

Queensland



Parliamentary Debates
[Hansard]

Legislative Assembly

FRIDAY, 23 NOVEMBER 1894

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FRIDAY, 23 NOVEMBER, 1894.

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

QUESTIONS.

LAND FOR SELECTION.

Mr. MURRAY asked the Secretary for Lands—

1. Is it the intention of the Government to throw open additional areas of land for general selection throughout the colony?

2. If so, what lands will be thrown open for selection in the Central division of the colony, and when will such lands be proclaimed?

The SECRETARY FOR LANDS (Hon. A. H. Barlow) replied—

1. Yes.

2. Exact areas are not yet defined, but will consist of best grazing lands in various parts of the division. Will be proclaimed open to selection in January next.

ADDITIONAL SITTING DAY.

On the motion of the PREMIER (Hon. H. M. Nelson), it was resolved—

That the House, at its rising, do adjourn until Monday next, at 3 o'clock p.m. and that Government business do take precedence on that day.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION.

Mr. ANNEAR: Before proceeding to the Orders of the Day, I request the permission of the House to make a personal statement with regard to a report in the *Telegraph* of a speech delivered by the hon. member for Toowong this morning, in which the hon. member referred to myself. The report says—

“Mr. Reid informed the House that the permanent Chairman, in an interview with him”—

which makes it appear that I went to seek an interview with the hon. member—

“agreed to resume the chair in ten minutes. He had not done so, and his (Mr. Reid's) belief was that he had been prevented from keeping his word.”

The facts are these. The hon. member for Toowong came to me at the top of the stairs and said, “Are you going to take the chair?” I said, “Yes.” Whether the time was named or not, I am not certain. A few minutes after the hon. member spoke to me, I came into the Chamber and took my seat on a chair outside the bar. I found then that a motion was before the Committee that Mr. Stephens, the Acting Chairman, leave the chair; and after sitting there for a few minutes I heard Mr. Stephens most grossly insulted, and I thought it would have been a piece of cowardice on my part to take the chair at that moment.

The SPEAKER: Order! The hon. member can make a personal explanation, but he must confine himself to that.

Mr. ANNEAR: That is all I have to say. That is the reason I did not take the chair—because a motion was before the Committee that Mr. Stephens leave the chair. I heard the Acting Chairman insulted, and did not intend to insult him further.

Mr. REID: With the permission of the House, I should like to say a few words.

The SPEAKER: There is no question before the House. It is only by the pleasure of the House that the hon. member can be heard.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. REID: I should like to say that I said the same to the House that the Chairman has said. The *Telegraph* report is incorrect. I think hon. members will bear me out in that. I did not say an “interview.” I said I had seen the Chairman, and he promised to come back into the chair. As to the Chairman's other statement, there is no necessity to refer to it.

ORDER OF BUSINESS.

On the first Order of the Day—Land Grant Railways Repeal Bill—being called,

Mr. HAMILTON said: I move that the consideration of all the Orders of the Day, general business, be postponed until after the disposal of general business, notice of motion No. 1.

Mr. GRIMES: I take this opportunity of objecting to the constant alteration of our business-paper. It is getting so notorious that members of the House know not when the business they are particularly interested in is coming up for discussion. We have important matters on the paper, and I know of several members who have laid themselves out to discuss the Orders of the Day this afternoon. This Order of the Day was postponed last Thursday for the purpose of getting at a matter lower down on the paper. I think it is not fair to members, and it does not add to the orderly discussion of the business to have these constant postponements.

Mr. FISHER: The second item—Electoral Reform Bill—is one that has stood on the paper since the opening of Parliament; and although I put the first item on the paper, I gave way to the second, which I consider of more importance than the first. Although I desire to see the first motion disposed of, I did not think there would be any opposition to its postponement. Hon. members have had a clear intimation, as I took care to advise the proper parties of the fact.

Question put; and the House divided:—

In division,

Mr. ARMSTRONG said: I wish to know, Mr. Speaker, whether I am entitled to record my vote on this question. I paired last night with the hon. member for Toowoomba, Mr. Groom, and I had forgotten all about it when the division was called on this motion.

The SPEAKER: I have no idea what the nature of the pair is.

Mr. ARMSTRONG: On the motion of the hon. member for Cook respecting payment of members.

The SPEAKER: A pair is purely a matter of private arrangement, and the hon. member must satisfy himself as to whether he is doing right in recording his vote.

Mr. ARMSTRONG: Then, as this division is not on the substantive motion of the hon. member for Cook, I presume my vote may be recorded.

Division declared:—

AYES, 21.

Messrs. G. Thorn, McDonald, Ogden, Kerr, Hamilton, Reid, Hardacre, Wilkinson, Jackson, Leahy, Dawson, Boles, Turley, Browne, Rawlings, Dunsford, Powers, Murray, King, Fisher, and Morgan.

NOES, 19.

Messrs. Nelson, Archer, Philp, Byrnes, Barlow, Smith, Armstrong, Stephens, Watson, Callan, Thomas, Grimes, Phillips, McMaster, Kingsbury, Chataway, Morehead, Annear, and Fogarty.

Resolved in the affirmative.

PAYMENT OF MEMBERS.

SPECIAL APPROPRIATION.

Mr. HAMILTON, in moving—

That this House will, at its next sitting, resolve itself into a Committee of the Whole to consider of an Address to the Governor praying that His Excellency will be pleased to cause to be placed upon the Supplementary Estimates of 1894-95, the sum of six thousand four hundred pounds to provide the additional sum of one hundred pounds each, payable monthly, to the unofficial members of the Legislative Assembly, such payments to be made to the 30th June, 1895—

said: I will not take up the time of the House in discussing the matter at this stage. I did not put the notice on the paper until I had a promise from the Premier that we should have Monday for its discussion. On that condition I gave the notice.

The PREMIER: I am rather surprised to hear the hon. member say that I promised to give him Monday for the discussion of this question, especially as the motion carried a short time ago makes Monday a day on which Government business takes precedence of all other business. I am not going to interfere with hon. members who want to vote this money for themselves. I know very well it will come to nothing; no result can accrue from it. I would simply draw attention to the wording of the resolutions, which means that every member is to get £100 per month up to the 30th June, 1895.

Mr. HAMILTON, in reply: I see very clearly that it can be read that way; but whenever two constructions can be put upon an expression the sensible construction is always to be put upon it.

The Hon. B. D. MOREHEAD: Which is the sensible one?

Question put; and the House divided:—

AYES, 24.

Messrs. Powers, Drake, Fisher, King, Fogarty, Boles, Dunsford, Dawson, Browne, Rawlings, Turley, O'Connell, Leahy, Jackson, Reid, Hardacre, Morgan, Bell, Hamilton, Kerr, McDonald, Wilkinson, G. Thorn, and Ogden.

NOES, 17.

Messrs. Nelson, Barlow, Archer, Philp, Byrnes, Smith, Morehead, Thomas, Grimes, McMaster, Callan, Stevens, Kingsbury, Watson, Crombie, Cameron, and Annear.

Resolved in the affirmative.

RAILWAYS CONSTRUCTION ACT REPEAL BILL.

POSTPONEMENT.

On the Order of the Day being read for the second reading of this Bill,

Mr. FISHER: I move that this Order of the Day be postponed until Friday, 30th November.

Mr. GRIMES: I rise to object to this postponement. This motion has already been postponed twice, and if the hon. member is not prepared to go on with it he should remove it from the business-paper.

Mr. FISHER: I am prepared to go on with it, but I think there is more important business.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: In connection with this particular order the hon. gentleman has treated us to speeches on the measure, and we have even had a division as to whether the Bill should be brought in. I agree with the hon. member for Oxley that the hon. member should either go on with the Bill or withdraw it. A member of the Labour party has come to the Government to try to get an opportunity to discuss a motion he is most anxious to have discussed. Other members are in the same position, and they are blocked because the paper is cumbered with things like this. This and other motions on the paper which are not to be proceeded with should be swept off the paper, and members who have real business to discuss should be allowed to go on with it.

Mr. REID: They would have been swept off long ago if you had not talked them out.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: It is entirely untrue that I have talked anything out.

Question put and passed.

ELECTORAL REFORM BILL.

SECOND READING—RESUMPTION OF DEBATE.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: I am called upon unexpectedly to resume the debate on this question.

