Queensland

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THURSDAY, 29 AUGUST 1889

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY.

Thursday, 29 *August*, 1889.

Sale of a Water Reserve at Cooby Creek.—Bible in State Schools.—Rockhampton Gas and Coke Company (Limited) Bill—second reading.—Brisbane Temperance Hall Bill—consideration in committee of Legislative Council's amendments.—Crown Lands Acts of 1884 to 1886 Amendment Bill—committee.—Adjournment.

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

SALE OF A WATER RESERVE AT COOBY CREEK.

Mr. JORDAN, in moving—

That there be laid on the table of the House, all papers connected with the sale, last year, by the Government, to the Honourable James Taylor, of a piece of land, shown on the map as a water reserve, near the junction of Cooby and Merritt's Creeks—

said: Mr. Speaker,—I asked the hon. member for Ipswich, Mr. Barlow, to call "not formal" to this motion, because I wish to say a word or two in explanation. In the *Telegraph* of Tuesday, the 27th August, there is the report of a deputation that waited on the Minister for Lands, in which it is stated that 1,100 acres of land were sold by me, when I was in office, to the Hon. James Taylor. It is further stated that that piece of land was a water reserve proclaimed twenty-three years ago, and that it contained the only permanent water for the selectors in the neighbourhood for many miles. I have to say, in the first place, that the land referred to was not 1,100 acres, but only 32 acres. In the second place, I am assured by the Under Secretary for Lands, that it never was so proclaimed; in the third place, I have to say that I did not sell it at all; and in the fourth place, that the papers will show that it was sold by the present Government. In March of 1888 this matter was brought before me, through a request of the Hon. James Taylor that he should be allowed to buy thirty-two acres of land situated in the middle of his own freehold. There were roads giving access to the land, but with that exception the land was surrounded by his property; and though it appeared in the map as a water reserve it was not one. It was represented to me that it would be only reasonable to allow Mr. Taylor to purchase the land, as his property surrounded it. I expressed no opinion whatever on the subject. I never promised to sell the land. I do not think I ever intended to sell it, but I intended to have the matter brought up for the consideration of the Cabinet. No land can be sold under the 92nd section of the Act of 1884 without competition, except by authority of the Cabinet, and the fact that the minute was to be prepared to be laid before the Cabinet for consideration, was no expression of opinion on my part either way. The papers do not show any evidence of my action, except that there is a stamp on the documents, and the Under Secretary says that is an indication that I authorised the matter to be laid before the Cabinet. Now it was my practice when I was in office in any matter of importance to take the opinion of my colleagues, and on many occasions when a certain matter was brought forward to be considered on its merits by the Cabinet, it was thought not desirable. I expressed no opinion on the subject to Mr. Taylor or anyone else. Four months after that a minute was laid before the Council that Mr. Taylor should be allowed to purchase this land without competition, under the 92nd section of the Act, and that was passed by the present Government, and initialled by six Ministers. It was a mistake, as reported in the paper, that the land was sold on the 14th June. Mr. Hume tells me he did not say so, although the Minister for Lands rejoined that that was the day before he took office. That is not exactly correct. I left the office in the middle of the day on the 13th, and Mr. Black took office on the 13th. The fact of the Executive Council minute being passed by the present Government, and initialled by six Ministers, is my reason for making this explanation before the papers are laid on the table of the House, and when they are laid on the table it will be easy for any hon. member to see what took place. The present Minister for Lands is of opinion that I sold the land, because I permitted the matter to be brought up for consideration by the Cabinet, but there was a delay of four months. My action was a mere nothing. As the case was presented to me, I thought it desirable not to negative it at once before it was considered by the Government. The Under Secretary says the reason for the delay was that, before being laid before the Cabinet, it is the practice always to submit such matters to the board to obtain a valuation of the land. The board valued it at £2 an acre, and I think it could not be of much value as a water reserve if only of that value. I fancy the authorities—the divisional boards who claim to have the guardianship over the place—are in error. It was never proclaimed as a water reserve, and they have nothing to do with it. I think they are a little jealous, perhaps, that Mr. Taylor has got the land. I certainly did not in any sense decide the question; much less did I recommend the sale of the land, and much less did I sell the land. I deny that I sold it.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS (Hon. M. H. Black) said: Mr. Speaker,—There is not the least objection to the production of these papers. In fact, I am glad they have been called for; but I think it is one of the most unusual things I ever heard of for an ex-Minister to endeavour to evade the responsibility of his acts. The hon. gentleman says himself that he sent this matter to the Cabinet, and it is not recorded what was done with it. The facts are very simple. Several months before this Government took office the hon. gentleman initiated the whole of this proposal. He received the

application and initiated the proposal, which resulted in the Hon. James Taylor acquiring this land.

Mr. JORDAN: Initiated?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: Yes.

Mr. JORDAN: I never expressed any opinion. The papers will disclose that.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: The hon. gentleman is to a certain extent correct, but he is somewhat misleading also. There are the papers with the usual stamp which a Minister has affixed when he approves of a certain proposal. The papers were stamped most decidedly by order of the Minister.

Mr. JORDAN: Not approved. I deny that.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: The next stage is that the papers go to the Cabinet. I assume so. I do not know what the hon. gentleman's mode of procedure was, or whether he was so weak-kneed that he could not decide himself.

Mr. JORDAN: It was a Cabinet matter.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: It was? That is what I thought. The matter received the sanction of the Cabinet, thus showing that the hon. gentleman was unable to accept the responsibilty of the act—it was then handed over to the Land Board to value the land. In the hands of that body it remained for three months, and that was one of the first papers laid before me. It appeared with the final stamp to carry out the action of my predecessor, which I believed was right in all honesty. I believed he had thoroughly considered it. The whole transaction took six months to bring to that stage, and it was one of the first papers to come before the present Government when they took office. I assumed that the hon. gentleman had thoroughly considered the case, and I had no reason to believe he was so vacillating and weak-kneed in his action. It was, as I say, one of the first papers that went up to the Cabinet under this Government, and, believing that the matter had been thoroughly investigated by our predecessors, we gave effect to the action initiated and carried on by them.

Mr. JORDAN: We never passed the minute.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: It would be a very dangerous thing if a new Ministry on taking office were to at once repudiate all the actions of the previous Government. This Government did not do that at all events, as will be seen when these papers are laid on the table of the House, and they are not at all voluminous. I admit that the final impress was given by this Government; but the whole proceedings were initiated by the last Government and carried on by them, and if there is anything irregular in the transaction the previous Government must accept the blame.

Mr. JORDAN: It never came before us.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: It is true that the place was never gazetted as a water reserve. It is one of those vacant pieces of land to be found in many parts of the colony, and marked on the maps as water reserves. No doubt it came by usage to be called a water reserve, and I have been informed that there is no water on it. At the moment I found this action was being opposed by the divisional board in the district I took steps to communicate with the Hon. James Taylor, to see whether he would surrender the land again or make provision for access to the water by the selectors. I am not going to say now whether the previous Government were right or wrong in the action they took, but I contend that the whole transaction was initiated by our predecessors, and we accepted the responsibility when we took office of giving effect to what we believed were the honest intentions of our predecessors. I never supposed the hon. gentleman would attempt to evade that responsibility when he found that what he initiated and we finally carried out by giving effect to his action, had become unpopular.

Mr. CAMPBELL said: Mr. Speaker,—Whether this particular reserve was ever gazetted or not I do not know; but I was always under the impression that before a water reserve was sold, the local authorities in the district in which it was situated were consulted. In this particular instance they were not consulted, and the reserve had been sold for some considerable time before they were aware of it. The sale of the reserve has caused a very great deal of annoyance in the district, so much so, that I believe the members of the board will resign their positions if the reserve is not restored to the district, so grieved are they about the way in which they have been treated. Whoever stated that there was no permanent water on that reserve, stated what was not true. I have known the reserve for several years, and have travelled that way with stock in years gone by, and I know that in the summer time and during the drought that was the only place cattle could get water at. It was a great convenience to a large number of selectors in that district, and if it is not restored to them, it will be a very serious loss indeed. When I took the matter up it was not my business to inquire whether it was the previous Government or this Government that sold it; but it was my business to try to get it back for the district, and I trust the Hon. James Taylor will see his way to give up that piece of land for the benefit of the inhabitants of that district.

Mr. GROOM said: Mr. Speaker,—I do not know anything about the facts of this case, but I do know this water reserve, and I had something to do with having it set apart as a water reserve when the district of Aubigny was connected with the electorate of Drayton and Toowoomba. That electorate has since been divided into three, but it was all in one at that time, and was represented in this House by myself. I interviewed the late Mr. T. B. Stephens, who was Minister for Lands at the time, and that gentleman had the land in question set apart as a water reserve. I am rather surprised to hear now that it was never gazetted, as I was under the impression that it had been gazetted long ago. At all events, I know that in all the maps of the district for many years past that portion is marked as a water reserve. I was, like the hon. member for Aubigny, very much grieved when I heard that that piece of land had been sold over the heads of the divisional board and the ratepayers of the district, without anyone knowing anything about it. This is another of those cases which accentuate the importance of placing all these water reserves in the hands of the local authorities. If that is done in the future, no such case as this can possibly occur. When I heard that the ex-Minister for Lands, Mr. Jordan, had sold this reserve, I could not believe it. I could not believe that that gentleman would do such a thing, knowing, as I do, the strong desire he has to benefit the selectors. I mentioned the matter to the hon. gentleman, and he assured me he had had nothing whatever to do with it. I am sorry that the leader of the Opposition is not in his place this afternoon, because I believe he could throw some light upon a document which, I understand, is missing, in connection with those papers. I believe the leader of the Opposition will have some recollection of what transpired in the Cabinet, when a minute, prepared by the late Minister for Lands, Mr. Jordan, was brought up for consideration. I understand that that

was a minute recommending the refusal of the sale of the land. That minute cannot be found, and I think the leader of the Opposition, if he were here, could throw some light upon it. I am not going to say what light he would be able to throw upon it, but, I believe, he could give the House the benefit of his recollection of the proceedings when that minute was brought before the Cabinet.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: Why was it handed over to the Land Board, then? That is the point.

Mr. GROOM: That is the main point, as the Minister for Lands has said, and, of course, he understands that I have nothing further to say in the matter than that I know the reserve; and I am given to understand that it is a fact that a Cabinet minute was brought up by the late Minister for Lands, in which the sale was refused, and that that cannot now be found. I understand, further, that if the leader of the Opposition were present he would be able to throw some light upon that subject. How the Land Board were afterwards put in motion I am unable to say, and that is a matter of departmental action, known only to the Government and the officials themselves. There has evidently, however, been some transaction carried on by somebody unknown to the late Minister for Lands. If we are to believe the statement he has made to the House, and I am sure there are very few members in this House who will doubt it, there has evidently been something at work behind him, in connection with this matter; and, whoever the persons were who misled that hon. gentleman, by telling him there was no water on the reserve, and that it had never been used as a water reserve, those persons must have known that they were stating what was not consistent with fact; because the place has been known as a water reserve for many years past. The fact that the divisional board have taken exception to the sale of the land, and that the ratepayers are insisting upon the surrender of the reserve, shows that it has been of service as a water reserve, and that the persons who gave the contrary information must have purposely misled the late Minister for Lands. I am very glad that the matter has now come before the House, because it will enable us to find out the truth, and it will be exceedingly interesting to know who really is at the bottom of the selling of this reserve. I do not know who the parties may be, and I am sure the hon. gentleman who purchased the land has got land enough, in all conscience, without wanting to gobble up these thirty-two acres, which have been exceedingly useful to the selectors in the district as a water reserve. I know that the hon. member for Aubigny—and all credit is due to him for it—has been moving in this matter for some time past, and I am glad to see now that the thing is coming to a head, and we are likely to get at the facts of the case.

Mr. JORDAN, in reply, said: Mr. Speaker,—I have no hesitation in saying that it was the Under Secretary, Mr. Hume, who told me that he knew the land well, and that there was no water upon it, or none to justify it being called a water reserve. I never gave any promise to the Hon. J. Taylor with regard to the land. I am satisfied that I disapproved of it, but I followed my usual practice in such cases, and laid the matter before the Cabinet—that is, I authorised its being laid before the Cabinet, and there was a memorandum written by my permission to that effect. I have an impression that a minute was prepared immediately afterwards for the Cabinet, and that it was rejected, as we did not think it desirable to sell the land. Cases of that kind frequently occurred during the time I was Minister for Lands. I had minutes prepared for the sanction of the Cabinet, as under the 92nd clause of the Land Act of 1884 no land can be sold without competition without the authority of the Governor in Council, and the Minister for Lands knows that perfectly well. The hon. gentleman is under a wrong impression when he says that I prepared the minute for the Cabinet, and he supposed that it was passed. I believe that I had a minute prepared, but that it was rejected—at all events there is no such minute among the papers.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: Why did you send it on to the Land Board?

Mr. JORDAN: I think the Minister for Lands must remember the explanation given by Mr. Hume the other day, when, with the permission of the hon. gentleman, I saw the Under Secretary in his presence to get his explanation. I said to Mr. Hume—"Why was it that the minute was not prepared immediately after I wrote the memorandum, in which I directed you to prepare that minute?" Mr. Hume replied—and I think I can recall it to the memory of the Minister for Lands—"The practice of the department in such cases is to refer the question to the board before the case comes before the Cabinet." Then I asked—"How is it that four or five months elapsed?" He said—"It was referred to the board I think in June, and the minute for the Cabinet was prepared in July." That minute was passed by the Cabinet of the present Government, and initialled by six Ministers. Now, if the previous Cabinet had passed a minute another minute would not have been sent up to the present Cabinet. The minute can be seen among the papers signed by six of the present Ministers, offering this land to the Hon. J. Taylor without competition under the 92nd section of the Act.

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL (Hon. J. Donaldson): Did you submit the minute to the Cabinet and not approve of it?

Mr. JORDAN: Certainly. I submitted the case to get the opinion of the Cabinet, and the hon. gentleman knows as well as I do that other Ministers submit matters which do not always pass.

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL: I do not.

Mr. JORDAN: For reasons already given by me I considered it was desirable to get the opinion of the Cabinet upon it, and I think they rejected the minute which cannot be found among the papers. The minute which is among the papers is initialled by six of the present Ministers, and gives the Minister for Lands authority to sell the land without competition.

Question put and passed.

BIBLE IN STATE SCHOOLS.

On the Order of the Day being read for the resumption of the debate on Mr. Macfarlane's motion—"That, in the opinion of this House, it will be advantageous to the colony, and for the best interests of the rising generation, that the Bible be read in the State schools as a lesson book"—

Mr. McMASTER said: Mr. Speaker,—It appears that the hon. member for Wide Bay who was speaking upon this question when it was last before the House is not present, and I would like to say a few words on the motion of the hon. member for Ipswich, Mr. Macfarlane. I do not suppose he has any intention of dividing the House on the question, though if he were to do so I should certainly give him my support I cannot understand why Parliament objects to the Bible being read in our schools when we insist

in all other matters that the Bible shall be the book upon which a man shall make a declaration on oath. A man cannot take his seat in this House without first taking his oath on the Bible. In all courts of justice the Bible is acknowledged to be the book upon which we are to speak the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth. Why it should be debarred from being read in our schools, I have long been at a loss to understand. I do not believe it should be expounded or explained by the teachers in our State schools. The children should be allowed to read it without any comment whatever, and if there is any subject in it which they cannot understand, they should make inquiries about it from their parents at home. Why should we debar this book from the rising generation in our schools, when it is acknowledged from the Queen on the throne down to the very lowest subject? One argument brought against the resolution was, that we should have to select certain passages from the Bible for the scholars to read. I maintain that if the open Bible is considered fit to be laid on the family table at home, no portion of it should be closed in our schools. I daresay there is not a member of this House who is afraid to leave the Bible on his table perfectly accessible to his entire family, so that his children may open it at any passage they choose. I fail, therefore, to see why the school children should be debarred from having the entire Bible before them as a reading book, so that they may read such passages in it as they may think proper. It has not injured the British nation as a nation. It is a well-known fact that wherever the Bible has been introduced it has been the forerunner of civilisation. What has the Bible done for the heathen? Wherever missionaries have gone with the open Bible, we find that civilisation follows. What was Fiji before the Bible was introduced? What has the Bible done even for New Guinea during the short time it has been introduced there? I maintain that we have no right to debar the children in our schools from a book that the British nation has put so much value upon and has protected through all ages. Judging from the opposition to this motion, which, I am sorry to see, has come from both sides of the House, it is hardly likely the hon. member will divide the House upon it, but in any case he has my sympathy and support. I would have the Bible read in our national schools without any comment from any teacher. I daresay many hon. members read the Bible in their school days, and I do not think it has done them any harm. I am quite certain it has done them a great deal of good. If the Bible was more read in our schools we should have very much less of the larrikin element among our rising generation. The fact that we prevent that book from being read in our schools is simply telling the rising generation of young men and young women that we have no confidence in it, and that we do not think they ought to read it. It has been said that the children, if they want to read the Bible, can read it at home. Fortunately it is safe in the home; otherwise I believe some people would prevent them even from having an open Bible there. To prevent our children from reading the Bible in our national schools is, in my opinion, a blot upon those who are responsible for it. I hope the hon. member for Ipswich, Mr. Macfarlane, if he does not carry his motion to-day, will not give it up, but will bring it on again on some future occasion; and I trust the day is not far distant when the Bible will be an open book in our State schools, and our children allowed to read it, as they did before, without any comment whatever.

