not taken the trouble to make any inquiries about it since, but a gentleman who did know all about it came and told him the facts of the matter. It appeared the big purse subscribed amounted to less than £300. One gentleman now sitting on the Government side was the principal subscriber, and another gentleman sitting on that side was secretary to the fund. Something over £200 was expended in printing, and the balance was given to a gentleman for writing a pamphlet; and so the whole fund was distributed. That was a very different story with regard to the big fund used before and during the elections to assist in the return of his party. He thought he need scarcely refer to the history of the squatting party to show their consistent opposition to him, and to show that he, at any rate, owed no gratitude to them.

The PREMIER said it appeared that the hon. gentleman estimated the support he received by money contributions. He was very

glad the hon. gentleman had afforded the Committee some information with regard to the secret history of a certain pamphlet. He was glad to find that it cost so little money, but he thought it was dearly bought at the price.

MR. HAMILTON said he knew a little about the fund. A member of the Upper House informed him that he had seen the subscription list, and that there were men whose names were down for £50, one of whom had expended £1,000, though his name was down for only £50. That gentleman mentioned to him the names of a great many persons who subscribed largely, none of them under £50; and he endeavoured to get an individual to have a look at the list. His friend went to the treasurer of the fund, and said he wanted to buy a station, but the treasurer was too fly to let him have a look at the secret list. Tens of thousands were subscribed to the fund; and other defamatory pamphlets, in addition to the one already referred to, were published; and if the work was done for £300, they were circulated at far less than cost price. One or two gentlemen at present on the Government side were connected with the fund, but at that time they were supporters of the party on the other side.

THE MINISTER FOR MINES AND WORKS said he did not think the leader of the Opposition was responsible for anything he had stated with regard to the fund, though he was rather incredulous as to the hon. gentleman never having heard of it. The hon. gentleman said he had not, so he must take his word, but it was a matter of common notoriety.

THE HON. SIR S. W. GRIFFITH: It did not happen, so far as I know. How could I hear of a thing that never happened?

THE MINISTER FOR MINES AND WORKS said he was not aware that any of the subscribers were in or had been in the Assembly. The men to whom he alluded were big squatters who were not in the House at all—some of them the largest squatters in Australia; and he had every reason to believe that the statement he made was perfectly in accordance with fact. He never saw the list, and he did not suppose it would have been shown to him had he asked to be allowed to see it; but he was confident that the amount subscribed and spent was a much larger sum than £300.

THE HON. SIR S. W. GRIFFITH said that not knowing anything about it he could not contradict the hon. member, but the story seemed highly improbable. For his part, he did not believe a word of it. He knew very well how the squatting party had always treated him. With the single exception of a gentleman who was now in Victoria, they were his consistent opponents during the whole of the last Parliament. To say that the squatting party had ever supported his side, or that his side owed any gratitude to the squatters was simply absurd, as everyone who was acquainted with the history of the colony very well knew.

THE MINISTER FOR MINES AND WORKS said that was rather too thin. They knew that though the squatters might have been consistently opposed to the hon. gentleman all along, they were not opposed to him in his opposition to the Transcontinental Railway. That was where the squatters came in to support him, and that was why the purse was subscribed. The squatters attained their object, but, having done so, they did not care a fig for the hon. gentleman.

MR. SALKELD said that, as far as he could gather, not only were the squatters with the leader of the Opposition in his opposition to the Transcontinental Railway, but the whole of the colony was with him.

The PREMIER said he must admit that the leader of the Opposition had been the kindest friend of the squatters, notwithstanding their ingratitude. The hon. gentleman had given them an indefeasible lease for a very long period, and also compensation for improvements at the termination of their lease. No other Government but that led by the hon. gentleman would have given such terms to the squatters. He admitted that it really seemed hard that that portion of the community should not accord the hon. gentleman their support. He did not know why it was they did not support the hon. gentleman, but "charm he never so wisely" they would not support him. He had tried them by opposition and by bribery, but without effect. It appeared as if they never knew where to find the hon. gentleman or his party. They always seemed to think he had a card up his sleeve, which he was going to play at some inopportune time, and, possibly, that was the reason why they would not give him their support. He would remind the hon. gentleman, however, that there were squatters in the late Ministry. There was the late Mr. Miles, who was a squatter of the squatters; there was Mr. C. B. Dutton, who was an indescribable being, but a squatter all the same; there was the Hon. Mr. Macdonald-Paterson, who was a squatter, and the Hon. Mr. Moreton, who was also a squatter. He admitted that the hon. gentleman eliminated the Hon. Mr. Macdonald-Paterson, at a particular period of the existence of his Ministry, but he thought it was very ungracious on the part of the hon. gentleman to attack the squatters, seeing that such a large proportion of them were included in his own Ministry.

The HON. SIR S. W. GRIFFITH said he did not think the discussion was a very useful one, but he wished to say a word more. The reason why the squatters never supported him or his party was not because they did not know where to find his party, or because they thought he might have a card up his sleeve, as the hon. gentleman said, but because they knew exactly where they would find his party. They knew that what was given to them was given because the Government of the day thought they were entitled to it, and not because of any special consideration for the squatters. They knew that his party considered the interests of the country, and that when the interests of the country demanded that the squatters should have a different tenure, they gave them that tenure. But when the squatters wanted anything simply for their own benefit, they knew they would not get it from his party. The squatting party was essentially a selfish party, and he had never received their support; nor did he ever receive or expect to receive the support of any selfish party in the colony.

Mr. ARCHER said he thought the hon. the leader of the Opposition might rest his soul in peace. In passing the Land Act, if the hon. gentleman did not do any other good action, he did good by giving the squatters a good tenure, and if the whole of that Act had been as good as that part of it, there would have been no need to amend it. They could not make any worse use of land than to give it to persons on a bad tenure. Having conferred such a benefit upon the squatters and the country, the hon. gentleman might rest quite satisfied that he would be remembered for having done so.

Mr. MACFARLANE said if all those thousands of pounds that were said by the Ministerial side of the Committee to have been raised on behalf of his side at the general election had been so raised, he would like to know what had become of so much money. Where had it all gone to?

Mr. HAMILTON said it had all been spent upon anonymous pamphlets, tens of thousands of which had been sent all over the colony.

Mr. MACFARLANE said that would not have cost one thousand pounds. There were seven members representing his district, and they knew none of that money had been spent there. The Liberal members on his side were perfectly free from receiving any of that money, if it were subscribed. He supposed hon. members on the Government side received it.

Mr. MURPHY said so far as he could make out from the speech of the leader of the Opposition, that hon. member found fault with the squatting party because, having passed a Land Bill under which the squatters had certainly received some benefit, and for which they gave him credit, they had not changed their political opinions and followed him for the future. The hon. gentleman put it as though he had offered the squatters that Land Bill as a bribe. He said he had never received any support from the squatting party. That was true enough, except in a few cases. He had had squatters in his Ministry; but he blamed the squatters because, after he passed that Land Bill, they did not immediately change their political convictions and follow him. That was putting the matter fairly. The hon. gentleman ought to have a higher opinion of the squatters than to imagine they were going to be bought in that way, and forswear all their previous political views, and sell themselves for a mess of pottage. He was very glad that the squatters had held to their political views, and remained faithful and loyal to the party they had always been attached to. Nobody could say that the squatters had been found first on one side and then on the other. They had fixed firm political views, and they would stand or fall by them. There was no "shilly-shallying" in their political views; they would stick to their views as they always had. It did not matter what bribe might be offered them; it would never have the power of making the squatters follow the hon. member. He knew the hon. gentleman had some sinister motive in making the speech he had just delivered; he did not make it without an object. He knew what the hon. gentleman would probably say as the Bill went on—that he would oppose any provisions that might be for the benefit of the squatting party. It might ease the hon. gentleman's mind if he told him that if he thought the portion of the Bill relating to boring for water upon the resumed areas of runs was any concession to the squatters, they would assist him if he wished to have it struck out.

Clause 1 put and passed.

Clause 2 passed as printed.

On clause 3—

The HON. SIR S. W. GRIFFITH said he thought it would be better to take the different subsections of the clause *seriatim*. Although it was under one heading it dealt with different subjects in different parts of the Act. In a clause dealing with a complicated matter, it was the usual practice to take the different subsections *seriatim*.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS said he thought it would be far better to take the subsections *seriatim*, so that they would be able to confine themselves to each particular subject.

On subsection 1, as follows:—

"The Principal Act is hereby amended as follows:—

Rehearing by Land Board.

- (1) Applications to the Governor in Council under section twenty shall be made within ninety days after the decision of the board."

The HON. SIR S. W. GRIFFITH said the only question was whether the time specified was long enough.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS said hon. members must understand that when the Land Board sat, every opportunity was given to lessees, or anyone interested, to appear before the board and make objection, if he had any, to the decision of the board. Clause 20 of the original Act said—

"Upon the application of any person aggrieved by a decision of the board, the Governor in Council may remit the matter to the board for re-consideration."

Considering the leases were extended from twenty-one to thirty years, that clause would apparently give a right to a lessee at any time to ask for a re-hearing. It was intended that a lessee should have the right to appear before the board, and protest, if he had any grounds for complaint; but several cases had been brought before the Minister where lessees had been apparently satisfied at the time with the decisions given by the board, and two or three years afterwards had asked for their cases to be re-heard. That was never intended, and the object of the new clause was to fix a reasonable time, and he thought ninety days was a reasonable time, within which notice of appeal against a decision of the board should be given.

Subsection put and passed.

On subsection 2, as follows:—

"Grazing Farms."

"(2) With regard to grazing farms so much of section forty-nine as is contained in the words 'Applications shall take priority according to the order of their being lodged with the land agent' and in the proviso to such section is hereby repealed, and the following provisions are substituted in lieu thereof:—

"Every applicant shall, in his application, state the annual premium (if any) in addition to the rent specified in the proclamation which he is prepared to pay for the lot for the first five years of the term of his lease in the event of there being competition for the same.

