Queensland

Parliamentary Debates
[Hansard]

Legislative Assembly

WEDNESDAY, 29 JUNE 1892

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY.

Wednesday, 29 *June*, 1892.

Question.—Question Without Notice: Unfurnished return.—Elections Bill: Resumption of committee. —Adjournment.

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

QUESTION.

Mr. MURRAY asked the Secretary for Lands—

1. What are the reasons for withdrawing from grazing farm selection all the lands in the land agents' districts of Aramac, Blackall, Charleville, Cunnamulla, Hughenden, Isisford, Normanton, Tambo, and Thargomindah?

2. What are the intentions of the Government regarding the disposal of the said lands?

The SECRETARY FOR LANDS (Hon. A. S. Cowley) replied—

The reason for the withdrawal is to enable provision to be made for any necessary reservations under the provisions of the Railways Construction (Land Subsidy) Bill. Any grazing farms which are not likely to be required for the purpose will again be proclaimed open s oon as possible.

QUESTION WITHOUT NOTICE.

UNFURNISHED RETURN.

Mr. BLACK said: Mr. Speaker,—I would like, with the permission of the House, to ask the Chief Secretary—I am sorry the Treasurer is not here this afternoon—to have the return I moved for on the 12th April in connection with the progress of the sugar and gold-mining industries expedited a little. It is a continuation of a return laid on the table some time ago. Any ordinary clerk in the office with reasonable intelligence could do the whole thing in a day; he has only to extract the particulars for the different districts.

The CHIEF SECRETARY (Hon. Sir S. W. Griffith) said: Mr. Speaker,—I shall inquire into the matter, and see that it is pressed on.

ELECTIONS BILL.

RESUMPTION OF COMMITTEE.

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

Clause 5—"Declaration and attestation"—passed as printed.

On clause 6, as follows:—

"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."

Mr. POWERS said he would like to know whether the Government intended to insist on the retention of the words "or otherwise." It had been clearly pointed out that certain questions required to be answered by the claimant, and that it would relieve a justice of the peace from being liable to the penalty under clause 7 if those questions were asked and answered in his presence. If those words were retained a justice of the peace would consider it necessary to make inquiries of persons other than the claimant, and that would prevent him attesting declarations.

The CHIEF SECRETARY said that the object of the Bill was quite the contrary. Those words were inserted to provide for cases where the man could not himself sufficiently explain the matter to a justice of the peace. Supposing a man was a foreigner, and the justice of the peace could not make inquiries of him personally, someone who knew him thoroughly might testify, and satisfy the justice of the peace that he had the necessary qualification. Those words were inserted to enable him to dispense with the inquiry from the claimant when it was not practicable, and not for the reason suggested by the hon. member.

Mr. GLASSEY said that even if a claimant gave every explanation that he was capable of giving, it was just possible that the justice of the peace, or school teacher, or registrar might require a great deal more information before he was satisfied. There might be very few persons that either of those persons would know. The head teacher of a school would know a number of persons in his own locality; but how was a teacher or a registrar to know all the particulars with respect to persons living two or three miles away? If one of those officials attested a claim, and some little point which he did not see came out afterwards, he would be liable to a penalty of £50. As had been pointed out again and again, hundreds of claims would be rejected simply because it would be necessary for a person before attesting a claim to make such inquiries as would satisfy him that the statements made by the claimant were true.

The CHIEF SECRETARY said it was really getting intolerable to have the hon. member getting up time after time and making such reckless statements. There was no such provision in the Bill or anything like it. There was no provision requiring a justice to be personally acquainted with the facts, and it was perfectly scandalous for the hon. member to get up and make such assertions. He represented that the Government had brought in a Bill which would prevent a man from getting on the roll unless he could find a justice who was willing to certify that he knew of his own knowledge that he was entitled to be on the roll; and then on a text like that he would go outside and declaim upon the wickedness of the Government. He (the Chief Secretary) endeavoured not to be impatient, but human patience had a limit, and when that sort of thing went on it was no wonder that ill-will was stirred up.

Mr. SAYERS said that, as he understood the clause, the justice, or head teacher, or registrar simply had to ask certain questions, and it was for the claimant to answer those questions. So long as the attesting witness asked the questions honestly he need have no fear of any liability; but if the claimant made a false statement he would be liable—not the man who witnessed the signature.

Mr. GLASSEY said he was astonished at the anger of the Chief Secretary. He thought he had read the clause correctly and interpreted it correctly. The 6th clause said—

"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."

And then the next clause said—

"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."

He thought that bore out everything which he had contended. The justice or other person must make inquiry, and if he found that the claimant had not conveyed to him sufficient facts to justify him in attesting the claim he would reject it; and if he signed it, and it afterwards turned out as he had before stated, then the penalties provided in the 7th clause must follow.

Mr. PAUL said it was an aphorism that a man judged other people by himself. The hon. member for Bundanba looked upon everybody as dishonest, and therefore the only inference to be drawn was that the hon. member must be of the character which he attributed to everybody else.

Mr. GLASSEY: That is a very good definition.

Mr. PAUL said he thought there was no more hateful character than a suspicious man. He would treat everybody as honest until proved to be dishonest, and then he would let all the penalties of the law fall upon him. He simply rose to protest against that cruel waste of time. If the hon. member wished to make his mark as a statesman he must drop the tactics he was pursuing at the present time, by which he was alienating from himself every honest worker in the country. He (Mr. Paul) had lived among working men all his life, and was perfectly certain——

The CHAIRMAN: I must remind the hon. member that the question before the Committee is clause 6.

Mr. PAUL said that his experience in the colony extended over thirty years, that he had been a justice of the peace for twenty-eight years, and had sat on the bench in various districts, and that the majority of the justices he had been associated with were men of high, upright character, who would not stoop to anything dishonest. He knew the pains magistrates took to investigate claims for enrolment. He thought it was a great pity that many more justices did not act on the revision courts, so as to be able to give their assistance in determining the right of claimants to be enrolled.

Clause put and passed.

On clause 7, as follows :—

"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."

Mr. POWERS said he would like to ask whether the Chief Secretary intended to insist upon all those penalties if a justice of the peace was convicted of the offence specified in the clause. Any one of the three penalties was sufficient, and if, in addition to a fine of £50, a justice was to be rendered incapable of being registered as an elector, or of voting at a parliamentary election for five years, many justices would refuse to run the risk involved in attesting a declaration. He did not intend to move an amendment, because unless it was accepted by the Government he knew it would not be adopted by the Committee.

The CHIEF SECRETARY said it was not for him to insist upon them; he simply submitted them for the consideration of the Committee. But he thought that if a justice lent himself to roll-stuffing he deserved those penalties. Supposing a man was going about with claims in his pocket, and a justice lent himself to the business of attesting those claims, was he not deserving of the penalties proposed? He had heard of justices being engaged in that business, not in Brisbane, but in other parts of the colony, and a justice who did that sort of thing deserved severe penalties. He did not think that the penalty was excessive or that the disqualifications were excessive. With regard to a person who committed that offence being incapable of acting as a justice of the peace, that would follow whether it was in the Bill or not. And as to his being incapable of being registered as an elector or voting at a parliamentary election for five years, that was, he thought, a very satisfactory penalty. It involved incidentally the exclusion of such persons from the House, which might be an advantage.

The HON. J. R. DICKSON said it seemed to him that it would be better if after the words "full inquiry," in the 2nd line, there were inserted the words "from the claimant or otherwise," as was done in the preceding clause. That would make it clear that the inquiry might be conducted by the alternative methods proposed.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: I have no objection.

The HON. J. R. DICKSON said it should be made clear that a magistrate would not suffer the penalties if he were satisfied with the evidence given by the claimant. He moved that after the word "inquiry," in the 2nd line, there be inserted the words "from the claimant or otherwise."

Mr. PAUL said he thought the word "wilfully" should be inserted before the words "signs any such certificate."

The CHIEF SECRETARY asked how could a man do it except wilfully. The only circumstances under which he could do it otherwise than wilfully would be if he was drunk.

Amendment agreed to.

Mr. HYNE said he believed that the enacting of all those penalties would have a very deterrent effect upon magistrates attesting claims. There was one magistrate in the district he represented who stood in dread of those penalties, and he thought that others would have a similar feeling in regard to them. He moved the omission of the words "liable on summary conviction to a penalty not exceeding £50, and shall be." The clause would then read—"Any justice or other person who signs any such certificate without personal knowledge or full inquiry from the claimant or otherwise, shall be incapable of being or acting as a justice of the peace, or of being registered as an elector," etc. That would be sufficient penalty.

The CHIEF SECRETARY said surely the man must be tried before he could be punished! The hon. member had left out the machinery for trying the man to ascertain his incapacity. He did not sympathise with that system of justice. The hon. member's argument, that a man would be very careful before he attested any claim if the words he proposed to omit were left in, was an argument for the retention of the words rather than for their omission.

Mr. GANNON said he thought it a mistake to have so many pains and penalties hanging to the clause. At the time of a general election, when party feeling ran high, a magistrate might find himself brought into court by his political enemies on a charge under the Bill, and without there being anything special against him, his name would go forth as that of a man who had been charged with an offence under the Bill. The Chief Secretary should agree to omit the penalty of £50, and so amend the clause as to provide that the other penalties should follow a conviction of an offence under the Bill.

Mr. DRAKE said he agreed that there should be heavy penalties imposed upon anyone who wilfully assisted roll-stuffing, but he thought the effect of the heavy penalties in the Bill would be

to furnish an excuse to justices of the peace to refuse to attest claims. A number of justices of the peace were rather afraid of running their heads into a noose of that kind, and the clause as it stood would be thought an inducement to them to say to a claimant that they were too busy to attend to him and he must get somebody else to attest his claim. If the clause was passed as it stood, it should, he thought, be followed by some such clause as that he had given notice of, providing that a justice of the peace who wilfully refused to sign a certificate when a claim was presented to him should be liable to the same penalties. That clause he had drafted before the alteration providing for the attestation of claims by the electoral registrar or teacher of a State school was made. He did not suppose any difficulty would occur with regard to the electoral registrar, but there might be a great deal of difficulty, if those heavy penalties were agreed to, in getting justices of the peace or teachers of State schools to attest those claims. It was easy to see that great difficulties might be thrown in the way by State school teachers, as he supposed the Bill would be followed by a regulation from the Educational Department permitting teachers to refuse to attest claims during school hours, and as after school hours a man's time was generally held to be his own he might object to having a number of men coming up to his private residence to have electoral claims attested. If it was necessary to call upon justices of the peace and head teachers of State schools to do that work, it was equally necessary to provide some penalty if they refused to carry out the duty proposed to be imposed upon them by the Bill. They were by the Bill imposing new duties upon certain persons, the non-performance of which might result in injury to those persons, and those persons should be protected from wilful default of duty on the part of those on whom it was cast.

Mr. SAYERS said he would point out that the penalty imposed might be anything from 1s. up to £50, and it was only in aggravated cases, where men could be shown to have gone round professionally stuffing rolls and attesting false signatures, that the full penalty was likely to be imposed. Hon. members were talking as if £50 was the lowest penalty that could be imposed under the clause. He thought that the limit was perhaps too high, and he would move the reduction of the penalty from £50 to £25.

The CHAIRMAN: I cannot take that amendment while the amendment of the hon. member for Maryborough is before the Committee.

Mr. DALRYMPLE said that while he would not object to any penalty in cases of fraud, they should consider what effect the clause would have upon the minds of average magistrates. He was disposed to agree to some extent with the hon. member for Enoggera, and to believe that inasmuch as it was not compulsory upon a magistrate or a school teacher to attest those claims at all, they might say, "If we do not attest these claims we will suffer naught, while we will free ourselves from a possible penalty which we might ignorantly incur by attesting them." It might lead to more difficulty in men getting their claims attested than he was sure the Committee desired. The Chief Secretary might suggest some machinery to prevent that.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: In what way?

Mr. DALRYMPLE said it appeared to him that to provide that persons offending under the clause should have their names struck off the roll would be sufficient.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: That must be preceded by a conviction.

Mr. DALRYMPLE said of course there was that difficulty, but he had no doubt the hon. gentleman was possessed of sufficient ingenuity to surmount it.

Mr. POWERS said the difficulty could be got over by moving the omission of the words "be liable."

Mr. HYNE said that, with the permission of the Committee, he would withdraw his amendment, with the object of substituting another amendment for it. His purpose was to omit the penalty, which, he agreed with the hon. member, Mr. Dalrymple, would have a very deterrent effect upon justices of the peace.

Amendment, by leave, withdrawn.

Mr. HYNE moved that the clause be further amended by the omission of the words "to a penalty not exceeding £50."

The CHIEF SECRETARY said he could not help thinking that it would be a very great mistake not to have a pecuniary penalty. A penalty of £50, which might be lowered to 1s., seemed a very trivial thing compared with the disqualification from voting at elections for five years. It was something like straining at a gnat and swallowing a camel. There was no objection to depriving them of their parliamentary franchise, but there was an objection to fining them 1s.

Mr. GLASSEY: Why deprive them of the parliamentary franchise?

The CHIEF SECRETARY said because they tried to deprive other people of theirs. Men detected in trying to rob other people of their parliamentary franchise should be deprived of their own. He hoped the hon. member would not press his amendment. The matter had been very carefully considered, and he certainly thought there should be some pecuniary penalty. The average intelligence of justices was sometimes rather underrated. What the clause said was simply, "You must not sign this certificate unless it is true." He did not suppose all justices were aware of the consequences they were liable to at present when they acted as justices. If they did things corruptly, if they certified to things that they knew to be false, they were liable to be prosecuted for a misdemeanour, and to be imprisoned at the discretion of the court. The clause cast a duty upon them to make inquiries before they certified that the claimant had satisfied them, after full inquiry, that his qualifications were as stated. If a justice signed such a certificate knowing it to be false he should be punished for it. Some justices, as had been pointed out, might decline to act at all. If they did, and if the Government found it out, they would be struck off the roll. That was the proper way to deal with justices who did not do their duty. He might add that it was the practice of the Government, when justices did not get sworn or did not undertake the functions, to leave them off the commission.

Mr. CALLAN said that although the penalty was stated as being £50, the court might reduce it to £1 if they chose. But the latter portion of the clause was a far more serious one; and personally he would rather pay a fine of £500 than be declared incapable of being a justice, or of being registered as an elector or voting at any parliamentary election for a period of five years

Mr. PLUNKETT said he would take a case that might happen to himself. A man who lived twenty miles off in the bush might come to his place and ask him to attest his signature, saying that he had been a resident in the electorate for six months. He (Mr. Plunkett) would have no

means of inquiring from any person. Supposing he took the man's word, would he be doing right?

The CHIEF SECRETARY: No.

Mr. PLUNKETT said that for any justice who abused his position, and signed what he knew to be untrue for the purpose of getting a man on the roll, a fine of £50 was not too much.

Mr. McMASTER said that any honest, straightforward magistrate would not hesitate to attach his signature after the amendment of the hon. member for Bulimba had been accepted. If a person came to him and asked him to attest his signature, and declared on oath that the contents of the document were true, although he had no personal knowledge of the fact himself, he should do so, and the responsibility would be on the applicant's shoulders. Only that day he had attested a signature on the applicant declaring that the contents of the document were true, although he did not know personally whether they were true or not; the man said they were, and he attested the signature. After the adoption of the amendment of the hon. member for Bulimba, no honest magistrate need hesitate to make the attestation, and he hoped there were no dishonest ones on the roll. If there were any, the sooner the Government struck them off the better. He thought there should be a money penalty as well as striking off from the parliamentary roll. He would not hesitate to attest a man's signature, but he would throw the onus on him and relieve himself.

Mr. GANNON said he was perfectly certain the magistrates of Queensland were not likely to wilfully incur the penalties provided, but he would call attention to a case that came before one of the Supreme Court judges, when he stated that a magistrate who had attested a signature should have known the person whose signature he took. Now that was impossible. He (Mr. Gannon) attested dozens and dozens of signatures, but he could not go into a court of law and pick out any particular man again and say that he made a certain declaration. He did not think it would be a good thing to have those three penalties There ought to be a money penalty, and he did not care what the amount was, but the other disabilities were very severe. A magistrate might be returned to Parliament, and one of those cases being brought against him might be the means of his losing his seat. In times of political warfare feelings ran high; men did things then which they would not do in cooler moments; and there might be instances in which innocent men might suffer through designing men bringing false charges against them.

Mr. CASEY said the Chief Secretary had told them, and the Committee would agree with him, that the intention of the Bill was to enable every man justly entitled to a vote to get on the roll. He thought if that large money penalty was attached it would have a deterrent effect upon magistrates and head teachers of State schools from acting. He thought if they were criminally liable no penalty could be too great, but when those men saw the penalty they would not act. He knew himself that magistrates would grant a summons when they would not grant a warrant, even to the police, because the penalties to which they were liable for granting a warrant informally or incorrectly were very much greater than in the other case. They might have every desire to act fairly and honestly, but if through an accident they did not thoroughly comply with the law, and seeing that they were liable to a penalty of £50, they would endeavour to evade the duty cast upon them. He thought if the penalty was reduced to a very much smaller sum, say £5, with the very much greater penalty provided at the end of the clause, it would meet every case, and the result would be equally deterrent to men who desired from impure motives to work the Act to a bad purpose.