Mr. JORDAN said: Mr. Speaker,—I heartily sympathise with the object of the mover of this resolution, inasmuch as I think that education is essentially imperfect unless we give to the children moral training. To teach them to distinguish between right or wrong, let them become acquainted with the divine law. The Bible is entirely ignored in our present system of education, which is purely secular, as it is called—that is, entirely irreligious. We have not only abolished those selections from Scripture which were used in the early days of the colony under the national system of education, but the books in the schools have been so altered that it may be said that we give no moral instruction to our children. I think this is an essential defect at the root of all things. What would the nation be if the rising generation were taught to disregard all moral laws? The foundation of the moral law is contained in the inspired Scriptures. Why is it wrong to take what does not belong to us? Why is it wrong to pursue only our own selfish aims and purposes, disregarding altogether the rights and feelings of other people? Well, the foundation of all moral law, as I said, is contained in the inspired Scriptures—the Scriptures in which we believe as Christians. But the worst of it is, that if we have religious teaching in our schools—that is, what is called dogmatic or doctrinal teaching, the teaching of those principles which are supposed to be contained in the inspired word of God—we immediately begin to differ in opinion. The Protestant sections of the Christian Church hold certain views and our Roman Catholic friends hold other views on what may be considered some important particulars. I maintain that the Roman Catholics hold all the essential doctrines of the Bible, all that is essential to salvation. One of the greatest authorities among the dissenters, that is John Wesley, said some of the best and holiest men and women who ever lived belonged to the Roman Catholic portion of the Christian Church. Of course we all admit that, but our Roman Catholic friends add things which Protestants think unnecessary and to a certain extent dangerous. Hence the difficulty of using our edition of the Bible in our schools. The Roman Catholics use the Douay version, I believe, and, of course, they object to their children being taught the doctrines contained in our version. Hence the difficulty of using the Bible as a class-book in our national schools, and I am rather sorry that the hon. member for Ipswich, Mr. Macfarlane, did not frame his motion in this way, which I should very much prefer: That selected portions of the Holy Scriptures, such as were in use in this colony some years ago, and were also in use under the national school system in Ireland for many years, should again be used in our schools in Queensland. I think the Hon. the Minister for Mines and Works, in some remarks on the subject, stated that those selected portions had been selected by the Roman Catholic Archbishop of Ireland, Dr. Murray, and by Archbishop Whately—that they met together and consulted on this important question, and selected from the New Testament Scriptures—the narrative of the New Testament—certain portions which would not be objectionable to any denomination of Christians; and those were in use for many years. I remember attending the first meeting held on the subject of education in Brisbane, when Queensland formed part of New South Wales. It was then proposed that we should adopt the New South Wales national school system, pure and simple. Specimens of these lessons were read at the meeting, and they commended themselves very much to my mind as being lessons which were very wisely chosen and which no one could object to being read to their children. I do believe that these colonies are suffering in every way from the fact that we have excluded religious and moral

teaching to a great extent from our schools. We have adopted the secular system, and I am not at all surprised that our Roman Catholic friends will not allow their children to go to our schools. They are too wise to allow their children to be taught in that way, excluding religion altogether. I believe that if we revert to the system first adopted in the colony the Roman Catholics would soon fall in with it—that is, that lessons shall be read containing the narrative of the New Testament, such as the life of Christ and his miracles. I believe it will result in immeasurable advantage to the colony if our children are trained up in the knowledge of the truths revealed in God's holy word, the fountain of all moral law, which teaches us what to do, and what we should abstain from doing. Without that we shall have widespread immorality, a disregard of those things which concern our highest interests, and which teach us to be good citizens—good fathers, mothers, husbands, and wives, and our children obedient to their parents. How is it that so many of our young people are disobedient, careless—larrikins, as they are called? I am not at all surprised at it. The Bishop of Melbourne called it "educated ruffianism," and I am sure that this miserable larrikinism, which is growing so rapidly in the colonies—and perhaps in none so rapidly as in Queensland—may be traced to the absence of moral training in our schools. I deplore it from my heart, and have done so for many years; therefore I take this opportunity of making these few remarks. In Queensland the Government have a monopoly of education; private schools cannot exist in competition with them; therefore the Government undertake the responsibility of preventing children from being instructed in the truths of God's holy word—prevent them from getting moral and religious training in our schools. I think that is an awful responsibility for the Government to take upon themselves. I never believed in the secular compulsory system of education which is now in operation. I believe it is a great mistake, and we are reaping already the bitter fruits of our folly. In what we have done, have we conciliated the Roman Catholic section of the community. I believe not. As I said before, they are too wise to send their children to schools were irreligion is taught. I go as far as that, because I contend that any system of education which discards God's holy word is teaching irreligion. The children are brought up to a state of infidelity, to despise and reject those things which belong to our everlasting peace. With these remarks, Mr. Speaker, I have much pleasure in supporting the motion.

The MINISTER FOR MINES AND WORKS (Hon. J. M. Macrossan) said: Mr. Speaker,—I did not intend to say anything on this subject, but a few words which fell from the hon. gentleman who has just sat down have induced me to alter my mind. I have great sympathy for the motion, but my sympathy will not lead me to the length of voting for it, even if altered in the direction in which the hon. gentleman wishes it to be altered. In fact, if that were done probably I should be more strongly opposed to it than I am now. I cannot, for one, allow my children to go to a school to be taught selected portions of Scripture, unless the selections have been made by the authorities of my own Church, and I will give the hon. gentleman my reasons for it. He has referred to something I interjected the other evening when the hon. member for Wide Bay was speaking; I did not interject what the hon. gentleman has mentioned, but I told him afterwards privately that the selections that were used in the Irish national schools for a period of thirty years were made by Archbishop Whately, Episcopal Archbishop of Ireland, and Archbishop Murray, the Roman Catholic Archbishop of Ireland. Those selections were read in all the national schools for a whole generation, and it come to pass after Dr. Whately's death that his life was published by his daughter, and certain conversations that had taken place between him and Mr. Senior, who, I daresay, most hon. members have heard of if they have not read his works. In those conversations Dr. Whately admitted to Mr. Senior that he carefully made those selections for the purpose of proselytizing the Roman Catholics; and Dr. Murray, a poor simple-minded ecclesiastic, took them in good faith, without knowing the insidious poison Dr. Whately had been instilling into the minds of Roman Catholic children through the selections he had made. Hon. members may find those statements in Mr. Senior's works which I think are in the library, and also in the biography of Dr. Whately, as written by his daughter. That I am certain is in the library. Now, knowing that—knowing that selections were made with that object by a gentleman of the standing of Dr. Whately, who was in every respect a man of high standing, how can Roman Catholics in this colony submit to selections being made by any person of a different religion from their own? The thing is impossible.

Mr. JORDAN: It could be done by a conference.

The MINISTER FOR MINES AND WORKS: It would be utterly impossible to do it by a conference. Those selections were put entirely on one side afterwards. Since 1859 or 1860, no such selections have been read in the Irish schools. Those schools are denominational schools now; in one part of Ireland nearly all the schools are attended by Protestant or Presbyterian children; in another part they are attended by Roman Catholic children, and they are all taught religion according to the religious belief of their parents. I believe in religious teaching in our schools; but owing to the unfortunate differences between the various religious sects, religious teaching in the State schools of this colony was abolished by the State Education Act of 1875. That came about in this way: The Protestant sect were jealous of Roman Catholics; they disliked Roman Catholics as such, and they allowed themselves to be carried away by another sect which is neither Protestant nor Catholic, and not even Christian—I mean the sect called secularists. They allowed themselves to be deluded by the secularists, and combined with them to destroy religious teaching in our schools, thinking that by so doing Roman Catholic children would be brought into the State schools for education, and imagining, probably, that the same thing would take place, which Dr. Whately thought would take place by the reading of the selections which he made from the Bible. I thought and predicted at the time the Education Act was going through that the time would come when the very men who were then abolishing religious education from our schools would afterwards ask for it. That time is coming, and I believe the hon. member for Ipswich, Mr. Macfarlane, was one who was then a secularist, as far as the principles of education in State schools are concerned—that he believed in education free, secular, and compulsory. I know that the great body of Protestants were then secularists in that sense, but I know they are not now. Had the Church of England people at that time had the same idea of teaching religion in our schools as they have now, that Act would never have been passed. They never can have religious teaching in the State schools again unless by the consent

of the Roman Catholic people of the colony, as represented in this House, because the secularists and Roman Catholics combined will always be strong enough to prevent religious teaching being given in State schools on such a basis as would lead to proselytism, as was expected to result from the selection mentioned by the hon. member for South Brisbane, Mr. Jordan. I am sorry I cannot support the motion, because I believe in religious teaching in the State schools. I would like every Protestant child in our schools to be taught religion, but I believe the thing can only be done by the different denominations coming to the determination to be fair, open, and candid with each other. In no other way can it be done. When they come to that conclusion the secularists who, I admit, are not numerous, though they are influential, will have to give way, and when they are numerous enough they can have their own schools also. This question has been debated in Victoria very lately, and I have in my hand a speech made by Dr. Pearson, the Minister of Education in Victoria, who read an extract from Mr. Senior's conversations, and that extract is in confirmation of what I have already stated. I think I had better read it. This is what Dr. Whateley said to Mr. Senior :—

"The great instrument of conversion is the diffusion of Scriptural education. Archbishop Murray and I agreed in desiring large portions of the Bible to be read in our national schools; but we agreed in this because we disagreed as to its probable results. For twenty years large extracts from the New Testament have been read in the majority of the national schools far more diligently than that book is read in ordinary Protestant places of education. . . . Those extracts contain so much that is inconsistent with the whole spirit of Romanism, that it is difficult to suppose that a person well acquainted with them can be a thoroughgoing Roman Catholic. . . . The education supplied by the National Board is gradually undermining the vast fabric of the Irish Roman Catholic Church. . . . . I believe, as I said the other day, that mixed education is gradually enlightening the mass of the people, and that, if we give it up, we give up the only hope of weaning the Irish from the abuses of Popery. But I cannot venture openly to profess this opinion. I cannot openly support the Education Board as an instrument of conversion. I have to fight its battle with one hand, and that my best, tied behind me."

That is what was said by Dr. Whateley, who made the selections referred to by the hon. member for South Brisbane. We must recognise the fact that the community is divided into different sects, and when I see the Protestant portion of the colony combining with the secularists out of jealousy of the Roman Catholics—I do not say out of jealousy to Roman Catholics as individuals, but out of jealousy to the Roman Catholic religion, because I believe there is an immense deal of good feeling existing in the minds of Protestants and Catholics towards each other—I cannot hope that we shall have religion taught in our State schools. So long as the different sects are utterly opposed to each other and will not combine upon some common religious ground, so long will the Bible or religious teaching be excluded from our State schools, as is plainly seen from the history of this question in all Australia. We have a grand system of education in this colony. I do not think there is a better system of education in the world, as far as secular education is concerned; but it wants the one crowning point of religious education. At the same time, I cannot admit what the hon. member for South Brisbane stated, that secular education means irreligious education. It does not mean that; it means a worldly education, the absence of an education concerning the things of the world to come.

Mr. JORDAN: That is irreligious.

The MINISTER FOR MINES AND WORKS: No, it is not; it is a want of religion. Irreligious is opposed to religious, anti-religious. A man may be a secularist and not be opposed to religion, and he may be thoroughly moral and be a secularist; but I believe the best chance of a man being thoroughly moral is to have been trained in his youth in a good, sound religious education. I cannot support the motion, nor could I do so if it were altered in the way suggested by the hon. member for South Brisbane.

Mr. BARLOW said: Mr. Speaker,—I cannot allow this question to pass without saying a few words upon it. It need not, I think, be invested with anything like a controversial or sectarian character. It is quite possible that this House can discuss the question in a calm and temperate spirit without going into the principles of sectarianism, which is, perhaps, one of the greatest evils of our day, and one of those things which most seriously retard our civilisation. The Minister for Mines and Works has indicated in his remarks that proselytism is the main object which is had in view in this matter. I think a proselyte is of very little account, and I would never seek to draw any man away from any faith which he intelligently and properly held.

The PREMIER (Hon. B. D. Morehead): Then what is the use of having missionaries?

Mr. BARLOW: I am not speaking of missionaries to the heathen; that is a totally different thing. I am now speaking of any Christian faith. I could give the Premier a great many reasons why it is necessary to send the gospel to the heathen. I could enter into that subject at great length; but in my humble opinion that has nothing to do with the present question. I am now dealing with those Christian denominations which unfortunately seem to be permanently opposed to each other. I think that to try and draw any man from any faith which he intelligently holds, to another branch of the Christian Church, is a very great mistake; and men who are so drawn are not, as a rule, of much use. I am now endeavouring to reply to the arguments of the Hon. Minister for Mines and Works, in which he appeared to my mind to show that the tendency this motion will have will be to encourage proselytism. I consider that that is a great mistake—to seek to draw a man from the faith in which he has been brought up, and which he intelligently holds, is a mistake. In regard to reading selections of the Scriptures, I submit to this House that if the experiences of Jesus Christ are read without note or comment whatever, the sublime character of the Saviour of the world, as shadowed out in his Gospel, would be a good thing. The character of Jesus Christ is unlike any other that ever lived or ever will live again; and I contend that the mere reading of His life and teachings must have a powerful effect for good upon any man who reads it, or upon any number of children to whom the account of His life and His teachings is read. A good deal of the difficulty in this connection is the fault of the Churches themselves. Instead of teaching the great truths which are common to Christianity, and leaving the gospel to which I have referred to find its way into the hearts of men by its own inherent power, they have substituted innovations of their own, or they have denied portions of that gospel, until it has become the duty of a teacher to teach the doctrines of a particular Church rather than inculcate the great truths of Christianity. I do not hesitate to stand up in this House and express my belief both in the authenticity of the Bible, and in the benefits which it will confer upon mankind. It is true that there are in the Bible many things which are perhaps considered

unfit for general perusal. Why are they there? The fact of their being there is the greatest evidence of the authenticity of the Scriptures. The fact that God, in His revealed word, has never hesitated to expose the sins and follies and backslidings of His servants is, to my mind, the strongest argument in favour of the divine origin of that book. But it does not follow that we should prominently bring those parts forward. They are there for a wise purpose, and a purpose which an ephemeral legislature like this can never laugh away. To my mind that country which begins to laugh at the wisdom which is the highest wisdom this world has ever seen or ever will see, will begin to enter upon a downward course. Now, we all know that there is such a thing as irreligion—which was referred to by the hon. member for South Brisbane, Mr. Jordan, as larrikinism—amongst children. What does this arise from? Does it arise exclusively amongst the children of the lower or poorer, or the industrial classes, or whatever they may be called? I say no; there are larrikins of the worst character amongst the children of men who are well-to-do in this country; amongst people who ought to know better. Larrikinism is due to the want of home training—home influence—and to some extent to the nature of the climate in which we live. There are truths which can be inculcated without entering into any doctrinal matters. There are truths which are common to all branches of the Christian Church. There is the truth of the responsibility of men to their Maker, and the responsibility we have to one another, and I say that such truths can be inculcated without the slightest necessity for making a selection from the Scriptures for that purpose. The mere reading of the Scriptures will be quite sufficient. I was asked during my canvass of the electorate of Ipswich what my views on this question were, and I then stated that I was in favour of large school boards in very large electoral districts, and that in those districts there should be a system or principle of local option. The persons residing in those districts should have the right to say whether the Scriptures should be read in their schools without note or comment, or whether they should not. In that way there would be very great freedom, and the people who wish to have the Scriptures read would have them read, and the people who did not could let it alone. Of course there must be in every case a conscience clause. It is neither fair nor right to expect that people who do not wish their children to hear the Scriptures read should be compelled to do so. Then some teachers may have conscientious objections to reading the Scriptures; but I do not see that any persons can have any conscientious objections to reading the experiences of Christ. There may be some little differences, but the gospel according to the Roman Catholic version can be read to Roman Catholic children, and the gospel according to the authorised version can be read to the others. For my part, I believe there is very little difference between them, and with a conscience clause for the sake of the children, and to a certain extent for the sake of the teachers, the plan I suggest might easily be carried out. There is one difficulty in the way, and that is that a great deal in the training of the children depends upon actions as well as words, and if the teacher were to treat the sacred volume with contempt, by his manner or action, a great deal of harm might be done. But I am confident that the teacher who habitually did that sort of thing would no longer hold office whichever party was in power. If a man is appointed to an office and receives public pay, I conceive it to be his duty to act in accordance with the instructions he receives, so long as they do not violently conflict with his conscience. So long as he is under those instructions, and those instructions are not such that any reasonable man can object to, a check should be put upon any manifestations of the kind I have referred to. I do not think that secularists are so violently opposed to the teachings of Scripture. I think there is far more opposition on their part to the mere teachings of sections of the Churches, than to the pure teachings of the Scriptures. That is the view which I hold. As I said before, I am not ashamed to profess my belief in the Bible, and I am not ashamed to support the motion, nor am I ashamed to state my belief that unless the teachings of the Bible are the foundation of our legislation, there will be very little good come out of it. There can be no question to my mind about that. We have seen races reach a far higher civilisation than ours, and we have seen them fail and decay. We have seen them tumble to pieces under the influence of their own follies and their own vices, and I have no hesitation in saying that the one thing which has preserved, and which will preserve ours—I am speaking of men of all denominations—and enable us to permanently hold the place we do amongst the nations of the world, is that our legislation is to a great extent, and I wish it was to a still greater extent, founded upon the Holy Scriptures. I have given my pledges on the subject, and if the motion goes to a division I shall vote with my colleague. I do not think the system of selections would be of any use. As the hon. member for Townsville pointed out, it would always be a bone of contention, and there would be very great difficulty in making the selections. I question the expediency—I do not say the wisdom—of reading the Old Testament; I should like the Scripture readings confined to the four gospels, especially the gospel of John, leaving out as far as possible those controversial matters to be found in the rest of the New Testament. I believe that reading the four gospels, having a conscience clause, and regulations for local option in large electoral districts, would be the true solution of the case, and would do our lads and children in the schools a great deal of good. There are many lads and children growing up at the present time with very little knowledge of the Scriptures. The Sunday schools, to a certain extent, overtake them—and there is no more honourable and noble work anyone can engage in than Sunday school teaching—but the Sunday schools do not thoroughly cope with the difficulty. As long as the conscience clause is observed, and a general vote is taken in large electoral districts, I see no reason why we should not fall in with the views of my hon. colleague.

