Queensland

Parliamentary Debates
[Hansard]

Legislative Council

TUESDAY, 13 NOVEMBER 1894

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LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

TUESDAY, 13 NOVEMBER, 1894.

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

ASSENT TO BILL.

The PRESIDENT announced the receipt of a message from the Governor, conveying His Excellency's assent to the Mercantile Act of 1867 Amendment Bill.

CRIMINAL LAW AMENDMENT BILL.

ASSEMBLY'S MESSAGE.

The PRESIDENT announced the receipt of a message, intimating that the Assembly insisted upon the insertion of the new clause substituted for clause 6 of the Bill, because it was considered that the fraudulent misappropriation of the proceeds of trust property should be punished in the same manner as the fraudulent misappropriation of trust property itself.

Message ordered to be taken into consideration to-morrow.

CO-OPERATIVE COMMUNITIES BILL.

THIRD READING.

This Bill was read a third time, passed, and ordered to be returned to the Assembly.

RABBIT BOARDS ACT OF 1891 AMENDMENT BILL.

SECOND READING.

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL: This is a Bill to amend the Rabbit Boards Act of 1891, which expires in a short time, and it is desired by this Bill to extend its operation until the end of the year 1897, and thereafter until the end of the next session of Parliament. It is recognised that the question of the rabbit incursion is one with which the colony must deal seriously, and this Bill makes provision for dealing with the danger in a more effective way than hitherto. The first provision is for the establishment of a central rabbit board in Brisbane—a board of advice or consultation, consisting of the Minister and six other members, to aid the Government in dealing with this very important question. As the matter stands now, the operation of the Act is in the hands of rabbit boards constituted in the districts adjoining New South Wales and South Australia, but it is considered that something more than that is required, and the Government propose to contribute a sum not exceeding £10,000 a year to the fund to be administered by the central board to defray the expense of maintaining the rabbit fences already erected by the Government in repair, and to ensure that the money already expended in that way shall not be wasted. The application of the funds is fully set out in clause 6. Advances to rabbit boards are provided for to a limited extent, and so that the aggregate shall not exceed a capital amount upon which the annual instalments payable under the Bill are equal to the amount actually

raised by assessments levied by the board during the preceding year. Provisions are also in the Bill to enforce the repayment of the loans made to rabbit boards. The Bill provides for an alteration in the law with regard to the representation of stockowners on rabbit boards, and repealing the 6th section of the principal Act, it is proposed to substitute fresh provisions, making more clear and equitable the voting power to which each stockowner is to be entitled. There are some other provisions with regard to the constitution of boards, the retirement of members, and the mode of election. The Bill provides that the contributions for the maintenance of rabbit fences shall be more extended than at present. It is considered desirable that not only the persons who are just on the border of the danger should contribute under the Act to the maintenance of rabbit fences, but that others who, in the opinion of the board, are benefited by the erection of these fences should also contribute. There is a further provision that any runholder dissatisfied with the decision of the rabbit board in this respect may appeal to the Land Board, whose decision shall settle the question. There are one or two minor amendments with which I need not trouble hon. gentlemen, such as giving power to include in the expenditure of a board expense incurred in travelling, as it follows as a matter of course that, unless the members and officers of a board travel to inspect the rabbit fences and the condition of the country, they will not be able effectually to carry out their work. Under section 16 there is a subsection added to section 26 of the principal Act, which provides for expenditure with the consent of the Governor in Council to defray the cost of measures taken outside of Queensland which may be conducive to the prevention of the incursion of rabbits into Queensland. That is intended to allow co-operation between ourselves and New South Wales or South Australia in dealing with the pest. Penalties are provided for leaving open gates or interfering with the security of the rabbit fences; and the last clause deals with the manner of printing the principal Act to show therein the amendments made by this Bill if it is passed. This measure, for the most part, has its foundation in the recommendations of the conference recently held in Brisbane, and the Government have availed themselves of information supplied since that conference sat. It is hoped that the provisions of this Bill will aid very materially in preventing the colony from being exposed to what I must refer to as the terrible invasion of these animals into the country. I move that the Bill be now read a second time.