The first year's premium so stated shall accompany the application.

If the application is withdrawn, the premium shall be forfeited.

"Subject to the provisions next hereinafter contained, applications shall take priority according to the order of their being lodged with the land agent.

If two or more applicants shall be present at the time of opening the land agent's office, the applications lodged by them shall be deemed to be lodged at the same time. In such case the applicant who has in his application offered the highest premium shall be entitled to priority.

Provided that in case the highest premium offered shall have been offered by more than one of such last-mentioned applicants, the right of priority shall be determined by auction between such applicants, in the prescribed manner.

The premium shall be added to and be deemed part of the annual rent."

Mr. HODGKINSON said that was a very important amendment on the present law. It appeared to him to throw difficulties in the way of the grazing farm selector whom it was intended to encourage by the Act of 1884. A selector had not only to examine a piece of land to see if it was suitable for his purposes and make arrangements for taking it up, but, if that amendment was passed, he would also have to contend with an unknown quantity in having to specify the additional rent which he was prepared to pay for the lot during the first five years of the term of the lease in the event of there being competition for the same. That condition would not only give a preponderating influence to capitalists, but it would also deter a great many men from ever inspecting the country, as they would say, "After

I take all this trouble and incur certain necessary expense, I may be thrown on my beam ends simply because there are men who can afford to pay a higher premium than I can." Such a provision threw an impediment in the way of the settlement of a class of people whom it was especially desirable to encourage. With regard to the remarks that had been made as to the political opinions of squatters, he would say their political opinions were just the same as the political opinions of other people, and where their interests were concerned their opinions were perfectly subordinate to their interests. The framers of the Act of 1884 endeavoured to give the squatters what they had always claimed—namely, a fixed tenure of their runs which they could produce and give as security to financial institutions, in consideration of their aiding in the promotion of settlement on the land as much as possible. Squatters were given the undisturbed right to a certain portion of the land they occupied, so that the people of the colony who were anxious to settle on the land should be as little impeded as possible in doing so. There was no political question connected with that, and the question they had now to consider was simply whether that Bill, taken as a whole, was in favour of the pastoral interest or not? Were the squatters prepared to face the demand made by the country for land and fight the matter out? They had sufficient ability to recognise that if they were, they must go to the wall. The most desirable portion of the Land Act of 1884 was that relating to what he might call the yeoman farmer. He referred to the grazing farm clauses, and if they put any obstacle to the operation of those clauses they would destroy the virtue of the Act so far as that particular matter was concerned. Where an element of uncertainty was introduced into a bargain, the number of people who were anxious to enter into that bargain would be diminished. It took, he presumed, at least £3,000 or £4,000 to enter upon one of those grazing farms with any hope of success, and the object of passing the clauses he had referred to was to induce a class of men who had the necessary capital to emigrate from the other colonies and invest their fortunes in Queensland. There were very few people in this colony who had the capital and experience requisite to take advantage of the grazing farm provisions, and if they threw any obstacle in the way of the selection of those farms they would simply destroy the most valuable part of the Act; and undoubtedly the introduction of an element of uncertainty into the matter was placing an obstacle in the way. The system of ballot was open to serious objections, but it was infinitely superior to the one proposed in that Bill by which an applicant had to state in his application what premium he was prepared to pay on the rent specified in the proclamation. What chance would that give the average grazing farm selector in precisely those portions of the country where the pasturage was of that quality which would enable a grazing farmer to make a living on it by the expenditure of a certain amount of capital. The adjoining runholder would have friends as anxious to secure the land as the average grazing selector, and they would have sufficient local knowledge to guide them, and a command of capital sufficient to enable them to outbid the average selector. But the injury would be that as soon as it was known throughout the colony and the other colonies that that amending clause had been adopted nobody would trouble about the land at all. It would be a very unfortunate thing if the clause was carried, but it would be more unfortunate for those who were now pastoral tenants than it would be for the people whom the principal

Act was intended to benefit, because they might rest assured that the worst possible use to which land could be put—except leaving it an utter waste—was to the growth of cattle and sheep. That was the very first stage of civilisation in all countries. He noticed that the hon. member for Barcoo laughed. He was glad to see the hon. member laugh. No man had a greater respect than he (Mr. Hodgkinson) had for antiquity, whether it was in the shape of a piece of sculpture, or a painting, or a relic of some fossilised state of existence rapidly passing from the stage of the world. The hon. member was a squatter of the squatters, and was blind to his own interests in laughing at the proposal he (Mr. Hodgkinson) had made. He had no animosity towards the pastoral tenants—no member of that Committee would go further than he would to give them not only justice but liberality—but if the squatters, after having obtained advantages which it had been said the leader of the Opposition had thrown to them in the shape of a bribe, now wanted to throw down the little fence which divided them from the people, there would be such a revolution in popular opinion that the Land Act of 1884 would be abolished in a way that would be destructive of their interests.

Mr. PAUL said that the present was the first opportunity he had had of explaining the action he took some years ago in regard to what was called the "yellow pamphlet." He could assure hon. members that the reason he took the action he did at that time was in consequence of an Act passed by the Douglas Ministry, called the Railway Reserves Act, under which his run was resumed within six years of a twenty-one years' lease. That created a feeling amongst those who were backing him in London that it was an act of repudiation. When the transcontinental railway was promulgated he looked upon it in the same way as he looked upon the Railway Reserves Act, as an act that would destroy investments without giving any compensation. That was the reason why he took the part he did in opposing the party of which he had always been an adherent. A meeting of squatters was held at his chambers, at which Mr. Donald Wallace and himself were appointed a deputation to wait upon Sir S. W. Griffith to tell him the part the squatters intended to take. He felt that it was necessary to state these facts because he had been charged with having deserted the party to which he had always belonged. Mr. Donald Wallace and he waited upon Sir S. W. Griffith, and told him that if he would do a fair thing towards the squatting industry and the sugar industry, they were prepared to give him an independent support. He was sorry to say that the hon. gentleman did not do so. They stated to him, that if he was prepared to amend the Land Act, by appointing a land board to administer the Act, if he would make provision by which the Government would increase the rents of runs within means of railway communications, and give compensation for improvements, in lieu of pre-emptive rights, they were prepared to give him their support. Instead of doing that, unfortunately for the hon. gentleman, he took into his counsel a man who had those Georgian ideas about land, which simply ruined him. If he had carried out the programme the squatters submitted to him he might have passed one of the most successful Land Bills that had ever been introduced into the House. He was perfectly certain that if Sir S. W. Griffith had acted upon the advice of the squatters he would have had their support, and would have been at the present moment in the proud position of the leader of the Government. Unfortunately for him he was guided by the advice of a gentleman who had

lived in the bush without any practical experience whatever of life; and between them they brought in a Land Bill which was simply ruination to the country. If what he had foreshadowed had been carried out, everything would have been right. Instead of that they took away from the squatters one-half, or one-third, or one-fourth, as the case might be, of their runs, and gave them an indefeasible lease for the remainder. What was that indefeasible lease? It was a lease which precluded the miners from ever going on to their country. Had the then Government simply amended the Act by providing a board to administer it, by obtaining power to increase rents within railway communication—which every squatter would have been perfectly willing to accept—and by giving compensation for improvements, it would have been the grandest Act that was ever passed in the whole of Australia. Instead of that, they humbugged the whole thing by introducing the Georgian theory of non-alienation. The consequence was, that after having taken half the squatter's run away from him, and given him an indefeasible lease for the remainder, the miner had no right whatever to go on to the leased portion of the run. What was to be done? His opinion was that the Government ought to introduce a clause into the Bill by which, if any portion of the leased area of a squatter's run was resumed for mining purposes, an equal portion of the resumed area ought to be given him in return, or else compensation. The way in which they tinkered with regard to land legislation was simply destroying all confidence, and capitalists would not advance money for the development of the squatting industry, because there was such uncertainty with regard to the land legislation of the colony. At the same time, whatever bargain the Government made with the squatters they should religiously stick to it, even if it was a bad bargain, until the time had expired, and then throw the land open for selection.

Mr. CAMPBELL said he felt inclined to oppose subsection 2 of the clause, as in his opinion it would tend to prevent a very desirable class of settlers from taking up the land. He was quite sure that that class would not be able to compete against men with money in their pockets. It was well known that there was a considerable amount of dummying carried on under the existing clause, yet he questioned very much whether the system now proposed would have any effect in checking it. If men were disposed to dummy, or put in bogus applications, they were just as likely to do it under the clause as before. As to the subsection itself, he would repeat that it would do a great injury to a very worthy class of settlers, and would not have the desired effect in preventing dummying.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS said the hon. member for Burke said the clause would be introducing the element of uncertainty. In his opinion it would have quite the contrary effect. It was the present system that introduced the element of uncertainty. On further consideration he had decided to make one premium only, not an annual premium. He wished hon. members to understand that it was not to apply to agricultural selections, but to grazing farms. As it stood it would give the man of means a preponderance over the man with very little money; but men of small means as a rule did not take up grazing farms. It required men with a considerable amount of capital to take up those farms, and the same principle, the hon. gentleman said, should apply to occupation licenses. He (Mr. Black) would give the reasons which had induced him to alter the system proposed, it being understood that he proposed to make it one premium only. He had a list before him which showed

that the same nefarious system that had been going on in connection with grazing farms had also been going on in connection with occupation licenses, though not to the same extent. He had communicated with the different land agents where occupation licenses had been granted, asking for the total number of applicants for those licenses, and the number of *bonâ fide* applicants amongst them; and he had received advices from the following districts:—St. Lawrence, name of run Balling de Rouche; there was an occupation license to be disposed of there, for which there were 16 applicants, of whom only one was a *bonâ fide* applicant. All the rest were palpably dummies, who derived considerable benefit from blackmailing the *bonâ fide* applicants, to whom the securing of an occupation license was a matter of considerable importance. In the same district, for an occupation license on Inglewood, there were 38 applicants, of whom only 2 were *bonâ fide*; the rest all dummies. At Mackay, on block No 1, parish of Kelvin, there were 53 applicants, of whom only 4 were *bonâ fide*; in the same district there were 28 applicants, of whom only 4 were *bonâ fide*; in the same district again there were 22 applicants, only 3 being *bonâ fide*.