Mr. BUCKLAND said: Mr. Speaker,—I cannot say that I can support the motion. I have often been asked, during the last twenty years, whether I was in favour of the Bible being read in State schools, and I have always said I was opposed to it. In saying this much, it is not that I am not a believer in the Bible, because I am a firm believer in that book, and always have been; and I believe the greatness of the country from which we come is greatly due to the fact that that book has been the standard religious book for the last two or three centuries. I am informed that in the Education Department there is a considerable proportion of teachers who could not conscientiously read the Bible; and such being the case, I certainly shall continue my opposition to the reading of the Bible in State schools, unless—which would be a difficult matter to accomplish—the whole of the arrangements of our education system are remodelled. It has been remarked that the Bible is read and prayers are used in the old country schools. The other day I was looking through the accounts of the various school boards in England and Scotland; and I find it

is optional with the various boards whether the Bible or any religious book should be taught in their schools. In some cases they begin with prayer, singing, and reading a portion of Holy Writ. In that great Bible-loving country, Wales, there are seven villages in one county where no religious instruction is given and the Bible is not read. I was rather surprised to find that, because anyone who knows the Welsh character would suppose that in that part of Great Britain the Bible would be read even more than n Scotland.

Mr. McMASTER: No.

Mr. BUCKLAND: We all know the love the people of Scotland have for the Bible and the teaching of the Bible in their various public schools; and I am convinced that if there is one thing that has made Great Britain great it has been the free circulation of the Bible for the last two or three centuries. The hon. member for Fortitude Valley, Mr. McMaster, mentioned what it has done for the South Sea Islands. The reading of the Bible and the promulgation of the truths of Holy Writ among the natives of the South Seas have made it possible for us to trade there without fear of loss of life. The missionaries have done a work there which without the Bible they could not possibly have done. While I say this much I am still opposed to the reading of the Bible in our State schools, for the reasons I have already given. I noticed the other day, during the sitting of the Anglican Synod, that the matter was introduced by the hon. member for Toowoomba, Mr. Groom, and very favourably received; but I noticed one remark made by Bishop Dawes to the effect that he had no belief in any reading of the Bible in our State schools unless with notes and comments; and that is the part I object to more than any other. If we could have the Bible read without note or comment I should not so much object; but where there is a large number of teachers who could not conscientiously believe in the Scriptures they were reading, it would be very easy for a teacher to drop an important verse, a connecting link, in the portion of Scripture he was reading; and that might turn into ridicule what was intended to raise the children's ideas of a Supreme Being. I am sorry I cannot support the motion, but I cannot conscientiously do so for the reasons I have given.

Mr. MACFARLANE, in reply, said: Mr. Speaker,—I must say that, to a certain extent, I have been disappointed at the discussion that has taken place. I did expect, not only from what I heard outside, but from what has taken place in previous years in this House, that such a motion would have been more generally discussed. It has been very fairly discussed by members on this side, but I have heard very little said on the other side either against or in favour of the motion. I am more particularly disappointed in reference to the position taken by the Minister for Education. He seems to think it beneath him to take any part in this discussion; but of all the members on the other side it was expected, by those outside at all events, that he would have delivered his opinions in this House on this most momentous subject. But he has not considered it his duty to tell us what he thinks, or how the department under his control would be affected if the motion were carried into effect. And as he has chosen so to act of course I cannot object to it; but I may say I do not admire him for it. I was very glad to have the sympathy of the Hon. Minister for Mines and Works. If Protestants had the same ideas in reference to their children that the hon. gentleman has in reference to his, we should have had a different discussion on this subject. What did he say? That he for one would not send his children to the State schools, even if selected portions were read, unless they were selected by the authorities of his own Church. I admire the hon. gentleman and the denomination to which he belongs, because they will have the Bible read in their schools. They are justly entitled to taunt us, the Protestants of Queensland. The hon. gentleman read some words of Bishop Whately, to the effect that by the lessons selected at that time they were instilling an insidious poison into the minds of the Catholic scholars of the schools. Now, what does that mean? Does the hon. gentleman believe that there is insidious poison in the Bible. As was very truly said by my hon. colleague, there are things in the Bible not convenient for children to read; but what does that prove? Why, that it is truthful. The biography of the Bible is like no other biography in the world. Read the biography of the best man that ever lived, and we find none of his faults mentioned, but all of his virtues. The Bible reveals everything and hides nothing, and though there are many things in it which, on account of their truthfulness, we cannot place before children, there are other things which those who run may read. Therefore, I am sorry that the subject has not been better discussed. Now, I want to say a few words in reference to the attitude taken up by the Premier. When the motion was previously before the House he said he did not think it would be advantageous to have the Bible read in State schools. Of course I disagree with him, but I do not blame him for taking up that attitude. I am only sorry that we cannot all agree, and that our disagreement is the cause of our want of action. The Premier asked who were to make these selections, and the hon. member for South Brisbane, Mr. Jordan, said he should rather approve of having selected portions read. I brought forward the broad question, leaving it to the House to decide in what way the Bible should be read; but the Premier says who are to make the selections. I for one would not object to the Minister for Education making them.

The PREMIER: I would.

Mr. MACFARLANE: I should not object to his doing so, because I have complete confidence in him that he would not place before the children anything that would be the means of doing them any harm, or put a wrong interpretation upon anything. The Premier goes further, and tells us that the youth of this colony are very intelligent, and with that I agree; but he asks, Do I think that those youths would be content with selected passages? He says they would want to know more of the Bible, and that is the very object I have in view. I think the Bible should be read in State schools so as to give children a desire to know more of it. I believe that if the youth of this colony had a taste of the Bible and its truths, they would have a continually growing desire to know more of that which they so much relish. The Premier made a great point of having the approval of the leader of the Opposition, who was here when the Act of 1875 was passed. I am sorry the leader of the Opposition is not here; but so far as he is concerned, I could not have expected him to take up any other course of action than he has taken up. Anyone who has read the Education Act, and the discussion that took place on it when it was passing, will see the great part he took in framing it. I therefore could not have expected anything else, but the leader of the Opposition is by no means a conservative. He has changed many of his opinions during the last ten or twelve years, and I have great hope that, in reference to the education of

the youth of this colony, he will also change his opinions. Will not the force of public opinion make any man change his mind?

The PREMIER: Oh! no.

An HONOURABLE MEMBER: Those are time-servers.

Mr. MACFARLANE: Why was it that the present Ministry, through the force of public opinion, adopted the political opinions of their opponents at the last general election? They adopted every one of them, and I say that public opinion is now working very strangely and very strongly. No one knows what a year or two will bring forth. We are running at a pace in the present century that would have been looked at a hundred years ago as almost madness, and now the political leaders are compelled by the force of public opinion to adopt opinions that five or ten years ago they would not have adopted. This just reminds me that the Minister for Mines and Works said that when the Act was passed in 1875 I was one of those who were in favour of the Bible being excluded from the State schools. That is perfectly correct, and I stated so in moving this motion, but the force of public opinion has converted me. The force of public opinion and my knowledge of the effect of the exclusion of the Bible from the schools has caused me to turn completely round on this subject. What do I see now? I see young men and women growing up and getting their education in Queensland, and if you put the Bible before them and ask them a few questions upon if they know nothing about it, and many think you are quoting from Shakespeare or some other book. A class was asked—a Sunday school class who ought to have known better—"Who was it said: 'Behold the Israelite, in whom there is no guile.'"? And no one in the class could tell, nor could they tell of whom it was spoken. That showed that the education of the young people in our schools at the present time is not calculated to advance their religious instruction.

An HONOURABLE MEMBER: In our Sunday schools?

Mr. MACFARLANE: It has been asked by both the Premier and the leader of the Opposition: Who are to be the teachers, supposing that we get over the difficulty of the selected passages? and my colleague has hinted at what might take place in any particular district if the people wished to have the Bible read in the schools. Let us have local option. I would not ask that a bare majority should decide in such a matter, but if three-fourths of the parents of children attending a State school are in favour of having the Bible read in that school, why not let them have it? If a teacher refused to teach the Bible in that school, what is there to hinder the Minister for Public Instruction removing that teacher?

An HONOURABLE MEMBER: Where will he send him?

Mr. MACFARLANE: He could send him to some other school in which local option in this respect is not in force; and then, if this local option prevailed in all the schools, any teacher refusing to teach the Bible would have to go.

The PREMIER: Bring in an amending Education Act.

Mr. MACFARLANE: We cannot do that all at once. I may say that I hold in my hand the regulations of the School Board of London, and just as we have six or seven standards here, they have seven standards in the board schools in London. I will not read the whole of the curriculum, but will take the first and the fourth standards, and show what is done in the London schools. In the first standard the children have to learn the Ten Commandments. They have to read to the 20th chapter of Exodus, and that includes the Commandments. Then they have to commit the Lord's Prayer to memory, and read certain lessons from Matthew's Gospel, lessons from the life of Joseph and the leading facts in the life of Christ, told in a simple way. That is included in the first standard, and there is nothing to harm the children in that. There is nothing religious in it. It is true it is the foundation of all religion, but there is nothing sectarian in it. Then in the fourth standard there is a considerable amount of memory work done; that is to say, they have to commit portions of the Scriptures to memory, and lessons such as the Two Debtors, The Good Samaritan, The Prodigal Son, The Master and Servant, The Lost Sheep, and The Pharisee and the Publican. These are all truths accepted by Christians of all denominations, and all who revere the gospel. No harm could possibly come to children by reading such lessons as those. There are some other motions on the paper which I understand hon. members desire to deal with, and I will not occupy the time of the House much longer. I will just say I am not discouraged on the whole by the turn this debate has taken. Though I am cast down I am not destroyed, and if no one else takes up the matter again I may take it up myself; but I hope some one more able than I am will take it up and bring it to the front. I know it will come to the front, whether I take it up or not. It is bound to come to the front. The world is moving, and—

> "Though beaten back in many a fray,
> Yet freshening strength we borrow;
> And where the vanguard halts to-day,
> The rear shall camp to-morrow."

That is the faith I have, and while we may not meet with the encouragement we expected, the time is coming, and it is not far distant, when a change will take place in this matter, and leading politicians will be compelled to lead in it, as they have been compelled to lead in other matters which they would not have taken up a few years ago.

Question put and negatived.

ROCKHAMPTON GAS AND COKE COMPANY, LIMITED, BILL.

SECOND READING.

Mr. MURRAY said: Mr. Speaker,—In moving the second reading of this Bill, I have simply to point out that it is a Bill to amend the Rockhampton Gas and Coke Company, Limited, Act of 1874; to enable the company to light with gas the borough of North Rockhampton and the Fitzroy Bridge, and to authorise the company to supply electricity for public or private purposes within the area comprised in the municipality of Rockhampton, the Fitzroy Bridge, and the borough of North Rockhampton, and for other purposes. Clause 3 provides that—

> "All the provisions of the principal Act applicable to the town of Rockhampton and its suburbs shall be applied and extended to the borough of North Rockhampton and to the Fitzroy Bridge, and whenever in the principal Act the expressions 'the town of Rockhampton and its suburbs,' or 'corporation of the municipality of Rockhampton,' or 'corporation,' or 'the municipality of Rockhampton' occur, the same shall respectively mean and include the borough of North Rockhampton and the Fitzroy Bridge, and their respective councils, or governing authority, as the case may be, as well as the municipality of Rockhampton and its corporation."

Clause 6 provides that—

> "The company may, with the consent of the local authority, having the control or management of the said bridge, lay pipes and electric lines along, over, or

under the Fitzroy Bridge, and may contract with such local authority to light the bridge with gas or electricity: provided always that such pipes and electric lines respectively shall be so laid or erected as not to interfere in any way with the traffic passing over the said bridge, or to impede any passenger crossing the same."

Clause 7 provides for the mode of treating dissenting shareholders, and states that—

"If any person holding shares in the company at the time of the passing of this Act shall within six calendar months thereafter leave at the registered office of the company a notice, in writing, expressing his unwillingness to continue a shareholder in the company, such dissentient shareholder may at any time within such six calendar months require the company to purchase the interest held by such dissentient shareholder at a price to be determined in manner hereinafter mentioned, and the company shall, within sixty days of receiving such requisition, comply with such request, and the share and interest so purchased shall be dealt with in such manner as the directors may determine."

Clause 8 provides for the fixing of the price to be paid to any dissentient shareholder; and clause 9 provides that the pipes, electric lines, meters, accumulators, fittings, works, or apparatus of the company are not to be subject to distress for rent when they are upon premises not belonging to the company, nor can they be taken in execution. There is nothing in the Bill of a contentious nature. Copies of the Bill have been sent to the municipality of Rockhampton, to the borough of North Rockhampton, and also to every shareholder in the company, and no objections have been received by the company. I do not think it is necessary for me to dwell upon the subject, therefore I simply beg to move that the Bill be now read a second time.

Question put and passed.

The consideration of the Bill in committee was made an Order of the Day for to-morrow.

BRISBANE TEMPERANCE HALL BILL.

CONSIDERATION IN COMMITTEE OF LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL'S AMENDMENTS.

On the motion of Mr. BUCKLAND, the House went into committee to consider the amendments of the Legislative Council in this Bill.

On clause 3, which the Legislative Council had amended to read as follows:—

"Every sale made in pursuance of the powers aforesaid may be in one or more lot or lots, and either by public auction or private contract, and upon payment of the purchase money to the society they shall convey the land so sold to the purchaser or purchasers thereof, and such conveyance shall be valid and effectual in law and equity for all purposes whatsoever: Provided that such land shall be first offered for sale by public auction, and if not sold, the same may be sold by private contract at a price not less than the highest price offered for the same at the auction, or if no price was offered, then not less than the reserve subject to which the same was so offered."

Mr. BUCKLAND said he moved that the amendment of the Legislative Council in clause 3 be agreed to, as it merely amended the clause to its original form. The Legislative Council had inserted the proviso, but that did not affect the principle of the clause. It often happened that in sales by public auction, when parties were anxious to buy land or merchandise, they combined to prevent the land or the article offered from fetching a fair and reasonable price. The Council's amendment would have the effect of enabling the trustees in such a case to withdraw the land, and to sell it privately at a price not less than the highest price offered at public auction. He moved, therefore, that the amendment of the Legislative Council be agreed to.

Amendment agreed to.

The House resumed; and the CHAIRMAN reported that the Committee had agreed to the amendment of the Legislative Council in clause 3.

On the motion of Mr. BUCKLAND, the report was adopted, and the Bill was ordered to be transmitted to the Legislative Council, with a message intimating that the Legislative Assembly had agreed to the amendments of the Legislative Council in clause 3.

CROWN LANDS ACTS OF 1884 TO 1886 AMENDMENT BILL.

COMMITTEE.

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

On subsection 6, as follows:—

"So much of section 73 as is contained in the words 'or of each of two or more successive lessees' is hereby repealed, and the period of five years is substituted in lieu of the period of ten years therein mentioned."

To which the Hon. Sir S. W. Griffith had moved, by way of amendment, that the following words be added at the end of the subsection:—

And as if the words "such period of five years being subsequent to the date of the certificate of fencing or improvement" had been inserted after the words "hereinafter mentioned."

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

The HON. SIR S. W. GRIFFITH said that as he was afraid some hon. members might have lost the continuity of the subject, it might be necessary to say a word or two as to what the point before the Committee was. The effect of the subsection as it now stood in the Bill was, that after five years' personal residence a lessee would be entitled to apply for his deed of grant. The five years' personal residence might begin on the same day the license was issued, and there need be no improvements made at all on the land until the very end of the five years. Of course he would have to put a fence round the land, or make some corresponding improvements, otherwise he would not be entitled to the deed of grant; but that might be put off until the very last moment. The proposal he (Sir S. W. Griffith) made was that the term of five years should not begin to run until the selector had given proof of his *bona fides* by fencing or otherwise improving his land.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS said that as the continuity of the debate had been interrupted, he also would state what the intention of the subsection was. The subsection as it stood in the Bill proposed to give the selector of an area of over 160 acres the same right—and no more—of acquiring the freehold of his land, on payment of eight times the amount of purchase money that the selector of 160 acres and under, had. If the amendment of the leader of the Opposition were accepted—that the five years should not begin to run until after the issue of the lease—it would entirely do away with the intention of the subsection. Any objection that could be urged against the subsection applying to holders of land over 160 acres applied with equal force to holders of 160 acres and under. He simply asked that the same treatment be given to the class of selector who paid eight times as much for his land as was granted to the holder of an area of 160 acres and under, and no more.