The HON. J. R. DICKSON said he could not agree with hon. members who thought the money penalty should be abolished, nor did he agree with those who thought the penalty should be either a pecuniary one or disqualification. He thought the two should remain as provided for in the clause, with certain modifications. The hon. member for Maryborough's amendment prevented the question of the size of the penalty from being considered. At first when he read the clause and spoke on the second reading he expressed some doubt as to whether the sum of £50 was not too large, because, although it was true that the penalty was not to exceed £50, still the impression abroad would be that people were liable to the full penalty, and really £50 was a very considerable sum to fine a man for possibly an error of judgment. He thought it was not intended that the Bill should be an aid to the Treasury. It was intended that the sense of justice in having violated his duty should be marked upon a magistrate by mulcting him in a certain sum; and he certainly went with the hon. member for Charters Towers, Mr. Sayers, in his suggestion that the amount should be reduced to £25. He thought it should not be a trifling sum like £5. Indeed, it would be better to strike the penalty out altogether rather than reduce it to such an insignificant sum. He was averse to anything like Draconian legislation. He did not like harsh laws, because, as a rule, they failed in their object. He thought they might amend the clause further by substituting three years instead of five as the period of disfranchisement. They were about introducing the system of triennial parliaments, and if a man suffered disqualification for a period extending over one parliament, and there was a penalty not exceeding £25 in addition, that would meet the case. He would therefore like the hon. member for Maryborough, Mr. Hyne, to take into consideration whether it would not be well to withdraw his amendment, so as to allow of a reduction of the money penalty being made.

Mr. JESSOP said he agreed with the hon. member that the money penalty of £25 would be sufficient. There were certain cases in which magistrates made themselves very officious in electioneering matters, but he thought a penalty of £25, together with the other penalties, would meet all cases. He should, therefore, like to see the amendment of the hon. member for Maryborough withdrawn, and the other amendment substituted.

Mr. ALAND said he took it that the penalty was not for not making sufficient inquiry, but for witnessing to a false assertion.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: Signing a false assertion.

Mr. ALAND said in those cases he did not think the penalty was too great, because they were assured by the Chief Secretary that if a magistrate satisfied himself by asking the claimant certain questions, and the claimant answered those questions, the magistrate relieved himself of all responsibility; but if a magistrate got a man or a number of men together, or went out into the country collecting a number of men before him and taking their declarations and signing them, knowing them to be altogether false, he would say that the penalty was not too severe. It might be said that the magistrates of the colony were too honest to do that sort of thing. He believed, as a rule, they were, but he had known divisional board elections carried

on in some such manner. He had heard, and he believed it was perfectly true, that during divisional board elections magistrates had been known to go round and collect ballot-papers from the persons entitled to vote. Whilst he did not like pains and penalties, still if a person wilfully did that which was wrong he thought he ought to suffer.

The CHIEF SECRETARY asked if hon. members had considered what it was that rendered justices liable to a penalty at all? They had to sign the certificate—

"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 ab ve stated."

It that were a lie, and he had not done anything of the sort, he incurred a penalty. If the claimant had done nothing of the kind, and he wilfully and deliberately certified to a falsehood, he ought to be punished. If the justice of the peace did not certify it, he incurred no penalty at all.

Mr. GANNON said the claimant might go before the court, or tell somebody outside that, notwithstanding he had made a declaration, he had not done so, and then he might start a prosecution against the magistrate. Who was to decide then?

The CHIEF SECRETARY: The court, of course, as in every other case.

Mr. GANNON said a man might go and make a declaration, and have it signed by the magistrate, and then go amongst some enemies of the magistrate and say he did not make the declaration.

The CHIEF SECRETARY said no provision could be made to prevent false charges being made against anyone. Innocent people might be punished sometimes, but very seldom. Suppose the man who had lately been convicted of roll-stuffing had been a magistrate, and had gone about with a number of papers in his hand to get people to sign their names to them, and had filled in the answers to the questions at his leisure and attested them himself—that might be done, and he had no doubt it would have been done if he had been a justice.

Mr. JESSOP said the Committee ought to make it as plain as possible, and as easy as possible, for all men entitled to be on the rolls to be so. The remarks of the hon. member for Toowoomba reminded him of something that occurred in regard to a divisional board. Complaints had been made to him by a prominent member of a board that even the chairman went through the district canvassing for votes, and he did it in this way: "I have not a voting-paper," said one elector. "Oh, I have," was the reply, and the man took one from his pocket. Something must be done to stop that. In court one man's word was as good as another's. A man might come into his (Mr. Jessop's) office and ask him to witness his signature. He might do so after asking a certain number of questions, and then find out that they were answered wrongly. The man might then go to court and say he was never asked the questions. The clause was the most important one in the Bill.

Mr. CASEY said, although the penalty might be reduced to an apparently small amount, it must not be forgotten that it carried a conviction with it and a far greater punishment in the loss of the franchise and all citizen rights for five years.

Mr. HYNE said he did not like the idea of inflicting money penalties upon magistrates, and, as the last speaker had said, to be struck off the commission of the peace and lose all rights of citizenship for five years would be a very heavy penalty. If anyone made a charge against a magistrate, that magistrate would have to suffer the indignity of defending himself and being put in the position of a criminal at once. If it were the wish of the Committee that he should withdraw his amendment, in order that another might be inserted, he was willing to do so, although he would do it reluctantly.

Amendment, by leave, withdrawn.

Mr. SAYERS moved that the word "fifty," in the 3rd line of the clause, be omitted, with a view of inserting the words "twenty-five."

The CHIEF SECRETARY said did it not occur to hon. members that for an offence committed by a justice of the peace in the execution of his high office a maximum penalty of £25 was rather low? When a magistrate deliberately prostituted his high position by signing a false certificate, to put down £25 as the maximum penalty seemed to be degrading the office. He thought that five years might be reduced to two years, and he would accept that amendment. But it was derogatory to the office of magistrate to make £25 the maximum penalty for the abuse of the office.

Mr. DRAKE: That is not the worst part of the penalty.

Mr. SAYERS said his object in making a lower penalty was in order that magistrates should not be afraid to give certificates. Of course, at present the penalty might be anything between 1s. and £50; the latter was only the maximum. Still, if £25 were the maximum, he did not think they would be so frightened to do so.

Mr. DRAKE said he was glad the Chief Secretary intended to substitute two years for five years, because the fine was by far the smallest part of the penalty. Of course the justices had the discretion of inflicting a fine to any amount, and if they thought fit might inflict no fine at all. But with regard to the reduction of the time to two years, it would be putting a great deal of power in the hands of two justices—to disqualify and disfranchise a brother magistrate for two years. Sometimes jealousies and angry passions were aroused over election contests, and that was a great power to place in the hands of justices. They had been told that the penalty applied also to the head teacher of a State school. He did not know whether there was any provision by which justices could inflict a penalty of that kind.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: Yes; under the Elections Act.

Mr. CASEY said that he would point out that in the case of the head teachers of State schools, it was very probable that that would not be the only penalty. They would certainly be dismissed from their positions.

The CHIEF SECRETARY said that there was a similar provision in the present law. The 96th section of the Act provided that a person guilty of an illegal practice should, on summary conviction, be liable to a fine not exceeding £100, and be incapable, during a period of two years from the date of his conviction, of being registered as an elector or voting at any election held for the electorate in which the illegal practice had been committed.

Amendment put and negatived.

The CHIEF SECRETARY moved the omission of the word "five" with the view of inserting the word "two." That would make it analogous to the present law.

Amendment agreed to.

Clause, as amended, put and passed.

Mr. DRAKE said he would now move the amendment of which he had given notice. He had altered one word in order to make it agree with the section which preceded. They had passed a clause inflicting penalties upon any justice of the peace, electoral registrar, or head teacher of a State school who attested a claim without having made full inquiries. It had been pointed out by several hon. members that a great number of justices and head teachers would be disinclined to attest those claims, and as that power was being conferred upon a limited class in the community they might be able to put obstacles in the way of persons who desired to have their names registered on the electoral rolls. He therefore thought it right that they should be subject to the same penalties, if they refused to perform the duties which were cast upon them by the legislature, as they would incur under the preceding clause. If one of those persons desired to shirk the risk of incurring the penalty for signing a certificate without having made full inquiry, and shirked his duty, and tried to pass it off on someone else, he should be subject to a similar penalty to that imposed upon the person who signed a certificate without having made full inquiries. He proposed a new clause as follows :—

Any justice or other person who, when an applicant has offered to depose to the facts upon oath, refuses to sign any such certificate, 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 two years from the date of the conviction.

The CHIEF SECRETARY said that if the clause were carried the number of justices of the peace would be very greatly diminished. He was in the unfortunate position, so long as he was a member of the Executive Council, of being unable to resign his position as a justice of the peace; and the morning after the Bill became law he might have forty or fifty men coming to his chambers to have their claims attested. If he refused to attest them he would be liable to a penalty of £50 in each case and to be disfranchised for two years. The hon. member must see that it was no use pressing a clause of that sort.

Mr. DRAKE said that the hon. gentleman could easily sweep away his objection by inserting the words "without just cause" after the word "refuses." It was perfectly clear from what the hon. gentleman said that if a number of justices of the peace were going to be struck off, or were going to resign in consequence of such a clause being put in the Bill, there must be a great many who would shirk their work, and decline to attest those claims, because no one else except those justices had anything to fear under the clause.

The CHIEF SECRETARY said that the hon. gentleman was surely aware that at the present time any justice of the peace could take affidavits, but it was not compulsory. He had never been asked to take an affidavit; but if every magistrate were bound to take an affidavit under a penalty of £50, anyone wanting to annoy him could ask him to attest an affidavit; and, under the amendment, any person who wanted to annoy a justice of the peace could do so in a most lamentable way. If he refused to attest a claim he would be liable to a penalty of £50.

Mr. DRAKE: It seems to me that they will not attest claims.

The CHIEF SECRETARY said there was no difficulty now in getting justices to do their work, but it had never been the rule to make justices the servants of everybody.

Mr. GLASSEY said it was not unreasonable to insist, when there was only a limited number of persons to do the work, that the person who went with a legitimate claim should have some reasonable show of getting it through. As the Bill stood it would depend entirely on the whim of the individual who was asked to attest the claim; and if he happened to be a partisan—as no doubt some of them were—he might decline or not, just as he chose.

New clause put and negatived.

Mr. POWERS moved the insertion of the following new clause to follow clause 7 :—

Notwithstanding anything herein contained a claim shall be received by an electoral registrar and may be approved of by the revision court without being attested by a justice of the peace, or an electoral registrar, or the head teacher of a State school, if the person who attested the signature of the claimant shall make the following declaration before a justice of the peace to whom he is personally known :—

Appeared before me at , the day of , 18 , , of , the attesting witness to this claim, who is personally known to me, and acknowledged his signature to the same, and did further declare that , the party who signed the same, was personally known to him the said , that he is satisfied, after full inquiry, that he possesses the qualification stated in the claim, and that the signature to the claim is in the handwriting of the said .

(Signature of a justice of the peace)

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

He thought that such a clause was necessary, more especially as the clause proposed by the hon. member for Enoggera had been negatived. The object of the Bill, as stated by the Government, was not to keep persons off the roll; and it was well known that in many parts of the colony people would have to travel long distances to get their claims attested by justices; therefore it was desirable that other persons should be allowed to attest signatures under the conditions set forth in the proposed new clause.

The CHIEF SECRETARY said that if the amendment was carried the result would simply be a continuance of the present system—that was to say, it would enable any unscrupulous person to go about collecting claims, to bring them in a bundle to a magistrate and make a declaration that they were all right. It was precisely the same——

Mr. POWERS: Except that he would be liable to punishment.

The CHIEF SECRETARY said he was liable to punishment now. One was caught the other day and punished. That man considered it was a perfectly laudable thing to get the names of persons who were not entitled to vote put on the roll. If they passed the proposed clause that gentleman would be able to re-engage in that industry on precisely the same terms as before. Of course he would be punished if he was caught doing it, but the object of the Bill was to prevent such things being done.

Mr. POWERS said that previously there was a difficulty about the identification of persons who collected signatures; but under the amendment now proposed a person who did that sort of thing would walk into a trap, as he had to go before a magistrate and certify that the claimants whose claims he presented for attestation were possessed of the qualifications described in their claims, so that no one was likely to run the risk of incurring those penalties. The very fact that

a person had to make a declaration before a justice would prevent him bringing forward improper claims, for he would be shut out from the defence set up in recent cases, that it was intended that the claims should not go in until a certain time, or from any other defence.

The CHIEF SECRETARY said the effect of the amendment would be that any person who chose might constitute himself a justice of the peace for the purpose of certifying to the *bona fides* of claims.

Mr. DRAKE said, as he had already endeavoured to point out that afternoon, under the New Zealand system a claim might be attested by any elector. That system seemed to work very well there; and he did not see why there should be such distrust of the electors of this colony—that they should be looked upon as a lot of rogues not to be trusted to witness signatures. The hon. member for Burrum proposed sufficient penalties and safeguards in his amendment, which provided that a man who attested a claim should make a declaration before a justice of the peace that the signature to the claim was genuine, and that he had made full inquiry as to the qualifications of the claimant. He (Mr. Drake) felt more than ever convinced, after hearing the remarks made by the Chief Secretary on the last clause, that if that Bill was passed without some increased provision being made for obtaining the attestation of signatures, a great number of people who wanted to get on the roll, and who were entitled to be registered, would be prevented by the operation of the Bill. The matter they were discussing concerned the people in electorates far away from the towns, where justices of the peace and head teachers of State schools were few and far between. It was perfectly clear from the remarks which fell from the Chief Secretary that a great many justices of the peace throughout the colony would seek to evade the duty that was thrust upon them by the Bill. Either on the excuse of pressure of business or for some other reason a justice of the peace would say, "Take your claim to a head teacher of a State school," and the head teacher would say, "I am too busy, take it to somebody else," and in the end the claimant would have to go to the electoral registrar. If it was the intention of the Bill that obstacles should not be put in the way of persons getting on the roll, then some provision like that proposed by the hon. member for Burrum should be adopted.

Mr. GLASSEY said he was sure the hon. member for Enoggera must be convinced, after the elaborate discussion which had taken place, that the object of the Bill was not to afford the utmost facilities to persons to get on the roll, but, on the contrary, to put obstacles in the way of their enrolment. He (Mr. Glassey) had pointed that out over and over again, and the Government and other members of the Committee had been very angry with him for doing so. But the opposition to every proposal that was made to afford persons every opportunity for getting on the roll more than confirmed him in his opinion. As was suggested by the hon. member for Enoggera, they might very well trust electors to attest the claims of persons to be registered as voters. Such a system had worked well in New Zealand, and it was a reasonable and rational mode of carrying out the work of registration. But when the simplest proposal was made to avoid some difficulty which would in future stand in the way of persons getting registered as electors, it was opposed by an overwhelming majority of the Committee, and hon. members did not feel justified in going to a division upon it. Hon. members were not of his opinion, for he would put his vote on record, even though he stood alone. The proposal of the hon. member for Burrum was a most reasonable one, and he (Mr. Glassey) could not share the opinions expressed by the Chief Secretary that any person would attest a claim, and run the risk of incurring all those disabilities, unless he had evidence that the claims presented to him were just and legitimate. Surely they had not arrived at the time, at all events he hoped they had not, when members were utterly afraid that the whole of the colony was infested by a number of persons who desired to defraud people out of their rights and run such risks, as they would do under the amendment. No doubt persons had made mistakes in the past, and it was more than likely that mistakes would be made in the future. But that that had been done to any great extent he entirely denied. They knew that a very large number of persons who were eligible for registration as electors were not on the rolls of the colony, and that showed a want of activity in getting persons enrolled. The hon. member for Burrum had surrounded his proposal with every possible safeguard, and it was astonishing that it was not accepted by the Government. It was also astonishing that the proposal made by the hon. member for Enoggera, that a claimant should have some person upon whom he could rely to attest his claim, should have met with the opposition of the Government. It was quite evident that, no matter how simple, just, or fair an amendment might be, it would not meet with the approval of the Committee.

Mr. POWERS said he did not propose to say anything more about the clause; it spoke for itself. The argument he used in favour of it was that in many portions of the colony it was difficult to find any of the persons who were allowed to attest claims, and that, therefore, it was necessary to make provision to meet such cases. He was not going to a division simply because he got the support of two or three members. If it was evident from the discussion of an amendment that there was no chance of carrying it, he would take the voice of the Committee, and not press the matter to a division. That was all a member could be expected to do. Hon. members had shown in the course of the debate that they were not disposed to accept the amendment, and he would take their decision on the voices, though he would be very glad to see it passed.

Mr. DALRYMPLE said the hon. member for Bundanba had, in connection with the new clause, repeated what he had said already so many times about the apparently small number of persons in the colony whose names appeared on the electoral rolls.

Mr. GLASSEY: The large number of those whose names should be on, but are not.