The HON. A. C. GREGORY: I think this Bill is one which is framed to improve our existing legislation for dealing with the rabbit pest, and apart from details it is one which we may reasonably pass. No doubt hon. members have prepared themselves for the consideration of the details of the Bill in committee. There is only one matter which struck me as requiring modification in reading the Bill over hurriedly, and that is the provision of a penalty of £50 under the 17th section for paying a bonus or scalp money as a reward for the destruction of rabbits or for selling or exporting for sale any rabbit or rabbit skin. It may be necessary to have some such provision, but I think the Bill as it stands goes too far in this respect. Why should not a person be allowed to export tinned rabbits or rabbit skins? Under section 17 a person so doing would be liable to a penalty. There may be good reasons for the clause, but I mention the matter now as one worthy of consideration when the details of the Bill are being discussed in committee.

The HON. C. H. BUZACOTT: I do not intend to occupy the time of the House for long, but I desire to refer to clause 5, which provides that in every year there shall be paid to the central board a sum not exceeding £10,000. Though I recognise that we have no authority to alter an appropriation of this sort, it seems to me it would have been very much better if the clause had provided for such a sum as might hereafter be appropriated by Parliament. This Bill, as I understand it, provides for an arbitrary subsidy. It may be more or less than what is required, and it seems to me a very arbitrary and unnecessary provision to make when the money required might be placed upon the Estimates, and Parliament be asked to make an annual appropriation of the amount required. I consider the Bill necessary, and the amendments it proposes on the principal Act desirable. I would not begrudge £10,000 for the service, as the evil is such a terrible one, and will prove so disastrous to the interests of the colony if it gets beyond control, that almost any expense would be justified in resisting it; at the same time it would have been better if the clause had provided for an annual appropriation, as I have suggested.

The HON. W. D. BOX: I do not know very much about rabbit boards or rabbits, but to my mind the evil of this Bill is the increase in the number of boards in existence in the country. I would like to see the control of the Act under a Minister of the Crown. Under subsection 3 of clause 6 it seems to me that this new board, when it is established, will have very little power, because in dealing with the expenditure of the fund that subsection says that the fund shall be applied "generally in such manner as the Governor in Council may from time to time direct." That is to say that the board's expenditure must first be approved and passed by the Governor in Council. I cannot see the value of the second portion of clause 17. The exports of rabbit skins is of considerable value to the other colonies, and here, as the Hon. Mr. Gregory pointed out, any person exporting a rabbit, or the skin of a rabbit, will be liable to a penalty. No doubt in committee we will get an explanation of that, and I trust good reasons will be shown for it.

The HON. A. NORTON: It appears to me to be the tendency of the day to work everything by boards. That is what I do not like about this Bill. We have boards in different parts of the colony to deal with particular districts, and now a central board is to be created. I think that if this central board is to be established to work the Act the district boards ought to be abolished. If that is not done, pretty well all the money voted will be required for the expenses of working the Act. I think it fair that stockowners in a certain district should bear the cost to a certain extent of the extermination of rabbits from that district, and if the rabbits spread as they seem likely to do it is fair that other districts threatened should be required to bear a part of the cost. At the same time I hold that the owners of those runs having to pay assessment under the Rabbit Act should have the fact considered, and fully considered, by the Land Board in dealing with the rents of these runs. I know the question has been raised before that the Government, as the landlord, should bear the cost of exterminating the pest, and there is a good deal to be said on one side and the other. If this Bill is passed, and there is to be a central board as well as district boards, it may be reasonable to ask that the taxpayers generally should bear the larger share of the expense incurred, or likely to be incurred, if this Bill passes in its present form. There is no doubt some measure of the kind is required, but

we want something more than an amendment of the present legislation which will add to the expense of working the principal Act.