Mr. DUNSFORD: This is the fourth day you have been at it.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: We have been treated this afternoon to a little instructive interlude showing the relative value which some members place upon certain measures before the House. At the last general election the one most important question with the so-called Labour party was that the Land Grant Railway

Act should be repealed. Hon. members have now shown that they consider that of secondary importance compared with this disordered Bill, and they have also shown that the proposal to vote themselves another £100 a year is with them of more importance than either, and of more importance than any other business on the paper. In resuming my remarks on this Bill I desire to make a personal explanation, necessitated not only by the interjections made this afternoon but by what has appeared in the public Press. It has been stated in one paper, which carries no weight with any but those who swallow it, and which grossly maligns the noble name of "Worker," that I have talked this measure out. A statement something similar was repeated in other portions of the Press. It was stated that I spoke for three hours on this particular question. That is perfectly untrue. It is unfortunate that my speech was divided into three parts, but I have counted up the amount of time I occupied, and find that I spoke for an hour and a-half. When it is considered that my speech was interrupted by breaks of that sort, and that I was subjected to a fusillade of interjections throughout, I do not think that is one whit too much to deal with what the hon. member for Burke in melodramatic tone calls "a most important subject." I have previously said that I hoped to finish on the last occasion when I spoke, and so I did. I hope that I shall be permitted to finish on this occasion. On the question of giving the franchise to women the proceedings in this House during the last two days have been very instructive, because, although the matter does not find a place in the member for Burke's Bill, still, to be consistent, which the hon. member is not, besides giving the franchise to women he should provide that they shall be eligible to be members of Parliament. The proceedings of the last two nights are a strong commentary on the wisdom of giving women a seat in Parliament, because while attempting to pass measures for the good of the country we were kept in the House until such an hour in the morning that no respectable woman should be abroad. Considering the lassitude that has evidently overtaken hon. members, and the great indifference they have shown to a most important subject by postponing it to enable something in which they have a pecuniary interest to be brought on, I do not feel disposed to address myself very much to hon. members on the other side of the House, and there is no necessity to address myself to members on this side, because I trust that in their wisdom they have already made up their minds with regard to the vital principles of the Bill. When I was dealing with this subject previously, I had to be somewhat discursive on account of the discursive nature of the subject and the amount of ground traversed by the mover and other hon. members who spoke on the question. As I said before, the onus rests on the hon. member for Burke of proving that this matter is one of necessity. Because a great many people ask for a thing and a great many acquiesce in it, that does not add any weight one way or the other.

Mr. TURLEY: What about a number of people asking for the repeal of the Civil Service superannuation scheme?

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: In that case the majority who were interested in the matter asked for it, and if the majority of women ask for the franchise they certainly must get it; but the fact that a lot of people want to pose as reformers and parade themselves before the world as political innovators gives no validity to the request that they may prefer. There are some people who genuinely believe that giving women a vote would bring about a great improvement in the political world. There are some people

who are indifferent to the subject, but because it has been tried elsewhere they have no objection to its being tried here; and there are some people who take up everything that is new, thinking that they have an opportunity of earning political eminence by following in the footsteps of others who have been first in the field in a particular thing. The hon. member for Burke, the hon. member for Maryborough, and other hon. members who think with them in this branch of politics, think that this is a most important matter. It is a very funny thing that until three or four years ago Australia seemed to have got on very well without this particular matter being discussed at all. We have also heard that one man one vote is absolutely essential—that the political millennium cannot arrive until that is conceded. I remember being in Victoria when a much fiercer agitation swept the country, and more revolutionary projects were cast over the land, than have ever been heard of in Queensland. That was when Sir Graham Berry was a second time Premier of the colony. All sorts of political reforms were spoken of, but we never heard of one man one vote. Nothing was heard of that until that distinguished statesman, Sir George Grey, advocated it. Since then someone has gone one better, and, instead of one man one vote, proposes that it should be one person one vote. If the proposals in this Bill were passed, they might very soon be outstripped by someone who would go for something else. I saw the political programme of a very distinguished gentleman in Queensland who, at the last general election, attempted to re-enter political life. He went much further than the hon. member for Burke, and it is a good thing for that hon. member that that gentleman was prevented from re-entering political life, for if he had the hon. member's programme would have been completely outstripped. That gentleman proposed annual parliaments, a Ministry elected every six months by the House, and, in addition to these, there was to be the referendum. I suppose that even if those matters were conceded we should be asked for something more, but, after all, they are not the solution of any difficulty. The trouble of the world, I believe, is that the great mass of the people are not sufficiently well off; that they are not sufficiently endowed with this world's goods, and an attempt has been made to bring it about that there should be a more equal distribution of the world's wealth. That is what the whole of the schemes proposed really amount to. If this Bill were carried in its entirety, would one person in the community be one whit better off? If woman was given a vote, what would be the result? She would be loaded with more responsibility than she has at present, and brought into work for which her past training and her physical frame of mind do not eminently fit her. What, after all, would be the practical result? It would be nil. I ask is that what the country seeks? Is that to be the answer to the riddles which are perpetually being propounded, and have been propounded for ages, as to how the world's work is to be carried on with the least suffering and with a more equal distribution of the world's wealth? This is merely trifling with the subject. I have no doubt that the public for a time are hoodwinked by schemes of this sort. What is called the "Advanced Party" in the Australian colonies has a programme as long as my arm. It goes back a thousand years, and includes matters, under other names, which have been exploded elsewhere. But, supposing they were all conceded, what practical result would there be? Even if the result were spoliation, and I do not say that would be the result—even if by violent means, by the force of legislation, the people

who had money were to be deprived of that money, and it were redistributed, what would be the net result? After a few years the old state of things would revive again. I must trespass again upon the ground of the hon. member for Mackay, and refer to that episode in the world's history known as the French Revolution. During that revolution all these things were tried, and no doubt a great many people lost their heads, in a literal sense as well as in a figurative sense. A great many people were stripped of their wealth, and what was the result? After a million human lives had been sacrificed, besides those who fell on the battle field, as the greatest historians have shown, by the scaffold, starvation, and insurrection, what was the net result? Tyranny; and the whole population shut up in barracks from which they have never emerged. Granting all those reforms and the whole political programme which we see advertised weekly in the *Worker*, and hear repeated by certain hon. members, were carried out, there would be no beneficial result. Nothing would be added to the world's happiness, even if the deleterious effects upon womenkind and the injurious effects upon mankind, which I contend would ensue, did not come to pass. I say the result would be nothing; and yet we are asked to spend time in discussing a matter of this sort. We are asked that what they call constitutional change should be preferred to every other reform throughout the country. If hon. members opposite really have the interests of the class they claim to represent at heart they will see that political change will not be the measure that will bring about any redress whatever. I know that in this matter, as in other matters, those hon. members look to the island colony called New Zealand.

Mr. TURLEY: Not necessarily.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: Very largely; but when we were dealing with a measure for the purchase of agricultural land they conveniently shut their eyes and turned the other way. In subjects of political reform they are very fond of looking to that island. This matter of women's suffrage is being tried there, and we cannot say yet what the result will be. There are also some other experiments being tried there that are strongly advocated by the same class of men who advocate this thing. But what has been the result? There is not the slightest doubt that there is a large exodus of population from New Zealand, and why? Because an exodus of population always follows upon an exodus of capital. Capital was hunted out of that colony by unjust legislation and absolute violence. If you have gold in the land you attract population from every part of the world; and if you have capital, which need not necessarily be under the ground, you attract population. I say this by way of illustration. It is very poor policy to try rash experiments in this colony, and the world's experience in these matters is very limited. America has been referred to, but the bulk of evidence there is against this proposal. Of course, as I have said, novelty always attracts a certain class of men, the same as a bauble attracts a baby.

An HONOURABLE MEMBER: Or a politician.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: Yes, some politicians—glittering baubles, a mess of pottage, or whatever you may call it. It may be that during the course of this discussion I have attempted at times to enliven the tedium of debate by an occasional sally, but, apart from all that, I feel seriously upon the subject. I may be entirely wrong, but I have the courage to express my convictions, hoping at the same time that if the matter is conceded my conclusions may turn out to be entirely erroneous. We are dealing with a great constitutional change,

and I am opposed to this particular form of constitutional change. If it does come about, I, like every other good citizen, will loyally accept it and try to make it work as efficaciously for the colony as possible. If this change were conceded, I should not have the slightest hesitation in trying to woo the suffrages of the female electors, although I may have done my best to prevent them having that suffrage.

Mr. LEAHY: You might have a lady for a colleague.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: A man might do a great deal worse than that. If ladies get into the House, there is nothing in the Officials in Parliament Act limiting the number of my lady colleagues. There might be a lady as Prime Minister; in fact, all the Ministry might be ladies, although I expect that if the Prime Minister were a lady she would be the only lady in the Ministry. When one has been up night after night the lighter vein gets worked out, and one takes a more gloomy view of things. A great number of people are very apathetic upon this subject, and do not think sufficiently about it. If you tell them the world will be lost without women's suffrage, they will merely say, "Well, give them votes, and give us peace." If you worry people enough you will get anything out of them.

