Queensland

Parliamentary Debates
[Hansard]

Legislative Assembly

WEDNESDAY, 22 JUNE 1892

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY.

Wednesday, 22 June, 1892.

Questions. — Question Without Notice: Influx of Chinese from the Northern Territory of South Australia.—Elections Bill: Committee; Recommital. —Copyright (Fine Arts) Registration Bill: Second Reading. — Marsupials Destruction Bill: Second Reading.—Adjournment.

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

QUESTIONS.

Mr. BLACK asked the Chief Secretary—

1. Has any further correspondence on the question of Northern territorial separation been received from the Secretary of State for the Colonies since that laid on the table last session?

2. If so, will he cause the same to be laid on the table of the House?

The CHIEF SECRETARY (Hon. Sir S. W. Griffith) replied—

1. None except a despatch acknowledging the receipt from the Governor of a letter from Mr. W. H. Corfield relating to the inclusion of the district of Winton in the proposed Northern colony.

2. I do not think it necessary to ask for directions to lay this despatch on the table at present.

Mr. LITTLE asked the Secretary for Railways—

If the Bill for the construction of railways by land grants now before the House becomes law, will the Government favourably consider an offer from a company to construct a railway from Granite Creek, on the Cairns and Herberton Railway, towards Georgetown?

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS (Hon. T. O. Unmack) replied—

In the event of the Bill becoming law the Government will give their attentive consideration to any proposals that may be made to them under it, but I am not able to say that any specific proposal will receive favourable consideration until the Government are in possession of it.

QUESTION WITHOUT NOTICE.

INFLUX OF CHINESE FROM THE NORTHERN TERRITORY OF SOUTH AUSTRALIA.

Mr. NELSON said: Mr. Speaker,—I would like to ask the Chief Secretary whether the attention of the Government has been directed to a telegram appearing in the papers this morning with regard to the Chinese invasion, as it is called? I do not wish to read the telegram; but what I would like to know is, whether the facts are as stated in the telegram—that there is an invasion of the Chinese, that they are being driven back to starve, and that they are actually asking the police to shoot them down rather than drive them back?

The CHIEF SECRETARY said: Mr. Speaker,—The attention of the Government has naturally been called to the telegram appearing in this morning's paper, but the statements contained in the paper were, of course, obviously incorrect. The story about the border between Camooweal and Urandangie being lined with Chinese is simply ridiculous to anyone who knows the country. Between thirty and forty Chinese have presented themselves upon the border. The instructions given by the Government to the authorities at Camooweal were to enforce the law; that is to say, if any Chinese came in without paying the poll-tax, to take them before the bench and get an order to send them back to the colony from which they came. That has been done, and they have been taken back to the border and told to go back across the border. If it is true that there is no water on the other side of the border—which I do not believe, from the information the Government are in possession of—if it is true,

then it is, of course, obvious that we cannot shoot the men down, or allow them to starve or perish for want of water.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

The CHIEF SECRETARY: That is perfectly obvious, and the Government do not propose to do anything of the kind. The law of the land must be observed as far as we can; but if it is a question between observing the law and being guilty of inhumanity, we shall prefer to follow the dictates of humanity rather than abide by the strict letter of the law.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

ELECTIONS BILL.

On the Order of the Day being read for the consideration of this Bill in committee,

The CHIEF SECRETARY said: Mr. Speaker,—I move that you do now leave the chair.

Question put and passed.

COMMITTEE.

On clause 1, as follows:—

"This Act may be cited as the Elections Act of 1892, and shall be read and construed with and as an amendment of the Elections Act of 1885 (hereinafter called the principal Act) and the Elections Act of 1885 Amendment Act of 1888, which Acts and this Act may together be cited as the Elections Acts, 1885 to 1892."

Mr. BLACK said that before the Committee proceeded to the consideration of the Bill, attention ought to be drawn to the fact that almost a new Bill had been put into the hands of hon. members for consideration. He had never seen a Bill brought forward in such a mutilated form before. The other day the Elections Bill was read a second time, after having received consideration from hon. members; and he was certainly under the impression that that was the Bill which hon. members were considering. That Bill contained twelve clauses, but now there were introduced for the first time no less than eight new clauses. It seemed to him that the second reading of a Bill was a perfect farce if when they went into Committee what was practically a new Bill was to be presented to them for their consideration.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: I intended to make an explanation in moving the next clause.

Mr. BLACK said it was a matter of principle; it was not a matter to be explained away by the Chief Secretary. It was unfair to hon. members to expect that they would at once consider in Committee an important measure which was of a very much different nature from that which they discussed on the second reading. Two clauses had been struck out of the original Bill, leaving only ten clauses of it, and there were eight new clauses to be discussed; in addition to them there was a whole page of amendments to be proposed by a Government supporter, the hon. member for Ipswich, Mr. Barlow, and there were also new clauses to be introduced by another Government supporter. He would like to have the Speaker's ruling as to whether in a case like that, where the original scope of the Bill was so much departed from, the Government should not withdraw the measure and bring in a fresh Bill embodying their more matured views on the question?

The CHIEF SECRETARY said he had intended in moving the 2nd clause to have made an explanation of the reasons which induced the Government to propose certain amendments which had been circulated. That would have been the strictly regular course; but as the matter had been referred to by the hon. member, he would ask the indulgence of the Committee to make that explanation at once. The principle of the Bill was first thoroughly considered by the Government. Then it was brought down to the House, and its principles were fully debated on the motion for the second reading. During the debate that took place, hon. members on both sides called the attention of the Government to what they conceived to be defects in the details, pointing out a better mode of giving effect to the principle of the Bill. Moreover, one or two hon. members pointed out matters which they considered were not provided for. The first principle of the Bill was to secure that a person claiming to have his name placed on the electoral roll should make a declaration which must be verified by a justice of the peace; and that was provided for in the Bill as it was read a second time. But it was pointed out that some confusion might arise from the fact of the Bill merely directing amendments to be made in the form of claim now used; and it appeared to the Government that it would be more convenient, instead of prescribing by the Bill what amendments should be made in the form of claim, to set out a new form of claim embodying all the changes intended to be made. In so far as it was proposed that it should be in the form of answers to a number of questions, the amendment was new; but that was only a matter of detail. It was pointed out on the second reading that there might be some difficulty with regard to getting a justice of the peace to certify to the declaration, and that it would be an improvement to prescribe certain questions to be put to the claimant. That appeared to him to be a sensible suggestion, and one which would remove all possibility of doubt or confusion. It was said further that many claims were rejected because the particulars with regard to residence were not sufficiently stated; also that many claims were rejected because the particulars of naturalisation were not properly stated. It was proposed, therefore, instead of merely taking the alterations proposed to be made on the Bill as originally introduced, to set out a new form of claim embodying the desired alterations. The amendments numbered "3" and "4" were merely transcripts of clauses of the present law embodying the alterations proposed to be made. The hon. member for Mackay ordinarily asserted that that was the proper thing to do; but now the Government proposed to do it the hon. member objected.

Mr. BLACK: I object to a new Bill like this being brought in without time being given for its consideration.

The CHIEF SECRETARY said it was not a new Bill. The subject matter was not new, at all events.

Mr. BLACK: The amendments are greater than the original Bill.

The CHIEF SECRETARY said that the principle was the same; the length made no difference. The clauses numbered "3" and "4" were exactly the same as the clauses in the Act of 1886 with the verbal alterations which were directed to be made by the Bill as printed. No. 5 was merely a verbal alteration of clause 2 of the Bill——

Mr. BLACK: We never heard about State school teachers in connection with the Bill.

The CHIEF SECRETARY said the hon. member might allow him to finish the sentence. It verbally altered the 2nd clause of the Bill, and embodied a suggestion made in the course of the debate to allow other persons besides justices of the peace to attest declarations. The amended clause 6 was the same as the original clause 3 with a similar verbal alteration. Then it was proposed

to add some new provisions which had been suggested in the course of the debate, and which were being suggested by hon. members who had circulated amendments. Those amendments, however, did not in the opinion of the Government sufficiently carry out the idea suggested, which was certainly a good one, and they had therefore framed amendments to meet the case.

Mr. POWERS: What clauses are those amendments in?

The CHIEF SECRETARY said they were in clauses 10 and 11.

Mr. DRAKE: There is nothing here to carry out the amendments of the hon. member for Ipswich, Mr. Barlow.

The CHIEF SECRETARY said the Government did not propose to adopt the amendments suggested by the hon. member for Ipswich. But he thought it was certainly conducive to the despatch of business that when amendments were suggested in the course of a second reading debate, and the Government approved of those amendments, they should put them in such a form as would be harmonious with the Bill. He could have moved all those amendments without giving notice, but that would be very inconvenient. But there was absolutely not a single new idea in the amendments proposed; they were all suggested on the second reading of the Bill. His idea of the duty of the Government under those circumstances was that when they accepted suggested amendments it was desirable that they should give the Committee an opportunity of seeing the form in which it was proposed they should be made. There was also an omission in the Bill which was not pointed out on the second reading, and it was proposed to remedy that. The Bill, in the form in which it was read a second time, required a person objected to to make good his claim, but there was no provision requiring that his attention should be called to that fact. It was only right that if a man was required to attend and prove his claim he should be told that he had to do so; and that omission, therefore, was supplied in the amendments. If the amendments made a radical alteration in the principle of the Bill, he quite agreed that the Bill should be withdrawn and another substituted. But when amendments to give effect to arguments used on the second reading did not make such an alteration in the Bill, and they were accepted by the Government, it was certainly regular to introduce them in the form proposed. Hon. members who did not want to see the business despatched would, of course, object to the proposal; but he hoped that hon. members who wished to see the Bill passed would give the Government their assistance in making the measure as good as they could.

Mr. NELSON said he did not rise to take objection to the amendments in the details of the Bill, but more particularly to call attention to the irregular practice into which the House had fallen. He agreed with the hon. member for Mackay, Mr. Black, that the second reading of a Bill was becoming a farce, a useless proceeding, and a waste of time. They asserted nothing by passing the second reading of a Bill. According to the ideas of some people, on a second reading they affirmed the principle of a Bill, which was supposed to be contained in the title of the Bill. But look at the title of that Bill—"A Bill to further amend the Elections Acts." What principle was there in that title? It gave scope for any clause amending the existing Elections Acts; there was no specified direction in which the amendments should go. His contention had always been that in approving of the second reading of a Bill they were approving of the general provisions contained in the Bill. But hon. members in discussing the second reading of a Bill frequently said, as one hon. member after another did on the previous evening, that they approved of the second reading, but were going to have the Bill amended in committee. That seemed to him to be absurd, because in committee they were not supposed to make any material alteration in the Bill, but simply to amend small details. But hon. members seemed to think that when once a Bill had passed its second reading they could knock it into shape in committee.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. H. Tozer): The same as with your Factories Bill.

Mr. NELSON said he knew nothing about a Factories Bill; he never had anything to do with a Factories Bill. But even if he had, he did not see that that was any argument. Because he was a sinner that was no reason why others should follow his example. The matter he was discussing was one on which he knew his ideas were rather stringent, but he thought it would conduce to the advantage and dignity of the Committee if they had a more rigid line laid down. As he said before, he was not going to object to the amendments in the Bill at that stage. The proper time for any objection to be taken to the mode of introducing those amendments was before the Speaker left the chair, and his ruling should have been taken on the subject. But, as they were discussing the matter from an educational point of view, he had no hesitation in quoting a good authority on the question—not for the purpose of obstructing the Bill which he wished to see go forward, but for the purpose of getting some light with regard to what the second reading of a Bill really meant Did it mean anything at all? The case he was going to refer to occurred in the House of Commons on the 16th August, 1889. There was a Bill brought before the House by the Government called the Tithe-Rent Charge Recovery Bill. The same thing happened as had happened in connection with the Bill before that Committee. When the discussion on the second reading took place a number of suggestions were made, and the Government on considering them decided to adopt several, and tabled a large number of amendments in the Bill, as had been done by the Government in the Bill before that Committee. The cases were exactly analogous. Attention was drawn to the matter in the House of Commons, and the following was the report of what took place:—

"THE TITHE-RENT CHARGE RECOVERY BILL.

"Sir W. Harcourt (Derby): I ask leave to submit to you, Sir, a question relating to the Bill which stands first on the order paper to-day—namely, the Tithe-Rent Charge Recovery Bill. You are aware of the amendments which it is proposed to introduce into this Bill, and I would ask you what is the practice and the rule of this House with respect to the introduction of amendments of a very extensive character into a Bill during its passage through committee. Perhaps I may be allowed to refer to the authority we all refer to on these occasions. I have here Sir Erskine May's book on Parliamentary Practice, in which it is stated that—

"'When a Bill has been committed *pro formâ* it is not regular to introduce without full explanation amendments of so extensive a character as virtually to constitute it a different Bill from that which has been read a second time by the House and committed. In 1856, the Partnership Amendment Bill having been committed *pro formâ*, it was extensively amended, but no amendment was inserted which it was not clearly competent for the Committee to entertain, yet when an objection was urged that it had become a new Bill, the Minister in charge of it, while denying the alleged extent of the amendments, consented to withdraw the Bill. When the amendments affect the principles of the Bill, the more regular and convenient course is to withdraw the Bill and present another.'