AN HONOURABLE MEMBER: What about grazing farms?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS said the same principle applied to grazing farms, but he had not been able to get the same information with respect to them. On Cape Hillsborough reserve there were 10 applicants, of whom only 2 were *bonâ fide*. In the Springsure district, name of run Galgathad, there were 24 applicants, of whom only 9 were *bonâ fide*; on Humboldt North, 38 applicants, of whom only 2 were *bonâ fide*; on Humboldt Creek No. 1, 38 applicants, only 2 being *bonâ fide*; on Humboldt Creek No. 2, 33 applicants, only 2 being *bonâ fide*. On Kenmare North there were 38 applicants, only 2 being *bonâ fide*; for block No. 2, the same number again applied, only 2 being *bonâ fide*. On Killoreen 38 applied, only 2 being *bonâ fide*. Evidently the same set of men put in dummy applications in each of those cases, the numbers being exactly the same. In the Bowen district, Dalton run, 14 applied, of whom only 2 were *bonâ fide*; at Pine Vale, 19 applied, only 3 being *bonâ fide*; Ben Lomond, 15 applied, only 2 being *bonâ fide*; Roundback, 9 applied, only 3 being *bonâ fide*; and then came the climax at Tip-tree Hill North, where 418 applied, only 1 being a *bonâ fide* applicant. He thought it was so apparent that a system of blackmailing was going on by which *bonâ fide* men who were anxious to get a grazing farm or occupation license were put to a great deal of trouble, that it was time the legislature took some steps to remedy the evil and give those *bonâ fide* men a chance. He believed the amendment he intended to introduce—having only one premium—would effect that object. Hon. members must understand that in the event of there being no competition, the premium would be returned. It was only in the case of competition that the highest tenderer would get the land, and if there were two applicants both tendering the same amount the land would be submitted to competition between those two applicants only.

Mr. GROOM said it would have been more satisfactory if the hon. gentleman had given some information respecting the particular portions of the colony where grazing farms were being selected, and where blackmailing was taking place, because then they would be able to more clearly understand the matter. He had watched very closely since the second reading of the Bill the current of public opinion through the Press, and it was a

singular fact that there was not a single paper which justified that clause. He had not seen one; and in the district represented by the Chairman the feeling of antagonism against it was very high indeed, so much so that they requested their representative to use his best exertions to get the clause struck out. The scheme now proposed by the Minister for Lands, of having only one premium, would in his opinion only intensify the evil, because if a pastoral tenant saw five or six farmers wanting to get on a certain portion of his run, it would pay him to offer £500, £600, or perhaps even £1,000 in one premium in order to keep them out and hold it for twenty years. He would state what his experience of squatters had been. He had never been supported by them, and although the Minister for Mines and Works had stated that a certain amount of money was subscribed in 1883, he presumed for the purpose of securing the election of certain members, he (Mr. Groom) did not participate in that fund.

The MINISTER FOR MINES AND WORKS: I said for the purpose of turning out the then Government.

Mr. GROOM said a Government could not exist without supporters.

The PREMIER: And some supporters cannot exist without a Government.

Mr. GROOM said it had been suggested that the Payment of Members Bill was the outcome of that kind of thing. When Sir John Macdonald was charged with corruption in the Canadian House of Commons, it was exactly the same charge as the hon. gentleman had now made against the leader of the Opposition.

The MINISTER FOR MINES AND WORKS: I made no charge against him.

Mr. GROOM said the hon. gentleman had stated that a certain sum had been subscribed, and the secretary of the fund had stated the amount.

The MINISTER FOR MINES AND WORKS: I was not aware that the secretary was in the House until to-night.

Mr. GROOM said when Sir John Macdonald was charged with corruption, it was not said that he derived any personal advantage from the money subscribed by the Pacific Canadian Railway Company, but that it was scattered about amongst various candidates at the general election in such a way as to secure a majority for the carrying out of that particular railway.

The MINISTER FOR MINES AND WORKS: He was *particeps criminis*.

Mr. GROOM said no doubt Sir John Macdonald received a large sum to secure his own election, and that was what led to his being under a cloud in 1876, and from which he was relieved in 1879. If the same thing had been done here, he (Mr. Groom) had not participated in it. He had always paid his own election expenses except on one occasion when his constituents did him the honour to pay them for him. As far as the pastoral tenants of the Crown were concerned, his experience had been that ever since the passing of the Act of 1868, in which the hon. member for Rockhampton took so much interest, they had never been satisfied with the resumed halves of their runs, and if ever there was the slightest chance of getting possession of adjoining areas they were always on the alert to do so. The greed for land was now as great as ever he had known it to be. It would have been interesting if the Minister for Lands could have given them some information as to who the class of blackmailers were who sent in applications for grazing farms. Of course he

knew there was something in what the hon. gentleman had said with regard to the occupation licenses; but he and other hon. members would be only too glad to know whether the Minister could have a similar return furnished with regard to grazing areas, to show in what districts that blackmailing took place. He had seen nothing in the public Press in connection with blackmailing in regard to grazing farms, although an assertion to that effect had been made in the House. In fact, he had heard it said that grazing farms were not a success, as people did not run after them as they had been led to believe they would. On the second reading of the Bill he had stated that he did not agree with the Minister for Lands, and he had seen no reason for altering his opinion since, and, as he had remarked before, the general consensus of opinion throughout the country, so far as could be judged from the Press—because there had been no public meetings held, except in the electorate of the Chairman of Committees—was not in favour of the premium system. At the meeting he had referred to there was a very strong expression of feeling against the system. In fact, the hon. gentleman had gone so far as to say that he did not think there was such a provision in the Bill, and when the *Courier* was shown to him with the clause in it, he had given his word that he would do his best to get that particular subsection eliminated from the Bill. He (Mr. Groom) had seen in his own district balloting carried out under the provisions of the present Act, and he had not seen any dissatisfaction with it. Everything had appeared to be conducted fairly in the lands office; and he had heard no complaints of the system. Many grazing farms had been taken up in his district and in the Dalby district, and he had heard of no complaints there either; so that he was desirous of learning in what particular districts the blackmailing had taken place. He confessed he was not in favour of the system at all; and he believed that the amendment mentioned by the Minister for Lands, that the premium should only be paid with the first payment, would intensify the evil, and would entirely prevent any *bona fide* man with small means from taking up a grazing farm, who, in the opinion of the adjoining run owner, was an objectionable person. He would prefer to have the principle contained in the Land Act of 1884.

The PREMIER said he did not really see how the squatter—who appeared to be a very objectionable animal, or person—was brought in at all, because the land which was proposed to be dealt with under that clause was taken away from the squatter. He would have no desire, under the provisions of the Act of 1884, to go beyond his holding.

Mr. MURPHY: He cannot do it.

The PREMIER said that he could go beyond his own holding by going outside his own district, but he had no desire to go outside his own holding—that was to say, he had no desire to deal with the portion of the holding that had once been his. The conditions of the Act of 1884 were so generous to the squatter, as regarded compensation for improvements, that it would pay him a great deal better to improve that portion of his holding so as to carry more stock, and put it in such a position that at the end of his tenure it could not be taken from him. That was the position in which he was landed by the Act of 1884—at least, it could only be taken from him at an enormous cost to the State. The only question, to his mind, was whether it was better to accept the lottery conditions, or whether they should dispose of the grazing farms by the premium system. He thought hon. members

would see, if they considered the question, that after all the premium was the best way, as the system of balloting, as had been pointed out by the Minister for Lands, had not been a success in the past. He quite agreed with the hon. member for Toowoomba up to a certain point. He thought that if the premium could be divided up to the end of the tenure it would be better, instead of making it payable in a lump sum, as by the latter method they would only bring the annual rent down to the price attached to the land in the first instance. At the same time it was as broad as it was long, because if the tenure was considered sufficient, the premium might be added to the first payment. That was what would take place. Not only was it fairer to the individual competitor, but it was fairer to the State. The State would, under the circumstances of a premium being offered in one lump sum, or spread over a series of years, get what was considered a fair value at that particular time, whereas, in the other case, if the land were let at the upset price by lot, it might be let for a long term below its fair value simply by a chance lottery. By adopting the system of premiums the State would benefit, and it would prevent the gross immorality and impropriety that occurred at present. Of course there was another way of dealing with it, and a way that that Bill also dealt with—that was the auction system. The auction system certainly contained the elements most strongly objected to by hon. gentlemen on both sides of the Committee and that was that the longest purse would carry the day. It could not in any way be made a political question, but it was simply a question of what was best for the colony, and he held that the best way to get the full value for the lands of the colony was the premium system. He had arrived at that opinion after giving full consideration to the three systems which had been suggested to deal with the matter, and if hon. members would consider the surrounding circumstances they must arrive at the conclusion that the system of premiums proposed in the clause was better than the proposed alteration of the Minister for Lands. If the amendment of the hon. gentleman were to become law a large addition would be made to the Treasury which would not be sustained in the succeeding years, as the payments would be decreased during the further currency of the lease by the amount of premiums paid. In that way it might prove objectionable. To his mind it was as broad as it was long, but he considered the premium system the fairest way of disposing of the grazing farms.