Mr. DALRYMPLE said that in proportion to their population there was a very considerable number on the roll, and they need not fear comparison in that respect with other countries. In order to show that he had some foundation for that statement, he would give a few figures to show the proportion of the people who were on the rolls in some of the greatest countries and most celebrated republics in the world. It must be remembered that in this colony they had a huge territory very sparsely populated, and there were natural difficulties in the way of persons becoming enrolled. The hon. member for Bundanba seemed to imagine that the moment a young man arrived at the age of twenty-one years he was seized with the same wild eagerness for political life as the hon. member himself. His own experience of persons of that age was that they had other things to think about, and were much more interested in cricket and football, and some of them had an eye for the beautiful in

the other sex. He thought the young man who was so exceptionally anxious to get on the electoral roll the moment he was twenty-one years of age was an anomaly. He had not met any young men of that class, and was not anxious to meet them. He might compare the proportion of persons on the electoral rolls in this colony, in the first place, with the proportion in the United Kingdom. In the United Kingdom there were 155 electors in every 1,000 of the population, and out of that number there were 121 voters, which was a much smaller number going to the polls than they found in this colony. He had not the number of electors in the United States of America, but the number of voters in 1888 per 1,000 of the population was 176. In France there were 266 electors and 220 voters per 1,000 of the population. In connection with that he should point out that France was the country of Europe remarkable for the stationary nature of the population, and there was a smaller number of children and a larger number of adults in proportion to the total population; so that the conditions were more favourable for high figures. In Germany there were 205 electors and 130 voters per 1,000 of the population in 1880. In Switzerland, which was one of the oldest republics in Europe, there were 230 electors per 1,000 of the population, and of that number 92, or scarcely more than one-third, went to the poll as voters. In Sweden there were 10 electors per 1,000 of the population, and of that number only 4 voted. Sweden, it might be added, would compare very favourably with any country in the world for admirable government and the general well-being of the people. In Queensland, in spite of the figures supplied by the hon. member for Bundanba showing the enormous number of persons who were not on the rolls, they had 225 electors per 1,000 of the population. That was a greater number than in the United Kingdom—he could not make the comparison with respect to the United States, as he had only the number of voters there—nearly as many as France, more than Germany, and about the same as the republic of Switzerland. Therefore, the laments about the want of energy on the part of the people, and on the part of the Government here, were really very much misplaced. Again, in the election for a President in the United States—and there was no election in the world in which such widespread interest and zeal was shown—there were only 180 votes per 1,000 recorded in 1888, while the number of voters was 10,868,000 out of a population of from 60,000,000 to 65,000,000. So that, in spite of all the efforts of politicians in the United States and the great interest shown in the presidential election, we had quite as many voters per 1,000 of the population as they had in the United States.

New clause put and negatived.

Clause 8—"Notice to be sent by electoral registrar to returning officer, and name to be erased from roll"—passed as printed.

Mr. BLACK said he had some new clauses to propose, to follow clause 8, and it might be as well if he explained that they were intended to introduce a principle which had not hitherto prevailed in their electoral system. They had up to the present time been adopting every possible provision to keep unqualified persons off the roll. The principle embodied in the new clauses he wished to propose was this: That anyone having acquired a *bonâ fide* residence qualification in the colony of Queensland should be allowed to transfer that vote from one electorate to another with greater facility than he enjoyed at the present time. It might be said by some members that the proposal would in some way be likely to introduce what was known as the "peripatetic or travelling vote"; but he contended that it would do nothing of the sort. If hon. members would take the trouble to read the clauses he submitted, they would see that every reasonable safeguard was taken to prevent the travelling vote being used for political purposes on certain political occasions. The principle embodied in those clauses was not altogether a new one, as it had been included in the Electoral Act in South Australia in 1879. It had now been in force there between twelve and thirteen years, and he was not aware that any bad results had ensued from the adoption of the principle in that colony. Again, the same principle had been introduced last year in the Electoral Bill submitted to the New South Wales Parliament. There they allowed the transfer of votes on more liberal principles than this proposal provided. In New South Wales they provided voters' rights, and it was only necessary for an elector to present his voter's right in the electorate to which he has moved to be at once put on the roll. He did not propose to do anything of that kind. What he proposed was that if any person who had proved his qualification as a voter by six months' residence in a particular locality desired to remove to another electorate, he should obtain a certificate from the returning officer to that effect. Then, having resided one month in the new electorate, he would be entitled to have his name put on the electoral roll of that electorate, subject to the usual provision, that the claim must go before the next revision court. That was what was endeavoured to be achieved by this proposal. He admitted that it was introducing a principle that had not hitherto prevailed in the colony, but he thought it would be the means of enabling qualified voters to obtain a greater amount of recognition than they had at present. He would give a case in illustration of his contention. If a man had a residence qualification for North Brisbane, and removed to South Brisbane, he would have to reside in the latter electorate six months before he could again qualify as a voter. He did not think any sound argument could be advanced why that should be the case. A resident of the colony who had shown his *bona fides* by being six months in one electorate should not be debarred from exercising the franchise because he moved into another electorate. He hoped that the principle embodied in the proposed new clauses would be accepted by the Committee. He was quite prepared to make any reasonable alterations in the working of the clauses, but they had been very carefully considered, and he trusted that, although not many amendments had as yet been introduced into the Bill, the principle would be accepted, and that practically the same law would prevail in Queensland as prevailed in South Australia and New South Wales. He moved that the following new clause follow clause 8 of the Bill:—

> When a person whose name is entered on the roll of an electoral district in respect of the qualification of residence, and has been so entered for a period of not less than for six months, ceases to be a resident in that district, and becomes a *bonâ fide* resident in another electoral district, he shall be entitled to be entered on the roll of the district in which he so becomes a resident, notwithstanding that he has not actually resided therein for the period of six months, provided that he has so resided for the period of one month at least next preceding the making of his claim.

The CHIEF SECRETARY said the hon. member had not explained very fully the nature or the effect of the proposed amendment. He confessed that at first sight he rather liked the idea; but he should like to hear what objections there were to it. It departed, however, to some extent, from the principle of territorial representation. At present a man before voting for a member for a district had to have a stake in that

district—not only a stake in the colony as a whole, but a stake in that particular district. That was the principle they had been going on hitherto. It was proposed to alter that, and to provide that if a man was once on the electoral roll of the colony he should have a right to vote for any district in which he might happen to be. The shortest time, however, within which he could do so would be four months, because a man must reside in his new electorate one month before making his claim at the quarterly court, which would be considered again at the next court, three months afterwards. A man who had been four months in a district could be put on the roll, although it might be longer than that; and his name was struck off the old roll. He felt some difficulty in forming an opinion as to whether the proposal was a good one or not. *Primâ facie*, he was inclined to think it was. The shortened time was not a fatal objection. What other objections there were to it he hoped hon. members would point out. If the principle were to be adopted, the scheme formulated for giving effect to it was satisfactory.

The HON. B. D. MOREHEAD said he thought that six months' continuous residence in a district was quite liberal enough, and he hoped the Government would not consent to any alteration in it. The intention of the proposed new clause was to shorten the duration of residence in any particular district. It was all very well for the hon. member to argue that a man ought to carry his vote in his pocket, and have certain special privileges because he moved from one place to another which were denied to permanent residents; but it struck at the root of their present system, and he was rather surprised to hear the Chief Secretary talk in the way he did. He was perfectly certain that the clauses would never be passed by the Committee. They were there to pass a measure which had been thoroughly considered by the Government, and which, judging from the divisions that had taken place, had the support of the House almost as a whole. He objected to the proposal, and would do all he could to prevent such an alteration in the present system taking place. What had they got to do with what was done in South Australia? South Australia was a colony where they had five Governments in one year, caused probably to a certain extent by the system which the hon. member sought to introduce into Queensland. They did not want that instability of government in times like the present. He had been told by a gentleman whose opinion he held in very high esteem, and who had just come from South Australia, that the system had not worked well there, and was causing great dissatisfaction. No necessity had been shown for such a sweeping alteration in their electoral system, which was as liberal as it should be; in fact, more liberal, perhaps, than it ought to be. Holding those views, and holding that the Government were bound to maintain the principle of the Bill—from which the amendment was a wide departure—he should be surprised and disappointed if the Government swerved from the line which they had laid down for themselves.

The HON. J. R. DICKSON said he did not like the amendment at all. In the first place, it would create an invidious distinction between a voter who possessed a residence qualification and a voter who possessed another qualification. If it be a good proposal to enable the former to itinerate in the colony from electorate to electorate, why should not the same privilege be conferred upon a voter who already possessed the qualification of freehold? Why should one class of voters only have the right to acquire a residence qualification after merely dwelling a month in an electorate. That was his primary objection to the amendment, that it did not confer upon all the electors of the colony the same privilege; but there were many other objections to it. The hon. member for Mackay had instanced the case of an elector of North Brisbane losing his franchise for six months if he moved to South Brisbane. That, no doubt, placed the position before them in an emphasised form. But let them consider, on the other hand, the case of a man who possessed a qualification in the South of the colony moving to Cooktown or Townsville. He thought there were such things as local politics, and that a man should certainly become well acquainted with the views and conditions which surround him in this immense country. People talked of Queensland as if it were a small country, forgetting that it extended from Thursday Island to Point Danger, and was of as large extent as from the north of Scotland to Sicily, or from the north to the south of Europe. They talked of Queensland as a little, insignificant piece of territory, where a man could move about and immediately became acquainted with local conditions. It took a man a long time, who moved from the North to the South of the colony, to become fully acquainted with local requirements and circumstances. He did not think six months' residence was too short an interval in which a man could make himself acquainted with the different conditions, and become an intelligent elector of that part of the colony. Rather than see the amendment introduced he would prefer seeing the territorial boundaries swept away, and allow seventy-two members to be returned by the general voice of the colony. That would be a better basis of representation than the one proposed. Of course there would be much to be said on both sides for such a scheme; but as it was outside the scope of the present Bill he would not discuss it. The amendment introduced a new principle into the Bill which he hoped would not be accepted. It was a very dangerous clause; but as it had been discussed pretty fully an evening or two ago little remained to be said. He should oppose the introduction of the clause into he Bill.

Mr. BLACK said he really could not see any connection between the residence vote and the property vote. In the case of the property vote, if the voter went away he could not take his property away, but he could come back and vote; there was no analogy whatever between the two.

The HON. J. R. DICKSON: You do not allow the resident a vote if he goes away.

Mr. BLACK said a property owner did not lose his property vote because he happened to go away. Take the case of Brisbane and suburbs. He did not know what could not be said about the voting power down here. Assuming that all men ought to have equal political rights, had those in the far distant electorates the same political rights as the people of Brisbane? Why, under the property vote a resident of Brisbane could vote in half a dozen electorates all round him. In what other part of the colony did such a system prevail? In Rockhampton an elector could vote in North and South Rockhampton; but he considered the property electors of Brisbane had an enormous advantage over other electors in other parts of the colony. He asked that the residence voter should have some concession made to him. They could not disqualify a property qualification if a man moved from here to Rockhampton, Mackay, or Cooktown.

The COLONIAL TREASURER (Hon. Sir T. McIlwraith): You can disqualify for a property qualification if a man sells his property.

Mr. BLACK said: How did a property voter lose his vote? Did they not remember the recent Bulimba election? Where were the votes there? Numbers of people had the property qualification, although they did not reside in Bulimba, and they were able to record their votes—a state of affairs which did not exist in other parts of the colony.

The COLONIAL TREASURER: What has that got to do with your amendment?

Mr. BLACK said the hon. member for Bulimba said the amendment gave an undue advantage to the residence voter over the property voter. He (Mr. Black) said there was no comparison. The residence voter was altogether overwhelmed, as far as voting power was concerned, by the property voter. He was saying nothing against the property qualification; but he said if any concession could possibly be made to a large section of the community who in his opinion were fairly qualified by six months' residence to exercise their vote, something should be done. He was quite prepared to take the sense of the Committee on the amendment; but when an hon. member misrepresented the facts, he was justified in stating that his arguments were not sound. At the later stage another proposal which had been much discussed in different parts of Australia would come on for consideration—the question of one man one vote. A great deal might be said about that; but his contention was that the amendment before the Committee was a just recognition of claims which up to the present time had been ignored. It was not intended to allow anyone without a reasonable residence in a district to get on the roll. The Chief Secretary had pointed out that even under the amendment four months must elapse before a voter could qualify. There was no peripatetic vote about that. Surely if a man showed his *bona fides* by residing four months in a district, having further shown his *bona fides* by residing for six months in another district, he should be entitled to record his vote. There was a great deal in the amendment worthy of consideration. At the first glance hon. members might apprehend that some great difficulties would arise; but they would see on consideration that all reasonable safeguards were provided, and no very serious danger was to be apprehended.

Mr. PAUL said he thought the hon. member for Bulimba was perfectly right in what he said, that if transfers of residence claims were allowed, certainly the man who had property and went nto another electorate should be allowed to vote also, unless they established the system of one man one vote. For instance, he held property at Indooroopilly, and was on the electoral roll for Oxley. He went and resided for six months, say, in the Leichhardt district. He had a residence vote for Leichhardt and a vote for the freehold. Therefore, if they admitted that, every other person in a similar position would have a vote for his freehold and his residence vote. The effect of the amendment would simply be this, that if it was known that in twelve months' time a member for Mackay was going to resign, one of the contending parties would transfer a lot of voters from the next district and swamp the Mackay electorate. He would not disguise matters, but would say at once he believed the labour party would do that. They were very strong in the Barcoo electorate, and no doubt they would bring 100 or 200 men into the Warrego and carry that electorate. Six months' *bonâ fide* residence was, in his opinion, a fair thing, and he hoped the Committee would not consent to the amendment.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. H. Tozer) said he had not spoken on the Elections Bill; but he must say he did not approve of the amendment. The hon. member was attempting to graft on to the present system something entirely at variance with it. No doubt a lot of anomalies existed at the present time in the electoral law. There was a great deal in the arguments of the hon. member for Mackay as applicable to a different system altogether. In the case mentioned by the hon. member for Bulimba, it would not matter whether a man moved from one place to another. The present system provided that local interests should be the first care, and he was one of those who was disposed to guard with zealous care any further extension of the suffrage. If a man were allowed a vote after he had resided six months in one locality he had all he could fairly ask. In France, a republican country, a man had to be two years resident in a district before he was allowed to vote. It was quite right that persons who were subject to the laws should have a voice in making the laws; but the difficulty lay in the application of that principle, the same as if a man were going to manufacture wine from grapes; he might make delicious wine, a moderate wine, a bad wine from the same grapes. The principle was one of the declaration of the rights of man—namely, that he had a right to a voice in the administration of the affairs of the country. But that principle had to be applied to the circumstances of the colony, and they had to guard with care the morality of universal suffrage. How could their system be described at the present moment? It would be described in France as the system of *scrutin d'arrondissement*, as distinguished from the *scrutin de liste*. At the time the republicans thought it would be truly democratic to go in for the *scrutin de liste*, and they divided the country into a number of electorates, but not so many as there were now. It did not work very well, and even in republican France it was found that it was far more convenient to go back to the system of districts, as they had it in Queensland. Now, the hon. member proposed to do away with that system and apply another; and he objected to it, being doubtful whether it would be within the scope of the Bill to alter the present principle of their franchise. Even supposing the hon. gentleman was right in his principle, the machinery he provided would never work. He thrust upon the returning officers—who were honorary officers—duties which it would be impossible for them to perform. They had a system here by which persons were returned to Parliament, not so much as representatives of the whole colony, but who were rather delegates for their particular constituencies. They often heard hon. members talk about studying the interests of their constituents, and that was natural under the present system. He could not see that it was fair to the present system of having men representing certain districts, to engraft upon it another system by which a man who had only been in it three or four months should have the same rights as men who had resided there for a long time. They would have two systems working together—one in which the member was, as it were, alleged to be the particular guardian of the local interests of his constituency, and another in which the member was alleged to be a member for the whole colony. That was the position that the hon. gentleman who moved the amendment took up. He would lose sight of the local interests he was bound particularly to guard, and take what he considered a higher stand, saying, "This man is an elector of the whole colony, and being so he ought to go on the roll if he has been six months in any one place." He placed no value upon some of the objections that hon. members raised, such as the inconvenience of the time of voting; those things could be avoided. Even if they could

prevent persons going from district to district at elections to turn out particular candidates, he did not think it was wise, while they had the present system in force of uni-nominal districts, to import a system directly at variance with it.

Mr. AGNEW said he wanted to have a solution of this difficulty. Could not any person, having qualified himself to vote by six months' residence in one district, exercise that privilege after he had left that district until he had qualified himself by six months' residence to vote in the other district? He entirely objected to a man having his vote in his pocket to carry about; but if a man resided in North Brisbane and was entitled to vote there, and shifted to South Brisbane, he should be allowed to vote in North Brisbane until he had resided in South Brisbane for six months, when his vote could be transferred to that district.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: He can now.