That is what Sir Erskine May says. I observe that on the occasion here referred to, Mr. Henley, a member of great experience in the practice of this House, objected to the introduction of extensive amendments affecting the principle of the Bill. Mr. Lowe said that—

"'The hon. member for Oxfordshire had given notice of his intention to move that the Bill should be rejected, on the ground that there had been an abuse of the forms of the House by the practical substitution of a new Bill.'

Then Mr. Henley said that—

"'He felt that the new clauses had essentially altered the character of the measure, and that much inconvenience would result if the principles of what was really a new Bill were discussed in committee.'

Accordingly that Bill was withdrawn in order that a new Bill might be introduced. I would now ask you, Sir, kindly to say whether when amendments are of so extensive a character as practically to constitute a new Bill and to introduce essentially new principles into a Bill, it is not the rule and practice of this House that the Bill should be withdrawn, in order that a new measure may be introduced in its place?"

Then he asked the Speaker's ruling, and the Speaker gave the following ruling on the question:—

"Mr. Speaker: The right hon. member was good enough to give me notice that he would put this question to me, and as a very important principle is involved, I propose with the leave of the House to go fully into the matter. I will first cite two precedents which, if they do not bear immediately upon this question, certainly illustrate the principle involved in it—the precedents of 1873 and 1878. In 1873 the University Tests (Dublin) Bill was introduced, and after leave had been given the measure was very much changed—so changed that the Speaker, having been appealed to, held that the Bill then before the House was not the same Bill for which leave had been given, and that Bill was accordingly withdrawn. In 1878 there was another Bill, the Hypothec (Scotland) Bill. When the order for the second reading was read, objection was taken that the Bill had been so transformed as virtually to amount to a new Bill, and the Speaker then from the chair ruled that, inasmuch as the Bill was a different Bill from that for the introduction of which leave had been given, a new Bill ought to be substituted, and the leave of the House should be asked to introduce it. The House will be good enough to observe that those are two cases of objection taken before the second reading, when the alteration had been introduced on the sole authority of the member who had introduced it, and not by a committee of the House; but the measure now before us—namely, the Tithe-Rent Charge Recovery Bill—is in a different position, for it has got into committee. If I correctly gather the feeling of the House, it is that I should give a ruling with reference to this particular Bill. I wish expressly to say that, in answering before a question upon this subject, I desired to safeguard, as I do now desire to safeguard, the rights and the jurisdiction of the Chairman of Committees. I do not think it is proper that an appeal should be made from his decision to mine, and the House must run the risk of any collision of opinion, which, however, I may say very respectfully I do not think is very likely to occur. I now come to the case cited by the right hon. gentleman as a precedent—namely, the Partnership Amendment Bill of 1856. That Bill was committed *pro formâ*, and a great number of amendments were proposed in committee, which so changed the Bill as to transform it into an entirely new Bill. The objection was taken, as the right hon. gentleman truly says, by Mr. Henley that the Bill was entirely different, and that it would be inconvenient to discuss in committee clauses the principle of which had not been affirmed at the stage of second reading."

The CHIEF SECRETARY: Hear, hear!

Mr. NELSON: That was the whole point. The Chief Secretary argued just now that the amendment in the Bill before the Committee did not affect the principle, but it was merely a matter of words, as the same ideas were there.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: Exactly; the same principles.

Mr. NELSON: The Speaker went on to say—

"That, I think, is a most powerful and cogent argument. Now the present Bill—the Tithe-Rent Charge Recovery Bill—having been in committee for some time, new clauses have been put down upon the paper by the Government; and, on comparing the Bill as it would stand with these new clauses embodied in it with the original Bill—that, namely, for the introduction of which leave was given, and which was read a second time—I am bound to say that I see a complete difference between them. In fact, nothing of the old remains except the saving clause, the interpretation clause, and, I think, two or three other lines at most. In the circumstances it seems to me that the Bill would assume such a shape that it would differ largely from that for the introduction of which leave was given. The right hon. gentleman asks me what is the rule and practice of the House? I hope I am not afraid of taking the responsibility upon myself; but in this case I do not wish to travel beyond the proper responsibility which attaches to me, and I express the practice of the House rather than the rule of the House, if I may distinguish between them. The practice of the House has unquestionably been, when a Bill has been so transformed, as in my opinion this Bill has been, that a new Bill should be introduced, that leave should be given to introduce it, and that the second reading stage should be gone through, when the general principles of a measure as distinguished from its component clauses can be defined. I express my opinion upon this point without the least hesitation, and I desire to affirm that opinion very strongly. Having said this much, I think I ought now to leave the matter in the hands of the House and the Government. I could not stop the Bill on the point of order, as constituting a new Bill; but I do unhesitatingly affirm that the practice of the House has been, in a case of this kind, to withdraw the old Bill, and then to introduce a new Bill in the amended form."

The consequence was that the Bill was withdrawn. The leader of the House after that ruling immediately moved that the Order of the Day for the committal of the Bill should be discharged from the paper, and the Bill was withdrawn. Those proceedings, however, took place before the Speaker, and he (Mr. Nelson) believed that the proper time to raise such a question was while the Speaker was in the chair. As he had said, he was not going to take objection to the course proposed; but he wished to enter his protest against the practice they had got into. When they affirmed the second reading of a Bill they should affirm something, but according to their practice, so far as he could see, they affirmed nothing at all. Some hon. members appeared to think that having passed the second reading of a Bill they could, when they got it into committee, alter it in any way they wished. That was not so. If that was to be the practice, then the second reading of a Bill would be a worthless form, involving a mere waste of time, as the hon. member for Mackay pointed out. He hoped something would be done to establish a better practice, as it seemed to him a mere waste of time to discuss a Bill on its second reading if, when they got it into committee, they could alter every line of it.

The CHIEF SECRETARY said the hon. gentleman's argument destroyed his position altogether. The hon. gentleman asked: What was the object of the second reading of a Bill? It was to discuss the principles of the Bill, and affirm or disapprove of them. What was the object of the committal of a Bill but to give effect to the principles affirmed on the second reading, with such amendments and corrections as might commend themselves to the Committee? If no amendments or corrections were to be made in the machinery provided in the Bill for giving effect to its principles, what would be the use of going into committee upon it at all? The hon. gentleman had proved too much, and had given very good reasons for a second reading of Bills. On the second reading the principles were discussed, and amendments or improvements in the machinery were suggested, and it was the function of the Committee to assist in making the improvements suggested on the second reading, but in no way to depart from the principles of the Bill. Of course when the principle of a Bill was to be entirely changed it ought to be reintroduced. In the case referred to by the hon. member, upon which the Speaker of the House of Commons gave his ruling, there was nothing left but the

preamble and a saving clause. In fact, it was a new scheme altogether. It had always been the practice of that Assembly, under similar circumstances, to withdraw the Bill and introduce a new one.

Mr. NELSON: In that case the amendments only affected one part of the Bill.

The CHIEF SECRETARY said from what the hon. gentleman had read he understood that there was only the preamble and a saving clause left. When the principle of the Bill was practically the same, the amendments only substituting other words, the course now proposed was the proper one. It was a singular thing that the Bills most amended in committee had been Election Bills. He remembered one brought in in 1879, in connection with which there were three entirely different schemes submittted in committee. The hon. gentleman had not raised a point of order. In fact, it was not a point of order; it was a matter of practice. The object of the amendments was to give effect to the suggestions made by various hon. members during the second reading of the Bill, and that was the correct practice.

Mr. NELSON said under the circumstances the position of the Chairman was one of grave responsibility. It was his duty to keep members in order, and to decide whether amendments were relevant to the question before the Committee. The title of the Bill was "A Bill to further amend the Elections Acts," and he would ask where were they to look for the principle of it? If the Chairman called a member to order for being irrelevant how could he decide whether he was relevant or not, or whether an amendment moved was relevant or not.

The COLONIAL TREASURER (Hon. Sir T. McIlwraith): Read the Bill first and then the amendment.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: Exercise his reasoning powers.

Mr. NELSON: The title of the Bill is to further amend the Elections Acts.

The COLONIAL TREASURER: You will not find the principle of it in the title.

Mr. NELSON said what he wanted to know was where to get the principle from.

An HONOURABLE MEMBER: In the Bill itself.

Mr. NELSON said it seemed to him that any hon. member could move any amendment whatever, so long as it had something to do with the Elections Acts.

The HON. B. D. MOREHEAD said he agreed with a good deal that had fallen from the hon. member who had just sat down, and thought the Government would not be wise to press the Bill in committee that night. The Bill, which he presumed was a well-digested measure of the Government, consisted of twelve clauses, and he now had placed in his hands a lot of amendments, to be proposed by the introducer of the measure, actually larger than the Bill itself. He thought the Committee should not have such a number of amendments sprung upon them as a surprise. He was not at all opposed to the Bill; on the contrary, he should do all he could to get it through; but he thought hon. members ought to have time to consider the proposed amendments and see how they fitted into the Bill, and also how they would affect the existing statutes referred to by them. It had always been the practice when exception was taken to certain clauses to postpone them, but in the present instance the amendments would alter the Bill from top to bottom. He therefore thought hon. members ought to have time to consider them.

The CHIEF SECRETARY said the hon. gentleman was not present when he explained at length the nature of the amendments, and pointed out that they merely expressed in other words the principles of the Bill in such a form as to give effect to suggestions of hon. members made during the debate on the second reading. There was really no alteration in substance, the amendments simply expressing in more convenient language what was desired. The hon. member for Murilla, Mr. Nelson, seemed to think that the title of the Bill should be an exhaustive statement of the contents of the Bill.

Mr. NELSON: No, no!

The CHIEF SECRETARY said from the hon. gentleman's argument he would appear to think so. He had objected to the title of the Bill—"A Bill to further amend the Elections Acts"—but he (the Chief Secretary) would point out that in the last volume of the English statutes, which he had before him, there were a large number of Acts which had similar titles. For instance, "An Act to amend the law relating to the custody of children," "An Act to amend the law of technical education," "An Act to amend the law relating to seed potato supply," "An Act to amend the Merchandise Marks Act," "An Act to amend the law relating to Savings Banks," and a number of others. He would also point out that nearly every one of those Acts—between seventy and eighty—was without a preamble. The hon. gentleman's argument was, therefore, beside the question. The Government were following exactly the practice of the House of Commons. His own idea was to go into committee *pro formâ*, formally make the amendments, and then re commit the Bill with the amendments in it.

Mr. POWERS: That will reopen the whole question.

The CHIEF SECRETARY said he had no doubt that hon. members who did not approve of the Bill would like to see it go through the ordeal of a second reading again. But he did not want to do that. There could not be the least objection to incorporate the amendments as a matter of form, and then recommitting the Bill in its amended form. That was a practice sometimes followed, and it was perfectly regular. He wanted to get on with the business of the House. They were told that the Bill was going to be obstructed, and that was why he was anxious not to lose time.

Mr. NELSON: The obstruction will not come from me.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: Not from the hon. member, of course.

Mr. NELSON said the discussion, so far as it had gone, would be useful to the House. All he wanted was information. He wanted to arrive at the principle of the measure, which could not be ascertained from the title; there was no preamble to it.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: That was ascertained on the second reading.

Mr. NELSON said there was no doubt that on the second reading one hon. member after another all through the House got up and said they approved of the principle of the Bill. But since then the Bill had been entirely altered by the amendments brought in by the Government, and he wanted to know where the principle of the Bill was now. He desired to assist the Chairman with regard to relevancy.

Mr. DRAKE said he had not heard very clearly the conversation that had been taking place between the leading members of the Committee; but he took it for granted that the facts they had stated were correct, and that the arguments they had used were sound. There was a great deal to be said against rushing legislation

of that kind through the House. The Bill was one to amend an Act amending another Act, so that actually there were three measures incorporated into one, and that made it very much more difficult to understand what was going on in Committee, especially when they had before them three or four pages of amendments. No doubt to the Chief Secretary the thing was as simple as possible, because the hon. gentleman had taken up the position that if any suggested amendments commended themselves to the Government they would carry them by their majority, and it was no use talking at all. On the other hand, if an amendment did not commend itself to the Government, it was not worth while talking about it, because it had no chance of being carried. He thought hon. members ought to take upon themselves more responsibility in connection with the work of legislation than they did. In addition to the four sheets of suggested amendments before them, there was another amendment, drawn up by the hon. member for Ipswich, Mr. Barlow, which had disappeared. The Chief Secretary had accounted for the disappearance of that amendment by saying that the Government were not going to accept it.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: I did not say that. I said that was the reason why it did not appear among the Government amendments.