Mr. TURLEY: You don't get much out of the Government by worrying them.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: I have not much more to say, but I wish I could knock out some of the nonsensical ideas that prevail in the minds of some hon. members opposite. I am afraid I have failed, because I can see that the mind of the hon. member for Gympie is made up, and I could not change it if I talked for a week. What this country is asking for is not political change, but rest and peace and quiet, and an opportunity to develop its resources. No doubt it is a very bad thing not to have wealth well distributed; but it is far better that there should be wealth in the country badly distributed than that there should be no wealth in the country at all. Speaking from a material point of view, we should take care to do nothing to plunge the country into a constitutional agitation and bring about internecine strife when our best energies should be devoted to the general development of its wealth. But there is another aspect of the question. The hon. member for Burke has touched with a sacrilegious hand something that should be sacred from politics. It has been said by a distinguished writer that we cannot prevent the devil from misquoting the sacred Book or the fool from misunderstanding it. Now we are asked that the most sacred subject in the world should be dragged into the turmoil of political life. I have protested against this; I have spoken against it, and I shall certainly vote against it; and as far as Queensland is concerned, though Governments may come and go, though men may have one vote or fifty, though Parliaments may last three, five, or ten years, I hope that women will always exercise a higher function than she could in this House as a representative or outside an elector. The most general advocates of this reform say that political life requires purifying, and that it can be done by the introduction of a large body of female electors. I believe in parliamentary institutions standing high in the opinion of the people; but there is great danger, when people think that Parliament can bring about everything, that they will expect Parliament to do what they themselves only can do. And when they find that they cannot get from Parliament what they expected, they will be inclined to discredit parliamentary institutions and bring about the establishment of a tyranny. I believe the power of woman for doing good is

unlimited; but I say that if woman is brought into the political arena parliamentary institutions will suffer, and the power of woman as the regenerator of man will also suffer. I look upon it as a dangerous experiment. Now, let me direct myself to a practical aspect of the question. Suppose women were enfranchised to-morrow, we should also have to provide for a redistribution of seats. If we double the number of electors we must take notice of the fact that the new electors reside in variable proportions throughout the country, and we must see that the electorates fairly represent the voting power of the country, especially as the hon. member includes in this Bill the equalisation of voting power to the extent of saying that a voter shall have one vote and not more than one. If the proposal of the hon. member for Burke were adopted we should have to consider whether there would not have to be a fresh carving out of electorates, so that the same number of persons might have the same power to elect members to represent them in this House.

MR. TURLEY: Which they have not got now.

THE ATTORNEY-GENERAL: The present system is not founded on the basis that 1,000 people are to return one member, and no more than one; it is founded on the same basis as the British Constitution—namely, the representation of localities, and not the representation of mere numbers. Seeing that there must be a redistribution of seats in the event of the equalisation of voting power, I ask the hon. member for Burke, as a Northern member, how the North would fare in the redistribution. The town of Croydon, being a settled place, would fare better than the electorate of Burke; but in Croydon the proportion of women is smaller than in a place like Brisbane, and the result of an equalisation of votes, with the consequent redistribution of seats, would be that the North would suffer tremendously, while the West would be almost entirely disfranchised. The hon. member, while making provision for doubling the voting power, is lacking in an essential matter of detail, because he should also make provision for an equitable distribution of voting power. Therefore, I say this Bill cannot be treated from a practical, but merely from an academical point of view. The omission of all reference to a matter of such vast importance condemns the wisdom of the introducer of the Bill. It is such an admission that it is hardly worth while going on with the serious discussion of the Bill until the hon. gentleman tells us what he intends to do in that respect. I do not intend to say very much more on the subject. I believe it has been shown that there are such defects in the Bill as to justify us in rejecting it, or sending it back until its author has consulted with his friends and his draftsman, whoever he may be, or at any rate until he has learned that there are much more important things to be considered than the giving telegraph boys and railway porters and people of that sort the power to stuff ballot-boxes. The hon. member, by omitting a thing that must have occurred to him as a practical man, stands self-condemned. Of course it is open to hon. members to say this is a mere matter of detail; but when an hon. member brings forward such a drastic change he should be prepared for all those matters that are absolutely consequential upon the introduction of the new principle he proposes. I point that out so that if the Bill should get into committee—if the House in its wisdom decides that women should get the franchise—provision may be made for giving the political equality which is aimed at by the hon. member who introduced the Bill—so that the new class of voters may be given the same voting power which is given to the

present electors. I am opposed to the Bill entirely apart from matters of detail. I believe that its result would be injury not only to the body politic but to the women themselves. I believe, as was said by the American governor, that women can show their power in a thousand ways better than at the caucus, the convention, and the poll; and I think hon. members will agree with me that the functions of women are immeasurably superior to the functions and the moral conduct of the ordinary electors of the country. Instead of this new power elevating woman, it will cause her to sink to the level of man. I hope that the women of this country will cast on one side the pernicious gift that is being offered to them, because it is one that they would find extremely prejudicial to their higher interests. I do hope that whatever occurs in this country—if Parliaments come or Parliaments go—or whatever Ministry may prevail, or whatever form of politics may be introduced, that women will colour those politics through their representatives, and that they will abstain from them, reserving themselves for their higher functions in watching over the fountains of life, and going with infinite solicitude through all the worries and distresses of life in future as they have done in the past. I cannot support the hon. member, as I think it is bad in principle and defective in detail.

MR. JACKSON: If I thought there was any chance of a division being taken on this question, I should not have risen to make any remarks; but this is the first opportunity I have had during the two sessions I have been in this House of expressing my opinions on electoral reform. I do not presume to think that I can introduce any fresh arguments. The subject has been very well thrashed out, not only this session but last session and in the public prints. Perhaps the utmost I can do is to put some of the arguments in a fresh light. We have had some very lengthy speeches from the other side; and if lengthy speeches could kill electoral reform, it would be both dead and buried by now; but I believe that in spite of lengthy speeches that electoral reform will live and prevail in Queensland, and that the time is not far distant when we will have an extension of the franchise in the direction indicated in this Bill. The hon. member who introduced the Bill deserves to be complimented for the able manner in which he moved the second reading. The Bill deals with three very important points. I shall not attempt to go into details, as some hon. members on the other side, and particularly the Secretary for Lands, have done. The main principles embodied in the Bill are the extension of the suffrage to what are called nomads—that is, the miners and the bushmen of the West, who under the present electoral laws are unable to qualify themselves for a vote; it also provides for the extension of the suffrage to women, and for the abolition of the property vote. There are many details in the Bill, one or two of which I am not in favour of, but they can be dealt with should the Bill get into committee. President Lincoln's opinion has been quoted. I should be inclined to say that every adult white British subject should be entitled to the franchise. We do not contend to reform politics on the ground of common humanity. I believe that the junior member for Charters Towers, when speaking on the motion of the hon. member for Maryborough last session, took up that standpoint; but it is open to many objections. Hon. members on the other side have quoted aliens and kanakas. We object to them on the ground that their civilisation is different to ours. We object to them because they are not liable to share the burdens of the State the same as British subjects—I refer to the fact that they cannot be

called upon to defend the country. Hon. members opposite oppose woman suffrage on the ground that women are not liable to defend the country. When the hon. member for Mackay spoke he referred to Herbert Spencer, and quoted from many eminent writers in support of his contention. I think the principal if not the only objection that Herbert Spencer has to woman suffrage is that women do not share the burdens of the State in the same way as men—that they are not liable to be called upon to use the sword in defence of the country. Yesterday I happened to have my attention drawn to an article by Lady Henry Somerset, in the *North American Review*, which is well worth reading. Lady Henry Somerset makes very short work of that objection. She says that if women are not called upon to bear arms they are called upon to bear children. That is a much more important function than their bearing arms. However, I shall refer to this question further on. I will speak just now in support of the extension of the suffrage to nomads. The argument against giving a vote to nomads is that they have no responsibility. I say if you give those men a vote you will make them responsible individuals, and I contend that moderation and responsibility always go together. The result of not giving them votes is to cause a great deal of dissatisfaction amongst that class. I think it was John Stuart Mill who said that, under any system of Government, when people have no votes and no chance of getting votes you will either turn them into permanent malcontents, or make them a people who take no interest in the affairs of the State. That is distinctly true. Now, our Western bushmen and miners are too independent a class of men to be turned into people who take no interest in the affairs of the State. They are therefore certain to be turned into malcontents. There was one argument the hon. member for Mackay used which was so fallacious that I was surprised that an hon. gentleman of his ability should use it. He argued that the multiplication of votes did not tend to the elevation of the characters of the people, and he drew a ridiculous parallel between America and Switzerland. He said, "Here is Switzerland, a very well-governed country, although with very few electors; and here is America with a large population, and not so well governed as Switzerland." The comparison should not have been between the numbers of the population in each particular country. It should have been between the electoral systems, and even then the habits and customs of the people should be taken into account. The hon. member did not point that out. I am quite ready to admit that Switzerland is a well-governed country. There the Federal Government pays the secretary of the General Labour Federation. I think the hon. member, if he came forward with a proposition of that sort in Queensland, to pay the general secretary of the Australian Labour Federation out of State funds, would get a good deal of support from this side of the House. I contend that the extension of the suffrage will tend to the elevation of the character of the people. We know that political power confined in the hands of a few tends to the advantage of the few. Political power in the hands of the many will tend to the advantage of the many. I have quoted Herbert Spencer, and I shall now refer to another statement that he makes; I am not referring now to woman suffrage. Many people believe with Herbert Spencer that no faculty will grow except by its use. The function of any organ will never be developed unless it is used. For instance, a muscle by contraction and expansion will develop, and in the same way the brain will develop by conceiving and thinking.