The HON. F. T. BRENTNALL: I agree with what has been said by some hon. members with regard to the increase of boards of various kinds in the colony. This is about as badly a board-ridden colony as you would find in the British Empire, and we are going on legislating from time to time in the same direction and adding to the expense, for presumably there will be an increase of expense. I do not suppose half a dozen gentlemen will be found to sit on a board of this kind without some adequate fee, and I see nothing in the Bill with reference to the payment of fees. The only reference to the matter is in subsection 1 of clause 6, which provides that the moneys received by the central board may be used "for defraying the necessary expenses of the administration of this Act, including the necessary travelling expenses of any officers or servants of the central board." I suppose that will cover the payment of fees. If so, we are asked to vote the second reading of a Bill for the payment of fees, which may be £1 1s., £2 2s., or even £5 5s. a sitting. We have no information whatever as to what the amount of the expenditure will be, except that there will be annually handed over to the board a sum not exceeding £10,000. It may be much less than that; but where is the provision in the Bill for the preparation of an annual balance-sheet for submission to the Government, so as to enable them to see whether the right amount of money has been expended, or has been exceeded? I should like to have seen something in the Bill controlling the expenditure, but there is nothing, except the provision I have mentioned. That is how we are asked to legislate; and I think the matter requires the attention of hon. members, because the boards already existing in the different localities know their business better than the central board can, except at a heavy outlay for travelling expenses for inspection. We ought to look this straight in the face, and consider whether we are justified in voting a sum of money like this to be dealt with absolutely at the discretion of the board. There will certainly be a Minister as chairman of the board, and presumably he will exercise some control over the expenditure, but that is only a supposition or an assumption. With regard to the second part of clause 17, looking at its surface one would decidedly pronounce it to be an absurdity. An hon. member has suggested to me that one reason why there should be a provision of this kind is that there is a possibility that some person or persons may introduce rabbits into a district for the express purpose of killing them or causing them to be killed with a view securing a bonus from the money proposed to be granted or levied on stockowners for that purpose. There might be a fraudulent act of that kind against which there should be some prohibition, but is there no possibility of providing for a fraudulent contingency of such a character without introducing such a sweeping clause as this? One can conceive that somebody may introduce rabbits for the purpose of getting rewards for destroying them, but if the object of this measure is to put down a pest which is said to be threatening largely and seriously an important staple industry of the colony, and to put it down by levying contributions for that purpose, and by paying out of the consolidated revenue a sum not exceeding £10,000 a year, why should it be a criminal offence to destroy the pest? I should think the more rabbits there are destroyed the better for the colony. If they do get in, the more rapidly they are cleared out the better. Why then should we legislate with one hand against the evil, and with the other prohibit people from privately putting down the evil against which we are legislating? I think the House is indebted to the Hon. Mr. Gregory for calling attention to this matter in the way he has done, and I should very much like to see more light thrown upon it. On the face of it it looks enigmatical that we should legislate for the destruction of rabbits and yet make it an offence punishable with a fine not exceeding £50 to destroy a single rabbit. I have heard of people clamouring for cats to destroy rabbits, but under this clause, if a man keep a cat to destroy the rabbits on his run, he may have to pay a penalty of £50 for every rabbit it destroys. The more of these rabbits we can destroy the better, and if we can turn them to account by exporting their skins or by preserving and tinning the rabbits, the more benefits we shall confer on the colony. I hope that we shall get more light on this question.

The HON. T. MACDONALD-PATERSON: I should not have risen to speak on this question were it not for an observation of the last speaker. The hon. gentleman said, "if the rabbits do get in," and I think he is about the only member who would make that remark. The rabbits are in the country, and very much in it.

The Hon. F. T. BRENTNALL: I know they are in.

The HON. T. MACDONALD-PATERSON: I give the hon. gentleman credit for knowing that they are in the colony. A friend of mine recently sent out a blackfellow and his gin on a run very well within our territory, and they brought back fifty odd rabbits in one day. The £10,000 which is proposed to be granted by this Bill will be just as efficacious for their extirpation as would the burning of a kerosene lamp in this Chamber.

The HON. T. B. CRIBB: I can see a reason for that portion of clause 17, which some hon. members have objected to. There are men called marsupial scalp-hunters, who make a living by the money they receive as bonuses for the scalps of marsupials; and if indiscreet persons were allowed to offer such a reward for the scalps or skins of rabbits as would enable men to obtain a livelihood by the destruction of rabbits it might encourage them to introduce rabbits into a district for the purpose of making a living in that way, entirely regardless of the effect their action would have on the pastoral industry. On that account I think this is a very necessary provision. The local boards are the best judges as to what is the best way of dealing with the pest, and they should be allowed to deal with it in such manner as they think proper.

Question—That the Bill be now read a second time—put and passed; and committal of the Bill made an Order of the Day for to-morrow.

FRIENDLY SOCIETIES BILL.

FIRST READING.

This Bill, received from the Assembly, was read a first time, and the second reading made an Order of the Day for Tuesday next.

SCHOOLS OF MINES BILL.

FIRST READING.

This Bill, received from the Assembly, was read a first time, and the second reading made an Order of the Day for Thursday next.

OFFICIALS IN PARLIAMENT ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

SECOND READING.

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL: This is a very short measure which is intended to remedy an inconvenience which arises in the working of

certain Acts of Parliament. One of these provides that the Treasurer shall be the Minister to deal with a particular subject which practically belongs to the work in charge of another Minister, as in the case of the Sugar Works Guarantee Act. This measure simply authorises the Governor from time to time to place on the shoulders of one Minister the duties which by some special Act had been placed on those of one of his colleagues, and the alteration which it makes in the law will be a considerable convenience in the administration of departmental affairs. I move that the Bill be now read a second time.