Mr. DRAKE said that the amendment would be an improvement, as it would certainly correct a great number of cases of hardship which had occurred. If a man shifted from one electorate to another, in many cases his vote in the new electorate would not have matured before an election came off, and he would be absolutely disfranchised in consequence of the election taking place before he had time to get upon the new roll. Of course his name might remain on the old roll for six months or up to nine months, and he might have a right to vote in that district; but there was nothing to prevent his name being struck off the old roll in the meantime, in which case he would have no vote at all. He was amused at the hon. member for Balonne asking the Government not to swerve from the line of policy they had taken up, because the hon. gentleman had taken a prominent part the previous night in endeavouring to induce the Government to introduce an element of disfranchisement into the Bill. They had been told from the first that the Bill was not to be a disfranchising Bill, but the hon. member for Balonne had taken a foremost part in endeavouring to disfranchise persons who could not read and write.

The HON. B. D. MOREHEAD said he rose to make a personal explanation. The statement of the hon. gentleman was not in accordance with fact. He had said that his intention was not to disfranchise any of those on the rolls at present; the hon. member knew that perfectly.

Mr. DRAKE said that he did not think anything that he had said was incorrect. He had not said the hon. member's design was to strike off the rolls any names which were on at present; but certainly his design was to prevent a person who could not read and write, and whose name was once taken off, from ever getting on again.

The HON. B. D. MOREHEAD: No.

Mr. DRAKE said that it was also the hon. member's scheme to prevent persons who were unable to read and write, and who had not been on the rolls, from ever getting on.

The HON. B. D. MOREHEAD: That is true.

Mr. DRAKE said he considered that would be a measure of disfranchisement, because many of those persons had come out to the colony under a distinct promise that if they fulfilled certain conditions they would be entitled to have a vote. There were cases where an injustice might be done. For instance, Civil servants might be shifted before an election from one constituency to another. He would not say that it had ever been done or ever would be done deliberately; but cases might occur in which in that way Civil servants might be deprived of their right to record their votes, and that was certainly disfranchisement. He understood the principle underlying the amendment to be that when once a man had won for himself the right to the franchise it should not be taken away except through some fault of his own, and that where the nature of his business or other circumstances required him to remove his residence from one constituency to another he should not be disfranchised. No less than four amendments had been printed with the object of carrying out somewhat the same idea of the amendment moved by the hon. member for Mackay. The amendment would remove some inequalities, and would be just and fair, and therefore he intended to support it.

Mr. BARLOW said he would like to ask the attention of the Committee to the process by which an elector was taken off the roll. Between the 1st and 31st days of August in each year the electoral registrar was to search and obtain information, and was to mark "dead," "left," or "disqualified" against names so situated. He had thereupon to send by post a notice to every person so marked, informing him that it was intended to strike him from the roll. That went on until some time between the 1st and 21st November, when the revision court dealt with all those cases and corrected the printed roll. Then, on the 1st January, the corrected roll was to be reprinted. The result was that a man who lived, say, in South Brisbane, and left that electorate on the 30th August, would be off the roll on the 1st January.

Mr. JONES: No; he could not be.

Mr. BARLOW said that the electoral registrar had to send a notice to him informing him that it was intended to omit him from the roll because he had changed his residence, and the man could make no reply except that he had changed his residence. The man would be off the roll on the 1st January, and if, on the 1st February, supposing there was an election held in South Brisbane, he attempted to vote under the fourth question, "Have you been within the last nine months *bonâ fide* resident for a period of one month within this electoral district?" even though his answer might be "Yes," his name would not be on the roll. That was the difficulty.

Mr. JONES said that if a person was qualified as a voter by reason of residence, the question was put, "Have you been within the last nine months *bonâ fide* resident for a period of one month within this electoral district?" He might not have resided there for over eight months, and he would still be entitled to vote. If they referred to the 23rd section they would see that the revision court had no right to strike him off, because they were only authorised to strike off the names of those against whose names the words "dead," "left," or "disqualified" appeared.

Mr. BARLOW said that he could assure the hon. member that it was never done. The rights of the party were never preserved by the question which he had read. The fact of a man having left the electorate was acted upon, and in the new roll his name did not appear. The section to which the hon. member had referred did not say that a man's rights were to be preserved in case he went back to vote at some future time. The hon. member would excuse him being so positive, because he had made it a matter of close study.

The CHIEF SECRETARY said that he might have misled the hon. member for Nundah by the answer he had given. He had been thinking of the provision which allowed a man to vote while his name was on the roll, although he had left the district, provided he had been a

resident for one month out of the preceding nine. That was the law. So long as a man's name was on the roll he could vote. But if a man ceased to have a qualification his name ought to come off the roll. When he no longer had a qualification he ought to be no longer on the roll. That was the present law, and they did not propose to alter it.

Mr. BARLOW said that it depended upon the time a man left the district. If he left on the 10th January he had twelve months' longer privilege of voting in the electorate than a man leaving on the 25th August.

Mr. POWERS said that anyone coming under the provisions of the clause must have been fifteen months in the colony to start with—he must have been nine months in the colony before being placed on the roll, and six months on the roll. Then if he moved into another electorate he could apply after one month to be put on the roll of that electorate, and then it would be three months before his name could go on, so that altogether he would have to be nineteen months in the colony before he could vote at an election.

Mr. PLUNKETT said he thought the framer of the amendment had made a mistake. It seemed right enough that a man should get a transfer; but he thought the proposed amendment would make it too easy. The peripatetic vote, as it had been called, could be made a powerful engine in working elections; and if he had money, ambition, and the peripatetic vote, he could get into Parliament at any general election. He was willing that every man entitled to a vote should have his name on the roll, and he would go so far as to enfranchise the members of the Police Force and the Permanent Defence Force; but he could not support the amendment as proposed by the hon. member for Mackay.

Mr. GLASSEY said on reading the amendment he thought there must be some mistake in it. He understood the proposal was that when a person had resided six months in one electorate, and had been enrolled there, he could then remove to any other electorate, and after residing there for one month have his name transferred to the roll of that new electorate. But it appeared, as had been explained by the hon. member for Burrum, that the intention of the amendment was that when a person had resided six months in one electorate, and had his name entered on the roll, he must reside four months in another electorate before he could have his name transferred; so that he could not see any danger in adopting the amendment. But he supposed it would meet with the same fate as all the other amendments which had been proposed. The hon. member for Leichhardt had expressed the fear that if the amendment were adopted, a large number of persons—and the labour party was particularly mentioned—might go into some electorate and swamp the vote of the ordinary electors—that the labour party, seeing that an election was looming ahead in a certain district, might rush into the electorate, have their names transferred to the roll for that electorate, and swamp the votes of the ordinary electors. Did the hon. member really seriously believe that? How could a large number of men afford to leave their work and go into another electorate for such a purpose? Who was to keep them during the four months they would have to reside in the electorate before they would be entitled to have their names transferred to the roll of that electorate?

An HONOURABLE MEMBER: The unions.

Mr. GLASSEY said he was sorry to say the unions were not so flush of funds that they could afford to do that. He wished they were. He could not conceive how any member could really seriously entertain such an objection. He could quite understand some millionaire, who could afford to keep 300 or 400 men for three or four months, doing such a thing as had been suggested in order to carry an election for a particular purpose; but to say that it could be done by men following the ordinary avocations of life was preposterous. The Colonial Secretary had stated that the object of the Bill was to prevent roll-stuffing, and to remove improper persons from the existing rolls; but in doing that a number of persons might be struck off who were entitled to be registered. At any rate, it must be quite clear to any observer that in the event of a large number of persons being removed from the rolls in November, there would be no time for them to get on the rolls again previous to the next general election. He was, therefore, of opinion that hon. members would show their wisdom by carrying the proposed amendment.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS (Hon. T. O. Unmack) said the hon. member for Bundanba would persist in saying that it was necessary for a person to reside four months in a new electorate before his name could be transferred. That was not so. According to the amendment one month's residence only was required before making application. So long as the applicant resided for one month in any particular electorate before making application he would be put on the roll. It had been clearly pointed out by the Colonial Secretary that a considerable danger existed in the direction of depriving the ordinary residents of any electorate of their franchise by the fact that those newly enrolled might predominate if they chose. He would put a suppositious case for the sake of argument. They had instances in the present Parliament in which it was known for more than six months that a certain member would be compelled to resign within a certain time. Take, for instance, the recent election for Bulimba. It had been known for six months beforehand that the seat for Bulimba would become vacant. What would have been the result if any political party—he would not name any particular party, as he supposed political tactics were resorted to by all political parties—suppose any party felt it was in their interests to secure an additional member in the House? What was to hinder them, in a case like that, removing 400, or 600, or as many names as they liked from the North and South Brisbane and Valley rolls, and putting them on to the Bulimba roll?

Mr. BLACK: They could not do it within six months.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS said they could do it within four months if the time happened to suit. That would not bring about the true representation of the people which they were so anxious to secure. To allow a peripatetic vote like that was a dangerous principle, and he hoped the Committee would object to it.

Mr. BLACK said the suppositious case stated by the Secretary for Railways would not hold water. He did not know where the political party could be found that would disfranchise a large number of men in one electorate for the sake of putting them into another where the result of an election would be doubtful. Once having got the names on the second roll they could not be got off again for six months, and a general election might take place within that time. If a particular time was selected, no doubt the names could be removed in four months, but it would ordinarily take nine or ten months to do it. The Chief Secretary, on Thursday evening last, when the matter was being referred to, stated that if the proposal was put in a

concrete form he would give it fair consideration. That was all he had attempted to do. There was a great deal in the contention that a large number of men having acquired a residence qualification should not be debarred because they happened to move from one electorate to another. The Colonial Secretary, in order to find some excuse for opposing the proposal, said he did not think it came within the scope of the Bill. The hon. gentleman would find that the title of the Bill was "A Bill to amend the Elections Acts," and as those Acts contained all matters relating to the qualifications of electors the proposal was clearly within the scope of the Bill. It was certainly a new principle proposed to be introduced in the colony, and whether it was expedient or not was a matter upon which hon. members were free to hold different opinions. He thought it would be a good reform, and one which would give satisfaction to a large section of the community practically disfranchised at the present time. He hoped time would not be unnecessarily delayed on the clause; he should not refer to the matter further, as he was prepared to take the voice of the Committee on the subject.

New clause put and negatived.

The CHIEF SECRETARY said that one of the clauses the hon. member had given notice of supplied what was a defect in the Bill. That was the clause which read—

When a person claiming to have his name entered on the roll of an electoral district makes application orally under the provisions of the thirty-second section of the principal Act, he must answer the same questions as are hereinbefore prescribed to be answered by claimants who make written claims.

That was a desirable provision to insert, and he proposed to insert it as a new clause to follow clause 8, with the following words added :—

And the same consequences shall ensue as are provided by the last preceding section.

That was, that when that claim was made, notice was to be sent to the returning officer of the district in which the name already appeared, and it must be erased from that roll. That might perhaps be inferred without being expressly stated, but it was better that it should be expressly stated.

Mr. DRAKE said that as he understood the hon. member for Mackay accepted the decision of the Committee against his amendment, he would like to bring before the Committee the amendment which appeared in his (Mr. Drake's) name, with a view of carrying out the same principle by different machinery, and he thought that would be the proper place for him to propose it.

The CHIEF SECRETARY said he would suggest that the hon. member should let his amendment come on after the amendment before the Committee, as that would finish that part of the subject conveniently. The subject the hon. member proposed to deal with was entirely distinct from that, which was only a question of the revision of the rolls. The hon. member's amendment could be considered conveniently after clause 13.

Mr. POWERS said he would ask the Chief Secretary whether that would not be the proper place to introduce the amendment he intended to propose?

The CHIEF SECRETARY said the hon. member's amendment would be better introduced at the same time as that of the hon. member for Enoggera.

New clause put and passed.

On clause 9, as follows :—

"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 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."

Mr. POWERS said he believed the question, which was raised on the second reading, of advertising the names of persons removed from the rolls, instead of merely sending notices to their last known places of residence, would properly come forward for discussion. Under the present system the only notice a man whose name had been struck off the roll would get, would be a notice posted to the residence he had left, and which he would probably never see. In his opinion a list of the names struck off should be advertised. The next clause dealt only with the annual roll, and the advertisements should be issued so as to enable persons to attend the quarterly registration courts.

The CHIEF SECRETARY said the next clause dealt with the annual revision of the rolls. Under the present law, which it was not proposed to alter, the electoral registrar had to go through the roll and mark against the different names "dead," "left," or "disqualified." In addition to that it was now proposed to provide that besides the electoral registrar sending a notice to the persons said to be disqualified, a list of them should be made public in various ways. That clause dealt with cases of persons whose names were already on the roll. Clause 9 dealt with the cases of persons who were not on the roll and who were applying to get their names put on the roll. It would be the duty of the electoral registrar to inquire whether the claim was genuine, and if the claim was not genuine the electoral registrar would object. If a man sent in a claim to-day and left the locality to-morrow, he could not complain if he did not get the notice sent to his address.

Mr. POWERS said his contention would apply to people wanting to get on the roll. A man might apply to-day, and the revision court might be held two months hence, and the only notice he would have would be one sent to his residence. Whether that danger was to be risked by those who made the application it was for the Committee to say. The clause ought to state which registration court the applicant was to attend. That could be done by omitting the word "quarterly" and stating the revision court before which the claim would come for consideration.

The CHIEF SECRETARY said the hon. member seemed to have forgotten the procedure. A claim was put in, and it went before the next registration court and was considered. If it appeared to be right it was put into the list, and that list was revised at the next following court. The electoral registrar might not find out the facts at the first court, but he might before the next court. The claim had to go before two courts, one for consideration and the other for the revision of the list. The first was the registration court, and the second, which was also called a registration court, was really a revision court.

Mr. SMYTH said he wanted to know who was the leader of the Opposition. He himself had joined the labour party—he had taken his seat by the side of the hon. member for Bundanba.

The CHAIRMAN said he must point out to the hon. member that the question before the Committee was clause 9 of the Bill.

Mr. SMYTH said he had listened to speeches that night which were quite as irrelevant to the subject as his own. No doubt he was in bad company; but although he had joined the Glassey and Hoolan crowd he wanted to see purity in politics.

The HON. B. D. MOREHEAD: I am afraid you will not get it there.

Mr. SMYTH said the leader of the Opposition was a native, the Chairman of Committees was a native, and he was a native; but there was one man in the Committee, an Australian native, whom he was ashamed of.

The CHAIRMAN: The hon. member must obey the Chair. His remarks are irrelevant to the subject before the Committee, and I hope he will not continue the course he is pursuing.

Mr. SMYTH said the Bill had been introduced to try to make politics honest, and he intended to do all he could to prevent fraud. He felt disgraced to see a member on the other side who constantly posed as a law reformer, and who called himself a native. If that hon. member was a native he (Mr. Smyth) was not, and he knew more about law reform than the hon. member did. He hoped that when the Bill passed through the House they would try and purify the rolls, and do what they could to elect members who would act honestly. He had now got into very bad company.

Mr. HOOLAN: You were not asked to come here.

Mr. SMYTH said he was trying to reform the member for Burke.

The CHAIRMAN: The hon. member is not in order. He must address himself to the subject before the Committee or discontinue his remarks.

Mr. SMYTH said he would not have spoken as he had if the hon. member for Burke had not interrupted him. Because the Committee was trying to pass an honest measure members were sat upon by persons who were not politically honest. He intended to fight for the country politically, and if those persons attempted any trickery in bringing their friends into the House he would resist it. When such people began to talk of shooting and murdering other people——

The CHAIRMAN: The hon. member is not addressing himself to the question before the Committee, and I must again ask him to do so or discontinue his remarks.

Mr. SMYTH said he would do as the Chairman directed. He only wished to say that he hoped the Bill would pass through, and that the Australian natives in that Chamber would be able to hold their own, and not be dictated to by new chums. He hoped there would be no cheating, no trickery, and no organisations, and that every man elected to the House under the new measure would be returned by a majority of the people, and by an honest vote.

Clause put and passed.