Mr. GLASSEY said that at first sight the argument of the Minister for Lands seemed a very fair and equitable one; but it must be borne in mind that that was the point of divergence between the majority of hon. members on that side and the party sitting on the Treasury benches, and the point where they joined issue. They did not believe there were the same

inducements offered to persons with money at their disposal to lend money on land with the view, perhaps, of becoming ultimately possessed of it by persons whose holdings were under 160 acres as by persons who held land in large tracts varying from 160 to 1,280 acres. The great aim and object of hon. members and of the country ought to be to protect, as far as possible, those persons who settled on the lands of the colony from getting into the hands of the money-lenders through not being able to pay back the advances made to them together with high rates of interest. By that means those money-lenders acquired large tracts of land, were trafficking in it, and becoming wealthy at the expense of the toil and industry of other people. That being the case, hon. members on his side of the Committee were bound to adhere to the law as it stood, inasmuch as they believed that a considerable amount of temptation would be held out to those who went on the land to take up the position named in the amendment. It had been said during the debate, with some degree of accuracy and truth, that there were parties in the colony who had in their safes piles of parchment documents which they held as security for money that had been lent to persons who had gone on the public lands, no doubt with perfect honesty of intention, and done the best they could, but who after a little while found themselves crippled by having to meet the payments and high interest demanded by the money-lending class of the colony. He trusted the time was not far distant when some means would be taken by the present or some other succeeding Government to establish State or agricultural banks, such as existed on the Continent of Europe, to enable the agricultural classes to acquire sums of money on long terms, and at moderate interest. At the present time they had nothing of the sort, and the system in force simply drove a large number of people into the hands of money-lenders, who held out considerable inducements—decoyed them, as it were, by saying, "I'll not see you stuck for £100 or so." Five years soon went by, and the result would be that at the end of the term the holders of the land would be utterly unable to pay the money borrowed, with the high interest and the accrued interest charged; and large tracts of country would get into the hands of those money-lenders, as they had seen by past experience in Queensland and elsewhere. It would be a very serious thing in a young country like this if they permitted, by any device, a system of landlordism to grow and develop, a system which must work seriously and disastrously to a large number of the community. Hon. members on his side of the Committee feared, and their fears were well founded, that if the amendment proposed by the Government were carried, the land grabbers and sharks, who were always on the watch to decoy persons into their clutches, would get large tracts of country into their possession, with the view of trafficking in it in the future. He contended that they would do wisely by guarding against those things, and protecting, so far as possible, the honest, industrious, and *bonâ fide* settlers on the land. Those were their objections to the clause.

Mr. TOZER said he thought it would be a kindness to the Government, seeing that there was such a small attendance of members, many of whom never expected that the Bill would come on for discussion so early, if the discussion were continued until 6 o'clock. Therefore, if any hon. member had anything new or interesting to say on the subject, he should say it at that stage. Without any desire to prolong the discussion, he would quote an extract from an article on the land legislation of the colony as affecting their finances. It was from the *Money Market Review*, a journal of considerable importance.

The PREMIER: I do not think it is.

Mr. TOZER said he knew it was of considerable importance. So was the *Financier*, of which the *Money Market Review* was neither more nor less than the weekly edition. As far as correct returns and figures were concerned, those papers were considered two of the most respectable in London. The *Statist*, the *Bullionist*, and the *Economist* were all good papers, referring to particular subjects, but the *Money Market Review* went into comprehensive matters and questions affecting various parts of the world. That journal contained an article with regard to the financial statement made last session, which complimented the colony on its great resources, and made some reference to their land legislation, which was interesting, as disclosing the views of other people on the subject, those people being the colony's largest creditors. It said:—

"It is very evident from the whole report that Queensland is still in its infancy. Of the 428,000,000 of acres of which the colony consists, only 9,000,000 acres have been alienated. By an Act of 1884 the Government have had at their disposal, for rental or sale, land to the extent of 40,000,000 acres. Up to the present time the annual income from the sale and letting of land is only £19,146, while the expenses of administration have been £30,876. Something better, however, seems to be expected shortly."

The following extract was, he presumed, from the speech made by Sir T. McIlwraith:—

"'Hon. members should never forget the different position we occupy in this new country from that occupied by the people at home. Here we possess the land, but we possess no old accumulated capital in addition to the land; and it is our plain duty, instead of putting taxation on to the people of the colony, to save them from taxation by making the best use of the value of our public lands. Unfortunately, that source is not immediately available this year, but I look to it as the source from which all other taxation will be much alleviated in future years, when the Government have had a chance of carrying through the House their ideas of an amended Land Act.' It is probably to be gathered from these statements that the Queensland Government is looking forward to much larger immigration, to be fostered by special facilities for the purchase and lease of land. If that is the idea, it is no doubt the very best that can be adopted for the rapid improvement of a new country. We have not yet learned what emigration can do for us, but this at least is clear: Every man, woman, and child in Queensland buys goods from abroad, and mostly from England, to the amount of £15 per head, while our sales to the United States are reckoned in shillings."

In a previous part of the article it was stated that—

"Anyone would suppose that with immense territories, such as are owned by our Australian colonies, it would be easy to raise food enough for the population. Yet 'Queensland imports food and other farm produce to the value of £1,119,721, or say £3·05 per head of the population.' New South Wales imports food to the value of £2·32, and Victoria, which is much the smallest colony, £1·87 per head of the population."

That was what was stated and widely circulated in England. He hardly knew a man of business who entered the city of London in the morning who did not take the *Financier*, the paper in which that article was published, and from it they would gather that it was the policy of the present Government in this colony to sell lands in a different manner to that contemplated by the Land Act of 1884. He objected to the clause under discussion, because it would have a tendency to perpetuate the system of selling land in large areas. The provisions in connection with homesteads, which were small areas, being only 160 acres, had not the same tendency to encourage dummying as they would if made applicable to larger areas. Any legislation in this colony which had a tendency to repeat the

blunders of the Land Act of 1868 should be viewed with suspicion, and would be so viewed by members on his side of the Committee.

Mr. SMYTH said he would like to know whether the clause would be retrospective in its operation. He recollected a very able speech delivered by the ex-Minister for Lands, the hon. member for South Brisbane, last year, in which the hon. gentleman showed that selectors who took up land, would at the end of ten years try to make their holdings freehold, and the result would be that a large revenue would be derived from the lands. If the clause was retrospective in its operation, the five years would soon expire, as the principal Act was passed in 1884, and a good revenue would flow into the Treasury. No doubt it was a nice little move on the part of the Government to get that revenue during their term of office.

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL: The clause is not retrospective.

Mr. SMYTH said he thought the Minister for Lands should state distinctly, whether it was intended to make the clause retrospective, or whether it was only to apply to selections taken up subsequent to the passing of the Bill.

Mr. MORGAN said he certainly did not think the clause was retrospective.

The HON. SIR S. W. GRIFFITH: It certainly is.

Mr. MORGAN said if it was retrospective the reasons for refusing to pass it were very much stronger than if it were only prospective in its effect. In any case it was an objectionable provision, and it would be more objectionable if it was of a retrospective character. It appeared to him that the chief object in introducing the clause was to get increased revenue from the land, and that increased revenue, which should be spread over a number of years, would flow in within the next two or three years. It had been argued that if homestead selectors were allowed to convert their holdings into freeholds in five years the same concession should be made to the selectors of agricultural farms of larger areas, but he thought it would be admitted that the very best class of settlement they had had in the past or were likely to have in the future was that of homesteaders. If they extended the principle of issuing deeds to selectors of agricultural farms they would have a provision in the law which would promote selections by men who would take up land, not for the purpose of working it, but simply with the intention of complying with the conditions in the most perfunctory manner, getting their deeds, and trusting to the unearned increment in the meantime to make a profit out of the transaction by selling the land to somebody who was interested in building up a large estate in the neighbourhood. That would be the effect of the clause under discussion, and it was a most undesirable effect. The Committee should not, on any account, consent to pass the clause if it was to be retrospective in its operation.

The MINISTER FOR MINES AND WORKS: It is not intended to be retrospective.

Mr. MORGAN said, as members did not seem to be agreed on that point, he would resume his seat in order that they might have an authoritative expression of opinion from the Minister for Lands.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS said there was nothing in the Bill of a retrospective effect, unless it was made so by the Committee. The conditions which it was proposed should prevail with regard to selections would only apply to those selections taken up after the passing of the Bill. If hon. members thought they should be made retrospective let them say so, and introduce an amendment to that effect; but there was nothing retrospective as far as the clause under discussion was concerned.

The HON. SIR S. W. GRIFFITH said the hon. gentleman was certainly wrong in the opinion he had just expressed. The clause was retrospective—that was to say, retrospective in the sense that it gave additional privileges to the present selector. It was not retrospective in the sense of doing harm to anybody except the country; it did not deprive anybody of any privilege he now enjoyed. The subsection, as amended, would apply to every selector who chose to comply with the conditions, whether he was an old or a new selector.

Mr. MORGAN said they ought to have some understanding as to whether the clause would apply to selections that had already been taken up, or only to selections that might be taken up hereafter, if the Bill became law. They had not had an authoritative statement upon that subject from the Minister for Lands. Would the clause be retrospective in the sense that a man who had taken up a selection on the understanding that it would be ten years before he could get his title, would under the clause be permitted to obtain his title at the end of five years from the time he took up the land? That should be plainly stated to the Committee before the clause was allowed to pass.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS said he had stated before that the clause would not be retrospective. It would in no way cancel existing contracts. Those who had taken up land under certain specified conditions to wait until a certain time, would have to adhere to those conditions. In the same way that the Act of 1884 was not made retrospective, as far as the conditions of occupation relating to selections taken up under the Act of 1876 were concerned, so the present amendment would be applicable only to selections taken up from the date of passing that amendment.

Mr. MORGAN said that ought to be expressly stated in the Bill. In the Act of 1884 there were clauses empowering men to transfer their tenure from the old Act and come under the leasing clauses of the Act of 1884. He would ask the Minister for Lands where any evidence of discontent with the ten years' tenure had manifested itself. He was sure that in the Southern portion of the colony there had been practically no discontent with regard to the ten years' tenure; and the selectors at present got their land on very reasonable terms. He thought those terms were better for the country and for the selectors themselves, than the terms proposed, because if the clause became law a great many selectors would endeavour to get their titles as early as possible, even if they had to borrow money from financial institutions and money-lenders at high rates of interest, in order to complete the improvements which would entitle them to claim their deeds. He did not think it would be wise to encourage anything of that kind. The object of their land legislation had been to settle on the land people who would make their homes there; but he was afraid that if the clause passed men would go on the land for speculative purposes to a very much greater extent than was the case at present. A man who took up a selection, knowing that he must occupy it ten years, would not take it up for speculative purposes, but with the object of making a home: and in ten years he would make a comfortable home, which he would not be so ready to leave as a place which he had only occupied five years, and had not improved to the

same extent. He was sure there was no general desire amongst the selecting class in the Southern districts for the proposed change.

Mr. COWLEY: I know there is in the North.

Mr. MORGAN said it had been stated during the debate that there was very little selection in the North. Of course he knew that a man who took up land on a Northern or Southern river for speculative purposes with the object of selling it at a higher price than he gave for it, wanted to get his parchment as soon as possible, but those were not the people they had to consider. They were legislating for people who were taking up land for the purpose of keeping it and making a living out of it, and those people he did not think were in any way dissatisfied with the present tenure. He held it to be a mistake to make any alteration in the land laws, which would have the effect of increasing the amount of speculative settlement.

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL said if he understood aright, the objection to the clause was that it would enable the selector to acquire the right of purchasing his land too soon.

Mr. SMYTH: He can do that now.

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL: He could do nothing of the kind. The hon. gentleman did not understand the law. The clause now proposed gave the opportunity at a much earlier period than under the Act of 1884 of purchasing the land, and the general objection to the clause was that it would facilitate the acquirement of land, and enable persons to dummy. Now, he thought hon. gentlemen who took any interest in land matters should know that five years was a longer period than had been inserted in other land laws in the other colonies, where the land was far more valuable than in Queensland, and that there had not been the same amount of evasion of the law under a much shorter probationary period in those colonies. The only way they could reason was by analogy. He would give some of the experiences of Victoria. Under the Act of 1861 the selector had the right to clear himself in one year, and again in 1862 he had the same privilege granted. It was well known that a great deal of evasion of the law took place in that colony because the period was so short, and what did that colony do? Instead of flying to a ten-year period, under the Act of 1865 three years was made the period, and settlement was very successfully encouraged under Grant's Act.

Mr. GROOM: The sale of selections took place all the same.

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL said very little took place under the Act of 1865. The hon. gentleman did not know as much about the Victorian land laws as he did. He had lived a long while in that colony, and there were very few people who had better knowledge of the land laws than he had.

Mr. GROOM: I admit that.

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL said it was found desirable to amend the Act of 1865, making it more liberal to selectors, and again in 1869 the period of three years was fixed as the probationary period. If it had been found necessary to make the period longer for the sake of stopping dummying, that was the colony where they would have done it, because there was a strong desire to put *bonâ fide* settlers on the land and stop dummying. They had a smaller and more valuable area than Queensland, and under the Act of 1869 there was very little dummying. The term "boss cocky" had often been referred to, and it was under that Act that some of the "boss cockying" took place, but it was not to a large extent. The main reason for the Act of 1869 not being as successful as it might have been was this: He had before pointed out that selectors were limited in area to 320 acres, and before that Act came into operation the best land in the colony was selected under previous land laws. Finding they could not make a fair living on 320 acres, a great number of selectors sold their land to their neighbours, and many of them came to this colony. The hon. member for Toowoomba knew several of them who were on the Downs at the present time. Many of those men who had come to New South Wales and Queensland he (the Postmaster-General) knew personally, and they sold out because they could not acquire a sufficient area of land in Victoria. The bulk of them sold out, not to the large landowners, but generally to neighbours. It had been found necessary, to prevent anything like dummying in that colony, to extend the period of probation, and they had successfully proved that three years was a sufficient time there, because the land was far more valuable than it was here. The land in Victoria ranged in value from £2 to £15 and £20 per acre. Those who had selected the most valuable land that he had referred to, were residents of Victoria to this day, and if they had obtained poor land they would have sold out. At the present time in this colony a man must pay at least £1 an acre. He had heard many arguments used with regard to the desire of people to get their parchments at once, but he was not aware that they would run to a money-lender to borrow the money to pay for their land. He had a large knowledge of selectors, and he never knew people to do anything so foolish as that. They were not going to jump from a 3d. rent to 8 per cent. interest.

The HON. SIR S. W. GRIFFITH: Not the *bonâ fide* selector.

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL: The *bonâ fide* selector would not do it, nor yet would any person be so foolish as to attempt to dummy land when the term of residence was as much as five years. They would not do it, in fact, where the land was many times more valuable. Very little dummying took place with more valuable land than they had in Queensland, and where the probationary term was a little over half of what it was proposed to make it here. The hon. member for Warwick said that there was general satisfaction with regard to the long period amongst selectors in the colony. But the hon. gentleman had only the limited knowledge of selectors round about his own district, and there was a great number of people he did not know anything about; the people who desired to acquire land. Were those people satisfied? If they were, there would have been a much larger amount of selection. The return furnished by the Minister for Lands last night was conclusive on that point. He showed that a much larger area of land had been taken up under the conditions by which a man might acquire 160 acres at 2s. 6d. an acre, within a period of five years—more than twice the amount had been taken up under that portion of the Act than under the part they were now dealing with. If any proof was wanted, they could have nothing more conclusive. There were many people here, and in the other colonies, who would be tempted to come here, if they could get land made freehold within a reasonable time. The man who desired to go upon the land said that ten years was too long a time to look forward to. He could not make his plans in that time. He did not know whether he would like the colony or the occupation. He might desire to sell out, and did not wish to place himself in such a position that he would not be able to get

back the value of the improvements he had put upon the land. Therefore it acted as a drawback to people who were anxious to go upon the land. If it were the desire of the Committee to prevent people acquiring their deeds for a long time, let them be consistent, and not give the right of ever acquiring the freehold. If that was the desire, let them do that, by all means. But if the people were ever to get the right of acquiring freeholds within a reasonable time, then five years was long enough. It was a very long period, and he ventured to say it would be sufficiently long to prevent any dummying being attempted. That being disposed of, he did not think that they should, by their legislation, attempt to put such obstacles in the way of people that they could not acquire their freeholds, if they wanted to, within a reasonable time. It must not be lost sight of, that the clause left it entirely optional on the part of the selector. He could go on to the end of the term without paying the purchase money and acquiring the freehold, if he thought it to his advantage to do so. Were they to make such laws as would prevent people going upon the land? The desire of the Government was, by every means within their power, to encourage the settlement of people upon the lands of the colony. From some of the arguments he had heard, and from some of the speeches made, one would be led to believe that the present Government were the enemies of anything like settlement in the colony. He denied that any such charge had the slightest foundation in truth. No Government that had ever occupied the Treasury benches had been more anxious to see the colony go ahead than the present Government, and they knew it could not go ahead without settlement upon the land. He had had a large experience of land legislation, not alone in this colony, but more particularly in the neighbouring colonies, and he knew that selectors liked to see an opportunity of acquiring the freeholds of their selections within a reasonable time, and did not wish to be shut out by restrictions which delayed that. Ten years was a great deal too long for many people who could not see their way to remain almost a lifetime on the land. They wished to see their way clear to go elsewhere within a reasonable time, if they did not like the work or found it unprofitable, and they would not select land if the probationary period was made too long. Let them ask any practical man whether he would not like to get the freehold of his selection in a year if he could. They knew every man would like to do so, but it was necessary to provide for a longer period to prevent any thing like evasion of the law, which was passed to induce real settlement upon the land. If it were not for that, they might as well let a man go upon the land at once and purchase it at once. He was confident from his experience that under the clause there would be no attempt made at dummying, and he was also confident that by reducing the period as proposed a much greater number of persons would be induced to go upon the land. At the same time the period for the acquisition of the freehold might be as long as the selector liked under the clause, and he might, if he chose, go on with the lease for the whole fifty years. If he could not make his selection a freehold in five years, he could carry on for ten years or longer; but, if he did so, he had to take the risk of having a higher price put upon the land.

Mr. JORDAN: If he acquires it within twelve years he gets it at the proclaimed price.