Question put and passed; and committal of the Bill made an Order of the Day for to-morrow.

SMALL DEBTS ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

COMMITTEE.

Clauses 1 to 4, inclusive, passed as printed.

On clause 5—"Examination of judgment debtor as to debts due to him"—

The HON. A. NORTON said he was not present when the Bill was read a second time, and he would like to remark that, while it would be very convenient to give courts of petty sessions the powers which the measure would confer on them where the magistrates were competent to do the work entrusted to them, it would not work so well in country districts, as in many cases in outside places justices gave decisions which were not exactly in accordance with law. He was afraid, therefore, that with the extended jurisdiction which it was now proposed to give them the decisions given by courts of petty sessions would, in many instances, be such as would lead to much litigation afterwards.

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL said the clause gave the court power to summon a debtor to appear before them and be examined as to debts owing to him, so that the court might levy upon those debts and recover the money for the judgment creditor. The 2nd clause extended the jurisdiction of the courts from £30 to £50, and the object of the 6th clause was to give people in country districts, more than those in towns, the means of enforcing their claims against persons whom they had obtained judgment a little more effectively than they could do at the present time. Hitherto persons who had obtained judgment in the small debts courts very often found to their great chagrin that debtors were able to defeat the judgment. While there might be exceptional cases in which justices gave decisions which were not in accordance with law, he thought that, as a rule, their decisions were correct, and if the courts had the power to attach debts due to a judgment debtor they would be able to enforce respect for their judgments.

The HON. A. NORTON admitted that the object of the Bill was a good one, and if all magistrates were thoroughly competent to decide the cases with which they would have to deal he would have no objection to it. The magistrates in towns were generally better educated than those in the country districts, and their decisions as a rule were fair and reasonable, but there were in some places justices who were uneducated—some of them could scarcely read; and it would be a misfortune if they were allowed to give decisions in cases amounting to £50. His objection was not to the Bill, but to the men who in some cases would have to decide the cases brought before the court.

Clause put and passed.

On clause 6—"Court may order an attachment of debts"—

The HON. W. D. BOX said the clause provided that the court might order an attachment of debts upon the *ex parte* application of the judgment creditor before or after the oral examination of the judgment debtor. Was the hon. gentleman satisfied that that was not too severe a provision?

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL said the proposition contained in that and subsequent clauses was exactly in accordance with the practice now adopted in other courts of the colony. The process was very simple. The judgment creditor must satisfy the court by an affidavit upon oath that to the best of his belief a certain person owed the judgment debtor a certain sum of money, and the debt would then be attached. The court would then summon the garnishee, or person who owed money to the judgment debtor, to show cause why he should not pay that debt to the registrar on behalf of the judgment debtor. The machinery was simple and effective, and had stood the test of experience for a considerable time. If steps were not taken promptly and quickly, and the judgment debtor had notice that an attempt was going to be made to attach a particular debt, he might find means of evading the process. Many instances of that kind came before persons having practice in connection with garnishee matters in their courts. Before they could attach the debt they must have the debtor examined before the court, and there were times when such an examination was of great help to the judgment creditor in receiving the amount due to him. Where it was known that a debt was due to a judgment debtor there was no need for the examination, and an application to the court for the attachment of the debt was sufficient. The other clauses dealt with cases in which the debt was disputed, and showed what was to be done in each instance.

Clause put and passed.

The remaining clauses of the Bill and the schedules were passed without amendment.

The House resumed; the Bill was reported without amendment, and the third reading made an order for to-morrow.

BRANDS ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

COMMITTEE.

The preamble was postponed.

Clause 1 put and passed.

On clause 2—"The word 'neck' omitted from definition of distinctive brand, etc., and subsection (*d*) of section 18—meaning of word 'neck'"—

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL, in reply to the Hon. T. B. Cribb, explained that the 18th section of the principal Act referred to in the clause laid down the rules for branding, and subsection (*d*) provided that the distinctive brand should be upon the neck or cheek of stock. The Bill provided that the 1st section of the principal Act, the interpretation clause, and subsection (*d*) of section 18, should be read as if the word "neck" had been omitted therefrom, and that in the interpretation or construction of the principal Act, as so amended, the word "neck" was declared to mean a portion of stock upon which ordinary brands might be imprinted in the order prescribed by the schedule. It would enable persons to put a brand on the neck if they thought fit to do so.