Mr. DRAKE said before the next clause was put he had a new clause to propose. He was pleased that the Chief Secretary had altered the old Bill to a certain extent in the direction indicated, providing that the names of persons dead, left, or disqualified should be properly advertised. Still it would be advisable if the first part of the amendment of which he had given notice were adopted; that was, that where the electoral registrar puts the words, "dead," "left," or "disqualified" against names, he should also state in the margin of the roll the source of his information. In the case of deaths the source of information would probably be the registrar of deaths. That would be the most satisfactory source of information. If he put the word "dead" against a man's name, and he had not got information from the registrar of deaths, then he should say what the source of his information was, so that if a person was unjustly struck off the roll he would have an opportunity of knowing on whose information that was done. The same remarks applied to the words "left" and "disqualified." It seemed to him unfair that a man should be liable to have his name struck off the roll at the instigation of some person whose name was not disclosed. It was now done anonymously, and he could not see that any reason could be urged why the name of that person should not be disclosed. If a man wanted to get on the roll he had to make a claim, and the Bill provided proper safeguards against unqualified persons. He had to have his name advertised for a certain time so that persons might have a full opportunity of objecting to his name appearing on the roll, and he (Mr. Drake) thought when he did get on the roll every effort should be made to prevent his name being surreptitiously struck off. Something was done in that direction by the amendment made in the Bill by giving publicity to it; but still he thought that was not sufficient, because a man might go away from his electorate on a visit, and then some person might go to the electoral registrar and simply say, "That person has left." He was put down as "left," and notice was sent to him which, possibly, he never got; perhaps he never saw the advertisement, and he was struck off. He thought such persons should have an opportunity of knowing at whose instigation they were struck off. It seemed unfair that a person should be able to go quietly to the electoral registrar and tell him to put those words "dead," "left," or "disqualified" against certain names. The Act provided that the registrar should make inquiries among the residents himself; but they knew that to be an impossibility. He had very often two or three rolls to look after, and could not go about inquiring. As a matter of practice it was well known that what was done was this: Some person went to the registrar, giving him a list of names, and told him that these were dead, these left, and others had lost their qualification, and the registrar acted on that information. If he did not act on information brought to him in that way then he (Mr. Drake) failed to see how he could get the information. It was perfectly right when he got the information and marked the roll in that way he should put in the margin the source of his information. He was, of course, not casting any slur upon the electoral registrars. He believed throughout the colony they endeavoured to do their duty, and in the metropolis he felt sure they did so, and he thought they should be protected from persons who came to them just at the time when the annual roll was being made up, and told them to put those words against the names of certain persons with a view to having their names struck off. It was fair that the registrar should be able to say, "Who are you? If I write 'dead,' 'left,' or 'disqualified' against the names of these persons at your instigation you will have to take the responsibility." He moved that the following new clause be inserted:—

If the electoral registrar in any district shall, at the annual examination of the electoral rolls required by the fourteenth section of the Elections Act of 1885, place the words "dead," "left," or "disqualified" against the name of any person, he shall also state upon the margin of the roll the sources of his information and the name or names of his informant or informants.

The CHIEF SECRETARY said the proposed clause would render the Bill unworkable. Why should the registrar make a note on the margin of the roll of the person giving him information? He might derive his information from lots of sources. The fact might be absolutely notorious, and he might know it of his own knowledge. It had been contended that this duty should be left entirely to the Government officer, who should do the work upon his own responsibility; but now it appeared that he was not to do it upon his own responsibility, but should put down minutely all the information he obtained.

Mr. AGNEW said he was very sorry the Chief Secretary had taken that view of the case, and he entirely agreed with the suggestion of the hon. member for Enoggera. Only a few days ago he handed a notice of that description to the Colonial Secretary, and it had the word "left" marked on it. That notice was served upon a Mr. Smith, who had been residing for twenty years in the one house, and he was there still. Mr. Smith did not reply to a notice he received, and about two or three weeks ago he called upon him (Mr. Agnew), and he pointed out that his name had been omitted from the roll. He then found that he had received a notice in the year 1889. Whoever gave that information, upon which the registrar left his name off the roll, knew well that he was saying what was contrary to the truth, and such a man should be comeatable, and should be prosecuted. If anyone knew that a man had left the district he was performing a public service in letting the fact be known; but a man who deliberately misled the registrar should be prosecuted. Because this man had not replied to a notice sent to him in 1889, he had been struck off the roll.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES (Hon. W. O. Hodgkinson): Quite right, too.

Mr. AGNEW said what about the man who made the false declaration? Was he to go scot-free, while a man who had been engrossed in his business had to suffer? No harm could be done by adopting the new clause.

Mr. LITTLE said this evening he had met a friend who had resided twenty-nine years in Brisbane, and nineteen years of that time in the one house, but he found his name was off the roll. His advice to that man was to reapply, because he knew it had occurred through some mistake. It was very easy for members to stand up and censure Government officers, but it was not a manly thing to do, because they had their hands tied; they had not the columns of the Press to fly to, as hon. members had, and the privilege of replying to those who abused them. If a man did not think it worth while to spend 2d. on a stamp to reply to a notice, he deserved to be left off the roll.

The CHIEF SECRETARY said he would point out to the hon. member that the 10th clause required that names left off the roll should be published in a newspaper circulating in the district, and that a list of them should be posted up at the court-house and post office.

Mr. DRAKE said even that was not a sufficient safeguard, because a man whose name was left off might be away on a journey and not receive any notice or see any newspaper. The hon. member for Woothakata must bear in mind that he (Mr. Drake) did not blame the electoral registrars at all. They were desirous of doing their duty, and they did it fairly, but he wanted to protect people from another class who, just before the annual revision, went about nosing into everybody's business to find out what were their politics, and looked through the rolls to see whether a man was away where he could not be got at. They were a sort of political assassins, who fired from behind a hedge where they could not be exposed. Cases might occur in which a man's name was struck off by accident, but very often it was struck off deliberately. They knew certain people were away at the time, and would not receive the notices, and could not appear at the revision court to make good their claims. Those persons would not find out till they went to the polling-booth that their names had disappeared from the roll.

Mr. BARLOW: They could not be very keen politicians.

Mr. DRAKE said a vast number of the electors of the colony were not very keen politicians, but thought it sufficient when they were called upon to record their votes to go to the polling-booth and do so. The majority did not want to be continually running about to see if their names were still on the roll, and were perhaps culpably careless in that matter. But there were certain persons who made it their particular business to try to get names struck off the roll, and it was right that they should be stripped of their anonymity, so that people might know who they were.

Mr. JESSOP said that they had already provided that the electoral registrar should take all possible steps to find out who was disqualified, dead, or left. The remarks made by the hon. member for Enoggera might be all right in regard to electorates in the thickly-peopled parts of the colony, but they would not apply to the country. In the country districts it was customary for the registrars to take the only means they had of ascertaining what names should be struck off. They sent a copy of the roll to the various station managers and managers of mines, asking them to mark the names of those who were no longer entitled to be on the roll. But if the amendment were inserted in the Bill they would not supply that information, and it would, therefore, have the effect of destroying the intention of the Bill.

Mr. GLASSEY said that he was rather surprised at the Government not accepting the very reasonable proposition that the name of the person giving the information through which names were left off the rolls should be disclosed. Surely it was not unreasonable to ask that the names of the informants of the registrar should be made known. It was said that that would be dangerous; but the information was not worth a rap unless the name of the informant could be given. It was not honest information. There was something behind all that. If there was nothing behind, then there could be no opposition to the clause. There were individuals who did a great deal in that direction. He was going to give the names of some legitimate voters whose names had been removed from his own roll last year. There had been more than 100 legitimate voters in his electorate who had been removed from the roll on the information of some hidden informer who was afraid to divulge his name. He did not blame the registrar, who was simply guided by the information he received. The hon. member for Enoggera made a fair proposition, in order to protect the registrar, by which the name of the informer should be made known; and if that were done there would be honest work done at the revision court. He held in his hand a list of thirty-three out of the number he had already mentioned, every one of whom still continued to reside in his district. Some of them had been notified that their names would be left off. Of course they responded to the notices. Others again had been working in different parts of the country, and the notices had not reached them in time, the consequence being that their names had been left off and they were obliged to put in fresh claims. Why should the names

of honest voters be left off the rolls? If the Government were really desirous of making the Bill a thoroughly practicable and *bonâ fide* measure, which would suit the requirements of the people, that was a fitting time to accept a proposition of that kind. No intimidation was intended. In the list he held in his hand were the names of the persons, their numbers on the roll, and their qualifications. Was it fair that those persons who had lived in the locality for years—some of them having lived in the same house—should by some sneaking, crawling informer have their names removed from the roll? The excuse for not accepting the amendment was that it would make the Bill unworkable, and that it would be overloaded with amendments. Those were mere flimsy pretexts to give persons under cover an opportunity of removing some thousands of names from the rolls in November next, knowing that there would be no opportunity for making a fresh claim, as the hon. member for Woothakata had advised the individual he mentioned to do. They could not make a claim before January, and the Government would take very good care that those large numbers of persons would have no time to make a claim in order to be on the April roll. He would give the Committee some further information concerning that matter. He had a copy of the first report issued by the patriotic league, and he would read to show what they had been doing during the last ten months. The report was dated 11th April, 1892, and stated that the league had paid particular attention to the rolls. They had paid attention in the way he had mentioned to the rolls in the city and suburbs. The report said—

"To this the league gave early and earnest attention, and succeeded in purifying to a very gratifying extent the electoral rolls of the metropolitan electorates. From those rolls 4,700 names have been struck off"——

Many of whom were legitimate voters.

Mr. PATTISON: That is not in the report.

Mr. GLASSEY said he was not quoting the last words he had used. Hon. members must be a little patient, because he was not going to be deterred from speaking what he had to say by jeers, or gibes, or laughter.

Mr. PATTISON: Well, read correctly, then.

Mr. GLASSEY said he would quote correctly.

"From those rolls 4,700 names have been struck off and 1,700 names have been put on. This work must be continued."

He had done quoting. He thought it was in accordance with law that a fee of 5s. should be deposited in each case when objection was made to any name being on the roll; but he found that, though they had been instrumental in removing nearly 5,000 names from the rolls, yet they had only deposited £60 odd, a sum of money which represented only 262 objections. He wondered why the law had not been put in force, as far as that body was concerned. He had no hesitation in saying that the bulk of those who were removed were legitimate voters whose names should have been retained. Certain persons had been at work to do wrong to other individuals, and those individuals had no means of knowing who those persons were. Was it a reasonable or fair thing, when a dastardly political act was done, that the name of the informer, the skunk that went under cover——

Mr. SMYTH rose to a point of order. Was his colleague right in using the word "skunk"?

The CHAIRMAN: If the hon. member applied it to a member of the Committee he would not be in order, but I do not consider that the word is unparliamentary as used by the hon. member for Bundanba.

Mr. GLASSEY said he was sorry his new colleague had at so early a stage taken exception to any remark that he had made. He would give that hon. member every latitude. It was perfectly clear that there was a deliberate design on the part of the authors of the Bill to give opportunities to individuals who wished to remove names from the rolls——

The SECRETARY FOR MINES rose to a point of order. Was the hon. member in order in deliberately accusing the Government of committing an illegal act?

The CHAIRMAN: I think the hon. gentleman is not justified in saying that the Bill is a deliberate attempt to aid people in removing the names of voters from the rolls.

Mr. GLASSEY said that whatever the intention of the Government might be, that would be the effect of the Bill. He thought the information he had given to the Committee could be borne out. He would give the list to the Colonial Secretary, who could write to the registrar if he thought proper; and if it was found that he (Mr. Glassey) was wrong he would make apology. The effect of the Bill would be that thousands of persons would be removed from the rolls in November, and no opportunity would be given to them to have their names re-enrolled, and the result would be that when the general election took place in March and April those persons would be disfranchised.

The HON. B. D. MOREHEAD said the speech just made was a very interesting one, and the hon. member, no doubt, had a very just case, speaking from his own standpoint and judging from analogy, because, according to the hon. gentleman's own figures, Bundanba had been very badly treated all through. Taking the figures the hon. member produced the first night the Bill was dealt with in committee, when pointing out the injustice which various electorates suffered under the existing law, he found that the adult male population of Bundanba was 1,025.

Mr. GLASSEY: That is a printer's error; the number is 1,125.

The HON. B. D. MOREHEAD said he would give the hon. gentleman the benefit of the other hundred. The adult male population of Bundanba was 1,125. The number of voters in that electorate, where the residential qualification was not very large, amounted to 1,414. The hon. gentleman was not satisfied with that, but had a further grievance—he wanted to increase the number of voters. The hon. member reminded him very much—possibly his career might be the same—of one of those described by Mark Twain in his illustrious pedigree—namely, Twain the Rover. Twain the Rover went across to America with Columbus; and he went on board the ship which was to convey him to the *terra incognito* with all his worldly goods wrapped up in a cotton handkerchief. As time went on, and the voyage got tedious, he discovered that he had more luggage; and, in fact, as weeks rolled on, he had to stow it in several trunks, and had to move it from one end of the vessel to the other to trim the ship. Notwithstanding the trouble it must have given him, immigrant as he was, to move his luggage, he still persevered on his voyage with Columbus; and when he found America, his luggage had enormously increased and daily gave him more trouble. He was delighted, however, that he had reached what he hoped would prove the promised land; and when he got near the shore he demanded to be put into one of the first boats, and his luggage, consisting by that time of a large number of trunks containing clothing and

other things, was taken on shore with him. Some of the passengers were not altogether satisfied with what had taken place. After awhile he came back to the ship, complaining that he had been robbed on the passage—that somebody had stolen some of his clothes. That naturally raised the indignation of Columbus, who, with some of his lieutenants, probably the cook or his mate, threw him overboard, believing that that was the best way of getting rid of such a pestilent creature. But after awhile they noticed that the vessel was beginning to move, and, according to an extract from an old record, they found on investigation that he had dived down, stolen the anchor, and sold it to "ye damn savages." It was interesting to know that retribution came, though late. There were records to show that the Rover attended the first execution of a white man in America, and did not return. He (Mr. Morehead) was telling that story by the way; but it was an interesting story, and history repeated itself.

Mr. GLASSEY: What is the point?

The HON. B. D. MOREHEAD said he did not know what the point was; possibly the hon. member might discover it. There had been a great deal of talk about stuffing the rolls. He would now go from the Bundanba to Burke. There was none but the residential qualification in that electorate; but according to the figures of the hon. member for Bundanba, there were 2,133 males in the electorate and 2,981 voters.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: And nearly all residents.

The HON. B. D. MOREHEAD said the hon. member had done pretty well there, and if he was not satisfied, he was a glutton. He was certainly not going to assist the hon. member in his attempt to work that pernicious system of stuffing the electoral rolls, by supporting the amendment of the hon. member for Enoggera.

Mr. GLASSEY: Are you prepared to help the patriotic league?

The HON. B. D. MOREHEAD said he preferred to help himself. He had nothing to do with the patriotic league or any anarchist combination with which the hon. member was connected. Up to the present time he had been able to paddle his own canoe in this country without any combination or assistance, and he would be able to do so until the end; at any rate he would go down with his flag flying in that direction. He did not believe in the seditious combinations which the hon. member has gone in for, and which had brought the colony to a lower depth than it had been for the last fifteen years. That sedition had been brought about by men who had unfortunately been imported into the colony—men who could not make a living in their own country, and who, if they had their deserts, would be where he wished to see them.

Mr. HOOLAN: They have been here a long time now, and things are getting worse instead of better.

The HON. B. D. MOREHEAD: And they will get worse as long as some hon. members are at liberty.

Mr. GLASSEY: Why don't you tie them up?

The HON. B. D. MOREHEAD: If I had my way I should not hesitate to lock them up.

Mr. HOOLAN: By Jove, you have had too much of your own way!

The HON. B. D. MOREHEAD said that according to all accounts the hon. member who had just spoken had been locked up before. Until within the last few years they had no such trouble in their midst as that to which he had referred, but the colony was properly conducted, as he hoped it would be in the future. He believed that hon. members on both sides of the Committee would put on one side all petty party politics and combine to keep down the hydra-headed monster which was attempting to raise its head in their midst, to crush it and kill it as soon as it appeared. He was perfectly certain that the Government would receive every support from that side of the Committee.

Mr. GLASSEY: There is no doubt about it.

The HON. B. D. MOREHEAD said the hon. member never said a truer word in his life. There was no doubt about it. The Government would have the strongest support from every man who had any stake in the colony, either in the way of property or family ties. Any man who was the father of a family in this colony must do all he could to prevent the seeds of anarchism which had been attempted to be sown from growing, and he believed that every member of the Committee who had a spark of patriotism in him, or any love for his country—whether his own or his adopted—would do all he could to assist the Government to get rid of the pest with which the colony was ridden.

Mr. DRAKE said he supposed the remarks of the hon. member for Balonne had some relevancy to the amendment or the Chairman would not have allowed him to run on to such a length. But it appeared to him (Mr. Drake) that it was drawing a red herring across the trail. It was most astonishing that when any proposition was brought before the Committee, and hon. members were asked to consider it on its merits, and the Government began to see they could not oppose it on its merits, "the red spectre" was brought forward and flourished, as it had been by the hon. member for Balonne. But what had all that talk about anarchism to do with the amendment? The amendment simply provided that if a man took information to the electoral registrar, the registrar should take a note of the man's name and put it on record, so that it should be known who furnished the information. Surely if the man who brought the information was an honest-hearted citizen he would not be ashamed of it being known that he gave the information. The only man who would be ashamed and afraid to have his name recorded by the electoral registrar was the man who gave information that he knew was false, simply for the purpose of having a man who was entitled to be registered struck off the roll. The hon. member for Dalby, Mr. Jessop, had utterly given away the whole thing. The Government and other hon. members had been telling the Committee that the electoral registrar was to be a man who had nothing to do with party politics; that it was a Government officer who was going to be entrusted with the work of practically striking names off the roll. But what did the hon. member for Dalby say? He said it was not the electoral registrar, but people like station managers who were to do it; that the electoral registrar would send the roll round to the managers of stations, and ask them to tell him who were to be struck off the roll.

The COLONIAL TREASURER: He said nothing of the sort.