Mr. HODGKINSON said he would like to know whether the hon. gentleman was aware that the Bill dealt with both the premium system and the auction system. The Minister for Lands had certainly brought a strong argument against the lot system, but the system might be improved. He thought the amendment suggested by the Minister for Lands, to have one first premium, was not an improvement.

Mr. TOZER said, coming from a district in which there had been a large number of grazing farms taken up, he would like to bear testimony to the fact that the present system had operated extremely well so far as grazing farms were concerned. Knowing that the Minister for Lands had considered the question in connection with occupation licenses, he would ask him not to press the question because they might fly from an ill that they knew of to others that they wot not of. It might be a worse ill than the present system. By putting in those applications the man who bid the highest premium got the land. Now, there was a feeling in the colony that those things did leak out. It

was no use disguising it. He had travelled through the length and breadth of the colony, and had heard it stated in connection with railway tenders that so-and-so knew exactly what was going on. How it was known nobody exactly knew, but the officials in the departments were, no doubt, often to blame. In the case of a country land office, the commissioner might be away, and an application was left in the hands of a boy in the office. That boy did not receive a very large salary, and somebody would want to know how much so-and-so had tendered for a grazing farm, and he could very easily find out.

An HONOURABLE MEMBER: The application is sealed up.

Mr. TOZER said he knew it was, but there was a way of getting at those things. He was speaking now of what would happen. It was no use disguising things. There had been in the administration of the lands of the colony instances of the kind of thing he mentioned, which no one would credit, and when persons were desirous of getting a particular piece of land they would go to any extremes to get it. He said, therefore, that it was unwise to put such temptation in the way of clerks in the Government offices. He found that the person would have to state the premium he would give, and he thanked the Minister for Lands for the suggestion about the annual premium being eliminated. Why he did so was that their object was to settle persons on those grazing farms, and if they left in the annual premium they would frighten many persons who would otherwise take up grazing farms. People would tender as high as they could, and would know that the very sum they named would be used by the Land Commissioners at the end of five years as a reason for increasing the rent. Say that a man tendered an annual tender of £50. Of course, if he fixed that sum he might rest assured that at the end of five years, when his land was going to be re-assessed by the Land Board, his rent would not at all events be reduced. He mentioned on the second reading of the Bill that they had tried the premium system in connection with the mines of this colony, and it broke down. Although they sold a gold-mining lease, and succeeded in getting one premium for a twenty-one years' lease, yet the people bid against one another so outrageously that the Government could not, with any sense of justice, ask them to pay the whole amount. That would happen in connection with the land. If there were to be annual premiums, people would tender beyond what they could afford, and the result would be that they would not have the grazing farms settled on by the class of people they desired to see on them—namely, those who put their money into the land. The great object was not so much to get money for the Government as to get the land settled, so that there would be a fixed rent, and that it would be known what was coming into the Treasury. He trusted that if the Minister for Lands forced upon them the premium portion of the clause he would not force the auction provision. It was not likely that two men going to a land office would fix upon exactly the same sum unknown to one another. Sooner than have the word "auction" in the clause he thought they might fairly decide by lot. Although he believed the Minister had made out a very strong case in connection with occupation licenses, he felt satisfied that he could not bring sufficient figures before the Committee to show that there had been anything in the shape of dummyming in connection with grazing farms.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS said he wished to assure the hon. gentleman that it was not the desire of the Government to force anything upon

the Committee. He desired that any amendment of the Land Act should be fairly and rationally discussed, and that all parties should combine to do what they could to make it a good and workable measure. Hon. gentlemen must understand that the premium only applied to the first day that grazing farms were thrown open. The *Gazette* stated that at a certain day, announced fully a month beforehand, certain farms would be thrown open for selection, and it was during the first hour of the court being open that the rush took place. If farms were not selected on the first day they would remain open for selection and no premium at all was charged, but they could be selected at the upset price. He could not bring the same evidence to bear in connection with grazing farms that he had been able to do in connection with occupation licenses, but he desired to make the system the same in both cases, and he was assured by the land commissioners that the lot system was not a satisfactory one. It frequently happened that a selector, anxious to get a grazing farm, went to a great deal of trouble in travelling about the country selecting a suitable locality, and then applied to the department to have certain land thrown open for grazing farms and settlement. The department at once communicated with the Land Board, who made the recommendation, and after a certain interval of time, during which the selector had been waiting anxiously for the farms to be thrown open for selection, they were thrown open. But the result was that attention had been drawn by that individual who was anxiously hoping to get a particular farm to the fact that the land was to be thrown open, and when the time arrived he found that the people in the neighbouring town or district generally put in a lot of applications for the very farm that he had been eager to secure.

The HON. SIR S. W. GRIFFITH: They would be the people who would offer a premium.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS said that they often put in dummy applications. He wanted the State to derive the benefit of the premiums and not particular individuals. Dummyming was an evil that was growing. He was satisfied that the present system was not satisfactory, and he did not see his way to recommend the auction system. If anyone was to derive benefit it should be the State, and he was satisfied that the proposed system would give more satisfaction than that now adopted.

Mr. NORTON said he thought that there was some misapprehension about the blackmailing spoken of. He had had no opportunity of hearing anything about blackmailing with regard to grazing farms, but he referred more particularly to occupation licenses in connection with which the Minister for Lands had said there was a great deal of blackmailing. The paper the hon. gentleman read showed that numerous applications were put in for the same piece of land in a number of instances, and that there were only one, two, or three *bonâ fide* applications amongst them; but it did not follow that that was an evidence of blackmailing. He had heard that in some cases there really had been blackmailing; that some persons, knowing that an individual wanted a particular portion of country, put in an application for it, so that in the event of their getting the license they might pass it over to the person who really wanted the land upon his paying a certain premium for it. That was sometimes done, but it must not be supposed that that was the case in every instance in which a number of applications were made for the same piece of country. He knew of one case which had been mentioned to him by the gentleman interested in it. That gentleman had wanted to secure a certain piece of land for years. He had been using the land, and was quite prepared to pay rent for it if he

could get it; but he had never been able to get a lease or license for it. It was a dry piece of country, and not of much use except in good seasons, and he had occupied it for some years without paying rent for it, though he was willing to do so. When the Act of 1884 came into force, or very soon afterwards, that land was thrown open for occupation under occupation licenses, and that gentleman found that another besides himself was anxious to get it, and he had told him what he did. When that gentleman found out what the other man was doing he got a number of names and put in some eight or nine applications for the land, and the other man put in the same number of applications. Each thought he was putting in more than the other, but as it happened they might just as well have been content with one application each. When the matter came to be decided it was a test between the two, and as the country had been divided, one man got one portion and the other got another, so it was all right. What he wanted to point out was that, in that case, though a number of applications had been put in there was no blackmailing whatever about them. He referred to that because he thought it would be an unfortunate thing if people were led away with the idea that because a number of persons applied for a piece of land, they did so with the desire to levy blackmail upon two or three persons who required it. So far as the premium scheme before them was concerned, he thought it would be a decided improvement to have only one premium instead of an annual premium. If he read the clause aright the competition would be only amongst those who appeared in court when the land court was opened, and if another man came in half-an-hour later and put in an application with double the premium put in by those who were competing he would have to stand aside.

Mr. PAUL said he did not know whether he would be in order in referring to section 48 simply with regard to grazing farms, as he wished to bring under the notice of the Committee a case of gross injustice. Section 48 of the Crown Lands Act of 1884 said:—

"No person who is under the age of eighteen years, or who is a married woman not having obtained an order for judicial separation or protecting her separate property, or who is in respect of the land applied for or held, or any part thereof or interest therein, an agent, trustee, or servant of or for any other person, shall be competent to apply for or hold any land under the provisions of this part of the Act."

He must first refer to Saltern Creek. Messrs. Collier and partner, who were large squatters in Victoria, took up in the name of their several children something like seven grazing farms of 20,000 acres each. On the other hand, Mr. Herbert Hunter's son, who was in a bank here, and was not in any way a servant or agent of the holder of Victoria Downs, applied for 20,000 acres on Victoria Downs in the Maranoo district, and his application was refused by the Minister, and was also rejected by the Land Board. He had it on perfect authority, that that lad was a clerk in a bank here at the time he made the application and had nothing whatever to do with Victoria Downs Station, yet his application was refused, while Mr. Collier and his partner were allowed to take up in the names of their several children something like 150,000 acres.

Mr. CROMBIE: They were not the owners of the run.

Mr. PAUL said Mr. Herbert Hunter's son was not the owner of the Victoria Downs run.

Mr. CROMBIE: But his father was.

Mr. PAUL said the son was not a servant or agent under the 48th section, and it was a disgraceful thing that a native-born colonial should

have his application for 20,000 acres refused when the applications for seven grazing farms in the names of the children of Victorian squatters were allowed. That was one of the most disgraceful things that had occurred under the Act, and he thought some measure should be brought in by the Government by which a native-born Queenslander should be able to take up a selection just the same as the children of Victorian squatters.

Mr. AGNEW said he did not share the opinion of those hon. members who thought the clause would be objectionable. In many instances, when bankrupt stock was for sale, applications were invited in the shape of tenders from buyers, and the stock went to the person who offered the highest premium, or in other words, sent in the highest tender. And there were many other ways in which the same principle was applied. All Government contracts were let by public tender, and the system gave every satisfaction. He was sorry to hear the remarks made with reference to tendering for Government contracts in Queensland. He had been a contractor under the Government, and during the whole of his experience as a tenderer he had never heard of any exception to the rule that the system had given satisfaction. And his experience in other colonies also was that there was no better system of letting public works than by inviting public tenders. The system of premiums was simply a development of the principle of tenders, and he saw no reason why it should not work satisfactorily.