Mr. DRAKE said that when he asked for a copy of it he was told that it had been withdrawn from circulation. In his opinion that amendment to the Bill was the most valuable one that had been suggested, with the exception, perhaps, of some of those suggested by the hon. member for Burrum; and he believed it would have met with the approval of the Committee if discussed solely on its merits. He was asked, soon after the Bill was read a second time, to draft an amendment to carry out the view suggested by the hon. member for Ipswich, but he found next morning that that hon. member had saved him the trouble by drafting an amendment himself in a much more able way than he (Mr. Drake) could have drafted it. If the hon. member, Mr. Barlow, did not move that amendment he should feel bound, if no other hon. member did so, to move it himself if he could get a copy of it. It was not a question whether the Government approved of it or not. The members of the Committee should take the bit between their teeth; and if they thought that the amendment would commend itself to the people of the country, they should insist upon its being carried. As to the proposed procedure with regard to the Bill, he was of opinion that a short delay, to enable hon. members to understand exactly how the suggested amendments would affect the Bill, would be decidedly advantageous.

Mr. POWERS said he was satisfied that no member of the Committee could thoroughly see the drift of the amendments, having only received them that morning, unless they had had nothing else to do. At present he himself did not understand the effect the amendments would have. He could quite understand that the Chief Secretary did not wish to have another second-reading debate on the Bill. Although an opponent of the measure, he was not now speaking from that point of view; but he should like, before the Bill was proceeded with, to see what effect the suggested amendments would have on the Elections Bill and the Elections Amendment Act.

The CHIEF SECRETARY said he had already suggested a plan; but he would try to make himself more clearly understood. He would ask the Committee to agree to the amendments merely as a matter of form, without in any way committing itself to them. Then the Bill could be reported from Committee in its amended form, and then ordered by the House to be recommitted for discussion in the ordinary way. That was what he had desired to do in the first instance. The Bill would be recommitted at a subsequent sitting in its complete form, and the Committee would then consider it without members having committed themselves to anything. That was entirely in accordance with parliamentary practice, although not often adopted in this colony. He thought it would be the most convenient course, and he should prefer it to any other.

Mr. BARLOW said perhaps he might be allowed to say, as he had nothing else to do but study Acts of Parliament——

The HON. B. D. MOREHEAD: I am sorry for you.

Mr. BARLOW: That there was really nothing whatever in the new Bill but an extension and amplification of the other one. In the 2nd clause there was a very proper saving clause. Then the schedules were exactly the same as the schedules under the amended Act of 1886, except that a provision in the South Australian Act had been very properly adopted, putting it in the form of question and answer, instead of leaving it an open form. Then in the 4th clause there was another extract from a colonial Elections Act. He was not sure whether it was from the South Australian or Tasmanian Act, but it was a very popular thing to put those cautions in.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: They are the Act of 1886.

Mr. BARLOW said they were, but in another form. They were now put in a more intelligible, clear, and proper form. Then there was a very valuable amendment in the 5th clause, that a justice of the peace, electoral registrar, or head teacher of a school, might attest the declaration. There was nothing more new except in the 10th amendment—there was an adaptation of a suggestion thrown out on the second reading that the objections should be advertised.

Mr. BLACK: What about the transfer of votes clause?

Mr. BARLOW said that was not in the Government amendments. The 12th clause was very slightly varied, and it was a very great improvement, inasmuch as it compelled the objector to give notice to the person objected to of what would be the consequences of his not taking action. The rest were all verbal amendments. Of course he could not pretend to be an authority on the subject; but he could assure the hon. gentleman who had taken the objection that, as far as he saw, it was simply the Bill in another form, and decidedly improved.

The CHIEF SECRETARY said as he understood the Committee approved of the course he proposed, he would move the amendments formally; he would then move that the Chairman leave the chair, and the Bill would go into Committee again on another occasion.

Mr. ISAMBERT said as the Government intended to make a considerable change in the Bill as drafted, he would ask them to go one step further and meet the wishes of every member of the House by providing for the purity of elections, and taking the matter out of the hands of the contending parties. That might be done very easily. If the compilation of the rolls was entrusted to the Registrar-General, to see that every man entitled to vote was put on the roll, it would improve matters very much. He believed he could suggest a method that perhaps would entail a few expenses, but they might be saved in other ways. As it was at present, there were two political parties in the country. Formerly the parties were the Conservatives and the Liberals. Now, the Liberal party had

disappeared, and another party had taken its place. They might call the parties the patriotic league and the labour party. They were the two parties that would contend, and he believed both would try and stuff the rolls. If, along with the annual ratepapers, another paper was sent round compelling every man to give full particulars of his household, just as in the census-papers, that could be done without extra expense. The papers could then be handed over to the Registrar-General, and those who were entitled to it should be put upon the electoral roll as a right, and not as the result of political partisanship. If there was any expense attached to that, it might be saved by doing away with the advertising altogether, as it cost a lot of money. For instance, if copies of the revised rolls were placed in every schoolhouse, post, telegraph, and railway office and public institution, where everybody could see them, there would be no necessity for advertising. That would save a lot of money and produce purer electoral rolls. He was sure if the Government proposed such a system there was not one member in the House who would oppose it.

Mr. O'SULLIVAN said he had down in his notes just the very idea that the hon. member who had just sat down had referred to. He thought it was a great blot upon the whole Bill that nobody was made responsible for striking names off the rolls. He had suggested on the second reading making the registrar or somebody else responsible for taking men's names off the rolls. It had been a constant thing to see certain names on an electoral roll, and then, without any revision taking place, they suddenly disappeared. Nobody was responsible, and nobody knew how those names got off the roll.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: This Bill will remedy that to a great extent.

Mr. O'SULLIVAN said he did not think there was a single member in the Committee who would object to making an honest Bill, and he hoped before the Bill got out of Committee the impression would be left that it was directed against no party.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: Hear, hear!

Mr. O'SULLIVAN said if that was the intention nobody would find fault with it.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: That is the intention of the Government.

Mr. O'SULLIVAN said with regard to the remarks of the Chief Secretary, it was a very simple thing to dovetail the amendments. He was quite sure it would take him (Mr. O'Sullivan) a week to dovetail them, and then he would not understand them. The great impediment to the making of an honest electoral roll would be the insisting upon having the signatures of magistrates. Why would not the signature of a schoolmaster be sufficient, as suggested by the hon. member for Rosewood?

An HONOURABLE MEMBER: That is in the amendments.

Mr. O'SULLIVAN said he had a letter in his pocket which he received that day, stating that there were eighteen men desiring to have their names on the roll, but that there was no magistrate within twenty or thirty miles, and they could not afford the time to go to him. Many cases of that kind would occur throughout the country, and he hoped the matter would be seen to, because he believed it was really the desire of the Committee to prevent any rolls being "Bulcocked" in future. He would call the attention of the Chief Secretary to one defect in the Bill that he had referred to when previous Bills had been before them, and that was that the police were to be kept off the rolls. There was a time in their history when there might have been some reason for keeping those men off the rolls; but now they were an intelligent body of men, and the Chief Secretary must acknowledge that they were not likely to become labour candidates. They had been trained, they were quite aristocratic in their ways, and a roll with their names upon it would be a credit to the colony. The reason why they had been kept off the roll in the past was on account of their belonging to a certain nationality; but that was not the case now. They had enlisted men from all parts of the world, and there was a lot of the native youth amongst them, who had gone into the force probably because they were great horsemen and bushmen. Since the establishment of voting by ballot they had never meddled with elections at all, and there was no necessity for them at the polling places. There was another matter he would refer to, and that was that sometimes the names of men of property were left off the rolls when they had been away from the colony for a short time, and on their return they might be too late for the revision court. In such cases there was no immediate means by which they could obtain the right to vote. If the name of a man who was entitled to a vote was left off the roll through his absence, or sickness, or mistake, why could he not go to the police court and have his name put back there and then? He had had to put the name of a gentleman on the roll every year for five years, and on one occasion he had to fight the bench and render himself liable for contempt of court to get his own rights. There were so many amendments to be considered by the Committee that they looked to him like the Devil in a gale of wind, and he could not put them together. They should really have a week or two to try and understand them. He should assist the Government in passing the Bill through committee, particularly if it were possible to extend the franchise to the police.

Mr. McMASTER said the plan suggested by the hon. member for Rosewood could never be introduced into the Bill, because that hon. member did not know how the ratepapers were distributed by local authorities. The ratepapers only went out once a year. Some municipalities used to send them out twice a year, but since the new Valuation Act came into force they only sent them out once. If the hon. members for Rosewood and Stanley wished to disfranchise people and prevent their being enrolled except once a year, they would do it in the manner they had suggested. The hon. member for Stanley said he wanted them put on the roll the moment they arrived in the colony.

Mr. O'SULLIVAN: I said nothing of the kind.

Mr. McMASTER said he understood the hon. member to say that if a man was away from the colony, and his name was omitted from the roll by reason of his absence, he should be entitled to have his name put back the moment he returned. He said some such persons might be freeholders.

Mr. O'SULLIVAN said what he stated was that a freeholder might leave the district for some reason; he might be in England or one of the colonies, or he might be sick and unable to attend the revision court. In such cases he should be able to get his name back on the roll at once. He did not mean that a man just coming into the colony should have a vote.

Mr. McMASTER said what he understood the hon. gentleman to mean was that if a freeholder took a trip to England, and was away two or three years, and his name was omitted from the roll, he should have the privilege of being enrolled the moment he returned, because he was a property-holder.

Mr. O'SULLIVAN: No; because he was on the roll before he went away.

Mr. McMASTER said that might be very convenient, and might not do a great deal of harm; but men who had only residence qualifications would have to wait for six months. But he did not rise to take exception to that, because it would not be introduced into the Bill; he rose to point out to the hon. member for Rosewood that it would be impossible to get people's names on the roll if they relied only upon the assessment papers. At present any person could get his name on the roll once a quarter if he had been a resident for six months. Some hon. members had suggested that the residence qualification should be reduced to three months; but a man would not be able to get his name on except once a year if it was only done when the assessment papers of the local authorities were sent out.

Mr. BARLOW said that he could perhaps give some little information with regard to the practice in Victoria and Tasmania. The clerks of the divisional boards, or whatever might be the name applied to the local authorities, at certain times, before the sitting of the revision court in the end of the year which made up the roll for the following year, sent to the registrar a list of the assessments on all the properties. That was put on the roll as a matter of course, with all the real freeholding electors; and it was not a bit of use anyone trying to knock a freeholder off, because, if they did, as long as he was on the assessment roll his name reappeared as soon as the succeeding copy of the divisional board roll was sent in. The consequence was that in those two colonies no freeholder needed to trouble himabout his vote, for it was put on as a matter of course, and there it remained as long as he was assessed in regard to that property and remained on the rate-book.

Mr. GLASSEY said that he understood the remarks of the hon. member for Rosewood, and also of the hon. member for Stanley were to this effect—that the votes belonged to individuals as a right after they had resided a certain length of time in an electorate, whether they possessed property or not, and that the Government should put in motion some machinery whereby those votes would be secured to the individuals to whom they belonged. The hon. member for Rosewood put the matter very clearly, and he entirely agreed with that hon. member that in order to take the registration out of the hands of contending parties and factions, and in order that the rolls of the colony should be as pure as possible, it should be the work of Government officials, who, being employed by the Government, would have no party interests to serve. That was a suggestion worthy of consideration by the Chief Secretary. He thought it was the duty of the Committee to see that each person who was entitled to a vote should have that vote, and that those who were not entitled to have votes should not have them. He thought he had had as much experience in those matters as most hon. members; and although he had no wish that a man should have more than one vote, he certainly thought that every man ought to have a vote. It would be much better for all if the Government would put into motion some machinery by which each person's name should be registered when he was entitled to a vote; and he wished that the Government would take the work out of the hands of contending factions altogether. He would support a proposal of that kind, and he did not think any other proposal could be made which would cause such general satisfaction to the country. He hoped the Chief Secretary would take the suggestion into consideration, seeing the Bill was to be recommitted. From the tone of the debate on the second reading of the Bill he felt sure that a considerable number, if not a majority, of hon. members would approve of such a proposal, which would enable every man to discharge his duty as a citizen in a proper way, and not be disfranchised as some were in some cases. In all cases he would like to see that no one had more than one vote.