Therefore I say if we wish to develop the faculties of the people we should extend the privilege of the franchise to every adult in the community. Herbert Spencer also lays down this doctrine—in fact, it runs, I think, all through his writings—that every individual in the community is entitled to the full exercise of his faculties compatible with the privileges of every other person. That is the principle that we are arguing upon. I have not heard the contention that those men and women for whom we ask a vote are not educated sufficiently to exercise it. But, if that argument is used, I can quote the Right Hon. Mr. Bryce, who stated, and history bears out his statement, that men have not been given the franchise because they are sufficiently instructed to exercise it, but they were given the franchise and given the means of instruction afterwards. I have dealt so far in favour of the argument for the extension of the suffrage to men. I may now devote a little time to the question of woman suffrage. The senior member for Mackay and the Attorney-General devoted the largest part of their speeches to attacking the question of woman suffrage. I am quite as ready to admit as those hon. gentlemen that there are a great many defects in woman's character.

MR. DALRYMPLE: We never said so

MR. JACKSON: I think the hon. gentleman did say so.

MR. DALRYMPLE: Quite the contrary. I said they were perfect.

MR. JACKSON: I understood the hon. gentleman to refer to those characteristics of women that are peculiarly their characteristics as an objection to giving them the suffrage. He said women were guided more by emotion than by reason. I agree with him. He said that women were narrower in their views than men, and were subject to religious fanaticism. I believe most of those statements are fairly correct. I believe myself that women worship power and authority more than men do. They are swayed more by authority, no matter whether social, political, or ecclesiastical, than men are. But I do not think those objections are sufficient to warrant us in refusing them the franchise. In fact, I believe they are the best arguments why we should give them the franchise, extend their faculties, and enable them to take a proper view of matters that affect themselves and their children. I will not attempt to mention the defects of man's character—defects that men, if they are honest, will own up to. If we trace back those defects of character we shall find that they probably owe their origin to the way in which men have treated women in the past. Herbert Spencer himself says the refusal to give women full political rights is a remnant of savagery; and I believe that it is owing to the way women have been kept down in the past that they have those defects which hon. members opposite have referred to; and we should certainly, if we were fair, never think of throwing those things up in the faces of women. There is no doubt that what I have said with regard to the way women have been treated in the past is quite true. They have never been recognised as equals. The Aryans never treated women on any footing of equality except when they shared in the dangers of war. The primitive and the early Britons never recognised them as equals. They had the life and death power over women in those days. Women were bought and sold as slaves—very much in the way the aborigines of Australia treat their wives at the present time. All who have had experience among them know that the aborigines claim to have power of life and death over their wives. If a blackfellow kills his gin there is no danger

of any of his own tribe interfering with him. The only danger he has to fear is from the tribe to which his wife belonged. As nations developed from the militant type to the industrial type, the position of women got better, until we find that at the present day, if we except the privilege of the suffrage, they are on fairly equal terms with men. There is another objection that Spencer has urged against giving women a vote. I mentioned a short time ago that his principal objection against giving women a vote was because they did not share in the dangers of the defence of the country. But he urges another objection, which I will quote. I do not think it will have very much weight in these socialistic days. I may point out, before I read the quotation, that the defects of character I have noted already will influence women in a conservative direction. Women are more influenced by custom than men are; and there is no doubt, if we take those things into consideration, the influence of women will be in favour of conservatism, as I think the hon. member for Mackay pointed out in his speech. But women have another side to their character which will be in opposition to this, so I think, on the whole, their influence will be in favour of a moderate liberal policy. Even if we believe their influence would go against the Labour party, I do not think the Labour party would object to giving women a vote. We are not here to consider the effect any particular action will have on our success. We are here to do what we believe right, no matter what effect that action may have in the future. Spencer says—

"It is in the nature of women, as a concomitant of their maternal functions, to yield benefits not in proportion to deserts, but in proportion to the absence of deserts—to give most where capacity is least."

Again, he says—

"The preference for generosity over justice, combined with power worship, would increase ability of public agencies to override industrial rights in the pursuit of what were thought beneficent ends."

This objection, I say, would not weigh very much with people of a socialistic turn of mind. Mr. Goschen some time ago said that economics had been in the past discussed without reference to emotionality, but that now emotionality was being discussed or considered without reference to economics. I think that at the present time a little emotionality introduced into our politics would do very little harm. But I am not sure that there is so much in this remark of Spencer's as he wishes to make out. I happened to come across an article the other day in one of the reviews, and the evidence rather contradicts this theory of Herbert Spencer's. It was evidence given in connection with the London Charity Organisation Society, and it seems to prove that women are more unsympathetic than men with the cases they have to deal with. The writer says—

"The explanation of this anomaly seems to be that when the finer feelings are put under restraint, as must be in the administration of charity, women come more completely than men under the letter of rigid precepts."

Mr. OGDEN : Do you support that quotation ?

Mr. JACKSON : At first I was rather inclined to take up Spencer's view of the case—that women were inclined to be more charitable than men in cases where perhaps the people did not deserve to have charity bestowed upon them; but when I came across that quotation it somewhat staggered my belief in the theory Spencer lays down. But I say this : That we should not make it as a charge against women because they are inclined to be more merciful than men, which I think is a noble trait in their character; for they do not, when a case of hardship or poverty comes before them, begin to inquire as to

whether that person has brought that misery on himself by his own actions. Most of us remember what Portia, in the "Merchant of Venice," says with regard to mercy. She says—I hope the House will excuse me if I take up their time in giving the quotation—

"The quality of mercy is not strain'd;
It droppeth as the gentle rain from heaven
Upon the place beneath. It is twice bless'd;
It blesseth him that gives and him that takes:
'Tis mightiest in the mightiest; it becomes
The thronéd monarch better than his crown.

It is an attribute to God himself;
And earthly power doth then show likest God's,
When mercy seasons justice."

I therefore think we should not level an accusation against women that they are inclined to be less merciful than men are. There is another objection of considerable force which was made by the Attorney-General this afternoon, and it is the only objection there is very much in. That is the question of one vote one value. There is some force in it, but I do not think it is unanswerable. The hon. member for Maryborough pointed out that in South Australia they have one man one vote and at the same time unequal electoral systems. I cannot see that it follows that we should have equal electoral systems because we ask for one adult one vote. The argument is as if a doctor said to a man, "I cannot cure you of the toothache, because there is something the matter with your liver." We should cure one disease though we cannot cure the other. The Attorney-General did not scare me with his remarks as to what would happen to the North with one adult one vote. City electorates have many advantages over country electorates. They are represented by different organisations, such as chambers of commerce, which can bring greater influence to bear upon Parliament than country electorates can. Therefore I do not see that it follows that we should have members in proportion to the number of people resident in the various electorates. If we take the electoral rolls as a basis we find that people living in towns can get their names on the rolls much easier than people living in the country, particularly under our present laws, so that the names on a country electoral roll would not represent the number of people in the district. Again, city electorates have a great deal more influence through being usually represented by more able members than country electorates. I shall conclude with a few words upon the question of the abolition of the property vote. This question has been much more discussed than the questions I have so far dealt with, and it has become difficult to say anything original upon it. I recollect an argument used by the Secretary for Lands, last session, I think, that if everybody were equally virtuous and equally intelligent we might give all an equal vote. I would like to ask whether owning land is a sign of virtue and intelligence? It may be a sign of virtue; but my single-tax friends will not admit that it is a sign of intelligence. We have had it as an argument for the freehold vote that land cannot run away. We have heard something from the Attorney-General this afternoon about capital leaving the country, and we have had it demonstrated to us that the most liquid form of capital we know of cannot run away, and that is gold. It has not been able to run away from Australia during the last two or three years. I will tell the House what can run away out of the country.

An HONOURABLE MEMBER : Labour !