Mr. CASEY said he agreed with the remarks of the hon. member for Burke, Mr. Hodgkinson, regarding the resumed areas of runs. Any sensible squatter recognised the fact that he held the resumed area on a grazing license which could be taken away at any time, and he would be a very foolish man if he endeavoured by any illegal means to acquire a right to occupy it in a manner contrary to the intention of the Act. He did not know that there had been any particular rush after grazing farms; but he knew something about occupation licenses. The squatter seemed to be an animal who had no place whereon to put the sole of his foot in that Chamber—neither side seemed to care much about him. They sat behind what was called a squatting Ministry; and a Land Bill was brought in which was said to contain bribes to the squatters. They were certainly very small bribes, and none of the squatters would accept them as bribes in any shape. They simply wished to assist the Government to bring the Act of 1884 and the amending Act of 1886 into working form. They recognised the fact that the late Government had done them a good turn in giving them a fair tenure and compensation for improvements; and though the Act of 1884 did a certain amount of injury at the time, being introduced during a financial crisis, it had given them a tenure which had enabled them to some extent to recover from the losses brought upon them by drought and commercial depression. That, however, was a digression. With regard to occupation licenses, it was not a question between the rich man and the poor man, or between the squatter and the selector, but a matter between neighbouring squatters; and the squatter was not debarred from obtaining an occupation license if he could get it fairly. He did not think there had been any blackmail in connection with a large number of applications put in for single blocks of country. The persons who wanted the country simply got a number of their friends—which they were perfectly justified in doing—to put in applications, with the understanding that the person who succeeded in getting the piece of country

put up for competition should transfer it to his principal, who was the man that really wanted the piece of country. That caused no loss to the State; but he thought that if the premium suggestion was carried into effect it would result in a loss of revenue. If the auction system was justifiable in any case it was justifiable in the case of occupation licenses, because under that system the two men who wanted a particular piece of country would compete fairly before the auctioneer, and give the country the benefit of what they considered the premium they could afford in order to obtain the piece of country they wanted. With regard to grazing farms, which were on the resumed areas of runs, he would only say that every sensible squatter had made up his mind that he held the resumed area till such time as it was required for close settlement. And then, if the squatter was the sensible man he took him to be, he would be quite prepared to give up whatever country he occupied on the resumed area and meet the grazing farmer as a friendly neighbour. He suggested to the Minister for Lands that he should alter the regulation with regard to occupation licenses.

Mr. SMITH said he took it that the object the Committee had in view was simply to settle the people on the land, but he failed to see how the premium principle would further that end. He thought that a clause further on provided against dummyming, because the successful tenderer must necessarily reside on his farm, and no bogus application was of any use when the successful tenderer was obliged to reside on his farm.

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL: That refers to agricultural farms.

The HON. SIR S. W. GRIFFITH: It refers to both.

Mr. SMITH said he thought it referred to both grazing and agricultural farms. At any rate a clause to that effect would prevent any such thing as dummyming, or any bogus applications being put in for grazing farms. An injustice would be done to the first applicant under the clause. It appeared to him that every applicant was placed upon the same footing. The man who went out and selected land, who spent time and went to a certain expense in finding a suitable place to settle down, should have some recompense. He should have a preferential claim, as he went out to explore the country, and had to set the machinery in motion for having the land proclaimed open for selection. If he went and settled in an isolated place, the fact of his settling there was an incentive to others to settle near him, and he should be allowed some consideration. That principle was recognised in the Pastoral Leases Act, and why should it not be in the present Bill? The clause would do an injustice to the man who went out and explored the land, as it would put him on the same footing as other applicants, after he had gone to a great deal of trouble. Other men who sat quietly at home could take advantage of the labour, and expense, and loss of time that the explorer had been put to, and that would be unjust. He ought to be allowed to take up a grazing farm at the upset price; that was his (Mr. Smith's) opinion. It was not very likely that a poor man would take up one of those grazing farms; he did not see that he would have any chance. Twenty thousand acres was the least he should think any man of common sense would attempt to live upon. Thirty-one square miles of country, if it were in a favourable condition, would carry 3,000 head of cattle, and a man would need a considerable amount of capital to go in for it. The hon. member for Warwick made an appeal in favour of the poor man, and

said such were not considered in the Bill; but he (Mr. Smith) did not think a poor man could possibly take up a grazing farm. The hon. senior member for South Brisbane had effectually proved that it was necessary to expend a considerable amount of money upon a grazing farm, and no man could take up one unless he had a certain amount of capital to begin with. He must have £4,000 or £5,000 at least. What would it cost to fence thirty square miles of country? And then the selector had to build a house, and how could he possibly obtain his stock? The poor man was out of it altogether. He hoped the Committee would agree that the first applicant for a grazing farm should have a preference, and he would move an amendment to the subsection by inserting after the word "applicant," at the beginning of the 2nd paragraph, the words "except the first, who shall have his farm at the upset price."

Mr. HAMILTON said any measure that would have the effect of reducing dummyming should be supported, and it was very clear from the figures quoted by the Minister for Lands that dummyming had prevailed to a very large extent in regard to the occupation licenses. If two or three people applied for the land at the same time, it was only natural to suppose that each would make the best use of the land if he obtained it, and, therefore, why not give it to the man who felt inclined to give the most for it? It must be remembered that when the rush took place for the pick of the land, all those persons who were not successful could take up grazing farms in the same district at their leisure. The objection that the clause might lead a man to spend more than he could afford might also be raised in cases where the Government sold land by auction. As for the objection urged by the hon. member for Wide Bay, that if tenders were put in it was possible that one man might ascertain the premiums offered by the others, that was impossible, as the tenders were all put in at almost the same hour.

Mr. SALKELD said the Minister for Lands had been good enough to read a lot of figures in connection with applications for occupation licenses, and he stated the number of *bonâ fide* and the number of bogus applications. The idea at once went through his mind: how did the hon. gentleman know which were *bonâ fide* and which were bogus applications? Was it simply a matter of opinion on the part of the land agent or the department? Until they knew how that estimate was arrived at, he did not think the figures would prove anything at all. Whatever they might prove in regard to occupation licenses, they proved nothing whatever in regard to grazing farms. Grazing farms and occupation licenses were quite distinct. An occupation license was a temporary affair altogether. It was only a license from year to year, to occupy land that had not been taken up in any way. Almost the only interest the State had was in getting the most rent they could for the lands held under occupation licenses. One man might of course put the land to better use, and employ more persons than another, but there was no obligation of that kind imposed upon him by the Act. It would not matter much if all the occupation licenses in the colony were held by twenty persons. But it was quite different in the case of grazing farms; the selectors of grazing farms must make certain improvements, and there must be residence on the land either by the lessees themselves or their agents. The more people they could get to settle on the land on those conditions the better it would be for the colony. Another point to which he would refer was the provision requiring the grazing

selector to occupy his land within three months after the issue of the license; that period was too short, and might be extended to six months. There was not much inducement held out to dummies to take up grazing farms at present; they had to pay one year's rent, besides survey fees, and no person who wished to levy blackmail would pay a year's rent to do so. But by introducing that premium system there might be some inducement to dummying. He had not heard of any outcry in the Southern portion of the colony about blackmail taking place under the existing law, and he believed that that clause, providing for the payment of premiums on the rent specified in the proclamation, was looked upon with distaste by all persons who *bond fide* wanted to take up land. If it was a protection against blackmail they would be in favour of it, but they were against it because it would bring the poorer man into competition with the capitalist. He had no objection to the clause applying to occupation licenses, but grazing areas were a different matter altogether, and he hoped that as far as they were concerned the Government would see their way to withdraw the amendment from the Bill.

The PREMIER said the hon. member seemed to misunderstand altogether the views of the Government. The object of the Government, as shown in the clause, was to get a proper value from the lands of the State. The hon. member who had just sat down evidently did not understand—he (the Premier) did not say it offensively—what was taking place in regard to grazing farms. The hon. member seemed to think that there was no demand for grazing farms just now. There had not been in the past, he (the Premier) admitted. But the rains which had lately fallen and the prospect of good seasons were leading many people to come from New South Wales, where the land laws were not so liberal as they were in this colony, with the object of settling here as grazing farmers, and he hoped they would do well by occupying the lands in that way. The hon. member spoke as if grazing farmers were men of small means, whereas the fact was that no grazing farm would pay, as was pointed out by the hon. member for Bowen, with a less capital than £4,000 or £5,000. He (the Premier) would say that a man would require £6,000 or £7,000 to do any good on a 20,000-acre grazing farm. Of course a differential rate would prevail for those who took up smaller areas. But men of small means were not the class who would be affected by those provisions. He did not think there were many of the class of men who would be affected by that clause in the colony at the present time, but there was a considerable number from the other colonies, and he held that the State was entitled to get full rent for the lands they were offering to those people. All the valuations made by the Land Board must, to a certain extent, be conjectural, and he thought the system proposed in that clause was the best way of arriving at a fair value. If the colony were fenced in, and they had only a certain number of people to deal with, they could no doubt arrive at the particular value of a particular piece of land, but when they had a foreign element to deal with, that was persons from other colonies, who might possibly pay more for the land than the rental fixed by the Land Board, they would be failing in their duty to the country if they did not say that those grazing farms must be put up to some kind of competition, so that the colony might get full value for the land. That was what the Government were endeavouring to do, and he thought the premium system was the best way of accomplishing their object. There were, as he had mentioned before, three systems which might be adopted, but, of the three, that

was the best. It could not be construed that there was any insidious intention on the part of those who had framed the Bill to give the squatter any advantage. The clause did not in any way interfere with the provisions of the Act of 1894, except as regarded the mode in which the rent for grazing farms should be arrived at. That was the only difference. If hon. members would look at the question in that way they would see that the system of premiums was the best that had yet been suggested. It would certainly prevent what had happened in the case of occupation licenses. His conscience was not so elastic as those of the hon. members for Warrego and Port Curtis, both of whom seemed to think that it was quite a fair thing for a person who desired to get an occupation license to compete on what he might call pretty broad lines with another person in order to obtain it. What he wanted to impress on the Committee was that the object of the Government was to obtain a full—and not more than a full—and fair value for the land of the country. They were of opinion that that object could be best secured by the scheme proposed in the clause; still if any better scheme could be suggested the Government would willingly adopt it. All they wanted was to get a fair value for the land without introducing the elements of chicanery and fraud.