Mr. SAYERS said that the whole question was surrounded by a great many difficulties, and no doubt they had all different ideas as to how those difficulties could be surmounted. The arguments of the hon. member for Rosewood were wrong with regard to the making up of the roll from the ratepayers' list or from a yearly census. He would take the case of his own electorate, or Gympie, or Croydon. At present the revision court sat in November, when names were either put on or struck off the roll for the ensuing year. Well, a large number of ratepayers might have gone to another district. Under the old scheme their names would be put upon the roll as a matter of fact, although 500 or 600 of them might have gone to some other goldfield during the year, and their names would be on the roll for an electorate where they would not be able to vote. The only way of dealing with that would be to have electoral rights. But electoral rights cost money; and although they only cost 1s., unfortunately many people would not pay even that amount for them. They had tried that system, and the electoral rights had been open to fraud. He knew of people who had taken out electoral rights, and who on leaving the district or the colony had left their rights with somebody else, who voted under their names at different polling-places. So that there was hardly any system which could be devised which would not be open to fraud. He would like to see every elector in the colony have a vote, and, if possible—though it was not possible—to see no one left off the roll. He did not like the Bill as first introduced, but he approved of the amendment proposed by the Chief Secretary, that the head teacher in each State school should be allowed to witness the papers, as well as the electoral registrar and a justice of the peace. He would even go further and put in the postmasters and telegraph masters.

Mr. BARLOW: An amendment is proposed to that effect by the hon. member for Burrum.

Mr. SAYERS said that no harm would be done, because if those officers committed any fraud they could be got at. The amendments put before the Committee, and the alteration of the Bill, would meet the wishes of a good many who had objected to the Bill as it at first stood.

Mr. ISAMBERT said the hon. member for Fortitude Valley had objected to his proposals as not being liberal.

Mr. ALAND said he rose to a point of order. He thought the hon. member was not discussing the 1st clause of the Bill; and he would ask the Chairman's ruling as to whether the hon. member was in order.

Mr. FOXTON, speaking to the point of order, said he understood from the Chief Secretary that the Bill was to be committed *pro formâ*. He did not know whether that formal committal was now being proceeded with, but it seemed to him that they had entered on a discussion which might last for a week.

The CHAIRMAN said: The question before the Committee is that clause 1, as read, stand part of the Bill. On that a question was raised as to a matter of practice, and from that the discussion has drifted into questions concerning amendments which have been circulated, clauses of the Bill, and proposals which are neither in the amendments nor in the Bill itself. I do not think the hon. member for Rosewood is in order in discussing the question he has raised.

The HON. B. D. MOREHEAD said he understood that there was to be a committal of the Bill *pro formâ*, and that there would be ample opportunity of discussing the clauses afterwards.

Mr. GLASSEY said he presumed that in passing all the clauses formally hon. members would not be committing themselves to the principle in any way.

The CHIEF SECRETARY said he thought it was understood that it was perfectly formal, and that the whole matter would be discussed in detail afterwards.

Clause 1 put and passed.

Clauses 2 and 3 put and negatived.

On the motion of the CHIEF SECRETARY, the following new clause was inserted, to follow clause 1 of the Bill :—

The fourth and fifth sections of the Elections Act of 1885 Amendment Act of 1886 are hereby repealed, and the provisions of the four next following sections of this Act are substituted for them ; but such repeal shall not affect the validity of any claim which has been heretofore delivered or sent to an electoral registrar by any person, if such claim shows that the claimant is entitled to be registered as an elector.

On the motion of the CHIEF SECRETARY, the following new clause was inserted, to follow the clause last passed :—

A person claiming to have his name inserted in any electoral roll may deliver his claim or send it by post to the proper electoral registrar for the district in the roll for which he claims to have his name inserted.

The claim must be in the following form or to the like effect, and must set forth, in the form of answers to the questions contained in it, sufficient facts to show that the claimant is entitled to be registered :—

THE ELECTIONS ACTS, 1885 TO 1892.

Claim.

To the electoral registrar of the [division in the] electoral district of .

I hereby give you notice that I claim to have my name inserted in the electoral roll for the electoral district of , my name and qualification being as appears by the answers to the following questions :—

(1.) What is your Christian name and surname?
(2.) What is your age?
(3.) What is your occupation?
(4.) What is your place of abode ?
(5.) What are the particulars of your qualification?
(6.) Are you a natural-born British subject?
(7.) If you are not a natural-born British subject, have you been naturalised for six months?
(8.) Are you registered in respect of the qualification of residence as an elector for any other electoral district?
(9.) If so, for what district or districts?

And I hereby solemnly and sincerely declare that the foregoing answers to the above questions are true.

I elect to vote in the polling district which includes the post office [*or* court-house] at .

And I make this solemn declaration conscientiously believing the same to be true and by virtue of the provisions of the Oaths Act of 1867.

Declared before me this day of , 18 .
J.P.
(Signed) A.B.

The claimant must, in answer to the question "What is your place of abode?" give such a description of the locality of his place of abode as will enable it to be easily and clearly identified.

The claimant must, in answer to the question "What are the particulars of your qualification?" give a description of the particulars of his qualification in such one of the following forms as is applicable, or to the like effect :—

(*a*) Residence for the last preceding six months at [*giving the situation and number of the portion or allotment (if any), or otherwise describing locality of residence so as to identify it*] ;

(*b*) Possession for the last preceding six months of a freehold estate at [*describing situation as above directed*] of the clear value of not less than one hundred pounds above all encumbrances ;

(*c*) Householder at [*describing situation as above directed*] for the last preceding six months, the house being of the clear annual value of ten pounds ;

(*d*) Holder of a leasehold at [*describing situation as above directed*] of the annual value of ten pounds, the lease of which has eighteen months to run ;

(*e*) Holder for the last preceding eighteen months of a leasehold at [*describing situation as above directed*], of the annual value of ten pounds ;

(*f*) Holder for the last preceding six months of a license from the Government to depasture land at [*describing situation as above directed*].

The situation of the property, if any, in respect of which registration is claimed, must be specified in such a manner as to enable it to be easily and clearly identified.

The claimant may, at his option, fill up or not fill up the blank in the line relating to a polling district.

On the motion of the CHIEF SECRETARY, the following new clause was inserted, to follow the clause last passed :—

Forms of claims may be provided by the Government Printer, with the sanction of the Minister.

Every claim so provided shall have printed at the foot or on the back a note in the following form or to the like effect, that is to say :—

Directions to be observed in answering the questions and filling up the claim.

(1.) Name.—The claimant's name must be written in full.

(2.) Place of abode.—The claimant must give such a description of his place of abode as will enable it to be easily and clearly identified.

(3.) Particulars of qualification.—The answer to this question must set out a description of the claimant's qualification in such one of the following forms as is applicable, or to the like effect :—

(*a*) Residence for the last preceding six months at [*giving the situation and number of the portion or allotment (if any), or otherwise describing locality of residence so as to identify it*] ;

(*b*) Possession for the last preceding six months of a freehold estate at [*describing situation as above directed*], of the clear value of not less than one hundred pounds above all encumbrances ;

(*c*) Householder at [*describing situation as above directed*] for the last preceding six months, the house being of the clear annual value of ten pounds ;

(*d*) Holder of a leasehold at [*describing situation as above directed*] of the annual value of ten pounds, the lease of which has eighteen months to run ;

(*e*) Holder for the last preceding eighteen months of a leasehold at [*describing situation as above directed*], of the annual value of ten pounds ;

(*f*) Holder for the last preceding six months of a license from the Government to depasture land at [*describing situation as above directed*].

(4.) The situation of the property, if any, in respect of which registration is claimed must be specified in such a manner as to enable it to be easily and clearly identified.

(5.) If the registration is not claimed in respect of residence, the eighth and ninth questions need not be answered.

(6.) The claimant may fill up the blank in the paragraph relating to a polling district, or not, at his option.

(7.) The claim must be signed by the claimant with his own hand, or, if he cannot write, with his mark, and must in either case be declared before and attested by a justice of the peace or an electoral registrar, or the head teacher of a State school.

On the motion of the CHIEF SECRETARY, the following new clause was inserted, to follow the clause last passed :—

The claim must be signed by the claimant with his own hand, or, if he cannot write, with his mark, and must be, in either case, declared before and attested by a justice of the peace, or an electoral registrar, or the head teacher of a State school, each of whom is hereby authorised to take such declaration.

On the motion of the CHIEF SECRETARY, the following new clause was inserted, to follow the clause last passed :—

The justice or other person attesting the claim shall, if he is not personally acquainted with the facts, satisfy himself by inquiry from the claimant or otherwise that the answers to the questions are true, and shall sign at the foot of the claim a certificate in the following form or to the like effect, that is to say :—

I, , J.P. [*or as the case may be*], hereby certify that the abovenamed A.B. has satisfied me after full inquiry that he possesses the qualification above stated.

On the motion of the CHIEF SECRETARY, clause 4 was so amended as to read thus—

"Any justice or other person who signs any such certificate without personal knowledge or full inquiry shall be liable on summary conviction to a penalty not exceeding fifty pounds, and on such conviction shall be incapable of being or acting as a justice, or of being registered as an elector or voting at any parliamentary election, for the period of five years from the date of the conviction."

Clauses 5 and 6 put and negatived.

On the motion of the CHIEF SECRETARY, clause 7 was verbally amended so as to read thus—

"If it appears from the claim that the claimant is registered in respect of the qualification of residence for some other electoral district or districts, the electoral registrar shall forthwith send notice of the claim to the returning officer or officers of the district or districts for which the claimant is so registered. And the returning officer or officers shall forthwith erase the name of the claimant from the roll or rolls of such district or districts, and shall send him notice that his name has been so erased."

On the motion of the CHIEF SECRETARY, clause 8 was so amended as to read thus—

"It shall be the duty of the electoral registrar to make full and careful inquiries with respect to the qualifications of all persons who claim to have their names inserted in the electoral roll.

"If the electoral registrar upon inquiry has reason to believe that any claimant is not qualified to be registered as an elector, he shall send him a notice requiring him to attend and prove his qualification at the quarterly registration court before which the claim will come for consideration, or at the next following registration court, and informing him that if he fails so to attend either in person or by agent, and to prove his qualification, the claim will be rejected.

"At the court at which the claimant is so required to attend he must appear either in person or by agent, and must prove his qualification orally by the oath of himself or some witness competent to depose to the facts from his own knowledge. And if he fails so to appear and prove his qualification, the claim shall be rejected."

On the motion of the CHIEF SECRETARY, the following new clause was inserted after clause 8 :—

The electoral registrar shall make out a correct list of the names of all persons against whom he places the word "dead," "left," or "disqualified," under the provisions of the fourteenth section of the principal Act, showing the word so placed against each name, and shall cause a copy of such list to be published once at least in the month of September in some newspaper circulating in the district, and shall also expose a copy of such list to public view at every court-house in the district, and at such post offices and other places as the Minister may direct, and such list shall remain so exposed until the holding of the registration court for revising the annual lists.

There shall be prefixed to such list a notice in the following form or to the like effect :—

Notice.—The name of any person included in this list whose qualification is not proved on oath to the satisfaction of the annual revision court to be still subsisting will be omitted from the electoral roll.

The notice sent by an electoral registrar under the provisions of the fourteenth section of the principal Act to any such person must state that it is intended to omit his name from the electoral roll unless his qualification is proved on oath to the satisfaction of the registration court for revising the annual lists to be still subsisting.

On the motion of the CHIEF SECRETARY, the following new clause was inserted after the clause last passed :—

At the registration court for revising the annual lists the court shall inquire into every case in which the electoral registrar has so placed against the name of any person the word "dead," "left," or "disqualified," and the chairman shall expunge from the list the name of every such person whose qualification is not proved on oath to the satisfaction of the court to be still subsisting.

This enactment shall be substituted for the first sub-paragraph of the twenty-third section of the principal Act, which sub-paragraph is hereby repealed.

On the motion of the CHIEF SECRETARY, the following new clause was inserted after the clause last passed :—

Every notice of objection given under the twentieth section of the principal Act to a person objected to must state that such person must appear, either in person or by agent, at the registration court, and prove his qualification orally by the oath of himself or some other competent witness, and that if he fails to do so his name will be expunged from the electoral list.

Clause 9—"Persons objected to must prove their qualification"—passed as printed.

On the motion of the CHIEF SECRETARY, clause 10 was so amended as to read as follows :—

"At the registration court for revising the annual lists the court may call for and inspect any claim theretofore made by any person whose name appears upon the list.

"Any registration court may require the production of the valuation lists of the local authority within whose jurisdiction any land, in respect of which the qualification of any person whose qualification comes in question before the court arises, is situated. And the value appearing by the valuation list shall be *primâ facie* evidence of the value of the land, without the improvements, if any, upon it."