The HON. T. B. CRIBB said his reason for asking the explanation was that the Hon. Mr. Macansh had pointed out to him that branding a horse on the neck was very objectionable, and he was not sure whether it was necessary to amend that clause, or whether it would do to make the desired amendment in the next clause.

The HON. A. NORTON said there was not the same objection to brands on the hides of horses as on the hides of cattle, as horse hides were not often sold, unless the hides of brumbies or wild horses, which had no brands at all. A

great deal had been said about the depreciation in the value of hides through branding on parts of the body other than the neck; but there was some exaggeration about the amount they were told the country lost in that way. A butcher had told him only last week that he sold some hides without any brand, some with great sprawling brands, and some with brands on parts which damaged the hides very little, and yet if the hides were put up separately it would not make the slightest difference to the buyers. They would all bring the same price. It was right to give owners the right to brand on the neck if they chose; but so far as horses were concerned, they might be excluded from the Bill.

The HON. J. D. MACANSH did not see any necessity to amend the clause, as horses were not mentioned in it at all; but he intended to move an amendment in the next clause and another in the schedule to leave horses out of the Bill. It was most objectionable to brand horses on the neck, as no brand so disfigured a horse as a brand there. With regard to the limit of an inch and a-half for the brand, he thought the size of the brand might be left to the discretion of the owners, and it would make no difference if the brand was smaller so long as it was legible.

Clause put and passed.

On clause 3—"Same brand for horses as for cattle, and minimum length of branding-iron"—

The HON. J. D. MACANSH moved the omission of the words "both horses and" after "for," in the second last line of the clause, because he thought it should be left to the breeders of horses to put a brand on of any size they pleased. In their own interests they would put on a brand that would be distinguishable, and any brand on the neck was a disfigurement, and a large brand on any part of a horse was a disfigurement.

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL asked if the hon. gentleman held that a brand of less than an inch and a-half could be used effectively for horses and cattle?

The HON. J. D. MACANSH: Yes.

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL did not think that was the experience of all stockowners. Such brands as the figures 3, 5, and 8, if less than an inch and a-half in size, were very likely to become blotched and illegible. The object of the clause was not to make any distinction between horses and cattle, and to provide that the minimum length of a brand should be an inch and a-half. If a smaller brand was put on the result would be inconvenience to stock-owners themselves, to the police, and to brand inspectors, and confusion would be likely to arise from the blotching of brands.

The HON. J. D. MACANSH said that his amendment would not prevent owners of horses putting on a brand of three inches if they liked. Horses were usually branded as foals, and an inch and a-half brand upon a foal might grow to be two and a-half inches when the foal grew to be a horse. Owners could be trusted in their own interests to put on legible brands.

The HON. SIR A. H. PALMER said the hon. member should remember that the Bill was intended to apply to horse-stealers as well as to horse-owners. The great object in having a Branding Act at all was to put down horse and cattle stealing, and to prevent that they must have a legible brand. What was an inch and a-half brand after all? If anything, it was too small in his opinion.

The HON. J. LALOR could not agree with the Hon. Mr. Macansh. He believed the brands should be of uniform length, and an inch and a-half was not too large when one considered the difficulty of distinguishing a brand in riding through the bush, and the difficulty of putting on a smaller brand without smudging. It should not be left to the whim and fancy of every horse or stock owner to have a brand of his own with regard to size. He knew something of branding horses, and he knew of no objection to putting a distinctive brand upon the neck.

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL said that the principal Act provided that every owner of both horses and cattle should use the same brand for horses as for cattle, provided that the branding-iron used for horses should not be less than one and a-half inches and that for cattle not less than two inches in length. So what the clause now proposed was practically a reduction in the length of the iron to be used for cattle, and it made no alteration in the minimum length allowed for brands upon horses under the present Act.

Amendment put and negatived; and clause put and passed.

Clauses 4 and 5 put and passed.

On the schedule,

The HON. J. D. MACANSH moved the omission of the first part of the schedule relating to the position and order of brands on horses. His reason for the amendment was that it was most objectionable to have horses branded upon the neck at all, as it was a great disfigurement.

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL said it was perhaps a question whether a horse was disfigured more by branding on the neck than on the shoulder, but if the amendment was adopted every person could brand his horses in any way he pleased, and they would lose all the advantages which followed from requiring brands to be placed in a certain order as was done by the principal Act. They must bear in mind that the Bill was not only for the convenience of stock-breeders and owners, but also to prevent horse-stealing.