Mr. DRAKE said the hon. member for Dalby stated that the way electoral registrars in the country districts would get their information would be by sending the roll to the managers of stations, and asking them to furnish the required information. And what did that amount to? Simply that the manager of a station would get the roll, go through it, and give the electoral registrar information upon which that officer

would act. If the information the manager gave was true, why should he be ashamed of it being known that he gave it?

Mr. CROMBIE: He would not be ashamed, but afraid.

Mr. DRAKE: What should he be afraid of?

Mr. CROMBIE: His grass being burnt.

Mr. DRAKE said if men had left a station, why should not the manager give information to the registrar to that effect. It was perfectly clear, from the remarks made by the Government, that the intention of that Bill was to strike men off the roll. If it was only to strike men off the roll who had no right to be on it, he agreed with them; but if it was to strike men off the roll who had a right to be registered, he disapproved of the Bill. If they allowed the present iniquitous system to go on, an attempt would be made, possibly by both sides, to strike off a number of voters who were believed to be hostile to them; and in the fray a great number of independent men who did not belong to any organisation at all would quietly disappear from the roll, and they would find it out only when they came up to a polling-booth to record their votes, as they did not study the rolls continually to see that their names were on them. He said, let those people who engaged in that nefarious business of finding out the politics of other people and getting their names struck off the roll because of their politics, be punished, and let them, at all events if they were to continue the practice, be compelled to do it in the light of day.

Mr. CASEY said he could tell the Committee the connection between the "red spectre" and the hon. member's amendment. Take the case of the station manager referred to by the hon. member for Dalby. He was a large employer of labour, and was known to the electoral registrar as such, and he had one of those stuffed rolls sent him in order that he might erase the names of those he honestly knew had no right to be on the roll. After erasing the names he would send the roll in to the registrar, and under the hon. member's amendment his name would be published as having supplied the information upon which those names were struck off. He would then become a marked man and the "red spectre" came in. The fire gang would go round, and that man's grass would be burned and his property ruined. That was where the connection between the "red spectre" and the hon. member's proposal came in.

Mr. JESSOP said that as the hon. member for Enoggera had taken up his remarks, he might say he could mention one station for which there were nearly eighty men on the roll, and there were not more than twenty-five men on that station. The same thing could be said of many of the stations in the far West; and was it fair to ask that the stations managers able to give information of that kind should have their names published if they gave it? In the Burke and Carpentaria districts, and other districts in the West of the colony, how would the electoral registrar get the information required to carry out the intention of the Bill if he could not apply to station managers and other persons for that information? Some men would hardly dare to give such information as it was, and was it fair to ask men to place themselves in such a position as the amendment proposed by the hon. member for Enoggera would place them in?

The HON. J. R. DICKSON said he did not intend to pursue the question of the connection of the "red spectre" with the amendment. Their business was to consider how far the Bill would be improved, if it was improved at all, by the amendment proposed, which should be considered with the amendment the hon. member proposed to follow it in the clause he had numbered clause 7. That clause said—

"Any person who, by means of false information, induces the electoral registrar in any district to place the word 'dead,' 'left,' or 'disqualified' against the name of any person, 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."

Mr. BARLOW: It means that a man could not be elected a member of the Legislative Assembly during that time.

The HON. J. R. DICKSON said that as the hon. member for Ipswich had pointed out, it would prevent a man being elected a member of the legislature during that time. The proposal was simply ridiculous, and would deter any person in possession of information which he considered reliable from furnishing that information to the electoral registrar. He would go further, and say that if that clause were introduced, the electoral registrar would refuse to act upon his own judgment without information supplied. He thought it would be far better for the electoral registrar to act independently, and let his action be supported by such investigations as he could make. While speaking upon the subject he desired to express his regret that any hon. member should consider the Bill in the light of how it would benefit this or that political organisation. They were not dealing with such narrow sections of the community. What they wanted was to obtain a broad, purified system of election that would not be swayed by political organisations of any sort; and the sooner they discarded from their consideration of the Bill the question as to how it would affect, or how it would be affected by, political organisations, the better for the colony, and the better they would be fulfilling their duty as legislators.

Mr. BARLOW said that one would suppose, to hear the arguments of some hon. members, that as soon as certain information was given to the electoral registrar he will rush to the roll and strike the name of a man off there and then. That was not so, as a notice had to be sent to the person claiming the vote, and the annual list had to be exposed for thirty days. They had all those safeguards; and now it was proposed that the names of the informants should also be published. He must speak plainly upon the subject, and he would say that no political organisation so powerful as that presided over by the hon. member for Bundanba and his friends could be injured by the Bill. He was certain that no names could be struck off without their knowledge. They had all the safeguards he had mentioned, and the additional security of the objections being advertised, and he did not think that their precautions could go any further.

Mr. AGNEW said that with reference to the notice to be sent, he could give an instance to show that the notice supposed to be furnished to the person claiming the vote might be of no value whatever. He knew of a case in which a professor of a college in the vicinity of Brisbane got a notice of the description mentioned addressed to him in such an ingenious manner that he got it a fortnight after the sitting of the court at which he was expected to show cause why his name should not be struck off the roll.

Mr. GLASSEY said that if the hon. member for Balonne wished to convey the impression that there had been a considerable amount of roll-stuffing in the Bundanba electorate, he could assure hon. members that such was not the case. Nor had there been in any other part of the colony, as was evidenced from the figures he read

the other night showing the adult male population and the number of persons on the rolls in every electorate. Those figures were not his own; they were taken from the census returns and from the rolls up to date. Including the plural vote in his electorate, which numbered about 400, there were only 1,400 odd names on the roll, while there were 1,125 male adults in the district. The abuse sought to be remedied by the amendment of the hon. member for Enoggera was one of a most glaring character. He himself had no desire to remove a single person from the roll who was entitled to vote. They might judge of what would occur in the future from what had taken place in the past. For every assertion he had made he had proofs which he would submit, if necessary, to the Colonial Secretary, and if that hon. gentleman found that any of his statements were incorrect he would apologise to the Committee for having made them. When an abuse of a most glaring and iniquitous character was sought to be remedied in the only possible way, it was opposed by the Government, and the only conclusion they could come to was that the Government had some intention which did not appear on the surface. Vast numbers of persons had suffered, and would suffer, and they would have no means of redress until after the next general election.

Mr. SAYERS said he thought they knew a little about electioneering in the North, but from the disclosures that had been made, he could only conclude that the South could teach them a lot. He intended to support the amendment, but it was not worth while going again over ground that had been covered so often, more especially as every hon. member had made up his mind on the question. He hoped the practices alleged to have been carried on in the South would never be resorted to in his district. It was the wish of all that every man who had been six months in the colony, and was entitled to a vote, should have one. Whenever a man asked him how to get on the roll, he always told him where to go, without asking him what his politics were or who he was going to vote for.

Mr. HOOLAN said he did not think that anyone who supplied the electoral registrar with information concerning the rolls should be in the least ashamed of it. Up to the time of his election he always assisted the electoral registrars at Croydon and Georgetown, and he was in the habit of getting men's names on the roll irrespective of their political opinions. He wanted every man to have a vote, no matter to what party he belonged. The electoral registrar at Croydon always went to him for information, and he gave him all the information at his command. It had been said that the roll for his electorate was stuffed. He had never looked at the roll, and did not know how many names were upon it until the list was read the other night by the hon. member for Bundanba. Possibly the large increase on the roll was attributable to the fact that there had been a large increase in the population of the district. When the time came for the revision of that roll, it would be done without giving the slightest offence or annoyance to anybody. If the electoral registrars all over the colony were of the same kidney as the one at Croydon, there would be very little cause for complaint.

Mr. GLASSEY said he would ask the Chief Secretary whether it would not be possible to give instructions to police magistrates or District Court judges to preside over the revision courts? Some justices, as they were all aware, were very strong partisans, and it was not desirable that they should preside over revision courts. Two members of the patriotic league sat on the revision court in his electorate, and he need hardly say that he had not the slightest confidence in them. Wherever it was practicable, it was desirable that police magistrates or District Court judges should preside over those courts, especially at the November revision. The result would then be far more satisfactory, and many of the evils which now existed would not occur.

The CHIEF SECRETARY said the 11th section of the present law provided that if a judge or a Crown prosecutor was present he should preside. As a matter of fact, it was always arranged, if possible, for the police magistrate to preside, and on more than one occasion a District Court judge or a Crown prosecutor had presided. What did all the argument they had heard come to when it was boiled down? That sometimes the electoral registrars made mistakes. What was to be done in that case? Endeavour to correct their errors, surely! The Government were endeavouring to correct the mistakes by giving the fullest possible notice to the persons whose names were proposed to be struck off. Surely the remedy was exactly applicable to the disease! The remedy proposed by the hon. member was that because the registrars sometimes made mistakes, therefore they must be prevented from doing anything; that was, compel them to make a great many more mistakes. That was a peculiar sort of remedy. Mistakes must occur, and the Government proposed to correct the errors; but the hon. gentleman proposed to correct mistakes by tying the hands of electoral registrars, so that, doing nothing, they would not make any mistakes.

Mr. BARLOW: Supposing a registrar objected to every name on the roll of his own motion?

The CHIEF SECRETARY said that was done in some places, where every now and again there was a fresh roll altogether.

Mr. BARLOW: It is done in Tasmania.

The CHIEF SECRETARY said he would like to call attention to the extraordinary inconsistency on the part of some hon. members—notably the member for Bundanba. They had had a great deal of time taken up in committee on that Bill, with the contention that it should be the duty of the electoral registrar every year to compile the roll afresh; that he should act on such information as he could get, and leave off the names he thought ought not to be on the roll.

Mr. GLASSEY: I never said anything of the kind.

The CHIEF SECRETARY said the hon. member made that contention as he understood him: that the electoral registrar ought to compile the roll afresh, and on the best information he could get. If that practice were followed, if the arguments now used were valid, he ought to give reasons for leaving off all the names he did not insert. He might put on 1,000 names, and leave off 100,000,000—how could he give reasons for what he did not do? If the hon. gentleman's own plan was followed, what he (the Chief Secretary) now contended for was absolutely necessary—and yet the refusal of the Government to accept a proposal inconsistent with it, indicated, according to him, abominable depravity. Because it was proposed not to accept the amendment, that was characterised as depravity. But what the hon. member now contended for was absolutely impossible. Where was the consistency in that? It was quite plain that what the hon. gentleman wanted to do was to object to what the Government proposed, and insist that what the Government did not accept was necessarily right. If hon. gentlemen thought that the scheme ought to be accepted, of course

they must remember that the result would be that a great many persons who had valuable information that ought to be given to the registrar would be deterred from giving it, and the rolls would not be as honest as they otherwise would be.

Mr. GLASSEY said what he said was that, instead of leaving the putting in of claims to persons who desired to have the franchise, a responsible agent should be appointed for each electorate. The claims should then be sent to the registrar and duly enrolled. Then if any person had not got his name on the roll he could send in his claim afterwards. Then he said, in addition, that when the registrar came to revise the roll in November he ought to have the best information which he could get from official sources, and other sources if he could not get sufficient from officials, but the names of the persons who give the information ought to be given. If he gave information that he objected to a person's name appearing on the roll, it was clearly his duty to give his name. He saw no inconsistency at all in his contention, nor did he see any inconsistency in the contention of the hon. member for Enoggera. With respect to how matters were conducted in the old country, they were conducted entirely by officials. Between September and October the full roll was completed, and a responsible person travelled from place to place seeing that justice was done to electors. When that system was established here no doubt greater purity would exist, but at present there was a lot of hidden work done, and many desirable and eligible persons suffered in consequence.

Mr. BARLOW said to show how much more liberal our law was than that prevailing in the southern colonies he might mention that the other day he was on the north-west coast of Tasmania, and at a certain railway station there was an electoral roll hanging up. Out of curiosity he looked through it, and found to his surprise that every residential qualification had stamped upon it with a rubber stamp the word "objected." On inquiry he found that the law required the electoral registrar to officially object to every residential claim once a year, and if the claim was not renewed the name was left off the roll the following year.

Mr. BLACK said it seemed to him there was a great objection on the part of some people to purify the rolls. No doubt the most glaring system of roll-stuffing had been carried on in the past. The patriotic league had been referred to in a way that would lead the general public to suppose that they were doing some underhand work; but on inquiry as to what they were really doing, he came to the conclusion that it was a great pity there were not more patriotic leagues in the colony. They had certainly been the means of securing to everyone entitled to it a vote, because they had put on 3,400 names which were not on the rolls before. They had also been the means of knocking off 5,000 names of men who were clearly not entitled by any qualification to be on the roll. He would ask, who put those 5,000 persons on the roll? No doubt there had been a counter organisation going on in Brisbane that had been most deliberately stuffing the rolls for the past twelve months. How did those men get their names on the rolls otherwise? He thought the patriotic league deserved the thanks of the community for honestly endeavouring to secure to every man his right, and seeing that a lot of fraudulent votes were not put on the roll. But it was not only in Brisbane that some care was taken in revising the rolls. He had wired up to the Central district to know what had been done there, and he found that in the districts of Leichhardt, Gregory, Flinders, Barcoo, and Peak Downs, at the last revision court no less than 4,000 names were struck off. If that was not a most glaring case of roll-stuffing, he did not know what it was. Was it not time that something should be done to ensure the purity of the rolls? How long was that political swindling to go on without some determined effort being made to put it down? Let it be shown that any man who was honestly entitled to a vote could not get it, and then let the Government take such steps as would ensure him being properly enrolled. But when they saw around Brisbane and in the Central districts that no less than 9,000 names had been illegally put upon the rolls, surely it was time that the Government took some action to put a stop to a system which would fill that House with men who probably did not represent the views of the country! He was astonished at the persistent way in which the hon. member for Bundanba got up and tried to make it a grievance that the Government were endeavouring to purify the rolls; and it was a significant fact that there was no constituency in the colony that showed a greater amount of roll-stuffing than the hon. member's own electorate. The figures had been read out; in proportion to population, there was no electorate in the colony where the system of roll-stuffing had been carried out to a greater extent than in the hon. member's electorate. Yet he stood up in the most innocent way and talked about depriving the poor, honest, hard-working man of his vote. It was becoming "too thin" altogether. The hon. member did not seem to understand what he was talking about. It was no credit to him to represent a constituency knowing that in all probability his return had been brought about by the most deliberate roll-stuffing. He hoped the Government would take every precaution necessary to see that the rolls were purified at the next revision court, and that those who were not entitled to vote, either by residence or a property qualification, should be struck off without an opportunity of getting on before the next general election.

Mr. DRAKE said he could not accept the position laid down by the Chief Secretary in regard to the evil sought to be removed by the proposed new clause. The hon. gentleman said that the evil sought to be removed was that the registrars sometimes made mistakes. But sometimes the registrars were the victims of false information, and the effect of the amendment would be, not that the registrar would make fewer mistakes, but that he would be less subject to receiving wrong information than at present. The hon. member for Mackay got up and made a long speech about the amount of roll-stuffing that was going on; but what had that to do with the matter? He wanted to know why a man who gave to the registrar information that would lead to the names of certain persons being struck off the roll should be afraid to have his name put upon the margin of the roll as being the informant? Hon. members talked about the reign of terror. Perhaps there was a reign of terror, but it was not all on one side. He had recently seen a letter sent to a member of the Committee, with the address in a disguised hand, so that it should not be known that the person was writing to a member of Parliament. That was an example of the reign of terror, but it had nothing to do with the reign of terror indicated by hon. members when they spoke in that Committee. If a person gave false information to the registrar and induced him to cause a man's name to be struck off the roll, that man should have some opportunity of finding out who furnished the information. The talk about the "red spectre" and anarchy was all beside the question. If some

safeguard of the kind he suggested were not put in, the effect would be that at the next election it would be found that the names of men who did not belong to any organisation, and were independent voters, would have disappeared without their being able to prevent it. People who belonged to organisations would have their names looked after by those organisations; but independent electors would not, and their names would be surreptitiously removed by some of those electioneering agents who made it their business to find out people's politics.

Mr. GLASSEY said the hon. member for Mackay had said there was an alarming amount of roll-stuffing all over the colony because a number of names had been rejected at the last revision court. But what did that prove? It proved that a number of persons had not been on the rolls previously, and certain action had been taken to have them there. Take the case of Balonne. There were 1,844 male adults in that district, and only 547 on the roll. In the Bowen electorate there were 1,246 male adults, and only 649 on the roll. In Bulloo there were 1,441 male adults, and only 533 on the roll. In Kennedy there were 1,303 male adults, and only 853 on the roll. In Leichhardt there were 965 male adults, and only 593 on the roll. In Mitchell there were 892 male adults, and 529 on the roll. In all those cases, if any activity were shown to get the names on the roll they would hear the cry of "roll-stuffing," when there was no roll-stuffing at all.

Mr. BLACK: What about Hardacre's case?

Mr. GLASSEY said it did not follow that because some people were struck off they were struck off legally; but that there had been certain persons at work who had been the means of getting them off the rolls.