On the motion of the CHIEF SECRETARY, clause 11 was so amended as to read as follows :—

"The annual electoral roll shall, in the case of all electors whose claims are made after the passing of this Act, contain, instead of the columns intituled respectively 'Qualification' and 'Situation of residence or property in respect of which qualification arises,' as prescribed by the twenty-seventh section of the principal Act, columns setting forth with respect to each elector his age, place of abode, and occupation, the particulars of his qualification, and the date when his claim was received by the electoral registrar."

Clause 12—"Several polling-booths at the same place"—passed as printed.

The CHIEF SECRETARY said he would now move that the Chairman leave the chair and report the Bill to the House with amendments. With reference to the suggestion that it should be left to some public officer to compile the roll, he might point out, as he had already done on the second reading of the Bill, that that system had been tried twice in the colony, and in both cases it had been subsequently repealed.

Mr. GLASSEY : The system is in force in the old country, and works very well there.

The CHIEF SECRETARY said the system was in force here when the colony was established, but was afterwards repealed. It was again introduced in 1874, and after that, in 1879 or 1880, it was again repealed. It seemed absurd to go on playing see-saw, and re-enacting and repealing the system. At any rate, the Government did not think it desirable, on the present occasion, to entirely remodel the electoral system of the colony. The intention of the Bill was, as far as possible, to make amendments in harmony with the existing law.

Mr. GLASSEY said he regretted to hear that the hon. gentleman would not adopt some proposal to place the compilation of the rolls in the hands of a responsible public officer. The only excuse given was that the Government did not want to remodel the whole electoral system. But if the present electoral system was bad, why not amend it, or put something better in its place? He (Mr. Glassey) thought that when they were dealing with the electoral system that was a most appropriate time to introduce an amendment which would meet the wishes of the country generally.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: We repealed the system you suggest for a reason you know.

Mr. GLASSEY said he supposed it was repealed for a reason, but the same system had been found to work well in New South Wales and in the old country, and he saw no reason why it should not work well in Queensland. That system took the matter very largely out of the hands of the different factions in the country; and if there was an honest intention on the part of the Government and those who were inclined to support them in that measure to establish the best and most complete system of registration, the present was a fitting time to do it. If they did not adopt some measure of that kind, then he was inclined to think that there was not an honest intention, but an intention to serve some purpose. He did not know what purpose it was intended to serve, but he did not think it was a purpose that would serve the country generally. He repeated that he thought the present was a most appropriate time to introduce the best method of dealing with the rolls and securing to each individual entitled to vote that vote which was his due. It was a great pity that the Chief Secretary could not see his way clear, for some reason best known to himself and his colleagues, to frame a set of amendments which would meet the suggestions made in perfect good faith by many members of the Committee.

Mr. BARLOW said that while the electoral amendment Bill introduced by the Chief Secretary was a very valuable one, and supplied many long-felt wants in the electoral system, there was another matter far more serious which was not dealt with. There was very little use in having a good register unless they had some system by which the voice of the majority of the electors could be heard. He would not dispute the right of the majority of the electors in any district to send any man to the House they thought fit, but it must be open to the observation of hon. members that very often that was not the case, and there was not that true representation of the people which might be obtained under a better system. He wished very much that the Government would take that matter in hand.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: What is that?

Mr. BARLOW said he referred to the better representation of the people by securing the vote of majorities in the constituencies. Under the present system, so long as interests at an election were split and there were three or four candidates running for the same seat, it would be utterly impossible to get a true representation of the people, even though the rolls were as perfect as human ingenuity could make them, unless there was also some means of getting the vote of an absolute majority of the electors in each district. Last year they had a long discussion upon a plan he had ventured to suggest. On that occasion they did not understand the subject, and perhaps he did not understand it himself as thoroughly as he ought to have done, and the consequence was that the Committee then got into trouble on the question, and the suggestion did not succeed. When in Tasmania the other day he found a very serious agitation going on in that colony for the introduction in its entirety of the system known as Hare's, and he ventured to speak to one or two gentlemen there about the system of an alternative vote. He was not without hope that at some future day, perhaps not far off, such a system would be adopted in that colony. He believed the scheme as suggested last year was not as perfect as it might be made; but it was not beyond the reach of their abilities, and especially of those of the Chief Secretary, to make it more perfect. He should feel very uncomfortable in that House if he represented only a very slender minority of a constituency. He did not remember the exact number of votes he got, but he thought the electors of Ipswich gave him a very substantial majority vote. It was clear to him that members who represented a fraction only of the electors in a constituency existed in that House only by the acquiescence of the majority. He was taking that opportunity to ask hon. members to turn the matter over in their minds. There could be no object or wish on the part of any hon. member present to have anything but a fair and full expression of the will of the people of the colony at the ensuing general election, and it would be in the best interests of the country if they adopted some form of legislation that would bring about that result.

Mr. DRAKE: What if those returned do not carry out their election pledges?

Mr. BARLOW said that if hon. members had done all that some members said they had, public opinion would make very short work indeed of them at the election. There was a very homely old saying that the proof of a pudding was in the eating, and the proof of a general election was in the voting. It was utterly impossible for any man to stand up there and say on the strength of the proceedings at a public meeting that public opinion had entirely changed. It was very easy to get up public meetings on either side in politics; and as for petitions, people would sign petitions on both sides if they were presented to them at different street corners. He did not hesitate to say that the coming general election would be the most important crisis in the history of the colony. He knew of no crisis that had taken place in the history of this colony since it became independent of New South Wales that was so important or demanded more the attention of every man entrusted with the franchise, whatsoever party he might belong to, as the coming general election. He had just thrown out a few hints in the hope that they might fructify in the minds of hon. members, and that something might come out of them. He might be pardoned the vanity of believing that the system he suggested last year with some amendments, and especially with the very valuable amendment suggested by the Chief Secretary to have only one alternative vote, would be valuable in securing a full and fair expression of the will of the people. He hoped hon. members would consider the matter in a spirit of fairness to all parties, as if they obtained a representation of the opinion of the people of the colony by absolute majorities, they would have far less faction in the new Parliament. He did not know that a worse thing could happen to the colony than to have what he called a "see-saw" administration during the next three years. Whatever the administration might be let it be a firm one and a fair one. Hon. members knew it would take three years at least—and he hoped it would be done in that time—to put the finances of the colony in a proper position; and if during that time they were exposed to constant changes of Government and dissolutions of Parliament, he felt sure the result would be exceedingly hurtful to the colony.

Mr. SMYTH said he was glad to find that the Government were going to recommit the Bill and not rush it through, especially as he noticed that one hon. gentleman had given notice of more amendments than there were clauses in the Bill. What he wanted especially to call the attention of the Chief Secretary to was voting by intimidation. He had been informed that arrangements were made by certain organisations in the colony so as to regulate how men should vote. It was done in this way: One organiser went into the polling-booth and received a voting-paper from the returning officer duly initialled; he then went into the room to erase the names he objected to, but instead of doing so he folded up a piece of blank paper and put it in the ballot-box. He then brought out the real ballot-paper, and the secretary of the organisation—of the clique—sat in the room and regulated the actual voting. It had been reported that that had been done repeatedly in the colony, and not very long ago.

Mr. ANNEAR: Quite true.

Mr. SMYTH said he wished the Chief Secretary could see his way to make some provision by which the returning officer could put a stop to such trickery and intimidation, so as to prevent persons who had no stake in the country getting possession of it. It was time that those who had a stake in the colony, who had lived in it for a number of years and had made it what it was, should have a bigger say in its government than they had at present. He hoped the Chief Secretary would be able to see his way to defeat the ends of a lot of tyrants, who practised intimidation and called those who did not agree with them "blacklegs" and other opprobrious epithets. It was well known that what he referred to had been done over and over again in the colony, and honest persons were prevented from getting into that House by persons who were—he would not say "not honest" in the ordinary sense of the term, but who were not honest in politics. He hoped the Chief Secretary and the Colonial Secretary would put their heads together and prevent such practices happening in future.

Mr. O'SULLIVAN said he wished to know from the Chief Secretary if he would be good enough to make someone responsible for the names that were struck off the electoral rolls? As he had told the hon. gentleman a few days ago, names that were on the roll one year were found to have been struck off the next year, and nobody could find out who had done it, or was responsible for it. That had been done in Ipswich every year for the last thirty years. No revision court had been held, nothing of the kind had taken place, and yet names disappeared mysteriously from the roll; no human being knew how they got off. It would be the simplest thing in the world to insert a provision in the Bill making somebody responsible for names that were left off the roll. If a person was put off without fault of his own, could not some simple method be arranged by which he could be put on again before an election came on?

The CHIEF SECRETARY said if the hon. member for Stanley would look at the amended Bill when he received it on the following morning, he would find provision was made by which the electoral registrar had not only to send notice to the person whose name was proposed to be omitted, but the list had to be advertised and exposed to view in various public places. The fullest publicity would be given; and then if the qualification was not proved on oath to the satisfaction of the revision court, the name would be left off. The electoral registrar would be made as responsible as it was possible to make any public officer for the administration of the electoral law.

Mr. O'SULLIVAN: I thank the Chief Secretary for that information.

Mr. PAUL said he had had some experience of sitting in revision courts, and had felt the inconvenience arising from the present arrangement in regard to the rolls. The annual list and the annual roll should be arranged on the same system; then there would not be a chance of names being knocked off in the way they were at present. Another thing he would suggest was that the rolls and lists should be printed on one side of the paper only. That would be very convenient for those who had the work of revision to do.

Question put and passed.

The House resumed; and the CHAIRMAN reported the Bill with amendments.

RECOMMITTAL.

The CHIEF SECRETARY said: Mr Speaker,—I move that the Bill be recommitted.

Question put and passed.

On the motion of the CHIEF SECRETARY, the recommittal was made an Order of the Day for to-morrow.

COPYRIGHT (FINE ARTS) REGISTRATION BILL.

SECOND READING.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY said: Mr. Speaker,—The principle of protecting to persons in the colony the results of their genius or of their enterprise has been recognised repeatedly in the various laws relating to patents. In the year 1887 the legislature of this colony passed an Act relating to copyrights in certain matters; but unfortunately there was an omission with regard to paintings, drawings, and photographs. Of course it is desirable, if possible, to give persons who may have genius in painting, drawing, and photography the benefits of their enterprise; and recently many persons have applied to the Registrar-General to register photographs and drawings. There has been no application with regard to paintings yet, but I am perfectly satisfied that as the colony progresses, and people become more wealthy, valuable paintings will be produced which people will desire to have registered. At the present moment, owing to an omission in the Act of 1887, there are no means of registering any of these articles under any Act in force in the colony, and they have to be registered at the Stationers' Hall in London. This matter was brought under my notice prominently by a communication in March of last year, in which there was an application made by a well-known firm of photographers in this city to register in this colony a particular photograph, to which they desired to have the special and exclusive right. They had gone to great expense, and the photograph was a valuable one. Unfortunately, the Registrar-General found that, owing to an omission in the Copyright Registration Act of 1887, he could not comply with their request. He then requested me to seek the opinion of the Law Officers of the Crown as to whether this could not be registered in Queensland under that Act, or whether it would have to be registered in England under the 25th and 26th Vic. c. 68, which is in force in this colony. The Solicitor-General looked into the matter, and reported to me that there was an omission in the Queensland Act, and that no provision was made for keeping a register of artistic works. To protect themselves, therefore, the applicants were required in that instance to register their production at

Stationers' Hall. This Bill is practically a transcript of the English Act in regard to these particular matters, and I therefore need not do more than draw the attention of hon. members to the fact that the object of the Bill is to enable persons to copyright in this colony paintings, drawings, and photographs. The 3rd clause provides that a register of copyright in artistic works shall be kept in Brisbane, at the Registrar-General's Office. I may state that the Patents Office is an office which is highly appreciated by the public, and is now not only a self-supporting institution, but recently has contributed something to the revenue. The 5th clause provides for the assignment of the copyright. The 6th clause is the usual one, providing that persons aggrieved by any entry in the register may apply to the Supreme Court, which may order the entry to be varied or expunged. The 7th clause provides that the register is to be open for inspection, and that persons can take extracts therefrom. The 8th clause makes a false entry in the register a misdemeanour. No doubt hon. members, who are always desirous to protect native industries, will in this manner assist to assimilate the law in this colony to the laws of England, and agree to the second reading of the Bill.

The HON. B. D. MOREHEAD said: Mr. Speaker,—Really this is wasting our time. Is there one man in the House, beyond the Colonial Secretary, who cares two pins about this Bill? I have never heard of any public demand for it.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: There are lots of cases.

The HON. B. D. MOREHEAD: The Colonial Secretary, who appears to be a very high-art speaker, seems to have brought in the Bill to give himself an opportunity of airing his eloquence. I certainly shall not oppose the second reading of the Bill, although I believe it will be utterly useless; but at a time like this, when really serious legislation is required, it is to be regretted that the Colonial Secretary and the Government should go peddling over small matters like this.