Mr. JACKSON : An hon. member interjects "labour," but I was going to say "brains." It is impossible for most forms of capital to leave the country. We cannot export our mines, or take our cattle and sheep from the land and send

them out of the country, but brains can leave the country. Brains are the unseen foundations of society, and are of more importance than perhaps most Labour members are willing to admit. I believe that brains have more influence upon the country than even capital has. We are told that capital can do this, that, and the other thing, but it is my opinion that brains make the world go round. I contend that the State ought to do all it can to enable each individual to exercise his faculties to the fullest possible extent, compatible with a like privilege to every other individual. We know what competition is between individuals; we are beginning to find out what competition is between States. Perhaps in the near future, if the time has not already come, it will be a question of race survival, and it therefore behoves the State to give each unit in the State the fullest possible opportunities for self-advancement. I may venture to prophesy that that nation will come down in the competition that fails to throw open to its men and women the fullest possible opportunities for self-advancement, and I contend that one of the steps we can take in that direction is to give every adult an opportunity to exercise the franchise.

Mr. THOMAS: I intend to vote against this Bill, but not on the same ground as the Attorney-General has taken up. I am prepared to give the franchise to women. My objection to the Bill is that it provides for one man one vote. I think that would be a great injustice to many people of the colony, and a great loss to the country into the bargain. There are some people in Brisbane who find the money to keep mines going in my electorate and, say, 100 persons in employment. I perfectly agree that every one of those 100 should have a vote, but I consider that the persons who find the money should also have a vote. If this Bill passes, the latter will not have a vote in the electorate where their money is invested; and on that ground I oppose the Bill.

Mr. CHATAWAY: I congratulate the hon. member for Kennedy on the open and unreserved way in which he has expressed his opinions. After demolishing Herbert Spencer with the aid of the Charity Organisation Society, commonly known to the world as the "C.O.S.," with quotations given by the secretary of that institution, he proceeds to support Spencer's opinion on brains. He told us that brains followed capital, and that brains made the world go round. I do not suppose that there is anybody on this side of the House who would in any way differ from that opinion; but I am afraid that the sentiment will not find favour with the bulk of the party who sit on the opposite benches. Certainly it does not find favour with that party in the other colonies, for I have seen a resolution which has just been passed in Adelaide to the effect that no person shall be eligible to be elected as a member of Parliament who is not a member of the Trades and Labour Hall. They require that a member of Parliament shall be a manual labourer, with horny hands and strength, but brains are not demanded in Adelaide. I believe that a motion to the same effect was lost here by a very narrow majority. Anyway, I can well believe that a motion of that sort was carried, and effect given to it, as we see in the present Parliament. The Bill we have before us has been characterised by its introducer as a most important measure; and I believe that in the opinion of very many electors and of some members of this House it is a most important measure. I indulge in no exaggeration when I say that I am amazed hon. members opposite have shown that they do not attach due importance to it by their frequent interjections and expressions of a wish to go to a division before any discussion has

practically taken place. We have constantly heard that legislation is being rushed through without due consideration, and without sufficient discussion. But when it takes place on a measure like this, which is acknowledged by many members to be a most important one, it is objected to. Members who are well qualified to give an opinion on the subject, members like the hon. members for Gympie and South Brisbane, who have given considerable attention to it, might have enlightened the House and shed rays of their wisdom on its darkness. They have not done so, but have called "Divide, divide." I think it is a matter for regret that in no Parliament in the history of Queensland have second-reading speeches been more at a discount than they are in this present Parliament. We miss the splendid addresses made by giants of old, some of whom are still in the House, and members seem to hasten into the bickering of Committee, where interchanges of personalities and other matters totally foreign to the Bills under discussion are introduced. When the hon. member for Burke, in moving the second reading of this Bill, traced the history of the questions dealt with, and made quotations from Plato down to the Hon. William Ewart Gladstone, he made what I call a proper second-reading speech. When my colleague made a speech, than which no more carefully-prepared speech has been delivered in this House for many years, making quotations from authorities which must have taken him months to look up, he was accused of obstructing, and of wilfully delaying the business of the House. When the Attorney-General poured out from his stores of historical knowledge quotations giving examples from history, ancient and modern, he was told that he was talking the measure out. Now a change has come over the spirit of the scene, and I have heard members this afternoon interjecting that my colleague did not go sufficiently into detail. That fault we can easily remove by moving an amendment so as to give the hon. member an opportunity to fully explain his views on this most important subject. This Bill is to put the coping stone on the wall of political equality in this country. Ever since the first years of the present century a struggle has been going on in western civilisation for political equality, and the results, as the Attorney-General pointed out, are nil. This is a mere trifle that is asked for now, but how much better socially will anyone be for it? No better at all. The struggle that civilisation is entering upon is one that might well have been undertaken before the struggle for equal social opportunities. In a country like this it may be said that every man has an equal chance of getting on; but in the older countries of Europe we know there is a very large number of persons who, no matter what their ability may be, cannot rise beyond earning their precarious daily bread. What I argue is that the real tendency of modern legislation should be towards equal social opportunities. We have it in this country now in the shape of free education and many other things. Those members who are battling for this Bill are really beating the wind and tilting at windmills, and they will get nothing out of it. This struggle for political equality will not make any working man any better off. It will not give him an extra shilling a day, and it will not relieve one woman of her anxieties. These shibboleths of one man one vote, one vote one value, one person one vote, and equal representation are all wasted time, and any discussion on them is mere political fireworks. The second part of the Bill deals with electoral reform, which, I contend, is very much needed. The proposal is that police constables should collect the names to be put on

the rolls. That has been tried in New South Wales with very good results. No obstacle should be put in the way of a man getting his vote, but I do not care about making constables electioneering agents. In the towns large numbers of men, many of whom are idlers, and perhaps more or less dependent upon the State, get on the rolls without any difficulty; but the farmers in the country districts, who are working out their salvation and the salvation of the country, have the very greatest difficulty. Many of them do not come into town from one year's end to another, except perhaps on a general holiday, when the electoral registrars' offices are closed. Another very serious objection is that names are often placed on the rolls improperly. The rolls are not kept properly purged. I had an opportunity of consulting with a man who had gone very carefully through the Charters Towers roll. That is one of the most important electorates in the colony, and I think the senior member for Charters Towers polled more votes than any other member in this House. I am positively assured that there are over 500 men who are on twice or three times. That is a state of things too disgraceful to contemplate.

Mr. DUNSFORD: I say that is false. It is a charge against my electorate. Who told you that?

Mr. CHATAWAY: Does the hon. member think I am going to hand over to him the name of my informant for a man or men like him to deal with? I shall do nothing of the sort. I say I am informed, and I have the letter here in my possession.

Mr. DUNSFORD: The statement is false, and you should withdraw it.

The SPEAKER: Order! The hon. member has a right to speak after the hon. member for Mackay has finished. I must ask him not to interrupt.

Mr. DUNSFORD: There will be no opportunity.

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. CHATAWAY: Probably the hon. member knows some of these names, and I will mention one or two to show him the necessity of having the rolls properly purged. There is a man who is Nos. 825 and 830 on the roll, and his name is Richard Crossland. In each case his qualification is "St. Patrick's Hotel." There is another name, Nos. 500 and 501. In one case the name is Edward Bushine and in the other Edward Bushnie, a transposition of one letter; but the man is identical. William John Davy appears in Nos. 864 and 872. Nos. 971 and 972 are James Dobbin.

Mr. DUNSFORD: Father and son.

Mr. CHATAWAY: 1777 and 1778 are Thomas Hogan, and are probably the same man. 2854 and 2855 are men named Jacob Neilsen, and both are the same man. 3363 and 3364 are Joseph Roberts, and then we have a still more extraordinary case. No. 2729 is Charles McDonald, junior; and on the supplementary list No. 4373 is Charles McDonald, watchmaker, aged 31. Those two, I believe, are both the same man.

Mr. HARDACRE: He has not a vote at all. They are different persons.

Mr. CHATAWAY: It is necessary that there should be a reform in the electoral law, a reform which would make it a misdemeanour for a man to put his name on the roll twice, and provide that he should be severely punished if he did so. The Attorney-General has alluded to the practical difficulties in the way of women's suffrage; he has alluded to the fact that if it is granted there will be a necessity for a redistribution of the electorates; and he has also said that if one person one vote is granted the logical result will be equal electorates. If every person is to

have one vote, there can be no reason against the electorates being equal. What is the use of having one person one vote if the votes are not to be of equal value? What is the use of saying that each voter in the constituency of Leichhardt shall represent one five-hundredth part of a member of Parliament, whereas each voter in Charters Towers shall represent one two-thousandth part of a member of Parliament? If every person is to have a vote, it seems to follow that every person is entitled to an equal value for that vote. At present our arrangements provide that votes shall not have an equal value not only on account of the property vote but also because sparsely populated electorates return a greater number of members in proportion to their population than the more thickly populated centres. I cannot understand how hon. members on the other side, holding the opinions they do, can support the retention of the present system, because equalisation of voting power tends to make equal electorates. The spirit that animates them is the spirit that animated those men who carried out the French revolution. In those days there was a party called the "mountain" ruling the State, and one man said that the name "mountain" was an argument against what they held to be most dear—that everything should be level and equal. I am not surprised that the hon. member for Euggera is in favour of women's suffrage because there are more females than males in his electorate, whereas in the Burke electorate there are not fifty females for every 100 males. I think the hon. member for Burke must have forgotten himself, and thought he was representing Bundanba or North Brisbane when he introduced the question of women's suffrage. There are 93,305 adult females in the colony according to the last census, and more than half of them are in the electorates in the immediate vicinity of Brisbane, and one can easily understand the effect of giving the women a vote in those electorates.