Mr. ARCHER said it was certain that something ought to be done, if it could be done, to prevent what was going on now with regard to grazing farms. The figures read by the Minister for Lands related only to occupation licenses, but he was aware, from his own personal knowledge, that with regard to grazing farms the same kind of thing was carried on. Two or three grazing farms had been put up for selection near Rockhampton, and a person told him that he had put in sixteen applications for one man. Fifteen of those were, of course, bogus applications, and the other was from the man who really wanted the land; and of course he got it. He knew the names of several people who were put in as bogus applicants. That was a state of things which should certainly be stopped, if it could be stopped. He fully apprehended the objections to the scheme—that it was a new departure, and that it appeared to favour the rich man as against the poor man; but, as had been stated, no man would take up a grazing farm unless he was possessed of some considerable means. The smaller grazing farms in the neighbourhood of Rockhampton had been taken up by men who were selectors under the Land Act of 1868, and who had succeeded so well that they were able to take up grazing farms, to the benefit of themselves and, he supposed, of the colony also.

Mr. CROMBIE said that when he first read the clause he did not like it at all. But he understood the Minister for Lands intended to amend it by providing that the premium should be paid only once, and that where there was only one application no premium should be exacted. Subject to those alterations the clause now met with his approval.

Mr. GANNON said he was not very much enamoured of the clause as it stood. He believed he could suggest a plan to prevent dummying, and that was to insert a clause to the effect that, where there were two or more applicants for the same land, they should pay a certain sum for the right to have their applications entertained. The sum might be fixed at £10, £20, £30, or more—the money not to be returned, but to go into the Treasury—and he felt assured that that would effectually put a stop to all bogus applications. While the *bond fide* man would willingly pay his £10, or whatever the sum might be, for the right

of having his application considered, the bogus applicant would not be inclined to lose his money. That seemed to him the only way out of the difficulty; at any rate it was worth considering by the Committee.

Mr. MURPHY said the only benefit that could possibly accrue from the proposed arrangement was a benefit to the State, which would get a little more out of the land, but he failed to see how it was going to alter the present state of things. The man who wished to get the land would put in so many sealed envelopes with cheques instead of filling in the names of bogus applicants. The thing would be exactly the same, the mode only would be slightly altered.

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL said it was no doubt quite true, as the hon. member had stated, that the clause would not stop dummying if people desired to do it, but it would be a strong check upon them. At the present time any person desirous of obtaining land not for a *bonâ fide* purpose would, by putting in a number of what he called "clashers," have a considerable advantage as against the *bonâ fide* selector. But supposing he had to pay a premium, the State got the benefit of that premium. The hon. member for Toowoomba, Mr. Groom, said the runholder would be anxious to keep the land, because he would acquire a lease of twenty years, and that he could afford to give a good deal to obtain the land. Did the hon. member imagine that any man would keep a dummy for twenty years? If he wanted the land he must fulfil the conditions, and the man would be no longer a dummy if he complied with the conditions. But the pastoral tenants were not the only people who would evade the law. He should be sorry to think they were going to evade it continuously. But there were "boss cockies" coming into the colony; they were the people more to be guarded against than the pastoralists, because the pastoralist had just enough to do to manage the leased portion of his run, while the "boss cocky" would be able to get every shepherd and loafer about him to strengthen his chances if he wished to acquire certain land. He might not want to acquire it for a great length of time, and supposing he did not intend to comply with the condition there was no obligation except the payment of the rental for three years. Of course it was now proposed that the land should be occupied within three months, which was an additional condition. Therefore he thought the hon. member for Toowoomba was leading the Committee astray when he stated that a person desiring to evade the land law could, by paying a certain sum of money, acquire the land for twenty years. As to the fear which the hon. member for Wide Bay said would exist in the minds of selectors because the amount of the tender would be divulged, that also was baseless, because the envelopes would not be opened until a few minutes after the opening of the office; they would be opened in the presence of the selectors, and it would then be ascertained if there were two or more applicants for the same piece of land.

The HON. SIR S. W. GRIFFITH: There is nothing about that in the clause.

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL said there was quite sufficient in the practice to know what the result would be. It would then be at once determined who should get the land. If there were two or more applicants it would be seen who had offered the highest premium, and if there were two of the same amount the question would be decided by auction, limited to the two applicants. He did not say that that was perhaps the very best means possible that could be adopted, but it was the most practical suggestion that had occurred to him and to the

Government. He knew that hon. members had not got all the information they desired in regard to the clashing which already took place between selectors of grazing farms, because in the case of occupation farms it was openly spoken about, while in the other there was a good deal of caution exercised. Take the Clermont case; everybody knew about that, and syndicates were actually formed to divide amongst themselves the amount of premium they would get from the one *bonâ fide* applicant. It was well known that £200 and £300 had been paid to men for the transfer of occupation licenses. But in the case of grazing farms, people who tried to evade the law were very careful not to speak about it; the penalties under the Act were quite sufficient to make them chary of talking about affairs of that kind; so that information which could be easily got in the one case was not so easily to be got in the other. There was not at present much competition for grazing farms. In 1884 he stated his belief that there would be a large amount of settlement on grazing farms, but owing to bad seasons, depressed times, and the low price of wool and stock, there had not been so many selectors of that kind as he had expected. But he still believed that a large amount of settlement of that kind would take place, and if there was to be competition, and people would evade the law by putting in clashers, why not let the State get some benefit out of it? Of course, as now proposed, the premium would only be payable when the land was thrown open to selection. It was not often that they would have great competition for lands in that way. A large area of land was surveyed and open for selection at present, which any person could go and take up without paying any premium whatever. There might be a rush in certain districts; possibly people might come from the other colonies and desire to acquire particular blocks if the land was good and the rent moderate, and why should not the State get the benefit of the premium. He believed that the system proposed would be a considerable check so far as clashers were concerned, and he applied the term "clashers" more against the "boss cockies" than against the pastoralists. The object of the Bill, as anyone could see, was not to put the slightest obstacle in the way of *bonâ fide* selectors. It was not intended that the *bonâ fide* selector should pay a higher rental than was fixed by the board, who should be able to decide what was a fair rental. Hon. members should remember that there would be only one premium, not a premium for each year, which he considered a desirable amendment.

Mr. GROOM: A squatter might pay £500 to keep selectors out.

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL said he would be very foolish to pay more than the value of the land, and it must also be remembered that the Land Board would settle the value of the land. As to dummying, the hon. member must know that anyone could put in nine or ten clashers, and ten chances to one were very heavy odds against the *bonâ fide* selectors. He thought anyone looking at the matter dispassionately would see at once that the intention was to assist the *bonâ fide* selector in every possible way.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS said that he would point out that the grazing farmer was not necessarily tied down to his land, as he was not necessarily a *bonâ fide* resident of the colony, and at the end of three years he could transfer if he chose. He had listened with attention to the opinions expressed by hon. members on both sides, and he would show in what way h

proposed to amend the clause. In the 2nd paragraph he proposed to omit the word "annual," so that it should read :—

"Every applicant shall in his application state the premium (if any), in addition to the rent specified in the proclamation, which he is prepared to pay for the lot for the first year of the term of his lease, in the event of there being competition for the same."

That would entail the leaving out the word "five" and altering "years" to "year." Then the next line would be amended so as to read—

"The first premium so stated shall accompany the application."

Then the last sentence would require to be struck out—

"The premium shall be added to and be deemed part of the annual rent."

He therefore begged to move that in line 17 the word "annual" be omitted.

Mr. SALKELD said that if there were more speeches like that of the Postmaster-General they would require an addition to the interpretation clause. They had heard of "clashers" and "boss cockies," and other such terms. He thought they were racing terms.

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL: No, they are not. I do not know anything about racing.

Mr. SALKELD said the Premier had stated that the object of the Government in that amendment was to get the full value of the land for the State, but he did not think the Premier really understood the clause. If the Government really wanted to get the full value of the land, they should make the clause provide that the premium should be paid for the ten years, instead of for five or for one, for the simple reason that the longer the time given the more rent would be given. The last words of the paragraph were unnecessary and should have been left out if the object was to get the most they could for the State—namely, "in the event of there being competition for the same." The Government should keep that money in the Treasury. If the main object of the Government were to get as much money as they could, they would leave out the proviso about refunding the money in the event of there being no competition. Why should they not stick to it? Why not extend the time over ten years instead of making it one? A man might be able to give more in proportion if it were extended over ten years than he could if it were only extended over five years. A storekeeper could get more for his goods, or a man for his land, if he gave terms than if he asked for cash down.

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL: He will get more promised for it.

Mr. SALKELD said that they would get it all right, because the selections would be forfeited if it were not paid. It had been stated that that clause would protect the *bona fide* selector. A great deal had been said about the premiums that had been given in connection with an occupation license at Clermont.

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL: £250 was given as a premium in the Clermont case.

Mr. SALKELD said he would like to point out the extreme improbability of anyone paying £250 premium to get an occupation license, as in the case of an occupation license the rent could be increased 25 per cent. by the Minister, or the occupation license could be terminated at six months' notice. That showed how unlikely it was. The hon. gentleman might have been informed to that effect, but if it had occurred it must have been done by some one who was ignorant of the provisions of the Act of 1884. That Act provided that if a transfer were made it must have the approval of the board. Clause

69 stated that a lessee might underlet the whole or any part of his holding, and that underlease might be transferred, with the approval of the board to such underlease or transfer; but would the board give their approval if the man had taken up land to blackmail.

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL: How would they know?