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL said that twelve years was the longest term before an increase could take place, and, as a rule, the first increase would be in ten years, so that he was technically correct. At that time the selector had to take the risk of having to pay a larger amount. Supposing the rental of his land was 3d. per acre, with an upset price of £1 per acre; if the Land Board, in their wisdom, thought fit to increase the rental to 6d. an acre, that would increase the upset price to £2 an acre. So that there was every inducement to the selector to pay up and acquire his freehold within a short period. For the purpose of that discussion it was not necessary for him to go further than the first increase to show what the effect of it would be. The proposed clause met with his hearty approval, because the period provided under it was longer than had been found necessary in a colony where very great attention had been paid to land legislation and where the selectors themselves had a great voice in the land laws of the colony and where they had never asked for a period of more than three years. He did not speak now with regard to the two later Acts passed in Victoria, as he was not so well acquainted with them; but he knew that all the good lands of Victoria had passed away from the Crown long before the last two Land Acts were passed in that colony. With the experience gained from Victoria, and knowing how successful settlement had been there, he was certain they were not running any great risk here in asking that selectors should be allowed to acquire their freeholds within five years. He was confident the provision would make selection far more attractive than it was at the present time. The late Minister for Lands shook his head, but the hon. gentleman could give no reasons against the assertion he made. It was certainly an assertion, but it was grounded upon experience, as he had himself been a selector for many years in Victoria, and had associated with selectors. He had been one who was chiefly consulted by them with regard to amendments to be made in the land laws. He had been one of the delegates sent to Melbourne in 1868 before the amending Land Bill of 1869 was brought in in Victoria, and he had argued and corresponded with selectors in that colony, and he, therefore, claimed to have a much larger experience of land settlement and land legislation than the late Minister for Lands.

Mr. SMYTH said they had just heard a very able speech from the Postmaster-General about his experience in other colonies. The hon. gentleman was one of that class of persons whose experience was confined to large areas and huge blocks, square miles and not acres, of country, and was not one of the small selectors they were dealing with now.

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL: The hon. gentleman is making an assertion which is not true. In Victoria, 640 acres was the maximum under the Acts of 1861, 1862, and 1865, and 320 acres under the Act of 1869.

Mr. SMYTH said they were dealing with the agricultural class, and if a man took up land valued at £1 an acre he paid 3d. an acre for it, and at any time within ten years he could make his land a freehold.

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL: No; not until after ten years.

Mr. SMYTH said that at the end of ten years it would have cost him 2s. 6d. an acre in rent, and if he paid up 17s. 6d. an acre then he got the freehold. By paying 3d. per acre on the land for ten years the man was paying interest at 1¼ per cent. only, and if the clause was passed by which the selectors could get their freeholds in five years, the result would be that they would go to the land mortgage societies, which were very plentiful in Brisbane, or to the banks, and borrow money, for

which they would have to pay 8 or 10 per cent., to fulfil the conditions of improvement and obtain the freehold. The amendment passed when the Act of 1884 was last amended, allowing the rent paid to count as part of the purchase money, was a very good one, and they went far in assisting the selector by that amendment. If the proposed clause was passed, as the hon. member for Warwick had said, it would be a dummying clause. The selectors had never called for such a clause, and it was only a clause to bring in revenue to the Treasury, and it did not matter how it was brought in so long as it was received. It was not a party matter, and hon. members opposite representing small selectors would be justified in voting against it, as it would only encourage any amount of dummying. They would simply be going back to the old style of things. He was not a landholder of any consequence, nor did he want to acquire land; but he was speaking of what he had heard and seen, and he thought ten years was a fair time. If men did not want to acquire a freehold within ten years, why should they get it? Supposing a man had £1,000 and he took up 1,000 acres he would not want to pay the £1,000 at once. He would put the bulk of the money in the bank, and get 5 per cent. for it, or he would utilise his spare capital on his land. He would prefer to pay the State 1½ per cent., and he thought all hon. members, except those who merely wished to fill the Treasury, would vote against the clause.

Mr. BARLOW said that if he were asked to define the clause he would say, as the hon. member for Gympie had done, that it was a clause to fill the Treasury. He was not going to traverse the arguments of the Postmaster-General. At one time he (Mr. Barlow) had had the Victorian land laws at the ends of his fingers, but he was out of date now he was afraid. He had been in Victoria from 1861 to 1865, and he knew that towards the close of that period a Land Bill was brought into force—whether it was the one referred to by the hon. gentleman or not he could not say.

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL: The Grant Act.

Mr. BARLOW said that it was the greatest engine for dummying that had ever existed.

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL: You mean the 1862 Act.

Mr. BARLOW said that he remembered the working of that Act. It was an Act brought in while he was living in Victoria, and he had left there in 1865. He could inform the Committee that there were hordes of dummies who went down to the Belfast and Warrnambool district armed with bank drafts, and in some cases they had camped round the land offices to be there when the tenders were opened. Around Warrnambool immense areas of land had been taken up, which had passed into the hands of the pastoral tenants of the Crown. In many cases that land had been re-sold or re-let, and the farming going on in that neighbourhood now was either tenant farming, or farming by persons who had bought the land at vastly increased prices. He was not prepared to say whether that was Grant's Act or not, but he well remembered the circumstances. As he understood the question before the Committee, the subsection proposed to amend section 73 of the Act of 1884, so as to render the title acquirable at the end of five years, in the case of personal residence by the lessee, or at the end of ten years, when there had been two or more successive lessees. To that amendment the leader of the Opposition had proposed to add a proviso, that those conditions of residence should not commence to take effect until after the improvements had been made, as required by the Act—or to put it technically, after the license had been converted into a lease. He thought that if there was one indication of a tendency to dummying more than another, it was the undue desire to acquire a parchment. As far as his knowledge of the land laws went, that was the great crucial test of a tendency to dummying. Why men should desire to hold a parchment he could not see. So long as they had a secure tenure—a tenure secured by the law of the land—at a low rental, why should they desire to embarrass and encumber themselves in order to acquire a parchment title? Any lawyer in that Committee could tell them that there was no such thing in the world as a freehold title. Their titles under the Real Property Act were not absolute freeholds—they were nothing more nor less than tenancies from the Crown. The titles they held land by were what were known as titles in "free and common socage." They acquired certain transferable rights under that amendment, and that was why hon. members on his side were afraid of it. They were afraid of it because the so-called freehold tenure, under which they held their lands was a transferable title, and a transferable title acquirable within a short period was the high road to dummying. It had been asked why a distinction should be drawn between the 160-acre selectors—commonly called homestead selectors—and others. The selectors of 160 acres and under were entitled to certain privileges. Whether it had been done from sentiment or not, they had always in the land laws of the colony treated those people upon a basis different to that upon which they treated others. They had approximated to something like his own idea of what their land laws should be—of the views which he had enunciated ever since he had had the honour of a seat in Parliament—and that was that where persons *bonâ fide* occupied and cultivated the land they should receive the land for nothing. There was an approximation in the matter of homestead areas to that idea, and he intended later on giving effect to his idea by introducing a clause giving land-orders to the native-born youth of the colony. He had said all along that homestead selectors had been treated on a totally different basis to the man who attempted to acquire larger areas in which there was a greater danger of transferring land to people to whom the State had not intended it to be given. The land laws of Victoria and New South Wales had lamentably failed in that respect, because they made improvement the condition of acquiring a freehold—improvement which could be done by capital, instead of residence, which could only be done by the individual. He knew of a place not a hundred miles from Toowoomba where four selections of 2,560 acres each all joined at the corners, and at the intersection of the surveyor's bearings a hut had been built, in which the condition of residence had been fulfilled for all four selections. The gentleman who had done that was well known to many hon. members in that Committee, and was certainly a very clever fellow. He was not prepared to say that he had ever seen the place, but he had passed it in the train at the time it was going on, and he had been informed that the man slept with his head in one selection and his feet in another, and so the conditions of residence had been fulfilled. He had no hesitation in saying that he considered the clause a most dangerous innovation, and a blow at the fundamental principles of the Act of 1884. Hon. gentlemen opposite had asked hon. members on his side why they had such an objection to giving a freehold, and why they would put a man on the land without giving him

a title to it? If a man were a *bonâ fide* settler, and held the land after he got the title, he (Mr. Barlow) would have no objection to it; but it was not the *bonâ fide* man who would want to acquire the freehold. It was the man who was not a *bonâ fide* settler who would go as soon as possible and rid himself of responsibility by acquiring the magical parchment which was supposed to do so much for him. Selectors did not eat parchment, so what was the object of it? It would give them a transferable title, and any step which would render the acquisition of that title easier and earlier obtainable was, in his opinion, a step in the wrong direction. The hon. member for Rosewood suggested that the amount of residence should be multiplied—that if a man had to reside so long on 160 acres he should reside twice as long on 320 acres; and although that was to a great extent an absurdity, it was carrying out the idea suggested by the arguments of hon. members on the other side. With regard to improvements, there was no doubt that improvements were gradual. It would be a hardship to call upon a man to borrow money to make improvements, but the tendency of the clause was to throw the men into the hands of a money-lender. Instead of remaining on the land under the easy terms of the Act, at a low rental and economising his capital, he would at once go and borrow money for putting up his improvements, instead of putting them up gradually. What would be the result if, as stated by the leader of the Opposition, the putting up of the improvements might be kept back until the last few months of the lease? It would be that they would have "walking fences" over again. As soon as a fence had served its purpose in one place, being quite new, it would be taken down and made to fulfil a similar purpose somewhere else. The aim of the amendment was that the five years' residence should not commence until after the improvements were completed, and he intended to vote for it. The clause as it stood was exceedingly dangerous, the most dangerous interference with the Act of 1884 that the Bill contained. He was not familiar enough with the details of Victorian land legislation to argue that matter out with the Postmaster-General, but he knew that a fearful amount of dummying, particularly in the Western districts, took place, and land was alienated in very large areas.

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL said that what he said was that in Victoria, under the Acts of 1865 and 1869, there was very little evasion of the law, and he was met by the assertion of an hon. member who admitted that he did not know much about the land laws of that colony, that very large alienations took place under the Act of 1865. Prior to the passing of the Act of 1860 or 1861 all lands were sold by auction, and when the liberal Bill was brought in it was contended on behalf of the persons who had paid a high price for their land that they should get some privilege; and they were granted a certificate which enabled them to select land up to 320 acres on payment of eight half-crowns, that was an eight years' tenure. Those were called land certificates, and they were transferable. When that Act ceased those demands were provided for in the Act of 1862, and as that Act did not remain long enough in operation to absorb all the certificates, they had to be worked out by the Act of 1865. With regard to the scandals referred to by the hon. member, those certificates were the only things that were used by people who were not *bonâ fide* selectors. They were used by people who desired to acquire large freeholds, and as those certificates had a cash value up to £1 an acre, many of the persons to whom they were granted sold them to land speculators. That was the scandal as far as dummying was concerned. But with regard to selections under the three years' residence system, there was very little dummying under that.

Mr. BARLOW said it was well known that at that period immense areas were alienated, and a whole series of scandals took place in connection with the land sales in that colony. However, he would accept what the hon. gentleman said, because he understood a great deal more about the Victorian land laws than he (Mr. Barlow) did. As to the three years' residence tenure, it was highly improbable that that condition could afford any effectual check upon the alienation of land to the large holders. A three years' residence was ridiculous. It might have been as the hon. gentleman said, but that it would prevent dummying in Queensland he could not possibly conceive.

Mr. GRIMES said he was not very conversant with the land laws of Victoria, but it might be that there were other conditions imposed upon the selectors, beside residence for three years, which would prevent the land from being taken up by dummiers.

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL: There were improvements at the rate of £1 an acre.

Mr. GRIMES said it was very probable also that those improvements had to be put on the land at a very early period after taking it up. In Queensland they had been a great deal more liberal under the Act of 1884. The only condition they imposed on the selector was that during the first four years he should surround the land with a substantial fence, which would very likely not come to much more than 10s. an acre, with the condition also that he should not be able to get his deeds until after the expiration of ten years. If there was to be any alteration in the law, he trusted the Committee would accept the amendment of the leader of the Opposition—that the five years should date from the completion of the fencing conditions. There would not be very much harm then in allowing the clause to go, although he would much prefer to see the clause of the Act of 1884 remain as it stood. It was one of the points with which, in 1884, the Assembly was at variance with another branch of the Legislature, and the managers of the conference considered it so important that they preferred to make concessions to the other Chamber rather than give way on that point. It was considered that to give way on it would open the way to a deal of land being taken up for speculative purposes. There was nothing to prevent it. People could take up the land, never spend a penny upon it for four years, until just prior to obtaining their deeds of grant, and then the would-be purchasers would come in, fulfil the conditions, and the selectors would move out. Speculation of that kind would not tend to advance real settlement upon the lands of the colony. One of the principal arguments advanced by the other side was that the clause would assist the selector. But he thought that assisting a selector to get his deeds, which he would then have to place in the hands of a money-lender, was no kindness to the selector. It would be much better for him to go on steadily as a leaseholder under the Government, improving his holding year by year, than to be under the thumb of a money-lender, and have to pay a large amount of interest, which would keep him continually "working out a dead horse." He could not look with any degree of favour on the amending clause, and he trusted the Government would give way on the point, or, at all events, allow the amendment proposed by the leader of the Opposition to be made before the clause was passed.

Mr. CAMPBELL said he should heartily support the clause, because he believed it would do a great deal of good to a large and deserving portion of the community. He was only sorry to hear the Minister for Lands say the clause would not be retrospective, because he was sure that many selectors under the agricultural clauses of the 1886 Act would look forward to being brought under it. It struck him very forcibly that there were very few members on the other side who had raised stock upon purchased land; and that was an important matter for consideration, because if the land was dummied, as it had been stated it would be, before the man for whom it was dummied got possession of it it would cost him not much less than £2 an acre, and they knew very well that land for grazing purposes would not pay 1 per cent. The men who had taken up land under the agricultural clauses of the Act had not taken it up for the purpose of dummying. They were a very different class from those who dummied under the Act of 1868. The class who dummied under that Act were, to a large extent, overseers and confidential men on stations, who took up large blocks of country, and eventually turned them over to the proprietors of the stations. He knew of only one instance on the Darling Downs in which land was supposed to be dummied under the 1876 Act, and the person who did it had got such a lesson that he was never likely to try it again. Before he got possession of the land he had to pay considerably above its value, and many of the dummiers stuck to their holdings, so that he was not likely to try the experiment again. He was sure the clause would benefit selectors to a large extent, and that they would avail themselves of it. Even if a selector went to the money market and had to pay, what the hon. member for Toowoomba called ruinous interest, for a time, as soon as he got his title deeds he could retire his first loan, and go to some monetary institution that would lend money at a cheaper rate. A man who had his title deeds could get money much cheaper than if he had nothing to offer but personal security. Those men were the best judges of their own business, and if a selector could pay up, and get his title deeds in five years, why should he be compelled to wait ten years, particularly when they knew that no pastoral tenant or runholder would ever think of getting those men to dummy at the price the land would cost? He wished to bring under the notice of the Minister for Lands a matter connected with the homestead clauses of the Act. Several cases had come under his notice where an agricultural area had been taken up very largely; homestead selectors came in and took up sixty, seventy, and eighty-acre blocks, all that was available, and they thought that at some future time they could go on to another agricultural area and take up the remainder of the area they were allowed, so as to make up 160 acres. But the Act did not provide for that, and it was a great hardship. He thought the matter was well worthy the attention of the Minister. It would be no great loss to the State to provide for such cases; on the contrary, it would do a great deal of good, and the settlers were a very deserving class.

Mr. GROOM said the Hon. the Postmaster-General had referred to the Land Act of Victoria, and no doubt the Act of 1869 had done a considerable amount of good in that colony. Probably the very large area of land now under cultivation there was, to a great extent, due to the operations of that Act. But, unfortunately, they offered less inducements for cultivation in Queensland than existed under the Act of 1869. The hon. member for Townsville, Mr. Philp, pointed out last night that they had alienated about 10,000,000 acres of land; he might have added to that 6,000,000 acres more that were in process of alienation; and yet they had only 200,000 acres under cultivation. Why was that? The simple reason was that they did not adopt the system which the Victorian legislature followed in their Land Act of 1869, and which provided against the mischievous effects that had been referred to by the hon. gentleman. Let hon. members see what cultivation meant according to the Victorian Act. There it was stated that—

"The word 'cultivation' shall include planting cereal or root crops, planting an orchard, vineyard, nursery, or shubbery, or laying down land with artificial grass."

Then it was further provided that—

"The words 'substantial and permanent improvements' any license to be granted under the provisions of Part II. of this Act shall mean and include dams, wells, cultivation, fencing, clearing or draining of an allotment, and the erecting of a habitable dwelling or farm or other buildings upon and permanently attached to the soil of such allotment."

When they came to the provisions of that Act specifying the area a man could select, and the conditions under which he could claim his certificate, they found that the selector was allowed six months to enter and occupy his land, and three years, including the six months mentioned, to make the prescribed improvements; that the rent was 2s. per acre, payable half-yearly in advance; and that at the end of the three years he was entitled to apply to the board for a Crown grant if he had fulfilled the conditions prescribed in his license, or if he did not wish to do that he could go on for another seven years paying 2s. per acre per annum, and at the end of the seven years, or at any time during the term, he could make his holding a freehold by paying the difference between the rent actually paid and the sum of £1 per acre. In the Queensland Act nothing was said about cultivation; all the selector was required to do was to fence his land; but in Victoria every license to occupy land contained a condition that—

"The licensee shall, within two years from the issue of such license, enclose the land described on such license with a good and substantial fence, and shall during the currency of such license cultivate at least one acre out of every ten acres thereof."

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL: That was not insisted upon.

Mr. GROOM said the licensees must have complied with that before they could get their certificates.

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL: I know they did not.

Mr. GROOM: Then the Act must have been evaded.

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL: It was a dead letter.

Mr. GROOM said how was it there was such an amount of land under cultivation in Victoria if that provision was a dead letter? There was a large area of land under cultivation in that colony giving employment to a great number of people and to her railways. Surely that would not be so if the Act was evaded. He contended that it was the omission of those very words from the Queensland Act which was the cause of such a small area of land being under cultivation in this colony at the present time, and which opened the door to the gambling in land which he knew from experience had taken place, particularly in the district where he lived. If the amendment was carried, as no doubt it would be, it would tend to shut out *bonâ fide* settlement, and place the land in the hands of men who, as the hon. member for Aubigny said, would devote it to the raising of stock.

Mr. CAMPBELL: I did not say anything of the kind.