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

The committal of the Bill was made an Order of the Day for to-morrow.

MARSUPIALS DESTRUCTION BILL.

SECOND READING.

On this Order of the Day being read,

The COLONIAL SECRETARY said: Mr. Speaker,—With regard to this Bill, at any rate, hon. members will not say that the introduction of it is a waste of time. It is a measure which I am sure will receive the serious consideration of the House. The subject is one of considerable importance to all members of the community, and more especially to those pastoralists and others who are very much concerned in the question of the extermination of the marsupials in this colony.

Mr. NELSON: Is it a Bill with a principle?

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: The principle of the Bill, which was approved as far back as 1881, is that it is desirable to encourage the destruction of marsupials. Although the Bill differs in some respects from its predecessor, the machinery for carrying out its object is the same. Year by year since 1881, as hon. members are aware, the House has been asked to affirm each year the desirability of continuing the machinery of the Act of 1881. It is well known that it was there provided that funds should be raised in the districts from persons who were the owners of sheep and cattle, and that those funds were to be largely supplemented by contributions in the shape of endowments from the general revenue. The Act expired not very long ago, and there remained at the time a considerable quantity of money to the credit of the fund. In the first instance, the Government considered what it would be advisable to do with that money, and a Bill was brought before the House by which it was proposed that the contributions, received mainly from endowment in that particular instance, should be placed in the consolidated revenue. On further consideration that principle——

The HON. B. D. MOREHEAD: That want of principle!

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: That principle, or policy, was deemed to be an error; the Government retraced their steps at once, and considered it advisable that the money so contributed, mainly by the owners of sheep and cattle in the colony, should be returned to them, so that they might use it for the purposes for which it was raised according as they choose to do so. This Bill, therefore, deals in the first instance with the money which has been raised. About £12,000 has been paid into the Treasury by the various marsupial boards, and now remains to the credit in a separate fund, to be operated upon by the provisions of this measure. I am pleased to say that, with the exception of one board, the whole of the debts contracted by the various boards in the colony have been paid—or, at any rate, there has been sufficient money sent into the Treasury to pay those debts. The only deficit is in the case of the Inglewood board. In that case the deficit is considerable, but it is entirely owing to their not having last year obtained the powers given by the Act. Had they done so, there would have been no deficit in that case. Now, the difference between this and the last Act is that this enables the pastoralists to decide for themselves whether it is advisable in particular districts to establish boards. Previously it was compulsory to do so, but in this instance the Government consider it is not advisable to force all persons to raise a certain sum of money for the destruction of marsupials, but to leave it to their option to do so. Now, the 3rd clause, which is the keynote of the Bill, says—

> "If it is made to appear to the Governor in Council that any part of Queensland is infested, or is in danger of being infested, with marsupials, the Governor in Council may by proclamation constitute such part of Queensland a marsupial district for the purposes of this Act."

Of course hon. members will know that, so far as regards the large marsupials, the price that has been paid for the skins alone is so large, in many instances reaching from 12s. to 16s., that there is no necessity whatever to stimulate and encourage persons to destroy them; but there are smaller marsupials which it is not so profitable to destroy; and it is considered that the people who have this money to their credit are the best judges of the position as to whether they should constitute boards for the purpose of destroying marsupials. If the marsupials increase, the people will call upon the Government, who will then proclaim districts. Then the Bill goes on to provide exactly the same machinery as in the old Act for the working of the boards, and I shall not trouble hon. members with details. The 13th clause provides in the usual way for the returns of stock being sent in. Then the next important clause is clause 15, which provides exactly the same levy as was raised before. It says—

> "For the purpose of creating a fund for carrying out the provisions of this Act, the board of each district may——"

There, again, is the keynote to the Bill. It is purely voluntary. No endowment will be paid to these boards; but the Bill enables them to spend the funds in hand, and, as in the case of the Rabbit Boards Act, to create a board and funds in the event of danger arising. I may say that this Bill has been called for by members engaged in pastoral pursuits who sit on the other side of the House, and nobody more so, probably, than by an hon. member whom we now miss from this House, and whom we unhappily shall never see again. The late member for Barcoo was particularly prominent in his efforts to get the House to consent to an extension of the provisions of the old Act, or, at any rate, to give the people an opportunity of acting for themselves. The only other clauses which it is particularly necessary on this occasion to draw attention to are the 31st, 32nd, and 33rd. These clauses provide for dealing with the funds that are now in hand, and for giving the boards that are in debt power to raise money to defray those debts. I may mention that since the Act expired many hon. members of this House and others have called upon the Government and said, "Here is a large sum of money remaining to the credit of the boards, and before we get the machinery of the Rabbit Act into operation would the Government consent to the boards that are not working under the Act spending that money?" The Government, of course, had no power to give that consent. The amount to the credit of the boards is £12,000, and £9,000 has been wisely and judiciously expended by the persons who raised the money to keep the machinery of the Act going until such time as the new machinery provided by the Rabbit Act came into operation. There has been very little money spent in the destruction of marsupials since the Act expired. The boards have been pretty careful in dealing with these moneys, and I may assure the House that the funds of the boards have been carefully, honestly, and faithfully expended. Clause 31 provides an indemnity for the payments that have been made, and I think the House will confirm the honest and *bonâ fide* payments made by the members of the marsupial boards since the expiry of the Act up to the 9th day of June, the day on which this Bill was introduced. Then clause 32 will provide that the funds now in the Treasury shall be, as soon as districts are constituted, transferred from the accounts in the Treasury and placed to the accounts of the boards in whatever banks they may direct. The next clause, 33, provides—

> "The board of a district constituted under this Act may pay out of any moneys raised or received by it under this Act—
>
> (1.) Any debts or liabilities which are proved to its satisfaction to have been incurred in good faith before the said ninth day of June, one thousand eight hundred and ninety-two, by any of the persons who were at the time of the expiry of the said expired Act members of a marsupial board, and which would have been liabilities of the board of which such persons were members, if the said Act as amended by the several Acts amending it had continued in force up to the date aforesaid."

I may state that, except in the instance of two or three boards, no considerable sum has been expended, and where any considerable sum has been expended it has been in those districts in which the rabbits were advancing into this colony, and they have been successfully resisted by the expenditure of the funds. I now leave the Bill in the hands of hon. members. Many of them will understand it better and have much more experience on the subject than I have. The Bill has been brought in for the purpose of assisting those persons who have contributed the money to get the benefit of their contributions. It has also been brought in

[The COLONIAL SECRETARY.

for the purpose of enabling persons engaged in pastoral pursuits to combine together. No innovation has been made in the machinery of the expired Act, and I trust hon. members will assist the Government, when the Bill gets into committee, in passing it through and making it the law of the colony. I beg to move that the Bill be now read a second time.

Mr. NELSON said: Mr. Speaker,—I am very much pleased to see this Bill introduced, and I intend to support it on the understanding, established now, that we are going to amend it in committee. That is our practice now, I believe. We have a stereotype now, and we cannot get away from it.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: What amendments?

Mr. NELSON: I do not know where the principle of this Bill rests, outside of the title. I think it rests mostly in clause 3, and clause 3 I consider is the most important part of the whole Bill. If the principle of the Bill is there, I believe it will require to be amended to a very large extent. The pastoralists throughout the colony are most desirous of having some Bill of this sort; but I am very much afraid this Bill will be inoperative. I do not think squatters are more patriotic than any other class of the community.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: In the Blackall district, since the Act expired, they have made a levy, and received more than they required.

Mr. NELSON: Well, perhaps Blackall is an exception. We must remember that the pastoral tenants have to pay high rents for their land, and are subject to assessments for a variety of objects under the Diseases in Sheep Act, the Brands Act, the Divisional Boards Act, and the Rabbit Act. I think you will find that it is piling it on rather too high to expect them to exterminate the vermin from the country entirely at their own expense, and it is more than can be reasonably expected. I do not believe they will do it. One or two boards may do so, but that is where the difficulty comes in. Even assuming that boards here and there assess themselves for the purpose of exterminating these vermin, the adjoining boards may refuse to do so, and the consequence will be that those who do so will be really paying for the whole country around. There will be nothing to prevent scalps being brought in from other districts, and paid for by the one patriotic board. That has been tried before; they have been brought down in coaches and trains and paid for. The only way to make the Bill operative is to compel every board to supply some funds: we shall have to go even further than that, and lay down exactly what the price is to be, instead of allowing one board to pay so much for one sort of marsupial, and another board a different rate. The rate will require to be uniform, and every part of the colony must provide funds. We know that abuses happened under the old Act, and we should try to remedy them, because a great many people are desirous of seeing something done to assist in the destruction of this pest. The question is one of great importance in this way—it affects the value of the lands. The lands are the property of the public, and if vermin are allowed to increase in one district the value of the land in that district will be very much depreciated; I therefore think it is a perfectly justifiable thing to ask that the whole of the members of the community who own the lands of the colony should contribute a little at least towards preserving their own property. That is really what it amounts to. We have got a valuable asset in the public lands of the colony,

and to expect our tenants to do the whole of this work is, I think, out of the question. I do not believe they will do so. I am very much afraid they will not. Where one or two may be inclined to do so they will be smothered by the inaction and want of activity of their neighbours; the consequence of that will be, if they attempted to do it, that the amount of the liabilities they themselves contract would immediately force them to put an end to their paying for the destruction of marsupials unless the statute compels them. With regard to the last part of the Bill, dealing with the present liabilities, I have no objection to that—it seems fair enough. I would like to see the Bill passed, if we can do so, without altering the principle of the Bill; but I am quite sure it will not act on the voluntary principle. I think we shall have to make it imperative. As far as the Bill on the whole is concerned, I am very desirous of seeing some action taken by the House in that direction. I know that nearly all the pastoral tenants are also very desirous, and I know that they will all help so far as they can, so long as they are persuaded that they are doing a fair thing. But you cannot expect them to do more than a fair thing. You cannot expect them to go and preserve the land for the purpose of having their rents increased at the next valuation; and if we, as the landlords—as we are—of that land, will not contribute in any shape, I am afraid our tenants will not do it. I would like, therefore, to see some more decided action taken on the part of the Government. It will be necessary to make it compulsory upon all the boards of the colony, without leaving it to the Government, to get information that there are marsupials in this district or in that district. I think the colony will have to be divided into districts, making it compulsory on everyone of those districts to provide a fund. If marsupials are killed within that district, then let them be paid for. If there are no marsupials in the district, then there will be no occasion to draw upon the fund at all. The old Act provided that on occasions where it was proved that the funds were quite sufficient to meet any possible liabilities, the boards might be exempt from collecting any further rates. So it may be provided here. I have only one more word to say in regard to the position I took up when leave was asked to bring in this Bill. Hon. members may recollect that I objected to the phrase at the end of the title of the Bill—"A Bill to encourage the destruction of marsupials and for other purposes." I suggested to the House that we might add to those words the words "in relation thereto" or "connected therewith," giving the Government the option. Well, whether those words were added or not is perfectly immaterial, because it is essential in the Bill that the purposes that are carried out must be "relating thereto" or "connected therewith." The only object that I had was to ensure that all the provisions of the Bill were so related, because at that stage of the proceedings the House was entirely in the dark. We had never seen the Bill; the Bill was not before us; and the Government came and asked leave to introduce a Bill to do so and so, and for other purposes. Well, is there any force in giving that leave? Is it of any use, or is it a farce?

Mr. GLASSEY: They are only lawyers' terms that do not mean anything.

Mr. NELSON: One does not know whether it is or not. There may be something in getting leave from the House. Well, what is the use of going through all this formula? Is it merely a dead letter, or is it of any use at all? If it is no use, then the sooner we abandon and abolish it the better. If there is a use in it, then let us know what that use is. What astounds me most of all is that the House itself should have established a precedent which will, I am afraid, lead to great difficulty. When I suggested that those words should be added, the Colonial Treasurer, who appeared to be in charge of the Bill, said he could not allow those words to be added because there were some provisions of the Bill which could not be said to relate to the destruction of marsupials—because certain provisions of the Bill could not be said to be related to the general purposes of the Bill. If that is so, I say the House ought never to have granted leave. Now I have read the Bill, I may say that I do not see anything in the Bill that can be objected to as not being related to the destruction of marsupials. But the Colonial Treasurer said there was something——

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: The disposal of the money does not relate to the destruction of marsupials.

Mr. NELSON: If it does not, the Bill must be withdrawn. I understand that the Secretary for Railways still argues that there are clauses in this Bill which make provision for purposes which are not purposes relating to the Bill.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: I did not say so.

Mr. NELSON: Then what did the hon. gentleman say? Either they are purposes relating to the Bill, or they are purposes not relating to the Bill.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: They do not relate to the destruction of marsupials, but to the disposal of the money that is there.