The HON. A. NORTON explained that branding on the neck gave greater facilities to horse-stealers. He knew that many breeders had the same objection as the Hon. Mr. Macansh had to branding on the neck.

The HON. SIR A. H. PALMER said he had had as much experience as any member in the House with regard to the branding of horses, and he thought the neck was a very suitable place to brand them. He was in charge of the "JPR," which were branded on the near neck when they bought the herd, consisting of 16,000 head, and they continued to brand there for years. The brand was as easily distinguishable there as on any other portion.

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL pointed out that if the amendment was carried all order in branding would be completely done away with, and the history of the breeding of a horse and its changes of ownership would be destroyed.

The HON. J. D. MACANSH said if owners could brand in any position they pleased he would withdraw his amendment.

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL said the owner or breeder of a horse would not be obliged to brand on the neck, but might brand in any position he pleased. The Bill simply substituted that schedule for schedule F of the principal Act.

Amendment, by leave, withdrawn; and schedule put and passed.

The House resumed; the CHAIRMAN reported the Bill without amendment, and the third reading was made an Order of the Day for to-morrow.

ACCLIMATISATION LANDS BILL.

COMMITTEE.

The House, in committee, agreed to the preamble and several clauses of this Bill without amendment.

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

PAYMENT OF MEMBERS BILL.

SECOND READING.

The HON. W. BROOKES: It may be known to some, but not to all hon. members, that I have undertaken to move the second reading of this Bill with the consent of the hon. gentleman whose name was first attached to it. I have not sought the duty, but have been asked to undertake it, though I certainly wish it had fallen upon some one else rather than myself. The Bill has attracted a good deal of notice outside, has been commented upon by the Press, and has been the subject of discussion among the citizens generally all through the colony. The subject with which it deals can hardly be touched without touching another subject which lies very deep down, forming part of the foundations of the power of this House. I will put it in the form of a question. It is this: Has this House the power to deal with a Bill coming from another place, the main object of which is money? I myself hold the opinion that this House is not competent to deal with such a measure—that the will of the other House is the supreme law. The Bill before us comes to us from the other House, and it was not passed there hastily. It was discussed at great length in all its various bearings, and I consider that the decision arrived at is one with which this Chamber cannot interfere. It may be just as well to know that this matter of the power of the two Houses is one that has engaged attention in other places besides this colony. The people generally desire a more accurate definition of the powers of each House; and in England, to which we may occasionally go for instruction, there is at the present time, and has been for some time past, a discussion going on, which is growing in importance, and which seems to tend to the one conclusion—that the House of Commons will not tolerate having its financial matters rediscussed and rejected by the House of Lords. The final decision has not been arrived at yet, but it is certainly in the air, and many years will not elapse before the House of Lords will have to clearly understand in practice what has always been clearly understood in theory—namely, that in financial matters the House of Commons is the supreme judge, and that the House of Lords cannot interfere in any shape or form. There is an opinion in process of formation in this colony that the other Chamber should be free to choose for itself in financial matters. That may seem to some members here to be an extreme position, but I respectfully submit to them that it is not so extreme as it appears. Every member of the other Chamber represents a constituency, and it is for a constituency to approve or blame the conduct of its member; to his constituents he is responsible. We have no constituents. Our existence has its origin in various sources, and none of the sources of power which hon. members possess in this House is one of political life; and I maintain, with some degree of confidence, that our right to interfere with financial matters which have been decided upon by the other Chamber is *nil*, and will be acknowledged to be nothing by the great body of the people of the colony. Therefore I trust that this Bill will not be hastily set aside. Let us have a fair discussion upon it, and let no irrelevant matter be imported into the discussion. The question is not whether it was wise for members of the other Chamber to increase their own salaries. That is a question with which we have nothing whatever to do. If they choose to do it they can. We may have a critical power, but a legislative power we certainly have not. We shall, I trust, hear a variety of opinions on the matter, and, without trespassing further on the time of the House, I shall conclude by expressing a hope that the discussion will be moderate and not calculated to excite any warmth of unpleasant feeling either among ourselves or among members of the other Chamber. I beg to move that the Bill be now read a second time.

The HON. A. C. GREGORY: I move that the debate be now adjourned.

Question put and passed; and the resumption of the debate made an order for to-morrow.

The House adjourned at half-past 5 o'clock.