Mr. HARDACRE: Their votes would be balanced by the property vote.

Mr. CHATAWAY: And why should not women be allowed to decide whether the property vote shall exist or not? Have not the women of this colony as much inherent right as we have to say whether property shall have a vote or not? Coming back to the position of the Northern electorates compared with those near Brisbane, I say that a number of electors equal to those already in existence would be added to the rolls in the electorates about Brisbane, whereas the North, which has fifty women for every 100 men, would not be able to put on the roll even those fifty. As a matter of fact, while nearly every qualified adult woman would be able to go on the rolls in Brisbane, not one-half of those who are qualified in the North would be able to do so. The result would be that there would have to be a redistribution of electorates. From a practical point of view, it is perfectly clear that the outside districts would suffer tremendously if women had votes. Unless the number of members was increased the proportion of members coming from the neighbourhood of Brisbane would have to be very much greater than it is at present. What would become of the electorates of the hon. members for Burke and Croydon? The electorates of Gregory, Mitchell, Flinders, and Carpentaria would not make one electorate among them. The electorates of Leichhardt, Clermont, and Normanby would not make a suburb of Brisbane.

Mr. LEAHY: What about Mackay?

Mr. CHATAWAY: Mackay would suffer equally. Instead of being represented by two members, there would be only half of my hon. colleague left to represent us, and there is no doubt that I should disappear into that obscurity

from which I have endeavoured to emerge. If women want the suffrage, my opinion is that they should have it. I have not the slightest objection to their having the suffrage, and I know that my colleague—although some of his views were rather misrepresented; and I may here incidentally say that I was extremely thankful, for the sake of the junior member for Maryborough and the hon. member for Kennedy, that the junior member for Maryborough was not in the House when he made his speech, because some of the things that he said about women would have driven the junior member for Maryborough into an early grave. He talked in a most reckless way about their defects. He told us that they were worshippers and seekers after power. He told us of their defects of character—that they were inferior to men. What I was about to say when I fell away from the subject was that my hon. colleague, although he has been in some respects misunderstood, was not opposed in any way to woman suffrage, on the ground that their influence would be injurious to politics. What he said was that politics would be injurious to them; and that is my opinion. If they were thrown into the struggle of politics, and kept up all night in a House like this, I ask what would happen to them? But I say again that if they want the suffrage, let them have it. My own experience of women—which is a very limited one—is that in the long run they always get their own way, and if they want the suffrage I have not the slightest doubt they will get it, whatever we may do. If they choose to abandon the position they now occupy, and to meet men on equal terms, I see no earthly reason why they should not have their own way. It will be bad for them, I believe, but as they are sure to get their own way in the end, we may as well give them the franchise at once if they want it. But we have not the slightest proof that there is any desire on the part of the women of Queensland for the suffrage. Where has there been any enthusiasm about this movement? Where have been the public meetings about it? It cannot be alleged that the women who propose to come into politics are too modest to attend public meetings. There has been a public meeting in Brisbane, I believe—a most successful meeting from one point of view—but whether resolutions were carried in favour of woman suffrage, or whether they threw the chairwoman out of the chair, I am not exactly certain. What is “photographically lined on the tablets of my mind” is that we were told they called each other “old cats.” A meeting like that cannot be called a proof that the women of this colony desire the suffrage. It does not even prove that the women of Brisbane desire the franchise, and I am perfectly certain that the women in our country districts—the women who have something to do; the women who work—the women who are working on the farms and in the houses—have no desire for the franchise. In nearly every case they have children to attend to and home duties to perform, and I believe they have home comforts. They have got their influence in the way that they best desire it. I know there are a certain number of unemployed women about Brisbane who are extremely anxious for the franchise, but they do not represent the colony, and from my acquaintance with ladies there are very few of them even in Brisbane who desire it. In spite of the New Zealand agitation and its successful issue there has really been no spontaneous movement in Queensland worth calling a movement for the extension of the franchise to women. There is this practical difficulty—that if women are emancipated, as the slang phrase goes—men will have to be “emancipated” too. We will be impaled upon the horns of this very awkward dilemma: That women

will either vote in accordance with the views of their husbands, fathers, brothers, or, as I hear an hon. member say, their sweethearts, or they will vote against them. If they vote with them, we are only doubling the number of men already on the rolls. If they vote against them, we are preparing for ourselves a very great deal of trouble. We are preparing for ourselves domestic friction and war in the home, the results of which we cannot anticipate.

At 7 o'clock, in accordance with Sessional Order, the House proceeded with Government business.

NEW SWANBANK COLLIERIES BILL.

SELECT COMMITTEE.

Mr. HAMILTON presented the report of the select committee on this Bill, and moved that it be printed.

Question put and passed; and the second reading of the Bill made an Order of the Day for Thursday next.

LOAN BALANCES DIVERSION BILL.

SECOND READING.

The COLONIAL TREASURER: I have already explained the object of this Bill, the operation of which, I may say, will in no way make the colony richer or poorer. As a matter of fact, it is entirely a matter of bookkeeping. In the previous history of the colony sums of money have been authorised for the construction of certain railways. The railways are now finished so far as the authority for expending the money is concerned, and there are large numbers of small balances which are not available at present for any purpose except the purpose for which the money was voted. This accumulation of small balances has been found to be very inconvenient, and it has been suggested that use might be made of them by aggregating them and allotting them to the railway systems we have in operation. The balances are as follow:—£70,868 for the Southern division, £36,593 for the Central division, and £50,960 for the Northern division. If this Bill is passed, it may save us occasionally from going to the loan market when any particular vote has become exhausted. Take, for instance, the vote for rolling-stock in the Southern division. That vote, on the 30th June, had only a very small balance to its credit, not sufficient, in fact, to carry it on for the present year. In order to pay for the contracts now in existence therefore we have to go through the process of drawing upon unforeseen expenditure, which is always tabulated by the Auditor-General in his report, and it is held over until some future loan is authorised by the House. If this scheme were put into operation we would in the meantime be able to use this £70,000 for that purpose or any other connected with the Southern and Western Railways. I may say that the Bill is the outcome of a suggestion from the Railway Department, the Treasury, and the Auditor-General's department. The Auditor-General has gone through the whole of the balances and checked them, and he recommends that this method of dealing with them should be adopted. It is of very little use carrying on these small balances through the Government books, and by doing this the whole of them will be dealt with in one account. This Bill does not appropriate any of the money, as it will be seen that by the 1st clause the Parliament has to appropriate the money from time to time. It will be a great convenience to the departments concerned if this Bill is passed, and I therefore move that it be now read a second time.

Mr. POWERS: I do not intend to oppose this Bill. At the same I did not understand it to mean what the hon. gentleman now tells us

it means as far as expenditure on rolling-stock is concerned. The Bill provides that the money shall be expended in railway works. That, on the face of it, to the ordinary mind, appears to mean railway construction. It seems to be intended to use some of the money for the purchase of rolling-stock.

The COLONIAL TREASURER: That is only one thing. In all Loan Bills there is a certain amount for rolling-stock.

Mr. POWERS: As to the Bill itself, it is only a book credit. It is not an appropriation. I do not see that any injustice can be done, and it will be of material assistance as far as bookkeeping is concerned. Probably objection will be raised to clause 2, which alters the boundaries of divisions. This is a new departure. In all other references to those divisions we have only one line of demarcation, and unless the hon. gentleman intends to spend some of this £70,000 on the Gladstone line there can be no reason for the alteration.

The HON. J. R. DICKSON: I think there can be no objection to these fragmentary balances being amalgamated and made available for such other purposes as may be deemed necessary in connection with railway construction. The only objection that may be raised is that certain lines of railway, which perhaps are not quite complete, and for which there may be a small amount still available, may perhaps lose the benefit of the existing appropriation. As an illustration, I will refer to two local lines. The existing balance of the unexpended appropriation for the Brisbane to Sandgate railway is £2,773. It has frequently been urged—and I think provision was made for it—that that line would be extended further into Sandgate—about three-quarters of a mile beyond the present station; and I should regret to see this sum, which might probably cover the cost of construction, lost sight of by its amalgamation with the other balances. In a minor degree it will similarly affect a line in my own constituency. The balance standing to the credit of the Brisbane to Cleveland railway is £208. Anyone who has travelled on that line will admit—and the railway authorities have admitted it to me—that the line might easily be carried over the level land about half a mile further into the heart of Cleveland. At present visitors have to take vehicles to get to the hotel. I have it on the authority of railway experts—I have had a conversation with the Chief Commissioner about it—that £300 or so would accomplish this desirable object. It is to be regretted that when railways are built to towns they are not carried more into the heart of them than has been the case in our railway construction. At Cleveland this is a very serious inconvenience, and it detracts from the place in the eyes of excursionists and others who, in the hot weather, resort to the seaside. That is the only objection I have to the Bill—that these fragmentary balances, small as they are, which might provide additional railway convenience on the lines for which they are appropriated, will be amalgamated and lost sight of, and the greater facilities so urgently desired by the residents will be closed against them. I mention this without any desire to obstruct or delay the Bill; but the matter is one to which careful consideration ought, I think, to be given.