Mr. GROOM said the hon. member wanted to make out that members on the Opposition side of the Committee did not know anything about the raising of stock, and stated that if land cost a certain sum per acre it would not pay to utilise it as grazing land. It was a repetition of the old story that the Darling Downs would not grow a cabbage. If stock raising was such an unprofitable occupation, how was it that so many persons went in for it? They should endeavour as much as they possibly could to encourage the cultivation of the soil. One of the reasons why the colony was in such an impoverished condition at the present time, was that they did not sufficiently encourage and promote the cultivation of the land, and so long as they were continually sending out of the country, as they were doing now for agricultural produce, they could not hope for any great or permanent improvement. Again, he would ask the Minister for Lands whether he could give the Committee any information showing that there was a demand by selectors for such an alteration in the law as was proposed by the clause before the Committee? If it could be shown that there was any demand for the change, then that would be a different thing, but he (Mr. Groom) had not heard of any. He was quite convinced, from his own knowledge and experience of the working of the land laws in the colony, and which he had assisted in passing, that the proposed amendment would lead to the *bonâ fide* men being shut out, and to persons taking up land, holding it for five years, putting a fence round it, and then selling it to capitalists. The land would certainly not be devoted to *bonâ fide* settlement. If the hon. gentleman would add to the amendment the words of the Victorian Act, insisting upon the cultivation of one acre in every ten, then he would be disposed to support the amendment. The Committee should do something in the way of insisting upon cultivation. That should be one of the primary objects they should have in view in their land legislation. The reason why so little land was under cultivation in the colony at the present time was that they had not, unfortunately, directed their attention in that direction. The Postmaster-General admitted that the Victorian Act had been the means of causing a large area of land in Victoria to be put under cultivation, although the hon. gentleman stated that one of the conditions had been a dead letter. He (Mr. Groom) was perfectly sure that the amendment suggested by the Minister for Lands would lead to that gambling spirit in land which he (Mr. Groom) had hoped had been, to a very considerable extent, stopped by the Land Act of 1884.

Mr. CAMPBELL said he did not wish the hon. member to put words into his mouth which he did not use. What he (Mr. Campbell) said was that he was quite sure that land which cost £2 an acre would not pay to use for grazing purposes, but would have to be turned to some other use. The hon. member for Toowoomba knew as well as he did, and as other hon. members representing Southern constituencies also knew, that there was sufficient agricultural land in the hands of the present holders to meet their requirements for the next twenty years, if they chose to cultivate it, or rather if they had a market for their produce. There was scarcely a selector in the district he represented but what would put three times the quantity of land under cultivation to-morrow if he saw his way to a market.

Mr. GROOM said the hon. member was perfectly right in saying that a great many men had sufficient land already; but they did not put the land to the purpose for which it was intended. Why was that? Simply because their land legislation did not compel the holders to cultivate it. Neither would selectors be compelled to cultivate their land by the amendment before the Committee. It would rather induce people to take up land, fence it, sell it, and then convey the fence by means of rollers to do service elsewhere.

Mr. BARLOW said the Postmaster-General had mentioned something about the evasion of the conditions of the Victorian Land Act.

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL: I said they were not insisted upon.

Mr. BARLOW said that in certain districts the conditions were evaded. He remembered hearing the story of orchards being planted by putting sticks in the ground without any roots, and the commissioners coming round and certifying that that was cultivation. In many cases the conditions were not insisted upon, but many *bonâ fide* selectors had their noses kept to the grindstone, and fulfilled the conditions to the letter.

Mr. MURRAY said a great deal had been said about dummying, but he was sure that dummying was unknown in the district he represented. Such a thing as dummying had never occurred since the Act of 1868 was passed, and the only effect of legislating against dummying there would be to harass and encumber the *bonâ fide* selectors, by enforcing unnecessary conditions upon them. It was well known that land had been open for selection in the Rockhampton district under the Acts of 1868 and 1876, and the whole of the land that was of any value was taken up under those Acts. When the Act of 1884 came into force there were only scraps of land left and they were declared agricultural areas, at a price of £1 per acre; but in that district he could buy very highly improved land at from 8s. to 10s. per acre. Under the Act of 1884 a man was bound to live ten years on the land and pay £1 per acre for it, whilst at the end of that time he would have a difficulty in obtaining 10s. per acre. He hoped the Minister for Lands would press the amendment, and he was very sorry that the clause was not to be made retrospective. Men would not reside upon the land for ten years, even if the land were made a present to them at the end of that time. The amendment would have his hearty support, and he hoped some hon. gentleman would propose an amendment upon it to make it retrospective, so that its privileges would be extended to those who had already taken up land under the Act of 1884. It was impossible for any uniform Land Act to do equal justice throughout the whole colony, and hon. members would see how absurd it was to declare the Rockhampton district an agricultural area, and fix the price at £1 per acre. The Act was practically unworkable, and the whole district was in a state of stagnation.

The HON. SIR S. W. GRIFFITH said there seemed to be some strange confusion about the clause being retrospective. He thought the word was used in different senses by different persons. The clause was retrospective in the sense that it gave an additional advantage to selectors under the Act of 1884. In that sense it was retrospective; but some hon. members seemed to use the term as meaning the imposing of additional liabilities, and in that sense, of course, it was not retrospective. The clause simply created a new privilege, and it gave that privilege to every selector under the Act, whether he took up his selection when the Act first came into operation in 1885, or at any later period. There could be no question about that. He understood when the Minister for Lands said the clause was not retrospective, that he meant it was not retrospective in the sense of imposing any disability; but it was retrospective in the sense that it gave

privileges to everybody. He had only one other observation to make before the amendment went to a division, and it was about time it did go to a division, if they were to get through the clause that evening. The arguments used on the other side in favour of the amendment proposed by the Minister for Lands had practically been to this effect: that there was no danger of land being dummied under that provision, because it would not be worth anybody's while to pay £1 per acre cash, when he could obtain the occupation of the land by paying 1¼ per cent. interest. He quite agreed with that; that was the argument the Opposition were using. No *bonâ fide* selector would take advantage of it; he would pay the 1 per cent., which would go towards the purchase money, so that the clause would be no benefit to the *bonâ fide* selector. The persons who would pay up the £1 per acre cash would be persons who were not *bonâ fide* selectors, but who wanted the land for some other purpose, so that the arguments used on the other side in support of the clause were the strongest arguments against the clause. But he did not suppose that would make any difference in their votes.

Mr. O'SULLIVAN said the remarks of the leader of the Opposition had reminded him that there were hundreds of thousands of acres of land in the West Moreton district at the present time that came under the designation of agricultural land which would not grow a cabbage. All the agricultural land in the district had been taken up under the homestead clauses at 6d. per acre, and they were now asked to pay £1 per acre for land not worth more than a quarter of the value of the land taken up before. There was not an acre of agricultural land available in West Moreton. He had been over a great deal of that country, and there was hardly as much available agricultural land there as would hatch a clutch of chickens. There was really something in the argument of the hon. member for Normanby. Where was the inducement to dummying when they had to pay £1 per acre for land worth only from 8s. to 10s. per acre? No one in his senses would do it. He knew that the district of Rockhampton was in exactly the same position as that of West Moreton; all the really good land had been taken up years ago. The argument that the clause would encourage dummying had not a single leg to stand upon.

Mr. SAYERS said he did not feel inclined to give a silent vote upon the question. He had listened attentively to the speeches made that afternoon, and had read *Hansard*, and had come to the conclusion that the selector could do no end of dummying under the clause; and he had met gentlemen outside the House who were speculators, who had said that the clause was a very good one, as it would reduce the time to five years, and that ten years was too long to wait. From what had been said by the hon. member for Normanby and the hon. member for Stanley, he did not see any use in passing the clause at all, because their contention was that the lands in the Rockhampton district were only worth 10s. per acre. Therefore, they were only wasting time in passing the clause at all. The hon. member for Stanley said that all the good land in West Moreton had been taken up, and, therefore, the clause would not apply to that district, because no one would take up the land that was left, even if he could pay the £1 per acre at once. If a man were a speculator he could buy the land at 10s. per acre, as he could in the Rockhampton district. There was a great craving on the other side for a freehold title, but he could not see what better title a man wanted than the title under the Act of 1884. People with gold mines worth half-a-million of money had only a lease of twenty-one years, which was shorter than many of the leases under the Act of 1884, and they were perfectly satisfied with that title. He did not see why assistance should be given to a certain section of the community to gamble in lands. The clause would put people who took up land four or five years ago in a position to gamble with it immediately after the Bill became law. At the present time nearly all the best coast lands in the colony had been selected. It was all very well to say that there were only 10,000,000 acres of freehold land in the colony; but there were 6,000,000 acres more to be added to that; and the people who had selected those lands had taken care to pick the eyes out of the country; so that all the best lands in the colony were in the hands of private persons and land speculators. He saw last night a list of thirteen men in the colony—or men who ought to be in the colony—holding nearly 1,200,000 acres between them; and if anyone took up that list—doomsday book, as it was called—he would see that some of the men crying out for the privilege of getting titles in a shorter time were large freeholders at the present time. It had been said that there was not much land locked up in the North at the present time; but he was satisfied that nearly all the coast lands in the North were locked up. Nearly 500,000 acres in the Mackay district were in the hands of private individuals, and only about 24,000 acres were under cultivation. Nearly all the best agricultural land in the district was in the hands of private individuals.

Mr. O'SULLIVAN: It would be a good thing if all the land in the colony were sold to-morrow.

Mr. SAYERS said the hon. member was evidently one of those who believed in the system of landlordism, because if the Crown parted with the land there was no doubt that it would be acquired by those who had capital, and then there would be large estates and landlords just the same as in the old country, and to a great extent in New South Wales, Victoria, and America. One could ride nearly a whole day in Victoria over freehold land belonging to one man. The system the hon. member would wish to see was the system that would bring about landlordism; and he could not reconcile the hon. member's statement with his acts on other occasions. He did not think the hon. member really meant what he said in the light in which he (Mr. Sayers) understood it; he might have some other ideas with which he (Mr. Sayers) was not conversant. The Minister for Mines and Works laughed; but he thought that hon. gentleman was like a good many more—he preached one thing and practised another. He (Mr. Sayers) intended to oppose the clause, and would have done so more strongly but for the promise made by the leader of the Opposition, that there would be no obstruction to the clause. The Minister for Mines and Works had stated that he thought he would have been justified in stonewalling the Cairns railway proposal, and he (Mr. Sayers) thought that if ever a measure was brought forward which hon. members would be justified in stonewalling it was the clause now under consideration. He believed that if hon. members were to stonewall the clause they would be backed up by the country; but as the leader of the Opposition had pledged himself—and, to a certain extent, those sitting behind him—against offering any factious opposition, he would simply vote for the amendment of the leader of the Opposition, and against the proposal of the Minister for Lands. He would prefer, however, to vote against both, and leave the law as it stood, and if the opportunity arose he would do so.

Mr. O'SULLIVAN said the hon. member just said he did not understand him (Mr. O'Sullivan). He never undertook to find brains for the hon. member.

Mr. SAYERS: You have little enough for yourself.

Mr. O'SULLIVAN said he must acknowledge that he had not brains enough to understand the hon. member. Though that hon. member got up to speak on every occasion, the Committee knew the value of his speeches. He did say he would be glad to see every acre of land in Queensland sold to-morrow, and he repeated that statement. He believed it would be the best thing that ever happened, because then the lands in the whole colony could be taxed and there would be plenty of revenue. As far as landlords were concerned, he was not much in favour of landlordism in any sense of the word; and he thought he had done his share as much as the hon. gentleman in the settlement of the colony. With regard to the repeated talk about gambling in land, he might ask the hon. member whether he and other people did not gamble in shares? Why should not he (Mr. O'Sullivan) buy a piece of land to-day and sell it to-morrow at a profit if he had the opportunity? There was nothing at all in that cry about gambling in land. He had just as much right to buy and sell land as he had to buy and sell a horse or a cow. As far as the clause was concerned, it would not place people in as good a position as they were in before the Act of 1884 was passed. Previous to that a man could select a piece of land, put a bailiff on it, and get his deeds in three years. He and another man took up a piece of ground on the Blackall Range under the old Act, and, after making their improvements, they were able to pay up the balance and get their deeds within three years; but under the clause proposed by the Minister for Lands, people would not be able to get their deeds under five years, notwithstanding the fact that they had to fall back on the worst kind of land in the colony.

Mr. SAYERS said he did not suppose the hon. member for Stanley had any brains to spare for him or any other member of the Committee. The hon member had made a very curious assertion. He said he would like to see all the land sold, and then taxed in order to provide a revenue. If he had all the brains he professed to have he would not make such an assertion. Who would expect if all the land were sold and in the hands of small freeholders, that these people would turn round and tax themselves?

Mr. MURRAY: Will the tenants turn round and increase the rents?

Mr. SAYERS said the tenants would not, but the land laws would. He hoped the hon. member for Stanley would keep what brains he had, and if he (Mr. Sayers) was short of them he would not come to the hon. member.

Mr. MACFARLANE said he had listened patiently to hear an argument used by some one on the other side in favour of reducing the term from ten to five years, and he had heard no reason given further than that stated by the Minister for Lands, that it would put the selector in the same position as the homestead selector, and enable him to get his title deeds in five years. That was not a sufficient reason for altering the Act of 1884. The hon. member for Aubigny wished that the amendment should be made retrospective, so that the first selectors should reap the benefit of it. He said that would be a great benefit to them, but he (Mr. Macfarlane) could not see where the benefit came in. If it was an inducement to have the title deeds so as to enable the selector to borrow money on his land, why should he pay 8 or 10 per cent. for borrowed money when he could get money from the Crown for 1½ per cent. The benefit, therefore, could not be to the selector. He would have no objection to some little change so as to benefit the Treasury and selector in the way suggested by the leader of the Opposition—to grant the deeds five years after the improvements had been made. If the selector was so very anxious to get his deeds, and had so much money to spare, why not make him put the improvements on in the first or second year, and five years after give him his deeds. He did not think the arguments used by the Minister for Lands and others were at all convincing that it would be a benefit to the selector to have such an amendment carried. There must be some other reason that had not come to the front—something standing in the background. Possibly the only object was to benefit the Treasury. They all knew that the Treasury was not in a very flourishing state, but there could be no doubt that if the proposed change was made there was some ulterior object in view, and he was very suspicious that the object was to enable large land holders to buy up the selected portions at the end of five years. Arguments had been used to show that it would not pay the selector to do so, but they all knew that in good seasons squatters made a considerable amount of money, and with that money they would be able to purchase back some of the selected portions which had formed some of the best bits of their runs. He could not see his way to support the amendment of the Minister for Lands, and he hoped the hon. gentleman would give them some kind of compromise, such as had been suggested by the leader of the Opposition, which would be a very reasonable compromise indeed.

Mr. GRIMES said he was glad the hon. member for Toowoomba had informed the Committee of the conditions under which land was selected in Victoria. He must say that to some extent the remarks of the Postmaster-General tended to mislead the Committee, and give them to understand that the three years' residence was considered sufficient. But the conditions imposed were far more oppressive than three years' residence. He had calculated what a selector in Victoria would have to spend on a 1,240-acre selection. Under the improvement clause, as given by the hon. member for Toowoomba, the selector had to cultivate one acre in ten. In that case, for 1,240 acres he must cultivate 124 acres of the ground. To put the land in order for cultivation would cost £10 an acre, or £1,240. Fencing, which had to be completed in three years, would cost another £620; the huts, barns, and other improvements would cost another £300, giving a total of £2,160 which the selector must spend during his first three years' residence. Now, he was quite prepared to say that hon. members on his side of the Committee would much prefer the conditions imposed under the Victorian Act to the alteration which it was now proposed to make. The 1884 Act was a great deal more liberal than the Victorian Act, and he had no hesitation in saying that if the condition as to cultivating one acre in ten was allowed, hon. members would be prepared to agree to the five years' proposal.

Mr. LUYA said the reason given by the Minister for Lands in favour of the clause was quite sufficient. He understood him to say that the object of the alteration was to make the land law more liberal and induce settlement. Surely that was a good enough reason for an amendment of that kind—to make more liberal laws, and induce the settlement which they all professed to desire to encourage. He was only sorry the Minister for Lands did

not go further. In his opinion they did not go nearly far enough in liberalty in their land laws, and there should be a great deal more discrimination in the classification of land than there was. Any old resident of Queensland knew there were large tracts of land in Queensland that were not worth 1s. an acre; yet under their present land laws it was valued at £1 an acre. How could they expect that land to be taken up at such a price. No member of the Committee would take up that land under the conditions imposed by their present land laws. If the land laws were made more liberal, and that description of land was given in larger areas, and those irksome conditions taken away, plenty of that land would ultimately be put to some kind of use, though it would never be of any use for cultivation. Speaking of cultivation, he might remind the hon. member for Oxley of a very simple way of going in for cultivation, and that was by sowing artificial grass, which could be sown without putting a plough into the ground. He had fulfilled the conditions of improvement by sowing artificial grass, and the same thing had been done in Victoria. It was absurd for hon. members opposite to talk about liberal land legislation. If there had been any liberal land legislation introduced in that House, it had been by the present Government party, and any illiberal land legislation that had been introduced had been brought in by hon. gentlemen opposite. That was because hon. gentlemen opposite had had no practical knowledge of the subject; if they had had a little more practical education upon those matters, they would take a very different tone altogether. It was the old residents of Queensland who had gone through all the trials of the selectors, and who had probably selected land under every Land Act passed in Queensland, who knew and appreciated the difficulties and troubles that beset the selector from the day on which he set about getting a selection. For his part he did not think they could be too liberal to the selectors if, at the same time, they provided proper safeguards against the acquisition of very large estates. Even that was not so dangerous now as it was in the olden times, for people who had once been bitten were twice shy. The hon. member for Ipswich had referred to the clause as being intended to benefit the Treasury, and he would ask the hon. member what the Act of 1884 was passed for? Was that not an Act intended to give them an overflowing Treasury, and to pay the interest on the £10,000,000 loan, and do ever so many other glorious things. If by the proposed amendment they could bring in a little more revenue to the State, while being more liberal to a deserving class of men, so much the better. It was satisfactory to think that it would increase the revenue, and enable them to relieve Queensland of the stain placed upon her credit by the administration of gentlemen opposite. He was very glad to hear the leader of the Opposition say the effect of the proposed clause would be retrospective, as he asked what crime had selectors who took up land in 1885, 1886, 1887, and 1888 committed that they should not participate in the benefits conferred under the clause? Why should they bear a brand or be classified differently from those who would select under the amending Bill they were considering? Had they done anything wrong by selecting under the Act of 1884? If they had, the sin was that of gentlemen opposite for passing that Act. He would not be so ready to vote for the clause if it was not retrospective. He was not ashamed to say that in his opinion the Act of 1884 was a very bad Act indeed, and he was prepared to go a great deal further than the present Ministry would go. He was much further advanced in his ideas of land legislation than they were, and he would sell every acre in Queensland, as the hon. member for Stanley had said, and utilise the cash, and they would have an everlasting rent in the interest that would be coming in. If they could sell the land and pay off their national debt with it, an era of prosperity would occur in Queensland such as had never occurred in any land in modern days.