Mr. NELSON: I cannot understand what the Secretary for Railways means.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: They relate to the destruction of marsupials under this Bill. That is all we have to deal with.

Mr. NELSON: The Colonial Treasurer and the Secretary for Railways say they do not; and another Minister says they do. What are we coming to? If they do not relate to the general purposes of the Bill, it is absolutely useless our going on with it. Where the words "for other purposes" are used, it is usual to add either "relating thereto" or "connected therewith." It will be absolutely useless for us to go on with the Bill if those words do not apply. I hold that if the words are not expressed they are implied, and that the purposes must be germane to the object of the Bill. The matter I refer to is contained in the instructions to the Governor. In "Votes and Proceedings" for 1889, p. 598, you will find that our present Governor is instructed to this effect—

> "In the passing of all laws each different matter is to be provided for by a different law, without intermixing in one and the same law such things as have no proper relation to each other; and no clause is to be inserted in or annexed to any law which shall be foreign to what the title of such law imports, and no perpetual clause is to be part of any temporary law."

If the contention of the Colonial Treasurer and the Secretary for Railways is right, the Government may as well withdraw the Bill. But I hold that both the Colonial Treasurer and the Secretary for Railways are wrong. Now that I have seen the Bill I think the purposes are all related to the Bill; and I do not object to the Bill now.

Mr. FOXTON said: Mr. Speaker,—I think the hon. gentleman is entirely thrown away here. He ought to have been an advocate in Chancery in the old days—he would have revelled in that sort of work. I am not going into the question of the Governor's instructions—if the Bill as

passed is not of such a character that he can give his assent to it under the instructions, I dare say he will refuse it—but I have a word to say on the merits of the Bill; and I am very glad to see a Bill introduced for the purpose of removing some great difficulties in connection with the operation of the late Marsupials Destruction Act. I believe that in the district I represent there exists the only board which under the old law has what may be called a debit balance. They, unfortunately, failed to make a sufficient levy to defray all their expenditure for the year; the Act expired, and they were not in a position to make any further levy—if they had been, there was no endowment for them. And although they were in the extraordinary position of having made a small levy, altogether inadequate to their needs for the year, they destroyed a very large number of scalps, and were at the time the Act expired, and the board became defunct, liable for a large amount to a number of unfortunate men who had handed over their scalps for destruction. Those men have not been paid to this day; the money owing to them amounts in the aggregate to some hundreds of pounds—£500, I believe—and represents to some of the men who are interested a very considerable amount. I am very sorry to see that no provision is made in this Bill which will compel the board which is to take the place of that particular board to make a levy which will be sufficient to pay those claims. It appears that the proclamation of districts under this Bill is to be left to the Governor in Council, and I do not know whether in the event of those scalpers or any other persons representing that it is desirable that a board should be proclaimed in that district it would be done. I scarcely see by what machinery that board could be compelled to make a sufficient levy under this Bill to provide for those men being paid their just dues. I am of opinion that the board was primarily responsible to the scalpers for the debt which they incurred; the scalps were handed in to the board on the understanding that it was an official body, and that the colony was in a measure responsible for the payment of those debts. I think, therefore, there should be some machinery introduced into the Bill which would ensure the payment of the amounts owing to those men. So far as I have been able to digest the Bill, there does not appear to be any such provision contained in it. There was such a provision in the Bill which was withdrawn. I do not advocate the principles of that Bill, because, as has been already said, there was a great lack of principle in it—that is to say, it provided that the moneys which had been accumulated in the various districts should go into the consolidated revenue, which would be an act of injustice. But it was also provided that the money should only go into the consolidated revenue after the debts of those boards which had debit balances had been paid; this was also in a measure an injustice, as it would certainly have been a diversion of the funds from the particular districts in which they had been subscribed. I am very glad that permission is practically given to the boards by this Bill to limit the bonuses which are to be paid for the destruction of marsupials. When the continuation Bill was before the House in 1886 I got an amendment embodied in it, giving the boards power to assess the amount of bonuses payable. The amendment was unanimously adopted by the House; but, as many hon. members will recollect, it was thrown out by the Legislative Council, and had to be abandoned. The reason that was given for proposing it was that the larger game—namely, kangaroos—had become of considerable value for their skins, and that the tendency of the Act unless amended would be that the men would shoot the larger game and leave the smaller, which were just as destructive. The working of the Act since then has shown that such was the case. I can testify from personal observation that many men are engaged in shooting the larger game purely for the sake of their skins, which are very valuable; while, on the other hand, the skins of the smaller game—wallabies and paddymelons—are, I believe, not of any value. In fact, I am told that marsupials are very much more valuable than sheep at the present time, and that in many instances a charge is made for permission to go on to runs to shoot kangaroos. I can hardly say that I entirely approve of the Bill. I am, however, very glad to see it introduced, and I trust that some means will be provided to protect those persons to whom money is owing by, at all events, one of the old boards—that some provision will be inserted making those debts a charge on the new boards. Seeing that the country is, so to speak, saved the endowment which would have been payable on the increased assessment which that board ought to have made at that time, I think it would be a very fair thing for the endowment to be paid to the board in respect of the assessment still to be made so far as is necessary to liquidate the claims against that board.

Mr. JESSOP said: Mr. Speaker,—Having had a good deal to do with a marsupial board during the last ten years, I think it my duty before this question goes to a vote to make a few remarks upon it. I am very glad the Government have taken some steps to alter the state of things which have prevailed during the last twelve months, where there were no marsupial boards in existence. I am sure the measure will be a benefit to the country, but I should like to have seen it go further and provide a sufficient endowment to induce men to kill the marsupials in the colony. By marsupials I mean the smaller ones—wallabies, kangaroo rats, etc. The price now paid for kangaroo skins is in itself sufficient to recompense hunters or scalpers for their labour. The Marsupial Act was introduced and passed eleven years ago, and was kept in force by continuation Acts until the end of the session of 1891, when it expired. Some boards, however, have, as has already been stated, continued to act until the present time. The board with which I am connected, and of which I have been chairman for nine years out of the ten the Act has been in force, is still exercising its functions to some extent, such as in paying off arrears, without any new assessment. I hold that it is as much the duty of the Government to take the necessary steps to prevent the increase of marsupials as it is to take steps to prevent the invasion of rabbits, because they are now again becoming numerous where they were numerous before, and almost as great a pest as ever. Some years ago some parts of the country were bare and barren, not a blade of grass on them, and the consequence was that marsupials travelled to other districts, and caused great destruction of pasturage. I have seen them within a few miles of the municipality of Dalby, and great complaints were then made of the damage they did. The same complaints are now being made by selectors, and they are crying out for a renewal of the Marsupial Act. That, I think, is a good reason why I should support this Bill. Having been chairman of a board for nine years, or rather ten years if last year is included, I know the benefit of the old Act. I know that had it not been in existence land in that part of the country would have been utterly useless to selectors and pastoral lessees, for the simple reason that there would have been no grass on it. I am of opinion that large marsupials might be exempted from the operation of

this Bill altogether, as their skins are sufficiently valuable to pay for their destruction. I took the trouble to have a return prepared of the number of animals destroyed by our board during the last five years of the operation of the Act. I have here an official document made out by the clerk of the board, giving the number of these animals destroyed in our district and paid for at the usual rate. Hon. members will bear in mind that the figures are those of one board in charge of a district which is not very extensive. In the year 1886 the numbers killed were 2,089 kangaroos, 8,764 wallabies, 251 rats, and 165 dogs, or a total of 11,269 scalps. In 1887 the numbers were 1,600 kangaroos, 10,668 wallabies, 607 rats, and 372 dogs, or 13,247 scalps. In 1888 there were 3,022 kangaroos destroyed, 10,989 wallabies, 1,137 rats, 458 dogs, or a total of 15,606 scalps. In 1889 the numbers were 9,601 kangaroos, 21,175 wallabies, 278 rats, 406 dogs, giving a total of 31,460 scalps. In 1890 the numbers killed were 4,152 kangaroos, 23,686 wallabies, 593 rats, 311 dogs, or a total of 28,742 scalps. Hon. members will see how the number of kangaroos killed go down as the skins become more valuable. The totals for the five years are: 20,464 kangaroos, 75,282 wallabies, 2,866 rats, and 1,712 dogs, giving a total of 100,324 scalps. This must make it plain to hon. members that it is necessary that something should be done, when we find that now for nearly twelve months the hunters have not been at work, and the people in the infested districts are crying out for the re-enactment of the old Act. The total amount paid by the Wambo board for those scalps was £2,534 14s. 5d., and half of that was collected from the selectors and leaseholders in the district. If no endowment is to be paid, the tax upon the selectors and leaseholders for this purpose will be too heavy. If we are to have the proposed stock tax and the rabbit tax, for we have now to pay for the wire and the carriage of it to the place at which it is to be erected——

Mr. GRIMES: That is a general tax.

Mr. JESSOP: The tax necessary to keep down the pest will be too heavy unless the endowment is continued. The figures I have given show that there is good reason for the Bill in order that the pest may be kept down. As bearing out what I have said, I may add that I have a petition here, largely and influentially signed by numbers of *bonâ fide* selectors and stockowners, asking for the re-enactment of the old Act. I was asked to present this petition, and I have made arrangements to present it to the Secretary for Lands to-morrow. If we do not take steps to continue the destruction of these animals, the country will soon be in the same state as it was in some years ago, and we shall be suffering from their ravages. If we are to have a stock tax and no endowment under the Marsupials Destruction Act, how are the selectors and stock-owners to stand it? The leader of the Opposition made some very pointed remarks about adjoining boards; and I know we had to pay for a large number of scalps that were not got in our district. They have been brought in by mailmen and packmen, but we have been unable to prove it, as we have not had the assistance of detectives to secure the conviction of the guilty persons. A man may have secured a number of scalps, and may be twenty miles from a neighbouring board's office and fifty miles from the office of the board in whose district the scalps were taken, and he will take them to the nearest office. Something should be done by the Bill to enable the boards to deal with that matter.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: Make the penalty more severe, and they will not do it.

Mr. JESSOP: Another matter I desire to refer to is that of trespass. We had a very hard case in our district the other day. A man was summoned for trespassing upon a leasehold. He said he was a scalper, and was on the run for the purpose of shooting kangaroos, but he was convicted and fined, and he was dead a week afterwards.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: The decision was upset.

Mr. JESSOP: It was an unfortunate case, as it is so hard to define "trespass" in this matter. A man may say he is shooting kangaroos when he may be shooting horses or cattle, or stealing them, or, in fact, doing anything he likes. I think, therefore, it will be necessary for the Government to introduce a clause to thoroughly define what trespassing is in those cases.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: People have no right to go there.

Mr. JESSOP: I am of the same opinion, but that ought to be made plain to the public. People have been so much in the habit of going where they like to shoot kangaroos that they seem to look upon it as a right. As long as those animals are there they will go and shoot them, unless there is some system provided of letting them know they are doing wrong. I shall support the second reading of the Bill, and trust that when it is in committee the Government will see their way to introduce a clause giving some endowment, if it is only 5s. in the £1, so as to make it easier for stockowners and selectors.

Mr. SMITH said: Mr. Speaker,—I intend to vote for the second reading of the Bill. I think it is necessary in order to indemnify the Government from liabilities which have been incurred, or from paying away money which is to their credit in the Treasury, and which has already been expended or authorised to be expended. The old Act expired in December, 1890; since that time a considerable amount of scalping has been done in various parts of the colony. Owing to a legal technicality, money which was to the credit of the boards at that time reverted to the Treasury, and the Government now require authority to pay it back to the districts whence it came. I know several districts in which a considerable amount is due to persons who have been engaged in destroying marsupials, and I hope that if the Bill pass the Government will pay to the various districts the full amount which remains to their credit in the Treasury. Of course, there is a clause which provides how this money shall be dealt with by the several boards. They cannot do as they please with it; it must be devoted to the purpose for which it was raised. I quite agree that the law should be voluntary instead of compulsory, because there are many districts where it is not necessary to destroy marsupials, and the people there would not think it necessary to raise money for that purpose. It seems to me that the skins of the large marsupials have now become so valuable that the bonus does not require to be so great for them as for the smaller animals. I see that the Bill goes on the lines of the old Act, giving the larger bonus for kangaroos; but the skins of those animals are so valuable that scalpers will undertake their destruction without a bonus at all.

Mr. NELSON: They might as well be left out.

Mr. SMITH: I think so; whereas under this Bill they will give the preference to the larger animals to the neglect of the smaller, which are quite as destructive because more numerous. I think the Bill is one that will give great satisfaction, and I have much pleasure in voting for the second reading.

Mr. GRIMES said: Mr. Speaker,—It seems to me, from what we have heard during the discussion, that the necessity for this Bill has gone by altogether.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: No, no!