Mr. SALKELD said the Minister for Lands had given a list of the number of applications, and how many were *bona fide*, and they could tell in the same way whether a man was a blackmailer. That hon. gentleman had told them that out of twenty-five applications only three were *bona fide*, so that there must have been twenty-two bogus ones, and in the same way he could tell whether a man who wanted to transfer to someone else was a blackmailer or not. As far as protecting *bona fide* selectors went, the whole thing was quite unnecessary. They must recollect that one swallow did not make a summer, and they should not upset the whole machinery of the Act because they had found an isolated case of blackmailing. He was sure that the proposition would not be received with satisfaction by the class of persons who really would wish to become selectors under the Act.

Mr. MACFARLANE said he thought the amendment proposed by the Minister for Lands would scarcely meet the views of the Committee. He could suggest to that hon. gentleman a system by which they could get out of the difficulty. It was said by the Premier very distinctly that the object of the Bill was to get the true value of the land. Why not allow the applicants to value the land themselves.

The PREMIER: You must fix an upset price.

Mr. MACFARLANE said instead of asking them to give a premium for five years, let each applicant state what rent he would give for the first five years. That would meet the cases of the bogus applicants. It would entirely do away with them, and by that means the true value of the land would be obtained.

The Hon. Sir S. W. GRIFFITH said an hon. member had asked what was a "boss cocky." He did not know whether he was right, but he had an idea. A "cocky" was a term of opprobrium introduced by the squatters of New South Wales to signify an intruder on their runs; he was, in fact, a selector, and a "boss cocky" was a larger selector than usual, who was entirely independent of the influence of the surrounding estate. They were a most objectionable class of persons to the squatters. They were regarded with the greatest abhorrence. No doubt those grazing farmers were regarded by a great many people in the same light. They were disagreeable intruders on the surrounding domain.

Mr. ARCHER: That is an excellent part of the Bill.

The Hon. Sir S. W. GRIFFITH said the hon. member for Rockhampton said that was an excellent part of the Bill, but his opinions on that, amongst his own party, were almost as solitary as on the excellencies of the other parts of the Bill. A great many members regarded the grazing farmers as most objectionable. Ever since he had been in the House he had tried various ways of encouraging the existence of small grazing farmers, and, from the first time of coming into the House up to the present time, there had been the same stolid opposition to them in one way and another. The old story was repeated: "They are no better than we are. We occupy the land for grazing purposes, and they will do the same. Why should we be put out to make room for them?" So when any assistance

was attempted to be given to that class of selector, the old squatting party—he always used the epithet “old” because he meant the old foolish squatting party who could see no interests in the country except their own—opposed it. He, of course, did not include all the squatters, but merely the old squatting party. They had persistently opposed anything that would facilitate those people going on the country. He did not for a moment mean to suggest that that was the only motive the Government had in proposing the amendment, but he could not help thinking there was some of that feeling of dislike to that class of persons attached to the amendment. He did not say that that was the conscious motive of the Government, but that they were unconsciously actuated by that old standing dislike. Just see what was the alleged evil, and the remedy proposed to be adopted. At Clermont, or some place, there were a number of people wanting a block of country under an occupation license. Those who knew what occupation licenses were could give reasons why the neighbouring squatter should be particularly anxious to have that block. There was perhaps some very disagreeable intruder coming into the neighbourhood. He wanted to take up that portion of the country where he could do a great deal of mischief, and it could be readily understood that the squatter should determine that he should not have that land, and use every endeavour to keep him out. Those things, no doubt, had happened just as when forfeited runs used to be put up at auction. He had heard of instructions being given by a neighbouring squatter to buy the run at any price, rather than allow some particular person, who wanted to obtain it for the purpose of carrying on some nefarious business, to get it. After a year or two he forfeited it again, and if necessary bought it again. Applications for occupation licenses had occasionally been made in the same way, and he did not blame the squatters, in certain cases, for opposing them by putting in a number of applications. He was not prepared to say that he thought the tender or auction system was a bad one in the case of occupation licenses, because it was a very fugitive kind of settlement after all, and so far as that went he did not see any particular objection to allowing the auction system to apply to occupation licenses. But in the case of grazing farms it was different altogether. A grazing farm was a block of land which had been first surveyed and then put up for selection. The occupier of the land first of all had to get a license; then he had to fence in the land, and until then he could not transfer it. When it was fenced he must continually occupy it. If the next proposed amendment in the clause was carried, then the land must be occupied before fencing. There was no particular inducement to dummieing in such cases, so that the clause could only apply to a very few cases, when there was a very large demand for a particular block of country, to be used as a grazing farm. He did not think blocks were likely to be taken up under occupation licenses for the same purpose as grazing farms, but if they were he did not think that was a sufficient reason why a particular person should not be allowed to ballot for a grazing farm, especially as the squatter was not allowed to compete with him. The object that was to be gained in the case of grazing farms seemed to be that the applicant should pay a higher rent. If the object was to put money into the Treasury, then there was no reason why the same principle should not apply all round. If the object was to get the largest rent possible, the proper thing would be to fix the upset price and let all applications be made by tender. That system was tried for

years, and abandoned afterwards, as not being a good one. Some hon. members, no doubt, were not aware of the fact that, at one time, all applications for runs were by tender.

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL: The conditions were different then.

The HON. SIR S. W. GRIFFITH said they were, but still the applications were by tender. Now, in the case of grazing farms the land had to be occupied. It had to be improved before it was transferable. If the object was to protect the Treasury, let all applications be by tender, as the hon. member for Ipswich had suggested. If the upset was insufficient, that showed that the board had not done their duty; but why should a person be submitted to that form of competition in this case more than in another. There was no doubt that the system was in favour of the man with the largest purse. It was no use denying that. Hon. members opposite said that a man must have a lot of money to start a grazing farm.

The PREMIER: So he must.

The HON. SIR S. W. GRIFFITH said they knew, as a matter of fact, that, in a great many parts of the colony, grazing farms were taken up by men of very small means indeed.

The PREMIER: How long do they last?

The HON. SIR S. W. GRIFFITH: The hon. gentleman no doubt did not believe in those people, but he was speaking from the point of view that that was a beneficial kind of settlement and should be encouraged. It seemed to him that that system of pitting men against each other by secret tender was open to all the objections of the auction system. The fairest way to the State was no doubt the auction system if they were to consider simply the interests of the Treasury, but there was a great deal more than that to be considered—to encourage settlement. The amendment suggested by the Minister for Lands would mean that the man with the largest amount of cash in his pocket would get the lands, not the man whose object it was to settle on the land. He confessed that he had listened with some incredulity to the stories that had been told in respect to applications for occupation licenses, and the reports the hon. gentleman had given them. The hon. gentleman had no doubt got those reports from officers in his department, but for all that he doubted some of the statements made. For instance, there was the case stated where 418 persons were said to have applied for one piece of land, and there was only one *bonâ fide* applicant amongst them. He doubted that very much. Did the hon. gentleman mean to say that those 418 applicants put in the first year's rent with their applications in cash? He did not believe there was so much cash in the district. How could it have happened? He supposed the block could not have been less than twenty square miles, and did the hon. gentleman mean to say that £8,000 was paid in cash to the land agent with those applications? He was quite sure it had not been. How was it done?

An HONOURABLE MEMBER: By cheque.

The HON. SIR S. W. GRIFFITH said that if that was so the thing could be easily remedied by a regulation. It was easy to prevent applications being accompanied by cheques, and it was right they should be accompanied by cash. He had supposed they were. They ought to be, certainly, because if a man was allowed to make his application by putting in a cheque, the system would be open to all sorts of abuses; but it would not take the system proposed in the Bill, and which was open to very serious objection, to get over that difficulty. After all, were there any

instances where injustice had been done, and any outcry that persons who desired to get grazing farms were prevented from doing so by the great competition for them? A man might have to wait a little longer, but he supposed that if a man was unsuccessful to-day, the supply of grazing farms open to selection was, or ought to be, in excess of the demand, and if he did not get a particular one he could get another before he left the office. Surely they would have heard if any great injustice had been caused, and yet not a single case, so far as he knew, had been reported by the press of a man being deprived of getting a grazing farm through undue competition. If that had occurred it would only show that the Lands Department were not doing their duty by keeping a sufficient supply of those grazing farms in the market for selection. That was the remedy for it—throw plenty of farms open to selection. He was glad to hear the hon. member at the head of the Government admit that the predictions he had made with respect to the Act of 1884 had not come true, and that people were coming here in considerable numbers to take advantage of that beneficial form of settlement. The difficulty referred to could be overcome by throwing open more farms, and further legislation to meet it was not necessary.

The PREMIER said with regard to the last remarks of the hon. gentleman that he had admitted that persons were coming here to take advantage of that beneficial legislation, by saying that large numbers of persons were coming over the border to take up portions of their lands, that statement was certainly correct; but, he asked, what did these persons take up those lands for? They did not take them up for the purpose of settlement, but for speculative purposes. The hon. gentleman might laugh at that, but he could tell him that those persons would part with those lands when the conditions were fulfilled which would enable them to transfer their properties. They did not come here as *bonâ fide* settlers. The hon. gentleman had made some little capital by saying that he had not heard that any great trouble had ensued through persons being unable to get the portions of land they wanted. That might be so, but it was better to legislate in time, as he was sure that anyone who knew anything about the subject knew that trouble was coming. The hon. gentleman had said that a great deal of good had been done by the Act, so far as it had gone, and that he knew of his own knowledge where people of small capital had gone in for large grazing farms.

The Hon. Sir S. W. GRIFFITH; I did not say large grazing farms.