Mr. CURTIS: I should be glad if the Premier would state the reasons for the alteration of the boundaries of the Central division. If it is intended to spend money already charged to one division in other divisions of the colony the matter can be easily rectified, so far as bookkeeping is concerned, by debiting one division with the money already charged to another division. If it is only a mere matter of book-

keeping it appears to me that the proposed alteration is inexpedient. With regard to the question raised by the hon. member for Bulimba, I would point out that those railways will be in no worse a position than other railways are or will be in the future in respect to which there are no unexpended balances. If they want money at any time for the kind of work referred to, they have simply to ask, and I suppose they will get the money by vote from Parliament if it is considered desirable. Excepting with respect to the boundaries it appears to me, as far as Central Queensland is concerned, the Bill is non-contentious. I quite understand the object in view; but, as it is a mere question of bookkeeping convenience for the Government, it is not essential that the boundaries should be altered in any way. On that point the people of Central Queensland will be very sorry to see any departure from the lines that have been observed in the past. If, as I think, the proposed alteration of boundaries is not essential, I hope the Government will not press section 2.

The COLONIAL TREASURER, in reply: The divisions into which this Bill divides the colony have no reference at all to the divisions under the Financial Districts Bill. This Bill simply deals with the railways as they are, and the Bundaberg-Gladstone Railway is reckoned as belonging to the Southern and Western division. If the hon. member will look at the schedules he will see the different votes put down to the three divisions under the Act he refers to. It will not in any way affect the books, and there need be no debit and credit entries such as the hon. member suggests, because all the moneys in the Southern division will be spent in the Southern division, and the same with the other divisions, so that there will be no complication whatever. With regard to what the hon. member for Bulimba says of the Brisbane to Sandgate and Brisbane to Cleveland votes, the Bill will rather help what he desires than otherwise. The sums now standing as balances of those particular votes are altogether inadequate to carry out the extensions he refers to, but if this Bill is passed, and Parliament then approves of plans and sections of those extensions, we will be able to get the necessary appropriation out of the aggregate sum. There is £208 to the credit of the Brisbane to Cleveland line, and there is no way of getting the additional amount required for the suggested extension except by charging it to unforeseen expenditure and waiting until a loan is floated, but by passing this Bill Parliament could immediately appropriate it out of the £70,000, so that the Bill will rather help the carrying out of works of that kind.

Mr. OGDEN: There are a good many balances besides those upon lines already completed, and I would like the Colonial Treasurer to say how he proposes to deal with the balances set forth in the Auditor-General's report. He shows balances available of over £1,000,000 for the Southern and Western division; Wide Bay and Burnett, £153,000; Central, £120,000; and Northern, £831,000.

The COLONIAL TREASURER: All these sums in the Bill are component parts of those balances.

Mr. OGDEN: Well, there is £90,000 voted from loan for the Bowen Railway. How will the Bill affect that?

The COLONIAL TREASURER: It has nothing to do with the Bowen Railway.

Mr. OGDEN: Could not that be made plain in the Bill, so that there may be no mistake made afterwards?

The COLONIAL TREASURER: This Bill does not deal with the whole loan account, but only with these little balances.

Mr. PHILLIPS: I have no intention to oppose the second reading of this Bill, but I want to draw attention to the fact that the unexpended balance for the Normanton-Cloncurry Railway does not appear at all.

The COLONIAL TREASURER: The Bill does not deal with that.

Mr. PHILLIPS: I know that, but the Normanton-Cloncurry and the Normanton-Croydon railways are so nearly connected that I think it would be better to keep the balances for these lines together. There is £5,000 voted for ballasting the Croydon Railway, and I presume that will go on, and it will take four or five years to complete. I think it would be more convenient to keep the balance for the Normanton-Croydon line, about £17,000, apart from the railways of the Northern division, and I would be glad if the Colonial Treasurer would accept that suggestion.

The COLONIAL TREASURER: It is only a matter of account.

Mr. PHILLIPS: I am afraid that it may be swallowed up, and that when the money has once gone elsewhere there will be great difficulty in getting it back again.

The COLONIAL TREASURER: It is more likely to go the other way.

Mr. MURRAY: I have no objection to offer to the Bill, and it will be a very good thing to be able to utilise these balances; but I am surprised to see the divisions of the colony altered in the way proposed. The lines laid down by the Financial Districts Bill and the Decentralisation Bill are very well defined, and all the accounts should be kept on those lines.

The COLONIAL TREASURER: This does not alter them in the slightest degree.

Mr. MURRAY: To state that all the railways are defined here in their respective divisions is scarcely correct, because the Gladstone-Bundaberg line is decidedly a Central division line, and I object to any departure from the boundaries of the three divisions of the colony, which have been defined with considerable care.

Mr. BOLES: No doubt the Premier was fairly clear in introducing the Bill, but so far he has given no reason why the divisions set out in the Financial Districts Bill have been set aside, and Gladstone made the boundary for the purposes of this Bill. My principal reason for referring to the matter is that a work of considerable magnitude, and of some importance to my district, has been left in an unfinished state for the past three years. The interest on the cost of this work amounts to £13,000 per annum, and is, I presume, charged to the Central district. The Government were inexorable to all demands made on them to complete the work, which is by no means of local importance only, but is of national importance as far as the Central district is concerned. What I wish to point out is that this work—the Gladstone-Bundaberg Railway—has an unexpended balance of £70,000, and that this, together with the £36,000 to be spent in the Central district, would almost complete the work, but by drawing the boundary at Gladstone the latter sum will be lost, and it is doubtful whether the district will participate in the £70,000. I would therefore ask the Premier to give a fuller explanation of the matter.

Mr. CURTIS: I ask the permission of the House to make a few further observations, as I may not be here when the Bill is considered in committee.

The SPEAKER: Is it the pleasure of the House that the hon. member be heard?

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. CURTIS: I merely wish to elicit from the Premier a reply to the question as to whether he attaches any importance to the alteration of the boundaries as proposed in the Bill from a territorial point of view.

The COLONIAL TREASURER: If it will satisfy the hon. member I have not the slightest objection when the Bill is in Committee to put in the boundaries he wants.

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

COMMITTEE.

Clause 1—"Unexpended balances of loans"—put and passed.

On clause 2—"Interpretation"—

The COLONIAL TREASURER said if the hon. member for Rockhampton insisted on it he had no objection to insert the boundaries he wanted, but the proposed divisions were only railway divisions, and in all probability those sums of money would be wiped out of the books before another twelve months had elapsed.

Mr. POWERS said that the third section of the Gladstone line was at present in the Central division, but if that clause was passed as it stood it would be in the Southern division. The whole difficulty was that there would be one division for railways and another for everything else, but if the amendment was accepted the divisions would be the same as those defined in the Real Property (Local Registries) Act.

The COLONIAL TREASURER replied that that would not make the slightest difference in the keeping of the accounts. These divisions were only for the guidance of the Railway Commissioners, so that the moneys raised for certain purposes should be used for those purposes in the divisions for which they were specified. There was none of the money for the Gladstone line included in the £70,000 or in the £36,000.

Mr. CURTIS said he quite understood that it was a departmental matter, and simply for the convenience of the Railway Department; but, notwithstanding that, it would be much more satisfactory to the people of Central Queensland if it was provided that the boundaries should be the boundaries defined in the Real Property (Local Registries) Act.

Mr. BOLES said the Government had been asked to complete the Gladstone-Bundaberg line, and their reason for not doing so was that they had no money. He would point out that the £70,000 and the £36,000 would go a long way towards finishing that work. It seemed as if they were trying to divert that £70,000 from that railway.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: It is the very opposite.

The HON. J. R. DICKSON said the remarks of the hon. member for Port Curtis, if carried into effect, would be that Gladstone would be denied the benefit of participation in £70,000 belonging to the Southern division, and have to look only for a possible share of £36,000 belonging to the Central district—a remarkable self-denial.

Mr. HARDACRE thought it would have been better if the Government had repealed the unexpended votes altogether, and brought down new votes for any particular lines that were required. The clause would make the accounts under the Financial Districts Bill all wrong, and would place money to the credit of the Central division instead of the Southern.

The COLONIAL TREASURER: Show me any particular sum that will be diverted.