Mr. BUCKLAND said the hon. member who had just sat down had said he would go further and make the clause more liberal, but he himself failed to see that it was more liberal to make a selector pay his £1 an acre for his land in five years than to give him ten years to pay it in.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: It is not compulsory.

Mr. BUCKLAND said he took it the object of the framers of the original clause was to settle people upon the lands as an agricultural population, and give them the easiest possible terms to pay for the land. Here they had selectors allowed to select land for ten years at £1 an acre, and pay 1¼ per cent. interest as a quit rent, and that was to be allowed as part of the purchase-money. He did not know what terms more liberal than those could be required. If the Minister for Lands could show the Committee that there was a general complaint throughout the country as to the length of the term under the present law, there would be some force in the arguments the hon. member had used in support of the clause, but that had not been shown. A great deal had been said during the debate as to the condition of lands in Victoria. He happened to know something of the early settlement of Victoria, and he could only say that if such a clause as was at present the law here had been in existence in Victoria, at the time he spoke of, about thirty years ago, it would not be possible for a man to do as the hon. member for Charters Towers had said could be done, and that was to ride for miles through the estates of one or two gentlemen. It would not be possible to count by thousands and hundreds of thousands of acres the large and valuable acquisitions of freehold that now stood in the names of the Chirnsides, the Clarks, the Learmouths, and the Manifolds in Victoria. He had before stated that there were about 500,000 acres of land held under lease for agricultural purposes in that colony and, while the lowest rental was 10s., it went up as high as £5 and £7 an acre. If the clause they were asked to amend had been in existence in Victoria at the time he spoke of, a very different state of things would be found there now. Some of the finest lands in the neighbourhood of that important goldfield, Ballarat, were held by a few gentlemen who were getting from £1 to £3 per acre per annum for land which he was certain did not cost them over £1 per acre. He recollected going into a Government auction room in Ballarat many years ago. He, with many others, had made a little money in gold-mining, and they were anxious to get a little land to settle on, but they were outbid in almost every case. Any of the land which was worth having was purchased by the pastoral tenants, who were fortunate enough to have longer purses than the smaller men who were anxious to get the land, and the consequence was that the land was held by those men at the present time. He did not admire the clause, and he could not support it for the reasons he had given. The clause in the Act of 1884 had been introduced to enable the would-be agricultural selector to get land on the very easiest terms, and if ten years were not sufficient, and the man was not prepared to pay the purchase money at the end of the first ten years, he could then have it reassessed and go on for another forty years.

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL: Yes, and pay double the price for the land.

Mr. BUCKLAND said any man who purchased land from a private individual on deferred payments, in almost every instance, had to pay interest on the money. There was no objection to that, as he ought to pay something, and the quit-rent which the Government asked was so small that no reasonable man could object to it.

Mr. McMASTER said that nothing new could be said to change any hon. member's vote, and the subject had been pretty well thrashed out. But having heard the extraordinary speech of the hon. member for South Brisbane, Mr. Luya, he had risen to refer to it. That hon. member had stated that hon. members of the Opposition side knew nothing about selection, or about how land was selected, and he believed the hon. member was not far wrong with regard to some kinds of selection. They did not know how to take up a timber selection, strip all the timber off it within five years, get a title for it, and then sell it for agricultural farms. He did not know whether any hon. member on his side of the Committee had ever done that, as the hon. member had said he had done. Then the hon. gentleman had told them how he had evaded the law with regard to fulfilling the conditions for improvements where there was no timber by throwing a handful of artificial grass seeds over the land. Was that the way hon. members opposite wished to settle people on the land? Was that the settlement they were desirous of carrying out? He was sure that no hon. member of the Opposition would stoop to such practices as the hon. member for South Brisbane had stooped to. He had not heard a single word to convince him that the clause was going to benefit the selector. He looked upon it as he had looked upon the tariff introduced last year. He had always contended that it was not a protective tariff, but a revenue tariff, and that clause was to be a revenue clause. It was simply proposed to obtain £1 per acre within five years instead of in ten years. He would ask hon. gentlemen opposite who were Crown lessees, whether they had not for years been crying out for an extension of their leases so that they might carry out their improvements? Would any hon. member assert that it was easier to pay £1 per acre in five years than in ten years? Such an assertion would be absurd. The man, if he had it to pay in ten years, knew exactly what the Crown was to get when he took up the land, and he made his arrangements accordingly. The argument had been used by hon. members opposite that in getting his title in five years the selector would be able to borrow money on it, but he would not want to raise money if he had to pay 8 or 10 per cent. for it, and in some instances even more, when the Crown would let him have the land on payment of 1¼ per cent.; and if the man did not want to raise money, what was the use of the deed to him? There was no doubt that the Postmaster-General had made a capital speech in favour of the proposal to reduce the period to five years, which was the term they had in Victoria; but, as the hon. member for Oxley had said, there must be something behind that, and when the hon. member for Toowoomba had let out what that was, the Postmaster-General had not denied it, but only interjected that in many instances the Act was evaded.

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL: I said it was not insisted on.

Mr. McMASTER said that, as a matter of fact, the condition compelling people taking up land in Victoria to cultivate it, was the reason for their now being in a position to supply Queensland with produce cheaper than they could get it from the Darling Downs. They were bound to cultivate the land in Victoria, and not having a market in their own colony they were exporting large quantities to this colony. If a proviso were inserted in the Bill compelling selectors here to till the land—not by sowing a handful of artificial grasses as the hon. member for South Brisbane had done—instead of sending large sums of money to Victoria, as at present, they would be able to keep that money here. He regretted that the hon. member for South Brisbane should have stooped to fulfil the conditions on his selection by throwing artificial grasses on the land. It was a well known fact that the hon. gentleman was a very large selector, as he held large areas in the Tewantin district, and after all the timber was gone—and he supposed the hon. member would strip it in five years—and after getting his title, he could re-sell it as agricultural land. Some of it, he believed, was magnificent agricultural land.

Mr. LUYA said that he wished to say a few words for the benefit of the hon. member. In the first place he did not mind explaining that he had never taken up a timber selection with the intention of stripping the timber off, and then selling the land for agricultural purposes. There was no doubt he had taken up a large quantity of land in the Noosa district under the Acts of 1868 and 1876, but not under the Act of 1884, and the conditions had been fulfilled to the very letter of the law. Although they never had more than a cabbage garden there, his firm had spent in labour and material since they had held the land over £280,000 in that district.

Mr. GRIMES: But you have taken off the timber.

Mr. LUYA said they had also put timber on. They had planted trees; they had done what the State had neglected to do, and what, at the proper time, he should urge the State to do. He had correspondence to show that many years ago they had pressed on the Government the importance of that subject. Why should they be decried because they had not cultivated the soil? There were other uses to put the land to besides growing arrowroot. There were plenty of other things which would pay the colony a great deal better. It would not require all the land of the colony to keep the few people in Queensland supplied with farming produce. If Parliament were to insist upon every selector cultivating even a tenth of his holding, their produce would simply rot, because there would be nobody to consume it, and such a condition would absolutely prevent people from taking up selections. The greater facilities that were afforded to the selector, the better it would be for the colony and for the selector himself. It was only colonists with actual experience who could speak with authority on those subjects, and the hon. member for Fortitude Valley had been speaking theoretically about a matter he did not understand.

Mr. ISAMBERT said the hon. member for Fortitude Valley said the matter had been thrashed out. He contended that it had not been thrashed out. There was something behind the motion that had not come out yet. There must be some motive for reducing the ten years' tenure to five years. It was not to be compulsory. It was said that no sane man would pay 10 per cent. to a monetary institution when he could have the land from the Government at 1¼ per cent., and that 1¼ in payment of the principal. If that was the case, there must be some ulterior motive, and he did not see any other motive than that some hon. members on the other side were agents for some financial institutions. Did they not know from

bitter experience how many squatters had been driven into the meshes of monetary institutions, and instead of being Crown tenants and wealthy men, had become miserable agents for monetary institutions, through that very pre-emptive clause against which his party had fought so hard. The monetary institutions forced the pastoral tenants against their will to take up their pre-emptives at 10s. an acre, and then they got the land. The hon. member for Aubigny contended that no man would pay £1 an acre for grazing land. Nor would any sane squatter have paid 10s. an acre for grazing land if he had not been forced to do so by the monetary institutions who would not make them any advances until they had exercised their pre-emptive right. And then, as soon as the eyes of the runs had been picked out, the banks foreclosed and got the freehold titles in their hands, and in that way many squatters were ruined. He could see no better reason why the term of ten years should be reduced to five years than that hon. members opposite were agents for some monetary institutions, which, having perhaps advanced a few pounds to the selectors, were anxious to acquire the freehold of their land. The reduction of the term of residence was not for the benefit of the *bonâ fide* selector, but for the large land grabbers and monetary institutions. Only that day, at the beginning of the sitting, they had had an instance of what a crafty man could do; they had seen how a water reserve had been taken away from the people near Toowoomba. He was astonished that some persons who called themselves nationalists, who went into hysterics over the wrongs of Ireland, and condemned the landlords there as land robbers — which they were — should do their utmost to establish in Queensland that very system of land robbery which had driven the people of Ireland to America and the colonies, and had in a very few years depopulated that country from 8,000,000 to 5,000,000. They were like hungry wolves. Reference had been made to Victoria. Land had been dummied very largely there, small as the colony was, and the poor farmer who wanted land had to go to the owners for it, cap in hand, as in Ireland. Very few farms could be rented there at 10s. an acre; people had to pay as much as £8 an acre for the land, and to make anything out of it they must cultivate it. It reminded him of the story of the dog that was pursued by a wolf, and in order to save its life had to climb up a tree. When some one said to the narrator of this extraordinary story, "You don't mean to say a dog climbed up a tree," he said, "He had to climb up a tree." And so it was with those miserable tenants in Victoria; they had to cultivate the land to make both ends meet; and the pastoral tenants had to exercise the pre-emptive right, because the banks told them to do so. If that clause was passed the selector would soon know to his cost that he would have to acquire the freehold; he would have to take the rôle of the dog and climb up a tree.

Mr. BUCKLAND said there seemed to be some doubt in the minds of members of the Committee as to whether the amending clause would be retrospective. He would like the hon. the Minister for Lands to clear that up.

Question put.

Mr. FOXTON said he thought the Minister for Lands might answer a question courteously put by a member on that side of the Committee.

The MINISTER FOR MINES AND WORKS: Do you want it answered over again?

Mr. FOXTON said there was still some doubt in the minds of hon. members, and courtesy itself should have prompted the hon. gentleman to reply to the question. No doubt courtesy would have prompted him to do so had the Premier not prompted him not to do so.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS said he could only refer the hon. gentleman to the legal opinion of his chief, who was, probably one of the most eminent lawyers in the colony. The hon. member had heard the opinion expressed by his leader, and he (the Minister for Lands) not being versed in legal phraseology, considered that that interpretation had considerable weight. He thought the hon. member would have accepted the explanation of his chief on the subject. At the same time he (the Minister for Lands) would inform hon. members, as the question had been raised, that he had not the least objection to the clause being made retrospective. If, however, it was retrospective, as stated by the leader of the Opposition, that set the question at rest; if not, it would be very easy to insert a few words to make it so.

Mr. FOXTON said a couple of minutes had sufficed to enable the hon. gentleman to forget that it was the hon. member for Bulimba, and not he, who had asked for the information. He (Mr. Foxton) did accept and thoroughly believe that the opinion expressed by the leader of the Opposition was the correct one, and he was very glad to find that the Minister for Lands, notwithstanding his previously expressed opinion, was now inclined to that view himself. He thought the question put by the hon. member for Bulimba was a very legitimate one, which might have been answered without hesitation, and he simply rose to ask that it might be answered.

Mr. ISAMBERT said if the clause was to be retrospective, and to confer benefits, he did not see why those who had already settled on the land should not be entitled to those benefits, as they had already done some service to the State. But he objected to the clause being retrospective, because he believed there was some ulterior motive behind it. One would almost imagine that every hon. member opposite was the agent of some financial institution—they were so anxious to get that reduction of five years, which nobody had asked for except speculators. He was not at all inclined to allow the clause to go to the vote. He was very sorry that the leader of the Opposition had promised that it should go to a vote, and take its fate, and spoil the Land Act of 1884. But perhaps the hon. gentleman was prophetic and saw ahead a general collapse of all those attacks upon the liberties of the people. In no way were those liberties more affected than through their land laws. The manner in which land was held showed how the liberties of the people were grounded, and was the basis of the distribution of wealth. Before he would let the clause go he felt inclined to read the whole article written by the hon. the leader of the Opposition on the distribution of wealth, and perhaps by the time he had done the Government would withdraw the clause, which nobody had asked for. The hon. member for Townsville appeared to have made the discovery that more capital had been spent in the North than in the South; but he (Mr. Isambert) maintained that the whole of the capital spent in the North could not be compared with the capital spent in human energy in West Moreton alone. It was said that if they had only the labour they required, there would be far more land cultivated. But in connection with coloured labour, let them look at the trouble that had just taken place in the very heart of the sugar industry — at Mourilyan, where those very nice quiet people, the Javanese, had revolted and nearly killed two men. He only wished they had killed a dozen, as nothing but a catastrophe would open the eyes of the Government to the evils of black labour.

Question—That the words proposed to be added be so added—put, and the Committee divided:—

AYES, 21.

Sir S. W. Griffith, Messrs. Jordan, Rutledge, Barlow, Hodgkinson, McMaster, Foxton, Wimble, Drake, Mellor, Isambert, Glassey, Morgan, Unmack, Sayers, Buckland, Grimes, Smyth, Salkeld, Groom, and Macfarlane.

NOES, 34.

Messrs. Donaldson, Nelson, Macrossan, Morehead, Black, Pattison, North, Gannon, Murray, Paul, Little, O'Connell, Rees R. Jones, Agnew, Dalrymple, Cowley, Luya, Adams, Hamilton, Corfield, Lissner, Battersby, Allan, Archer, Smith, Palmer, Plunkett, Campbell, Watson, O'Sullivan, Stevenson, Murphy, Crombie, and Dunsmure.

Question resolved in the negative.

Question—That subsection 6, as amended, stand part of the Bill—put, and the Committee divided:—

AYES, 33.

Messrs. Nelson, Morehead, Macrossan, Donaldson, Black, Pattison, Paul, O'Sullivan, Murphy, Stevenson, Dunsmure, Crombie, Watson, Adams, Campbell, North, Corfield, Rees R. Jones, Murray, Battersby, Plunkett, Lissner, Little, Hamilton, Cowley, Luya, Dalrymple, Gannon, Agnew, Archer, Allan, Smith, and Palmer.

NOES, 21.

Sir S. W. Griffith, Messrs. Rutledge, Hodgkinson, Jordan, Glassey, Drake, Sayers, Grimes, Groom, Barlow, Isambert, Wimble, Unmack, McMaster, Mellor, Buckland, Macfarlane, Foxton, Morgan, Salkeld, and Smyth.

Question resolved in the affirmative.

On subsection 7—"Occupation licenses"—

The MINISTER FOR LANDS said when they were discussing the question of deciding the disposal of grazing farms upon the lot system, of course hon. members were well aware that that proposal did not meet with the approval of the Committee, but sufficient was said upon that occasion to lead them to believe that the auction system would be a decided improvement in the case of occupation licenses. In order to give effect to that idea he had a new subsection he would propose in lieu of subsection 7. He therefore would move that subsection 7 be omitted with a view of inserting the amendment.

The HON. SIR S. W. GRIFFITH said the Hon. Minister for Lands had better move that all the words after the first four lines be omitted, with a view of inserting all the words after the first four lines of the amendment.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS said he had no objection to moving it in that form; it came to the same thing.

Mr. GROOM said an amendment had been circulated by the hon. member for Herbert, and another by the hon. member for Moreton. Were they withdrawn? If the hon. member for Herbert did not move his amendment then, he would not have another chance.

Amendment put.

Mr. COWLEY said he certainly wished to propose his amendment. It was not a contentious matter, and he thought it would meet with the approval of the Committee without any discussion. The present was the natural place for it, as it dealt with agricultural farms.

Mr. BATTERSBY said he wished to know whether he would be in order in moving his amendment at once?

Mr. BARLOW said it did not matter where the hon. member for Moreton moved his amendment. By a technicality it had been shut out from its proper place; but he could move it as a new clause.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS said he was willing to allow hon. members an opportunity of introducing their amendments. The fact was the amendments were more numerous than the clauses in the Bill itself, and he could not follow them all. He begged to withdraw his amendment.