Mr. DALRYMPLE said that the hon. member for Bundanba took a more sanguine view with regard to what could be done by mere assertion than other hon. members. The mere fact of a large number of men being struck off was a very fair presumption for there being some cause for their being struck off. The cases which had occurred a few days previously in Brisbane were conclusive evidence—he would not say that the hon. member could not deny it, because he had heard him make some most extraordinary statements—but he did not think any other hon. member would question that the cases which were tried in Brisbane, when certain persons had been fined, were conclusive evidence that roll-stuffing had been attempted. He did not desire to take up the time of the Committee, for one very good reason, which was that three parts of their time was positively taken up by the loquacity of the hon. member for Bundanba. He appeared to believe that that Chamber had been built for him, and that the Chairman had been brought into existence, and that hon. members had been brought there for no other reason but to hear him talk; and he seemed to have the same opinion with regard to *Hansard*. He appeared to think that those unfortunate gentlemen in the gallery—with whom he (Mr. Dalrymple) sympathised most deeply—had also been brought into existence, and been taught their most difficult profession simply for the purpose of taking down what the hon. member said. He did not think hon. members generally entertained that extraordinary opinion of the hon. member's talents which he seemed to have himself. He could not agree with one expression uttered by the Chief Secretary, who had said that he was surprised at the inconsistency of the hon. member for Bundanba. If he (Mr. Dalrymple) was ever led to feel any astonishment at all, it would be in discovering that the hon. member was consistent. He had heard of some inconsistent speakers, but he would defy the hon. member to talk without being inconsistent in that Chamber for half an hour. As a rule he talked six hours per day, and he was very much afraid the ten hours or eight hours system would have to be enacted in that Chamber with regard to the hon. member's talking. If anyone would take the trouble to analyse what the hon. gentleman said he would find that he always contradicted himself. That evening the hon. member had said he had been very much surprised—during the whole of that debate the way in which the hon. gentleman began was by stating that he was very much surprised that difficulties were placed in the way of the voters of the colony obtaining their votes. Generally he said later on in his speech that there was a deliberate desire, which he had fathomed all along, on the part of the Government to deprive the people of their votes. Why, then, should he introduce his remarks by stating that he was surprised that the Government were endeavouring to prevent people from having votes? Then, generally, in some other portion of his speech he occupied an intermediate position, and said that he did not know whether the Government were sincere or not. He occupied all positions. First of all he said he believed the Government were sincere, then he said, "If the Government are sincere," and at another time he attributed to them the basest and meanest designs. He should like to know which of those alternative positions the hon. gentleman proposed to occupy. Then with regard to the registrar, most of the objections which had been taken by the hon. member for Enoggera to the information had, in the main, been objections to the registrar. After all it was his business to satisfy himself that the information which he received was sound; and if he was not satisfied the fault was with him and not with the system. The registrar was not bound to accept any statements made to him. He was told to obtain information, and as a person in such a responsible position, if he did not feel absolutely certain, it was distinctly his business to seek for more information. The hon. member for Enoggera and the hon. member for Bundanba said they did not want to blame the registrar. Yet they had been blaming the registrar. The whole tenor of their statements had been to show that the registrar was to blame, because the registrar was responsible. He was not merely a machine or phonograph into which they were to talk. He was a person who was invested by the Government with certain powers, which it was assumed he would exercise with discretion. With regard to inconsistency, the hon. member for Bundanba objected to the system. He objected to the Government. He believed the Government was animated and ruled by most unworthy motives. He believed, or professed to believe, that the Government was a most iniquitous Government. He might say that the hon. gentleman had held that opinion ever since there had been a distribution of portfolios; previously he had entertained the highest opinion of the Government. With regard to the hon. gentleman's inconsistency, he blamed the Government, and he blamed the registrar indirectly; yet at the same time his remedy was more bad registrars—that there should be more Government officials to be appointed by a Government in which he placed not the slightest reliance. He should have imagined that the hon. member's experience of the Government would have led him to precisely the opposite conclusion. He wanted more Government officials.

The HON. B. D. MOREHEAD: Exactly. He has more sons.

Mr. DALRYMPLE said that another evidence of the hon. member's inconsistency—which was a feature in his character—was that he generally spoke in a tone of intense disgust and contempt of the old country. It was being governed by an effete monarchy at present. They all knew that the hon. gentleman was an enthusiastic republican; but if he had been in Chicago two or three years ago his enthusiasm for a republic would have been considerably moderated. If the hon. member was disposed to preach sedition, he would certainly not advise him to go to the great and free United States of America, or even to republican France. Generally the hon. member objected to monarchical government, and to a country in which there was a great deal of poverty—which he had no doubt was one of the reasons why the hon. gentleman and others had left it. He objected to the House of Lords, and generally to the whole of the institutions of the old country; yet whenever it suited him he told them that they said so-and-so, and that they did so-and-so in the old country. The old country was preached up to them, and they had been told that evening that there were some officials in the old country who performed certain duties—probably because the electors in the old country had not had the same experience that they had in Queensland; that they had not, on the whole, been as free. They were not as well off as a whole, nor as well able to protect themselves. But because there were some officials in the old country, where the electors were apparently in a state of tutelage and needed to be shepherded in having their names put on the rolls, in Queensland they should imitate that example. He did not want to take up the time of the Committee, although he could go on, if it were worth his while, to point out the hon. member's inconsistencies; but he did not think it required demonstration. It was perfectly clear to every hon. member that a more inconsistent talker—he would not call him a reasoner—that Chamber had never seen.

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

AYES, 8.

Messrs. Hall, Glassey, Ryan, Hoolan, Agnew, Sayers, Gannon, and Drake.

NOES, 45.

Sir S. W. Griffith, Sir T. McIlwraith, Messrs. Cowley, Hodgkinson, Nelson, Black, Aland, Powers, Dickson, Morehead, Pattison, Hamilton, Tozer, Unmack, Paul, Callan, Dalrymple, McMaster, Allan, Barlow, Mellor, Smyth, Crombie, Plunkett, Foxton, Macfarlane, Luya, Battersby, O'Connell, Lissner, Murray, Little, Smith, Grimes, Wimble, Campbell, Dunsmure, Casey, Watson, Corfield, Hyne, Jones, Jessop, Annear, and Stephens.

Question resolved in the negative.

Mr. MURRAY said he had given notice of a new clause which he was anxious to have inserted, but he found after conversing with several hon. members that it was not likely to meet with much support. It was a proposal to give to married men residing on their own freeholds some privileges to which they were justly entitled, and which, if granted, would be of benefit to the country. It was a matter he had discussed with his constituents, and one which met with their entire approval; but as there was no possibility of getting it inserted in the Bill he would not waste the time of the Committee by proposing it.

Clause 10 passed as printed.

On clause 11, as follows:—

"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."

Mr. DRAKE said he wished to know, in connection with the last part of the 1st paragraph, whether the oath was to be the oath of the person objected to?

The CHIEF SECRETARY said that in the case of a man who was objected to before he got on the roll he must appear and prove his claim, either in person or by agent; but in the case of a man whose name was already on the roll, if his name was objected to, he was not required to attend either in person or by agent, but the facts might be proved on oath by anyone.

Clause passed as printed.

Clauses 12 and 13 passed as printed.

On clause 14, 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."

The CHIEF SECRETARY said he must confess that the 2nd paragraph was open to a great deal of doubt. It was open to doubt from two points of view. A man whose property was really worth more than £100 might have it valued at less by the valuer, and he might not object. He did not know of any instance of a man objecting to a valuation because it was less than the real value of the property. There was some doubt, perhaps, whether he could do so. On the other hand, it was quite possible for a man whose property was not worth £100 to get it valued at £100 and say he would not object to the valuation; and by that means he would get *primâ facie* evidence in support of his claim to be put on the roll. That, of course, could only apply to unoccupied lands in any case. On the whole, he was inclined to think it would be better to leave out the 2nd paragraph, but the 1st paragraph, he believed, would be a useful one. He moved that the 2nd paragraph be omitted.

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

On clause 15, 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."

Mr. BARLOW said it occurred to him that the insertion of the age of electors in all the rolls might afford some facilities for personation. He had heard of an election which took place up country some years ago, where fifteen votes were polled by two men. They had a tent outside the polling-booth, and there they made themselves up for the occasion. If the information as to the age could be confined to the returning officers and scrutineers, it might be an advantage.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: That is impossible, I think.

Clause put and passed.

Mr. DRAKE said he desired to propose another clause, of which he had given notice, to follow clause 15. It embodied the same principle as the amendment moved earlier in the evening

by the hon. member for Mackay, Mr. Black; but it proposed to carry out that principle in a different way; and he thought the methods proposed to be adopted would be altogether free from the objectionable features which had been pointed out as obvious in the amendment of the hon. member for Mackay. It had been pointed out, notably by the hon. member for Bulimba, that under the amendment proposed by the hon. member for Mackay it would be possible for a number of electors to move from one constituency to another just before an election took place, and so influence the constituency into which they had recently removed. The amendment he (Mr. Drake) proposed was entirely free from that objection, because under it an elector moving from one constituency to another would be in exactly the same position with regard to the new constituency as he was under the law as it stood at the present time. At the present time, if an elector shifted from one constituency to another he could put in his application, and when his name had been advertised, and the proper time came, he would become entitled to vote for that constituency. The only difference that would be made by the amendment was that if an elector moved from one constituency to another, and a general election took place before his right to vote in the new constituency matured, he would maintain the right to vote in his old constituency, so that it would preserve the principle that when a man had once won the franchise and been enrolled he would not be altogether disfranchised because at some subsequent period he removed from the constituency where he was registered. If hon. members agreed that it was right that a man should not be disfranchised under such circumstances, then they would find very little to object to in the new clause. In many cases an elector might have moved from one constituency to another at a great distance, so that it would be impossible for him to be present in person and vote in the constituency which he had left. To meet such cases it was provided that if a general election took place before the vote in the new constituency matured, the elector might vote for his old constituency by sending his ballot-paper to the returning officer by post. He thought the machinery provided for that purpose was as simple as could be devised to carry out the principle effectually without leaving it open to abuse, but if the wording of the clause could be in any way improved he would be only too happy to accept any suggestion in that direction. He would now formally move as one clause the 1st paragraph of his amendment, which was as follows:—

"Every elector who intends to remove from one electoral district to another may intimate his intention in writing to the electoral registrar of the district or division which he is leaving. The electoral registrar shall thereupon place the words 'Removed to ' and the date of the entry against the name of the elector in the roll, to be produced by him to the next ensuing court for revising the annual lists, and such court shall not expunge the name of such elector but shall continue it upon the list, anything to the contrary in this Act notwithstanding; and the said words 'Removed to ' and the date of the original entry shall be printed against such name in the roll for the ensuing year, but shall be expunged at the court to be held in that year under the provisions of the twenty-second section of the principal Act."

He should like to mention before he sat down that another advantage would be attendant upon the adoption of that system, as when an elector left an electorate in which he was enrolled he would under that system have a strong inducement to give notice to the registrar that he was leaving that district. He would give that notice in order to obtain the advantages of that system, and the note stating that he had left the constituency could be placed upon the roll at once. That would prevent the possibility of a man's name being left standing on the roll for months and even years, as had happened, after he had left the electorate, leaving openings, of course, for personation.

The CHIEF SECRETARY said he was not quite sure that he apprehended the scheme of those amendments. If he understood them they would have this effect: A man left a district, say, in the month of January—ceased to be a resident, and ceased really to have any claim to vote in that electorate. He assumed that the scheme was only intended to apply to residents, though he did not know why it should only apply to them. Why should not one man be able to vote by post as well as another? Assuming that it applied only to residents: Say a man, in the month of January, left a district, and thereupon really ceased to have any right to vote in that district, he was liable to be objected to, and might be omitted from the roll by the revision court held in November. If that was done, at any rate, the name would not be on the roll for the succeeding year. The hon. member's amendment, however, enabled a man who made up his mind to leave a district in the month of January, by giving that notice to the registrar, to secure the keeping of his name on the roll for the whole of that year and for the whole of the succeeding year. That was the effect of it.

Mr. DRAKE: No.

The CHIEF SECRETARY said it was; and a man, by deliberately saying to the registrar "I have lost my qualification," secured his name being left on the roll for two years. The hon. member did not mean that?

Mr. DRAKE: No.

The CHIEF SECRETARY said that was the hon. member's proposal, and of course it was absurd. Another difficulty that would arise was this: Supposing any man went to the electoral registrar and said, "I am John Smith; I am on the roll, and I am leaving this district." The real John Smith might not have left the district at all, and yet he would have that notice of removal placed against his name on the roll. Was he to be qualified to vote in person while some other man could vote in the same name by post? If he was not to be allowed to vote in person, it would be quite easy for one man to disfranchise another, by simply saying, "That is my name on the roll; I am leaving the district." A man without doing any good to himself could deprive another man of his vote. Then he saw great difficulties in the way of identification, supposing a man voted by post. In the Divisional Boards Act they had a system of voting by post, but under that system the voting-paper was sent by the returning officer to the man, and there were reasonable grounds for expecting that the right man would get it. There was no provision in the amendment for a man's identification by somebody who knew him; he simply made a declaration that he was the person whose name was on the roll. It seemed to him that those were serious objections. If they were to have voting by post at all, they should have a general system, and it should be surrounded by greater safeguards than there were in that scheme.

Mr. DRAKE said he had no intention to provide that a man's name should remain on the roll so long that he would be able to vote in two constituencies on a residence qualification.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: That is another objection I omitted to point out. That could also happen under the proposed amendment.

Mr. DRAKE said that what he wished to secure, and he had no doubt that the Chief Secretary could draft a clause that would carry

it out exactly, was that a man's vote should not lapse altogether because he had removed from one constituency to another. He wanted a man's name to remain on the old electoral roll, and secure him his right to vote, until his title to vote in the new electorate had matured. He had no doubt a scheme could be devised to carry out that object. With regard to the suggestion that in the amendment he had proposed one man might vote in person, and another by post as the same person, that would be prevented entirely, because when the words "removed to" were written against the name appearing on the roll, no personal vote for that name would be accepted.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: That is not clearly expressed.

Mr. DRAKE said that might be so; but he would like to know how the amendment would enable one man to disfranchise another.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: By his giving notice in the name of another man.

Mr. DRAKE said it was surely easy to provide against that by simply making the man who personated another in such a way liable to the same penalties as were provided in other clauses of the Bill.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: If you can catch him.

Mr. DRAKE said he had first of all to notify his intention that he was going to remove before the note "removed to" was put upon the roll, and that would be the proper time, if he was not the man he represented himself to be, to secure his punishment.

An HONOURABLE MEMBER: The other man would be disfranchised all the same.

Mr. DRAKE said he thought there would be no difficulty in providing against that. In regard to the suggestion that the proposal should apply also to a person on the roll for a property qualification, when a man voted in respect of property he voted in an electorate where the property was situated, and if he removed into another electorate he did not shift his property with him, therefore his vote in respect of property must remain on the old roll.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: So does that of the residence man. It remains there to the end of the year.

Mr. DRAKE said that reminded him that the Chief Secretary had also said that when a man on the roll in respect of a residence qualification left a constituency he ceased to have any interest in it, but the present law contemplated that his vote should remain in the old electorate for nine months, because if an election occurred after he removed, and he could state that he had been residing in that electorate one month within the last nine months, his claim would be good, and why should that not be preserved to him in all cases? Why should it happen that through an accident one man might be able to vote in an electorate eight months after he had left it, while another man, who had not left it nearly so long ago, might be entirely disfranchised, because he could be struck off one roll before he had an opportunity of getting his name placed upon another?

The HON. J. R. DICKSON said there appeared to be a wonderful tendency in the Committee to give special consideration to the residential qualification. Six months' residence in a country was, in his opinion, altogether too limited to enable a man to acquire a full knowledge of the polity of a country and its political institutions, and yet some hon. members appeared to think that such an individual had a claim to special consideration, beyond a man who had lived in the colony for years, invested all his savings in it, and acquired a vote upon the freehold qualification. He had no sympathy with that sort of maudlin sentiment. He thought they should place all men who possessed the electoral qualification on a level, and if they were to give the residential voters an itinerant vote they should do the same with those who claimed a vote on a freehold qualification. If a man acquired a freehold in any electorate, why should he not be at once entitled to vote in that electorate? It was not proposed to do so, nor did he advocate it. In his opinion the amendment was even more dangerous than that of the hon. member for Mackay, which was discussed at an earlier period of the evening. Not only would the rolls be loaded with the names of persons who had removed from one portion of the colony to another, but of men who had left the colony altogether. A man might remove from one district to another, and have a *bonâ fide* intention of remaining there at the time, but before the twelve months had elapsed, during which his name remained on the original roll, he might have left for one of the other colonies, and still his name would remain on the roll. The object of the Bill was to prevent the names of those who had ceased to possess a qualification remaining on the roll, while the amendment, if carried, by maintaining the loading of the rolls with the names of persons who had left the colony, would lead to unlimited personation. On that ground he should certainly oppose it. The amendment, further, was not relevant to the Bill under consideration. It was, to his mind, a sentimental fancy to enable a residential voter to obtain privileges which were denied to a man who was tied to the colony by a freehold qualification, and who was, he ventured to say, a more valuable acquisition to the colony at large than a man who merely had a residential qualification. A man possessed of a freehold was tied to the colony; he was more bound up with its progress and prosperity than a man who came here for six months. He had no desire to restrict the qualification for residential voters. At the same time he would not give his vote for an amendment which would lead to a considerable amount of personation, and which was entirely outside the true principles of the Bill under discussion.