The PREMIER said he was sorry for them, and he thought the hon. gentleman must have been misinformed. They all knew how the large grazing farms had worked. Those provisions had resulted in capitalists coming over from the other colonies and selecting, in some cases, over 120,000 acres of land. That was not only in one case but in more than one, and they turned them to the same use—with a better tenure for themselves—as the country was used for before. That had been the only great result of the grazing farm system up to the present time. Certainly on the Lower Warrego some few persons had taken up grazing farms to the maximum in a *bonâ fide* way, but it had been proved that the grazing farm system had not been a success so far as *bonâ fide* settlement was concerned. They knew perfectly well what had been the effect of the system so far as the revenue was concerned. They knew just as well that they had locked up at the present time some of the finest lands in the colony on a tenure of thirty years, with an enormous penalty to be paid to

the holders of those farms on the termination of their tenure. That had been the result of the legislation of the leader of the Opposition. He would like hon. members of the Committee to bear the figures in mind, when he told them that the amount of the best lands of the colony locked up for thirty years under the Act of 1884, was 2,164,770 acres.

The Hon. Sir S. W. GRIFFITH: I wish it was twenty times as much.

The PREMIER said he did not agree with the hon. gentleman. He did not believe, and he was sure the country did not believe, in locking up such an area of country as the hon. gentleman said he wished was locked up, in the way in which that land was locked up now. The hon. gentleman no doubt thought it would last his time, and no doubt thirty years hence it would not trouble the majority of the Committee how the lands were locked up. He did hope, however, that notwithstanding the remark he had just made, the hon. gentleman was sufficiently a Queensland patriot not to wish anything of the sort. If the wish the hon. gentleman had expressed was carried out they would have nearly 42,000,000 acres of the best land in the colony locked up for thirty years, and absolutely unassailable, except by paying enormous compensation to those who held the land. The rent derived from the 2,164,770 acres already locked up was only between £11,000 and £12,000 a year, and for that paltry mess of pottage the hon. gentleman had parted with the birthright of a generation of people. There was no Act which, so far as it had gone, had done so much in one way and another to damage the colony. There could be no question about that. Two classes of persons had been fixed on the country who could not be shifted without enormous cost to the State—the pastoral tenant, to whom had been given an indefeasible lease, and who could only be moved from his position by the payment of enormous compensation; and the grazing farmer, who had a longer tenure, and could only be shifted on exactly similar lines. The leader of the Opposition knew as well as he did that in the future, though not in the immediate future, compensation would have to be paid by the State in one form or another. He did not suppose it would be paid in cash, but in a way that would probably be more detrimental to the interests of the colony, that was, by an increased tenure. There were thus two classes with every interest in common, who would in the future combine to elect a Parliament to give effect to their views and hold the soil against all comers. Hon. members might shut their eyes as long as they liked, but the ultimate result of the operation of the Act of 1884 would be the combination of classes of leaseholders, having in common the right of compensation at the end of their leases, and the creation of a power that would hold the land against the rest of the colony. And the arguments he had put forward to prove that could not be refuted.

The Hon. Sir S. W. GRIFFITH said that anyone who before doubted the correctness of his statement that the Government were actuated by a strong feeling of hostility to the grazing farm portion of the Land Act of 1884, must have had his doubts entirely removed by the speech of the Chief Secretary. It was evident that he regarded that portion of the Act as a monstrous piece of legislation; and holding that view, what sort of amendments could the Committee expect from the Government? Surely some amendments that would have the effect of restricting that kind of selection. When he pointed out that the amendment now under discussion would have that effect, some hon. members seemed to think he was imputing most improper motives;

and the Minister for Railways seemed to resent the idea that the Government were actuated by any such motive; but the Chief Secretary had proved conclusively—if he was the mouthpiece of the Government—that they were actuated by the strongest feeling of hostility to that portion of the Act.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: You gave the squatters a twenty-one years' lease.

The HON. SIR S. W. GRIFFITH said that was an entirely different thing. He was talking about the effect of the clause being to discourage grazing selection.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: The Chief Secretary said you had given indefeasible leases to two classes, and he mentioned them.

The HON. SIR S. W. GRIFFITH said he was talking about one thing, and the hon. gentleman answered by talking about something quite different. He said that the effect of the amendment would be to discourage grazing selection. What answer was it to say that the Act of 1884 had done something with regard to another class of persons? It was a fair inference to draw from the speech of the Chief Secretary that he desired to restrict grazing settlement. If it was so monstrous as he thought, he ought to abolish it altogether.

The PREMIER: That would be repudiation.

The HON. SIR S. W. GRIFFITH said it would not be repudiation to abolish it in the future. If it was such a monstrous system, why not stop it? Why not cancel all the proclamations offering grazing farms for selection. The hon. gentleman could do so if he liked; and that was what he should do if he thought the system was so monstrous. He would probably substitute alienation of the land. The Committee could only judge by what the hon. gentleman had always said—they did not know what he was going to say next—and he based his argument on what the hon. gentleman had said. The Premier had consistently opposed the system of grazing selection up to the present; but if he was not now opposed to the system, he should be glad to hear of his becoming a convert. The hon. gentleman said that the land was locked up by the system introduced in the Act of 1884; but his substitute was to make the land freehold and pay the purchase money into the Treasury; and he called that having a regard for the interests of posterity. The party to which he (Sir S. W. Griffith) belonged were said to sacrifice the interests of posterity, because they declined to take all the money for the land at once and pay it into the Treasury and use it. They decided to let the land at its fair value to be assessed by the Land Board, a judicial tribunal, and re-assessed by the board at the end of every five years; and at the end of thirty years, if nothing better could be done with it, let it again at its full value. He thought that was conserving the interests of posterity, and he did not think it could be shown that anything he had ever done in Parliament was against the interests of posterity.

The PREMIER: Who has to pay the compensation?

The HON. SIR S. W. GRIFFITH: The incoming tenants; the same as in Ireland.

The PREMIER: That is very unfortunate.

The HON. SIR S. W. GRIFFITH: The same as they will have to do in Ireland.

The PREMIER: That is more unfortunate.

The HON. SIR S. W. GRIFFITH said that some hon. members seemed to have curious ideas as to right and wrong in certain matters of politics. They thought it a monstrous thing that

the incoming tenant should pay the outgoing tenant for improvements; but it seemed the most natural and fair thing in the world to him.

An HONOURABLE MEMBER: You have to catch him first.

The HON. SIR S. W. GRIFFITH said that if, at the end of thirty years, no incoming tenant was prepared to pay compensation, the property would not be saleable, and the State would have the best of it, because the State would get the benefit of the improvements. He did not know that the present was the time to discuss the whole system of grazing farms, though it would have to be discussed before they got to the end of the clause which made such a violent attack on the system.

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL: How so?

The HON. SIR S. W. GRIFFITH: By cutting down the lease from thirty to twenty years. The amendments contained in the Bill, so far as grazing farms were concerned, were intended to discourage the system; at any rate, if that was not their intention it was their plain effect, and the amendment now under consideration would certainly have that effect. The Premier said that those people who came from New South Wales and Victoria were only speculators. What were people wanted to settle on the land for? Did they not all come to speculate in one sense—to make a profit out of it? What about the people who had made fortunes in the Western country by squatting—the people who had bought to sell again, and had sold again?

The PREMIER: What did the introducer of the Land Act of 1884 do for speculators?

The HON. SIR S. W. GRIFFITH said the Chief Secretary objected to persons coming from other places with money and taking up land as grazing farms. He did not care whether they lived on the land themselves or not, so long as they occupied the land and kept it well stocked, which was the best use it could be put to. Of course he would prefer to see them living there themselves; he did not believe in absentee landlords. But if those men would occupy the land and pay a fair rent for it, it was better than letting the land lie idle, as it was at present, although it was not putting the land to its best use. The hon. gentleman had told them a shocking story, about a number of relatives taking up adjoining grazing farms; but, that did not prove anything at all. He did not see why two brothers should not live next door to each other, or why ten brothers should not live in the same street if they liked. He thought it was a very desirable thing, so long as the land was taken up honestly and not dummied for somebody else, that they should be neighbours. Then in regard to the sale of these farms; that was one of the inducements they held out. But the inducement to sell out could always be removed by keeping plenty of land open for selection. So long as the supply of grazing farms was equal to the demand there was no chance of people from the other colonies taking them up to sell again. In respect to runs, of course, it was different. The lands were all taken up, and if a man wanted a run he would have to buy one from some existing squatter. Where were the young people to go to if they wanted to go in for squatting—the young people in the towns who might wish to go in for a country life? There was nowhere to go unless they bought a run from somebody who had one. Why should they not take up large selections for themselves if they wished to go in for pastoral pursuits? There were 200,000,000 of acres available in the colony for that purpose—not at present available, but which could be made available in future; it would

be idle to throw it open now. The question before them was, would the amendment to the present Act tend to facilitate settlement on the land? That was how the matter was put by the hon. member for Bowen. It was clear the Government did not wish to facilitate that kind of settlement, at least, the Premier did not; but he believed the Committee generally did. The amendment would rather tend to block settlement. It would prevent the poorer men from obtaining land; the man with the longest purse would have it. The speculator who came with a long purse would always outbid other men. He would welcome any number of men who came with money; let them come by all means, but he would prefer men who would live on the land. He would prefer to have men who came from abroad, and who would pay a full rent, rather than men who would pay only one-fifth of its value. The amendment under consideration would do all the Premier, in one part of his speech, said he objected to. It would give encouragement to the speculator, to the man who had money in his pocket, and who wanted land; while the man in the colony who wanted the land also would be at a disadvantage. It would simply give an advantage to moneyed men, and they had better wait until they could do something better before they made any change in the law at all.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS said he did not think it was advisable to weary the Committee, and he would therefore move that the Chairman leave the chair and report progress.

Question put and passed.

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

ADJOURNMENT.

The PREMIER said: In moving the adjournment of the House, I may state that, after the private business to-morrow, the Government intend to go on with the Crown Lands Bill in committee.

Question put and passed.

The House adjourned at twenty-six minutes past 10 o'clock.