The HON. SIR S. W. GRIFFITH said he would suggest to the Government that if they desired to get the Bill through in a reasonable time, they should say they were not going to allow it to be made an altogether different Bill from the one that was introduced. If they allowed amendments to be put in all round making it a new Bill they would be surrendering one of the most important functions of the Government; and the consideration of the measure would be prolonged to an indefinite length.

The PREMIER said it was not the intention of the Government to have the Bill mutilated or materially altered by any amendment; still they could not prevent amendments being moved and discussed.

The HON. SIR S. W. GRIFFITH: Of course not.

The PREMIER said the Government did not intend to force any Bill through by means of the majority at their back; they wanted to afford every hon. member an opportunity for full and free discussion.

Amendment, by leave, withdrawn.

Mr. BATTERSBY moved the following new subsection, to follow subsection 6:—

If, at any time before the expiration of the fifth year of the lease, the condition of occupation prescribed by the seventy-third section has been performed, the lessee may, instead of paying the prescribed price, deed fee, and assurance fee in one sum, elect to pay the same by ten equal annual instalments:

Provided always that if such instalment be not duly paid by the end of the tenth year, the rent shall be determined under the provisions of subsection two of section fifty-eight of the principal Act, any excess payments previously made under this section being credited to the lessee.

The object of the subsection was to assist in keeping the agricultural selectors out of the hands of the money-lenders; and if it were adopted, it would allow the selector, instead of being driven to the money-lender at the end of five years, to take as much money out of his land in the next ten years as would pay for his land. He had brought the amendment forward at the request of a great many agricultural settlers in the district of Moreton. It was well known that for the first four or five years all the agricultural selector could take out of his land he put back again in the shape of improvements, and if he wanted to make the land freehold at the end of five years he had to go to the money-lender. His object was to make the deferred payments easier on the agricultural selector, so that he could take the money out of the land instead of having to go to the money-lender.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS said the Committee had just passed a provision enabling the conditional selector to acquire the title of his land at the end of five years. The proposed amendment would infer that the selector was desirous of obtaining his title at the end of five years, but had not the money required, and the hon. member proposed that the unpaid balance should be divided into ten annual instalments. If the selector was in that position of impecuniosity and did not desire to borrow, he had better take advantage of the provisions of the Act of 1884, and continue the very small annual payments for a few years longer till he had saved sufficient to pay up the balance—which he could do at any time. It seemed to him that in any case the selector would have to go to the money-lender if he was so very poor as the amendment would infer; and he really did not

see what was to be gained by its adoption. It would be simply introducing another complication into the Act of 1884, which was already sufficiently complicated.

Amendment put and negatived.

Mr. COWLEY moved the following amendment to follow subsection 6 :—

With respect to agricultural farms the area whereof does not exceed one hundred and sixty acres, the following provision shall have effect:—

If at any time before the expiration of seven years from the commencement of the term of the lease the original lessee dies before he obtains a deed of grant for the land included in his lease, all his right, title, and interest in the said land shall pass to the following persons—

(1) If the lessee have made a will, to the person to whom the same shall thereby be given ;

(2) If the lessee die intestate, to his widow (if any) for her own use, and if he leave no widow then to his personal representatives for the benefit of all his children (if any) in equal shares, and if he leaves no children then for the benefit of his next of kin according to the statutes for the distribution of personal estate.

And the person to whom such right, title, or interest shall pass under the provisions of this section may at any time within two years after the death of the lessee, and without being liable in the meantime to the performance of any conditions other than the payment of the annual instalments, sell the said land for the benefit of the persons beneficially entitled thereto.

He had taken the amendment from the Land Act of 1876. It made provision in the case of the death of an agricultural lessee that the heirs should be able to dispose of the land without fulfilling the conditions of residence. The amendment was necessary, because in many cases men of small means, who had taken up land with the intention of residing on it died ; the widow might not be able to farm the property, and it would be very beneficial to her if she could sell it for the benefit of herself and children, and go into the town to earn a living. The clause spoke for itself, and he would not take up any further time in discussing it.

Mr. REES R. JONES said he should like to know for what reason the mover of the clause wished to benefit the widow at the expense of the children of the man who died. That was contrary to all his notions of how a man should dispose of property. If a man died intestate his children benefited by what he left, but the clause excluded the children.

The HON. SIR S. W. GRIFFITH said the matter was very carefully considered in the Act of 1884, wherein very good provisions were made. The Act provided that if before the five years had expired, after which the selector was entitled to a deed of grant, he died leaving a widow, the widow on fulfilling the conditions should have a deed of grant issued to her, and she should hold the land for the benefit of herself and children. That was the same way in which other property of an intestate was disposed of, and he thought it very fair. In the case of a will the property went to the executors ; and if a man died and left no will and no widow it went to the children. That was the present law, and he did not think it could be improved on. There was no reason for the amendment that he could see, and the only point at all in it was dispensing with the condition of occupation.

Mr. COWLEY : That is all I want.

The HON. SIR S. W. GRIFFITH said that had been a subject of discussion a good many times in the House. It was not novel. Under the clause as proposed a man on the point of death might take up a homestead selection, make a will, and leave the property to a friend or employer. If he died the person to whom it was left got the land for 2s. 6d. an acre without any occupation. A similar clause was called the "erysipelas" clause in New South Wales, and he remembered seeing caricatures in the New South Wales papers representing the inmates of benevolent asylums and hospitals selecting under such a clause.

Mr. COWLEY said it was very strange that the clause did not work such evil under the Act of 1876. He was asking for exactly the same right as the homestead selector had under the Act of 1876. The whole point was that the survivors of the selector should not be compelled to reside on the land. Otherwise the land would be forfeited. It could not be transferred.

The HON. SIR S. W. GRIFFITH : The hon. member is wrong there. It can be transferred.

Mr. ISAMBERT said he did not intend to obstruct, but the clause involved women's rights. There were other difficulties which occasionally arose. If the husband became insane, the wife might select a piece of land, pay rent, and fulfil conditions, yet, being a married woman, she was debarred from holding the land. If the Minister for Lands came across such a case as that he hoped he would act leniently.

Clause put and negatived.

Mr. PLUNKETT said he would propose the omission of the words "one hundred and sixty," for the purpose of inserting the words "three hundred and twenty." His reason for that was that during his election campaign he found that land suitable for homestead selection had all been taken up. The eyes of the country had been picked out. That was further accentuated by the amendment moved by the hon. member for Burrum granting 640 acres as a grazing farm to a selector holding 160 acres within twenty-five miles. That added very materially to the weight of his arguments in introducing his amendment. In the district he represented there was not one selector who could take advantage of the clause as amended last night, as there was no land that could be got within twenty-five miles of any part of the Logan and Albert as a grazing farm. From the support given on both sides of the Committee to the homestead selectors, he did not anticipate there would be very much difficulty in getting his amendment through. He quite admitted that under ordinary circumstances 160 acres was enough of agricultural land for a homestead selection, but the only land now available in his district was so far removed from land and water carriage that there would be great difficulty in a selector being able to make ends meet with a selection of 160 acres. He thought he was not asking too much in proposing that the area should be extended to 320 acres in particular districts. That was all he wanted, as he did not want the amendment to apply in districts where good land was available, but only where the best land had been taken up already. He begged to move the omission of the words "one hundred and sixty," in clause 64 of the principal Act, with a view of inserting the words "three hundred and twenty."

The HON. SIR S. W. GRIFFITH : The question is what amendment is proposed in this Bill, not what amendment is proposed in the principal Act.

The CHAIRMAN : The hon. member is not in order in proposing an amendment in the principal Act in this way.

Mr. PLUNKETT : Then, Sir, I will withdraw the amendment for the present,

The MINISTER FOR LANDS moved the omission of the following words, after the word "thereof," in subsection 7 :—

> "Every applicant shall in his application state the premium (if any) in addition to rent specified in the *Gazette* notice which he is prepared to pay in the event of there being competition for the same area.
>
> "If two or more applications are made at the same time, the applicant who has offered the highest premium shall be entitled to priority.
>
> Provided that if the highest premium offered has been offered by more than one of such last-named applicants the right of priority shall be determined by auction between such applicants in the prescribed manner.
>
> "If the application is withdrawn the premium shall be forfeited.
>
> "The premium shall be added to and be deemed part of the rent of the area."

With a view of inserting the words—

> When two or more applications for the same run or area are lodged simultaneously, the commissioner shall at the time appointed for considering them cause such run or area to be offered at auction to the several applicants and to no other persons, and that one of the applicants who shall make the highest bid for such area or run, and shall pay the amount of the rent to the land agent, shall be declared the successful applicant, and the annual rent payable by him in respect of such area or run shall be the amount so bid by him instead of the sum which would otherwise be payable under subsection one.

Mr. GLASSEY said it might be owing to the dulness of his apprehension, but he would like the amendment made a little more clear. Generally little consideration was given to amendments submitted to the Committee by certain members of it, and they invariably found that when amendments were submitted by those hon. members there was a scramble to get them out of the way as quickly as possible, unless they came from some very prominent member of the Opposition, or some prominent hon. member on the other side in favour with the Government. It should not follow that because an hon. member occupied an unimportant position in the Committee, his amendments should be treated in the way they were. What consideration had been shown for the amendment proposed by the hon. members for Moreton and Albert, and many others? The desire appeared to be to rush through with them, and get them into the waste-paper basket at once, as if the hon. members were of no account. He wished to enter his protest against that kind of treatment, as they were all sent there to do the best they could to further legislation generally, and they should not act blindly and in the dark as to what the effect of any amendment proposed would be.

The HON. SIR S. W. GRIFFITH said he understood the amendment now before the Committee had been, to some extent, discussed at an earlier stage of the Bill. An indirect reference, he thought, had been made to that part of the Bill, and he understood there were conflicting opinions upon the amendment, on the part of those who were more familiar with the subject than he was.

The PREMIER said there had not, he thought, been conflicting opinions on the subject, and the majority were in favour of the amendment as proposed. He did not say he was entirely in favour of it himself, but the opinion of the majority of the Committee was doubtless better than his own, and the matter was one of detail and was not of much consequence.

Mr. O'SULLIVAN said he wished to know whether the clause was proposed to substitute the auction for the lot system?

The PREMIER: Yes; but only with respect to occupation licenses.

Mr. O'SULLIVAN said he was opposed to it, no matter what system of selection it applied to. That matter had been fought out in the early days of the colony, and the people had insisted upon the lot system, and it was the only fair system. The poor man could not contend with the rich man in the auction room, and it was on that account they had to fall back upon the lot system in the past. He was for drawing lots to settle those things in any kind of selection.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS said that on the second reading of the Bill, and also during the discussion in committee on subsection 3 of clause 2, that matter had been fully discussed, and the opinion of the Committee then was, that though that was an undesirable provision to extend to grazing farms, it would be a good alteration in the law relating to occupation licenses. On that occasion he had read a somewhat lengthy list of cases in which the intention of the Act had been most deliberately evaded by applicants for occupation licenses. The scandal culminated in the well-known case at Clermont, where no less than 418 applications were put in for one occupation license, and it was reported by the commissioner that out of the 418 applications there was only one *bonâ fide* application, and the applicant who put that in had to buy the license afterwards from the successful drawer of the lot. In addition to that case there had been a large number of others. At St. Lawrence there had been two occupation areas proclaimed open. For the one there had been ten applications, of which only one was *bonâ fide*, and for the other there had been thirty-eight applications of which only two were *bonâ fide*. At Mackay, out of thirty-five applications only four were *bonâ fide*, and out of fifty-three in another case only four were *bonâ fide*, and so on. In respect to nearly all the occupation licenses which had been offered to the public under the existing law the same thing had occurred; and it was not right that a *bonâ fide* applicant for an occupation license should be liable to be blackmailed to the extent he had been during the last few years. It was now proposed that, in the event of there being more than one applicant, the land should be submitted to auction among the applicants, so that if there was to be any benefit, the State would benefit. As a rule it was not poor men who went in for occupation licenses, but men of some means; and it was a well known fact that a class of persons had sprung up who travelled about, when it was known that an occupation license was proclaimed open, from land court to land court levying blackmail upon the *bonâ fide* applicants. There could be no harm in accepting the amendment, which had been drafted from the practical results of the working of the Act during the last few years.

Mr. BARLOW said that it appeared that blackmailing existed to a great extent in New South Wales and Victoria, and from what the hon. member for Toowoomba had told him it had taken place in Queensland under previous Acts. If a clasher put in an application under that clause the premium would be forfeited, but he did not consider the present proposal preferable, as blackmailing might take place just as much under the auction system. Subsection 4 of clause 77 in the Act of 1884 provided that—

> "The first applicant shall be entitled to the license, and if two or more applications are made at the same time the priority shall be decided by lot in the prescribed manner."

If a man put in a clasher under the proposed 7th subsection, it would be made compulsory that the premium should be forfeited, but black mailing would go on just the same.

Mr. COWLEY said that he had no objection to offer, as he thought the clause would be a good one, and much preferable to dealing with the applications by lot, provided that it allowed that where any selector made an application for a certain piece of land to be thrown open for an occupation license, which had not already been offered for an occupation license, he should have a prior claim to the land; but where land had already been thrown open it should be disposed of at auction.

Amendment agreed to.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS said that on the 6th line he moved the omission of the word "simultaneously," with the view of inserting the words "at the same time," as that would be more in accordance with the wording in similar clauses.

Amendment agreed to.

The HON. SIR S. W. GRIFFITH said that he would like to know if the Government intended to accept with respect to occupation licenses the proviso he had proposed on the previous day with respect to grazing farms. A very slight alteration of words would make it applicable. The hon. member for Herbert had alluded to the proposal—that in the case of a man making application for land which had not been thrown open, his application should have priority.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS said he had no objection to it, as he thought that if it were made applicable to occupation licenses it would be a decided improvement in the Act.

The HON. SIR S. W. GRIFFITH moved that the following proviso be added at the end of the subsection :—

Provided, nevertheless, that when any person makes a request to the Minister that any specified area of land may be declared open for occupation, and it results from the request that the land is so declared open, the Minister shall notify to the commissioner that it was declared open at the request of such person, and if on the day appointed as that on which the land will be open an application for a license is lodged by such person at the same time as applications by other persons, the application of the person by whom the request was made shall be deemed to have been first lodged and shall be entitled to priority accordingly.

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

On subsection 8, as follows :—

"Subsection seven of the last-mentioned section shall be read and construed as if instead of the word 'September' inserted therein the word 'December' had been therein inserted."

The MINISTER FOR LANDS said that under section 77 of the principal Act an applicant from January to July for an occupation license paid a year's rent in advance; if after the 1st July he only paid half a year's rent, which carried him on to December. But in September the annual renewal was due for the next year, which carried him on to the December twelve months following. When a man applied during October, November, or December he could only be charged for half a year's rent, and could not get his renewal until the September following. It was proposed that the renewal should be applied for in December. Under the existing system the Government lost frequently four, five, or six months' rent; the land was held in occupation but they could not command the rent.

The HON. SIR S. W. GRIFFITH said the object of the law as it stood was, that all the pastoral rents should fall due on the same day, and occupation licenses were included in the annual run list, which was found to be a great convenience. Perhaps it might result from a strict interpretation that in the event of an application being made in October, November, or December, the law would be strained a bit. But very few people would apply for occupation licenses during those months, seeing that they would have to pay six months' rent for two months' use. The whole question was merely one of convenience.

The PREMIER said he thought it would be very much better if the payment of all pastoral rents were fixed for the same time; and, with regard to occupation licenses, the straining of the law would be very slight indeed. If the Minister for Lands would accept his suggestion, he would advise him to leave the clause as it stood.

Subsection put and negatived.

Subsection 9, as follows :—

"Applications for licenses under section ninety-eight shall be made to the Minister for Mines."

Passed as printed.

On the motion of the MINISTER FOR LANDS, the CHAIRMAN left the chair, reported progress, and obtained leave to sit again to-morrow.

ADJOURNMENT.

The PREMIER said : Mr. Speaker,—I move that this House do now adjourn.

The HON. SIR S. W. GRIFFITH : said Mr. Speaker,—I understand the first business on the paper to-morrow will be the resumption of the debate on the motion of the hon. member for Herbert, Mr. Cowley, respecting the sugar industry. I think it would be very desirable if some understanding could be come to as to whether the question is to be disposed of to-morrow night or not. I believe everybody would like to see it disposed of, if possible. If there is to be a division, many hon. members would like to be present; if there is to be no division, very likely they will stop away and take a holiday.

Mr. COWLEY said : Mr. Speaker,—A good many members have told me that they wish to speak to-morrow, and I shall certainly want some considerable time to reply. I doubt very much whether we can come to a division to-morrow night. I cannot say any more on the subject.

The MINISTER FOR MINES AND WORKS said : Mr. Speaker,—This motion has now been discussed on several evenings, and I think the hon. gentleman in charge of it should be satisfied with the discussion that has already taken place upon it. His reply should not take such a long time. I am certain that he is capable of saying all he has to say in half an hour, and I think he should make up his mind to close the debate to-morrow night. The number of members who wish to speak cannot be very great, and I think that out of deference to other members who have private business on the paper, the hon. gentleman should try and finish the debate to-morrow night. It is a matter that does not concern the Government in the least.

The PREMIER : I am prepared to pair with the leader of the Opposition.

The HON. SIR S. W. GRIFFITH : Pair! We should vote together.

The MINISTER FOR MINES AND WORKS : It is within the power of the hon. member for Herbert to close the debate to-morrow night if he likes.

Mr. COWLEY said : Mr. Speaker,—If I may be permitted to speak again, I must say that I do not think it is within my power to bring the debate to a close to-morrow night. On the last occasion the debate was adjourned especially out of consideration for the hon. member for South Brisbane, Mr. Jordan, who wished to speak; and I understand that several members

on the other side wish to speak. I do not know what their intentions are; and the subject is such an important one that I think it should not be hurried over.

Question put and passed.

The House adjourned at a quarter to 11 o'clock.