Mr. DRAKE said that he also desired to place all men on a level, but perhaps not in the way the hon. member meant. He hoped to see political equality established at the ballot-box, but that could only be done in one way, and that was by giving one man one vote, and one vote only. The hon. member for Bulimba said he had noticed that there was a great deal said in the Chamber about the residence qualification. Surely there was a reason for that! A man who had a property qualification might vote in many different constituencies on that qualification, but in the vast majority of cases the residence qualification was the only qualification a man had. As to men claiming to be put on the roll after having been only six months in the colony, he would point out that the vast majority of electors who voted on the residence qualification had been very much longer in the colony than six months. It was an injustice, under any circumstances, that a man should be absolutely disfranchised because he desired to move from one constituency into another. He maintained that the man who exercised a residence qualification vote had also a stake in the country. Any man who had a wife and children dependent upon him, and whose welfare depended on the prosperity of the colony, had just as much stake in the country as the man who had thousands and thousands of pounds' worth of property; and the man who exercised his vote on

the residence qualification should be thought just as much of as the man who exercised it on the freehold qualification. He was speaking more particularly of men who had only one vote. A man with a freehold qualification as well as a residence qualification could never be disfranchised. The most that could happen to him, on changing his residence, would be that he might have one vote less at an election. He wanted the Committee to take into consideration the case of men who only had one vote, and who if disfranchised at any time were disfranchised entirely, and deprived of any voice in the affairs of the country. He did not intend to press the matter to a division, because the principle had already been discussed and negatived by the Chamber. He had placed the amendment before the Committee because he was convinced that the principle of transferring a vote from one constituency to another was a true and just principle; and he felt certain that if the Committee only desired that such transfer should be made, there would be no difficulty whatever in framing the machinery to carry it out in such a way that no man should be disfranchised, and that there would be no opening for any abuses.

Mr. ISAMBERT said he did not entirely agree with the proposal of the hon. member for Enoggera, but he thought it might be adopted with some modifications. They might, for instance, accept the first four lines as far as "the electoral registrar shall thereupon," and then add "issue to such elector an electoral right, and such electoral right, on being handed to the electoral registrar of the district to which he has removed shall entitle him to be placed on the electoral roll for that district." There could be no mistake made. An elector had that right by virtue of his residence, and it was far more precious to him than if it was based on property qualification. Why should property only be represented? Was manhood not worth more than property? Did property exist for men, or did men exist for property? When a man moved from one district to another he was still a resident of the colony, and his voting right should be secured to him. The more they discussed the Bill the more they found it was pregnant with something that did not appear on the surface, and which it seemed to be the desire to rush through. His proposal was to make use of the local authorities, and issue with the rate-notices a census-paper, which would have to be filled in by the people.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: We are not discussing that now.

Mr. ISAMBERT said if the Government would accept his amendment many of the objections to the different clauses would be removed.

Clause put and negatived.

Mr. POWERS said he had a new clause to move, embodying the principle of one man one vote. It was rather late to propose it, but the principle had been well discussed both inside and outside the House. He proposed that an elector should only be entitled to have his name upon one roll.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: How do you give effect to that?

Mr. POWERS said he gave effect to it by asking a certain question—"Are you registered in respect to any other qualification?" and then that, together with clause 8, contained all the necessary machinery. He was not going to weary the Committee with going over all the arguments in favour of the principle. He was perfectly satisfied that every member had made up his mind on the subject; but he wanted to point out one or two things in connection with the proposal. He had been surprised to hear it termed by some hon. members a "fad," because if they looked round they would find that South Australia had the same principle in force already. New Zealand had it in force; the New South Wales Assembly had passed it, and it had been thrown out of the Upper House, and the same thing had happened in Victoria. On an appeal to the constituencies in the latter colony a majority had been returned in favour of the principle. Nearly the whole of Australia had taken up the question of late years, and they found, on reference to the *Courier* of 17th June, that the Right Hon. W. E. Gladstone had pledged himself to support the principle at the ensuing general elections. In addition to that, the Hon. A. J. Balfour had pledged himself to support it; and he presumed hon. members would admit that both those hon. gentlemen intended to carry out their pledges. Now, what he considered had made the world look at this question lately was that the people had been educated up to the fact that they had certain rights which had been debarred to them up to the present time. He was one of those who thought that it was impossible to crush such movements out of existence; they had never yet been met by crushing and compulsion, but by considerate attention to the claims of the people. For eleven years an attempt was made to resist the demands of the people of England, and that resulted in the first Reform Bill; then there came the Chartist movement; then the new reform movement in 1867; and at the present time a pledge from the leaders of the great parties in England to support the principle of one man one vote. The other day he saw a return showing that there had been 880 strikes in England in twelve months, out of which 440 were unsuccessful, and reconciliation would not be brought about by depriving men of their votes, or by insisting on the retention of the plural vote, but by extending the principle of manhood suffrage on the one man one vote principle. That was the only way to make the people satisfied, and he believed that really the revolutionists were those who would deprive people of that right. He was perfectly satisfied they would only get peace in this land by giving concessions to those who were entitled to concessions. In the question he was bringing forward he was not attempting to alter the qualification. They had limited the qualification now to residence for six months in one constituency, not allowing a transfer of votes until a second term of residence had been fulfilled, and that limit would still hold good. The hon. member for Maryborough had been good enough to tell him that he intended to show that in the Burrum electorate the principle, if adopted, would deprive people who had invested thousands of pounds in the district of their vote. Now, two members were given to Maryborough because it had a certain population, not because it had a certain number of allotments of certain value. He contended that it was never the intention of the legislature that Maryborough should control the Burrum electorate. The representation was on the basis of population. When they divided the electorates they had always been guided by that principle—not by the number of allotments, but by the number of people living in the electorate. He had publicly shown that he was in favour of that movement, and had had no opposition from people who had allotments in the Burrum electorate. The residents, the people who made allotments valuable, were satisfied that those people should vote at elections. The towns were dependent upon the country; it was by the value created by the country settlers that the country settlers were outvoted by the town men. It was only by the settlement of those

people that the property acquired any value at all. People talked about thrift, but it was only one sort of thrift. If a man had invested money in a mine, even in Mount Morgan, he would have no right to a vote on that account, but the owner of an allotment alongside, made valuable by Mount Morgan, could outvote a shareholder in that mine. So far as thrift was concerned, two men in Bundaberg could outvote Robert Cran at Millaquin—two persons owning land improved by that property could outvote him. It was the value of the land that gave the right to vote. The Legislative Assemblies throughout Australia were moving in this matter, and doing away with that absurd definition of property. It would be better if the voting was according to the amount a man had in the savings bank; but there was no reason why the principle should be kept in existence any longer. The time had come when the subject should be dealt with. He believed the people of the colony were in favour of it, and the people in the rest of Australia had proved themselves to be in favour of it. The adoption of the principle he advocated would do more to settle the unhappy difficulty which existed than anything else, and would do it upon a safe basis. Those who opposed it were unintentionally doing a great deal to prevent the settlement of the difficulty. He firmly believed in the principle, and had advocated it, believing it would be for the benefit of the country. With those few remarks, he moved that—

No elector shall be entitled to have his name entered upon more than one electoral roll.

The CHIEF SECRETARY said at that late hour he did not propose to detain the Committee very long, and regretted that the matter had not come on at an earlier hour. As a matter of abstract and pious opinion, he thought an elector should not have more than one vote or vote in more than one constituency. That would work if they had an ideal system of elections, but they had not an ideal system. The object of their electoral system was to secure good government, not to secure that every man should have an equal voice in the government. That he did not believe in. Various systems had been tried at various times. Universal suffrage was one; mob rule was another; and tyrannies, democracies, and aristocracies showed how the cycle went round. They tried one system after another, and each one failed, and was succeeded by another. They had unfortunately, as the necessity for the Bill showed, not a perfect system; but they were trying to make it better. What they had endeavoured to do was to give the different parts of the colony, and the different industries and interests in it, fair representation in Parliament, and as nearly as possible an equal representation. The theory set up by some hon. members, and generally set up by the advocates of one man one vote, that every man in the community had an equal right to a vote, simply because he was a man, he did not recognise at all. He did not think that was the reason why any man had a vote, nor did anybody really believe it, although they said they did. They did not propose to give Chinese votes, or kanakas, or aboriginals, or prisoners, or a great number of other persons. The right of a man to exercise the franchise was his fitness for it; he had no other claim. The mere fact of his being twenty-one years of age and living in the colony was not a conclusive proof that he was fit to exercise the franchise, and although under their system they said that every man who had lived in a constituency for six months might exercise the franchise, still they could not shut their eyes to the fact that a great number of people fulfilling those conditions ought not to have as much weight in the community as others in respect to whom the conditions were quite different. Under the circumstances, they had adopted a system which was not to give every man an equal voice in the government of the country. He did not think every man ought to have an equal right in that respect. Perhaps the present system could be corrected; but he might point out that Mr. Balfour qualified the adherence he gave to the doctrine by saying that it should be accompanied by equal districts. If every man was entitled to a vote, every 1,000 men were entitled to exercise precisely the same influence, so that all electorates should be precisely the same in number. If they had Hare's system, or anything of that sort, which he believed to be quite impracticable, every 1,000 men would have precisely the same voice in the Parliament of the country. There might be some advantage in that, and if it could be worked out he should be inclined to try it; but he should prefer to try the experiment under conditions where the result of a mistake would be less serious. Things being as they were in Australia, what would be the effect if the electoral districts were equal? Take the case of New South Wales, Victoria, or South Australia; the result would be that the capital city and its suburbs, which contained about one-third of the population of each colony, would control the whole legislation of the country. That was not very desirable. It would give those who had less interest in the good government of the country the controlling power in the government, which was clearly not right. It was quite manifest that the system of giving everybody an equal voice was not practicable, and the subject must be considered a great deal more than it had been, and from many more points of view than merely suggesting that every man had an equal right. Even admitting that one elector ought not to have more weight than another, he did not accept the second proposition that every man had a right to vote, nor did anyone else. Under the circumstances, unless they could devise some system by which more weight would be given to the fittest men they had better stay as they were. He believed the fittest men ought to have the most voice in the government of the country, the object of government being the benefit of the whole community; and he did not see what advantage was to be gained by giving the greatest voice in the government to men who knew the least about it.

Mr. POWERS: What is your gauge?

The CHIEF SECRETARY said that he did not simply count heads. Counting heads was not the only test of fitness. It had been tried in many countries. It had been tried over 2,000 years ago; and the consequence was recorded by Aristotle, whose writings on the subject, if hon. members had read them once, they might read a second time with advantage. For the reasons he had endeavoured briefly to indicate, he could not support the clause.

Mr. NELSON said that he was also entirely opposed to the amendment. There might be a little in the theory of the thing at first sight; it looked plausible; but practically there was nothing whatever in it. As had been already remarked, if every vote was to be of equal value then every electorate would have to consist of the same number of electors. It would be very unjust if they tried to put it in practice, because it would simply mean that the metropolis of any country would control the whole country. He would take the case of London as compared with Ireland. The population of London and the population of Ireland were both between

4,000,000 and 5,000,000; and in that case London alone would have the same influence in Parliament as the whole of Ireland.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: And more than Scotland.

Mr. NELSON said that London would have a great deal more influence than Scotland. Anyone could see that would never work. The people in the inland districts of the colony, in the same way, would be absolutely under the control of the metropolis, and the country districts would be actually disfranchised. They would be outvoted by Brisbane and Ipswich, who would do as they used to do at one time—rule the colony. That was not desirable, and he was very much opposed to it. The mover of the clause had stated as an argument in favour of it, that certain statesmen in England had given in their adhesion to the principle, but that was really not the case. They were strongly opposed to it. A motion had been brought forward in the House of Commons quite recently.

Mr. POWERS: This was on the 16th June this year. It appeared in the *Observer* of 17th June.

Mr. NELSON said that he would quote the latest news. He found that on the 18th May last Mr. Shaw-Lefevre had brought in a Bill for the purpose of abolishing plural voting, and he had moved the second reading. An amendment was moved by Mr. T. W. Russell, to the effect that it would not be just or expedient to carry out the principle of one man one vote embodied in the Bill unless the number of representatives allotted to England, Wales, Scotland, and Ireland respectively had previously been fixed in proportion to those parts of the United Kingdom, and the principle of equality of voting had been secured. When it came to a division, instead of being approved of by the House, he found that the second reading was negatived by 243 votes to 196, so that the statement as to the principle having been approved of in the old country was not correct.

Mr. POWERS: The cablegrams say it has been approved.

Mr. NELSON said there were the actual speeches made; and although some hon. members objected to the *Times*, in all his experience he had never known that the accuracy of the *Times*, as far as facts were concerned, had ever been called in question. So far as regarded their reports of the proceedings in the House of Commons—he did not know whether the hon. member for Bundanba knew it or not—but Mr. Henry Labouchere and other men who are very advanced Radicals had recorded their opinion that the reports in the *Times* were much superior to the reports in the *Hansard;* and as a matter of fact the *Hansard* of the House of Commons was largely copied from the *Times*, so that he did not see what more genuine information they could have on the subject.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: It was all electioneering after all.

Mr. NELSON: Very likely it was, and so is this now.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. NELSON said that he had tested the feeling of the people of the colony on various occasions, and, speaking for his own electorate, he could say that his constituents were decidedly opposed to it. He was sure that although there might be a little said in favour of the idea theoretically, it could not be carried out in practice, and it was not advisable to attempt to carry it out.

Mr. ANNEAR said that he had intimated the previous evening that he had felt somewhat surprised at the hon. member for Burrum bringing forward an amendment of that kind. He knew the hon. member was very much carried away by the applause he had received in this city and in other places from time to time when that question had been discussed; but he thought the hon. member would find that a meeting in the Brisbane Town Hall did not represent the feelings of the majority of the people of the colony. If it was possible to equalise the electorates, which were at present very unequal, there might be something in the contention. He would refer to Pialba, which was in the hon. member's own electorate. It was a seaside resort, twenty-one miles from Maryborough, and the Maryborough people had spent in that watering place, in land and buildings, between £80,000 and £90,000; but under the proposition of the hon. gentleman their property, which was subjected to taxation, would not be entitled to representation.

Mr. POWERS: That does not look much like electioneering though.

Mr. ANNEAR said there was no electioneering about him. When he went before his constituents they always heard what he had to say, and he thought they understood him.

Mr. POWERS: I was accused of electioneering.

Mr. ANNEAR said the present proposal was electioneering on the part of the hon. gentleman and several others with whom he worked. What the hon. member wanted was to deprive men of thrift, men of industry, who had helped to build up the colony—those men of Maryborough had spent between £80,000 and £90,000 at Pialba on property which was all subjected to taxation—what the hon. member wanted was to say that they should not be represented in that Chamber. If the hon. member's proposition were carried, their names would all be erased from the Burrum roll because most of them were resident in Maryborough. He would oppose the amendment; and he might say, after what he had seen the last eighteen months, especially in Brisbane, that if there was a general election to-morrow, he would be a determined opponent of one man one vote.

Mr. POWERS said the hon. member was not in the Chamber when he stated that the hon. member was fair enough to state last night that he was going to refer to that matter. He (Mr. Powers) said that the Maryborough people because of their number had two members, who looked after them very well; but, though the residents of Maryborough had invested money in the electorate of Burrum, they had no right to control the Burrum electorate by outvoting the residents there. He did not think they wanted to outvote the residents in the outside districts.

The HON. B. D. MOREHEAD said that when the one man one vote question was boiled down, it simply meant that a man was to bury his talent in the ground, which was condemned by Scripture. Was the man who went farther afield, and used his energies and invested his money in various ways in developing the country, to have no interest in anything outside the spot he squatted upon? In municipalities and divisions accumulated property got an accumulated vote.

Mr. GLASSEY: It is a mistake.

The HON. B. D. MOREHEAD said the hon. member might think it was a mistake; but he was simply pointing out a fact. He considered that it was quite right, too. Were the men of energy, the men who had done good to the colony, to be cut down to one vote? Because one fox had lost his tail, were all the other foxes to lose their tails also.

Mr. GLASSEY: Why should they have three or four tails?

The HON. B. D. MOREHEAD said he knew where the fox was, at any rate. The present system was consistent with the system of voting in municipalities and divisional boards, and he hoped it would be continued. He trusted that the attempt to introduce one man one vote would be defeated, because it struck at the basis of their electoral system. It was levelling down, when they ought to have an attempt to build up; and he hoped the amendment would be defeated by a large majority.

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

ADJOURNMENT.

The CHIEF SECRETARY said: Mr. Speaker,—I move that this House do now adjourn. We shall take the same business to-morrow.

Question put and passed.

The House adjourned at twenty minutes to 11 o'clock.