Mr. GRIMES: We have been told that the larger animals are so valuable now that they are worth destroying for their skins, and we have some evidence that they are even more valuable than that, for there is some talk of rearing or farming the marsupial.

Mr. JESSOP: That is the "fighting kangaroo."

Mr. GRIMES: However, it is clear that if the pastoral tenants or the selectors object to persons going upon their runs to destroy marsupials, and actually proceed against them as trespassers, they would rather keep those animals.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: There are very few of them.

Mr. GRIMES: What I say is evident from the remarks of the hon. member for Dalby. I am glad to see that the Bill is not drawn altogether upon the lines of the old Act—that we have no endowment; and I hope that hon. members on the other side of the House will not attempt to introduce a clause granting endowment. If they do so, members representing the farming community will put in a claim to have another addition made to the list of marsupials. Although it does not come properly under the designation "marsupial," still it comes as fairly within that definition as the dingo. I refer to the flying-fox. If any endowment is to be given from the general funds of the colony for the destruction of marsupials, we shall certainly have a claim to have flying-foxes included in the Bill. There is one very serious defect in the Bill which has been pointed out in former years; that is, imposing a tax upon persons and giving them no voice in the disposal of the funds raised by that means. Under this Bill a rate of 5s. is to be levied upon every 20 head of cattle, but unless the individual has 100 head of cattle or 500 sheep he has no vote in the disposal of the funds. I think if we do not give a man a vote we ought to fix the exemption at 100 head of cattle or 500 sheep. That would dispose of that part of the Bill. It seems necessary that the Bill should be passed so as to provide for a settlement of the accounts under the old marsupial boards; therefore I do not offer any objection to the second reading, but I hope the amendments I have indicated will be made in Committee.

Mr. HALL said: Mr. Speaker,—I am much obliged to the hon. member for Dalby for introducing the question of trespass with regard to the destruction of marsupials. The object of this Bill appears to be the destruction of marsupials, and ample provision is made for the appointment of boards and the management of the funds raised under the Bill. But I do not see in it any clause providing for indemnifying any person who is pursuing the destruction of marsupials and who is charged with trespass. It does not even define what constitutes a trespass. I may be allowed, perhaps, to read a letter I received the other day from a person engaged in destroying marsupials. It is dated Gaeta, near Gin Gin, 15th June, 1892, and is addressed to myself. The writer says—

"I would venture to call your attention to a deliberate attempt to introduce the old country game laws here. Enclosed is a copy of notice served on me by Matthew Ridler, lessee of Yarrol run. I and my mates have been for some time engaged in prospecting the country round for minerals, and to keep ourselves in food, etc., have been shooting kangaroos and selling the skins. Now we are threatened with prosecution, and having our horses impounded, unless we move off the run. I refused, as I believe my miner's right protects me from being prosecuted as a trespasser, and the kangaroo being vermin, a person should not be stopped from destroying them. Times are so bad now that we must do something for a living, and if a man is liable for shooting kangaroos it will take the bread from hundreds, and send them to swell the ranks of the unemployed. Will you let me know if persons holding miners' rights are prohibited from shooting? You might get the opinions of the House on the subject, and you would earn the thanks of hundreds of men earning an honest livelihood.

"The law of England, where every paper teems with poor Hodge being pulled for trespassing in pursuit of coneys, is about to be repeated here, unless prompt action is taken to stop it. I wrote to the Minister for Mines, asking him, and he replied—a miner's right gives the right to search for minerals on all Crown lands; that kangaroos had nothing to do with mining laws. I have had lawyers' advice, and it is contradictory. What I want to find out is, if a prospector in searching for minerals sees a kangaroo, has he a right to shoot it and dispose of the skin? Is there any law prohibiting him from doing so?

"I am, sir, yours truly,

"R. R. HAINES."

Mr. NELSON said: Mr. Speaker,—That important document having been read, according to the rules of the House it has to be laid on the table.

The SPEAKER: It is not necessary, if a private member reads a private communication, to lay it on the table of the House. If an official document is read by a Minister, then the House can demand that the paper shall be laid on the table. The same rule does not apply to private members.

Mr. HALL: I will now read a copy of the notice referred to in the letter—

"I hereby give notice that all kangaroo shooters and other persons found trespassing on any part of Yarrol run (leased or resumed) after this time, will be prosecuted according to law.

"(Signed) MAT. RIDLER.

"Yarrol, 8th June, 1892."

I think that this Bill, seeing that it is so important that the House should legislate on the matter, should contain some provision defining what constitutes a trespass.

Mr. MORGAN said: Mr. Speaker,—I think the Bill as introduced covers the ground that the hon. member for Carnarvon will require with reference to the case of those unfortunate men who, on the faith of the credit of the Inglewood board, killed marsupials, sent in the scalps, and were then unable to get their money. That is a case that well deserves the consideration of the House, and I hope that if the Bill becomes law, as I have no doubt it will, the Government will see that it is only a matter of right to proclaim that district an infested district, and that the board is empowered to levy rates on stockowners, and discharge their responsibilities. I think the Government are also liable to the extent of their share of the endowment under the old Act, because when those marsupials were killed the boards were entitled to the amount of £1 for £1; and the people who killed those marsupials have as much claim against the general taxpayer as they have against the individual stockowners in that particular district. I hope Ministers will see the reasonableness of this, and see that those unfortunate men who did the work, and conferred a certain amount of benefit on the colony generally, are paid for their work. I may point out that in that particular portion of the colony there were more marsupials slain than in any other similar area in Queensland, and that many of the marsupials killed there were never paid for at the public charge, because the slaughtering had commenced before we began to legislate on the subject of marsupials. I agree with hon. members who think that we have been paying too much attention in the past to the larger varieties of marsupials, and that in the

future we might pay less attention to them and more to the smaller ones. The larger varieties, as has been pointed out, have acquired a value which they did not possess when we first thought of legislating on this subject. Their skins now command a price in the market which will always make them sought after more or less by the scalp-hunters. For that reason, and also to induce the smaller varieties to be paid more attention to, we ought not to allow boards which come into existence under this Act to pay a bonus of 8d. for kangaroos and wallabies. It would be far better to knock off the odd 2d., and add it to the 4d. which is given for the smaller varieties. Make a sixpenny bonus uniform for all marsupials. I observe that liberty is to be given to the boards, under certain conditions, to pay for the scalps of dingoes. What is a dingo?

An HONOURABLE MEMBER: A native dog.

Mr. MORGAN: A native dog, the hon. member says. But all dogs born in the colony are native dogs. A definition of a dingo should be placed in the interpretation clause to prevent any difficulty arising. I would certainly refuse to be a party to the payment of an endowment on the destruction of marsupials. I do not think our pastoral friends would be justified in making such a demand on the country. In some parts of the country marsupials have been totally exterminated, and runs and farms have been protected by wire fences. I think, Sir, it would hardly be a fair thing to ask those people who have protected their properties in that respect to contribute again to a fund of this kind, more particularly as they did the work of extermination under circumstances very much more unfavourable than they are at the present time. I hope, therefore, that the demand for an endowment will not be insisted upon. I hope when the Bill is going through committee hon. members will see the wisdom of altering the provision which now renders a man liable to taxation, and does not give him a voice in the constitution of the board which has power to tax him. If he is to be taxed he ought to have a vote and to have the right to sit on the board. That is only a fair principle. The Bill as it stands, with the exception I refer to, is, I think, one to which no reasonable objection can be offered by the country. As to the case mentioned by the leader of the Opposition—the danger of marsupials being slaughtered in a district which does not levy an assessment, and the scalps being brought into a district which does levy an assessment, and the money bonus being claimed from that district—that can be got over by proclaiming the adjoining district an infested district; and I presume that on representations being made the Government would see that those unjust neighbours were compelled to destroy the vermin on their own property. If a board does not do its duty in levying an assessment it can be removed, and another board appointed that has a higher sense of duty and responsibility. I shall vote for the second reading of the Bill.

Mr. MURRAY said: Mr. Speaker,—I am very pleased that the Government have brought in this Bill, which is very much wanted. Many districts are threatened to be over-run with this vermin if something is not done to keep it down. We are all aware of the immense mischief they have done in the past. I know of very large tracts of country which before the passing of the Act was beautiful pastoral country, and which at the present time is covered with dense scrub. The Governor in Council appear to have the power of forming these boards, but I am inclined to think that on petition of two-thirds of the ratepayers the boards should be formed. I think it better that this Bil. should only apply to particular districts, because there are very large tracts of country in the closely settled districts where there are no marsupials, and settlers and farmers should not be taxed in those districts. I do not agree with some remarks made by the hon. member for Oxley, that the Government should not pay any bonus or subsidy for scalps. I think it would be a very good thing if a small subsidy were given in order to keep the boards under the control of the authorities. They would be better looked after, because their accounts would be audited by Government auditors, and in every respect the boards would be better managed. It must be remembered that the operation of the Act will apply to Crown lands, and it is the duty of the State to protect its own property. In course of time the leases will expire, and unless there is some encouragement to keep down these vermin the country will become useless. Therefore I think a subsidy of something like one to two would be a desirable thing to include in the measure. I know of some districts at the present time where, if there was a small bonus given for scalps, employment would be found for many of the unemployed, and where any man who can use a gun at all could make from £2 to £3 a week. If some encouragement were given by way of bonus it would be an inducement to many men to go out and destroy marsupials instead of walking about the country. I am pleased to see the Bill, and I will do all I can to support it and carry it through.

Mr. LISSNER said: Mr. Speaker,—I do not intend to offer any stonewalling opposition to this Bill. I will support it, but I would like to know from the Secretary for Mines where his answer was to the letter which has been read by the hon. member for Bundaberg. The person who wrote the letter says that he was shooting marsupials under a miner's right, and was prevented from doing so by the landlord. I would like to know what the hon. gentleman's reply was.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: The hon. member gave my reply.

Mr. DRAKE: The reply was that the kangaroo was not a mineral.

Mr. LISSNER: Well, if a marsupial is not a mineral, I am satisfied; but as a mining member I was deeply interested to know the decision of the Secretary for Mines.

Mr. PAUL said: Mr. Speaker,—Had it not been for the remarks of the hon. member for Oxley I question whether I would have spoken on this Bill; but I would remind the hon. member that there are several new members who have had no experience of the ravages that marsupials make. They make periodic visitations. Some people may not be aware that Leichhardt in his journal of 1846 gives an account of the country extending from the junction of the Comet to Isaacs River, and he describes it as being open brigalow country infested with myriads of wallabies. Anyone acquainted with that district knows that the whole of that country is a dense scrub some sixty miles through. I went there first in the year 1863, when it was all beautiful grass and saltbush, and you would not see a paddymelon in a day's ride. Some six years afterwards I went through the same country again, and so far as a wallaby could reach there was not a blade of anything. Then, when the scrub was eaten out, the marsupials went to the good land. My theory is that when there is an epidemic amongst dingoes the marsupials increase. And in time then the kangaroos disappear; they eat themselves out, and die of disease, full of worms. Now the marsupials are increasing as fast as ever again, and when I was out West a few weeks ago several stations that I passed through

bore marks of being marsupial-ridden. There is another amendment which might be inserted, and which would gain the support of the farmers to the Bill. I certainly agree that the large kangaroo, which has a value, should be expunged, and that the smaller marsupials, which do an infinite amount of harm, should be included. Many people think that the opossum lives only upon leaves, but it lives on the best grass also. At Withersfield I have seen the country perfectly denuded of grass by opossums; they not only eat the grass, but if they get into a garden they eat the vegetables also. Therefore I think the opossum should be included amongst the marsupials, and the larger kangaroo expunged. We know that in the open country in certain districts there is very little fear of kangaroos becoming a pest for some time; but they breed in the ranges at the heads of the watercourses. Therefore, the runs in those localities are the first to suffer; but if a board is proclaimed they are in a minority, and the board will not levy a tax. I do not see any provision in the Bill by which they can be compelled to do so, and I think there ought to be. I have been a squatter myself, and I know that when the squatters do not feel the pest themselves they are apt to ask why they should have to pay for other people's misfortunes. I hope something will be done in this direction, and I agree with the leader of the Opposition that there should be some contribution on the part of the Government, because, as has been pointed out, these ravages do not take place in consequence of any negligence on the part of the leaseholders, but in consequence of circumstances they cannot control. There are periodical invasions of rats out West. Nobody knows where they come from, and nobody knows where they disappear to; but they commit great ravages. I hope hon. members will support any amendment by which an endowment will be given to the boards.

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

The committal of the Bill was made an Order of the Day for to-morrow.

ADJOURNMENT.

The CHIEF SECRETARY said: Mr. Speaker,—I move that this House do now adjourn. We will go on with the Elections Bill to-morrow.

Question put and passed.

The House adjourned at twenty-seven minutes past 8 o'clock.