Mr. HARDACRE said the divisions were different. All that Gladstone would lose would be the difference between the £70,000 and the £36,000. It would not make the slightest difference so far as the expenditure of money was concerned. There would not be one penny more spent by including Gladstone in the South, but it would simplify the bookkeeping under the Financial Districts Bill when the day of reckoning came.

Mr. CURTIS moved that all the words after the word "Act," in the 1st line, be omitted, with a view of substituting, "the boundaries of the three divisions of the colony shall be those described in the Real Property (Local Registries) Act of 1887."

Mr. FISHER asked whether Gladstone would be included in the Central or Southern division? He thought it should be allowed to share in the lesser amount.

Mr. ARCHER said so far as he was concerned he did not care a bit about it. This was an Act for a special purpose. If Gladstone was included in the Southern division it would share in the £70,000, while if they preferred to be included in the Central division it would only come in for a portion of the £36,000. He did not think Gladstone would get much out of either amount.

Mr. BOLES said it seemed to him that Gladstone was between the devil and the deep blue sea. Some of the Central members wanted the boundaries altered, but that was opposed in a general way by Southern members. It appeared to him that Gladstone would be far better leaving the boundaries as they were under the Financial Districts Bill for the reason he had already given on the second reading. On that basis there would be available about £107,000, which would more than half complete the Gladstone Railway.

Amendment negatived; and clause passed as printed.

The remaining clauses, the schedule, and the preamble were put and passed.

The House resumed; the CHAIRMAN reported the Bill without amendment, and the third reading was made an order for Monday next.

QUEENSLAND COAST SURVEY BILL.

SECOND READING.

The COLONIAL TREASURER: This is a Bill to authorise the Government to continue the agreement which has been in existence for some considerable time regarding the survey of our coast. The survey was originally commenced under an agreement made in 1884. That agreement simply consisted of correspondence between the Admiralty and the Government of Queensland, and there was an annual appropriation of £3,000, in addition to which this colony furnished the steamer "Paluma" to carry out the work, so that our expenditure was much larger than the amount voted by Parliament. Now the Admiralty offer to continue the work and supply a vessel of their own. I may say that the "Paluma" is not at all a suitable vessel for the work. She was built for a gunboat. The "Gayundah" and the "Paluma" were built at the same time, and it was found that one vessel was quite enough for the port of Brisbane, so an arrangement was made with the Admiralty that the "Paluma" should be employed in this survey. The survey was commenced in 1885, after the "Paluma" arrived in the colony. She commenced at Whitsunday Passage and surveyed northward to Magnetic Island, and then came to somewhere about Cook Harbour. In 1890, after the wreck of the "Quetta," she went up North, and commenced surveying from Thursday Island southward, and she has been engaged in that work ever since. She is now on this side of Piper Island. I have some charts here which show the amount of work that she has done during that period. Any hon. member who wishes to see the original agreement with the Admiralty to which I referred will find it on page 805 of "Votes and Proceedings" for 1884. The Admiralty now offer to continue the survey for a period of six years from the 31st March next, that being the date at which the present agreement will expire. I consider it desirable that the matter should be

submitted to Parliament instead of going on an agreement by correspondence as heretofore, and therefore I have prepared this Bill, and now submit it to the House. The expenditure by the colony has been very varied, in some years being under £2,000, and in some others considerably more. In one year we spent over £5,000.

Mr. DRAKE: Besides finding the ship?

The COLONIAL TREASURER: Yes. The average for the period between 1890 and 1893 has been £3,800. The Admiralty now offer to undertake the work and to find a vessel, which no doubt will be very much more adapted to the work than the "Paluma," as well as the officers and equipment, for an annual sum paid by us of £3,270. I need not mention that this work is one that the colony may justly be proud of. It is a work that is not for the benefit of Queensland alone, but it is for the benefit of the trade and commerce of all countries that passes along our coast. No hon. member can object to this survey being proceeded with, and there is no doubt that already an immense amount of good has been done in the route of navigation up our coast. When the survey is completed—as it probably will be by the time this agreement expires—the navigation of that route will probably be as good as that of any sea in the world. I move that the Bill be now read a second time.

Mr. POWERS: As we have such a long coast we have to pay for its survey. We cannot go to too great expense for the purpose of having the survey a proper one. I do not know whether the Premier has made any arrangement by which the survey will be continuous during the whole term of the agreement; but I understood him to say that some years the cost to Queensland was £2,000, while it was sometimes as high as £5,000. From that I should infer that the survey has not been continuous. I presume the amount mentioned in the Bill is one-half the expense of the survey. It would be much better if the agreement were made for a shorter period—say three years—and at the end of that period, if we were satisfied with the progress that had been made, the agreement could then be renewed. It is better that the agreement should be ratified by Parliament than made as in the past.

The COLONIAL TREASURER: The reason why the amount we had to pay that one year was so large was because the charges due to the Imperial Government for two years came in in the one year.

The HON. J. R. DICKSON: The Government are to be congratulated on continuing the survey of the coast. I have no doubt, from information which has been supplied to me, that the "Paluma" has not been found by any means a suitable vessel to carry out this survey. The old steamer "Llewellyn," which was engaged in the work before the "Paluma," was much better suited for the service than the "Paluma" has proved herself. The period of six years strikes one as being rather long for the agreement to extend over, inasmuch as a considerable portion of the coast has been surveyed; but I presume it is intended to complete the survey of the interval now existing unsurveyed between Thursday Island and Cape Bedford. It would be a great pity if the work were at all interrupted. Considering that the Admiralty have to find the vessel and equip her, I apprehend that if the agreement were only for three years the guarantee on the part of Queensland would have to be larger. I would like to learn from the Treasurer what he proposes to do with the "Paluma." We have not got employment for one gunboat, much less two, and unless a war scare occurs in the East, which I trust will not be the case, I think it would perhaps be better to turn her into cash,

inasmuch as there are continual improvements in naval architecture, and these boats for harbour defence must be becoming obsolete.

Mr. FISHER: I do not profess to be possessed of professional knowledge in dealing with a Bill of this character, but I altogether agree that the survey should proceed. I think it would be wise to make room in some of these vessels for a few colonial cadets, so that they might learn the art of surveying. Regarding the amount of the contract I cannot speak, because that will depend upon the amount of the work to be done; but I should very much like to know whether there are not people in the colony as capable of doing this work as officers of the Admiralty.

Mr. DUNSFORD: If work of this character is necessary, I do not see why it should be left to the Lord High Admiral of Great Britain. I consider it should be a colonial work, and this shows me the necessity there is for federation. I do not see why we should always remain a dependency of Great Britain in such matters as this. The country maintains gunboats over which it has no control, the only thing we are called upon to do being to pay up. This is one of the matters that should receive attention at the hands of the Federal Council. As a native of the colony, I am one of those who hope that Australia will become a nation, and that in my lifetime; and I do not see why we should vote money to Great Britain for something which is purely an Australian matter. I believe this could be done better by colonial action, and that there would be less danger to shipping than there is at the present time. There is a sort of go-as-you-please about the present arrangements. Certain boats are stationed in Australian waters, but they lie in harbour for a good part of their time, the officers having a high time at the expense of Australia. I deprecate spending money over which we have no control.

Mr. McDONALD: I would rather see a little more money spent annually, and have this work carried out by the Government. It is national work, and I enter my protest against continually going outside the colony to have work done that we could do ourselves. I agree with the hon. member for Charters Towers when he says that this is a matter on which federal action ought to be taken.

Mr. WATSON: I should like to ask the Premier if no details are given of the work, and how it is done? We should not forget that there is a new method of surveying by sweeping; and if that method had been in force at the time the "Quetta" was lost no doubt the rock would have been found, and the disaster averted. I would also like to ask the hon. gentleman whether some of our youths could not be taken as apprentices on these surveying ships? I should like to see that done very much.

Mr. TURLEY: With regard to the question of training youths on board surveying vessels, everyone who has read the papers lately must be convinced from the figures quoted that there is no chance, even in the vessels employed along the coast, of anything of the kind being available. Undoubtedly this work is necessary; but if it were carried out by vessels of our own, as urged by the hon. members for Flinders and Charters Towers, it would involve considerably more expense. In addition to the ship, we should have to provide all the appliances for surveying purposes which, I understand, are now supplied by the Admiralty. It is quite unnecessary to go into such a large expense as would be necessary to carry on the work locally. The question asked by the hon. member for Bulimba—what it is proposed to do with the vessel taken off that work—is a very pertinent one. Those two vessels came here in 1885. Since that time

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one of them has been in continuous employment. The other has been practically lying nearly all the time in the Brisbane River. The only inference one can draw, from the silence of the Premier on the subject, is that there is no provision made for the future employment of the vessel. No doubt she will be laid up alongside the other ones in Garden Reach. I agree with the same hon. member that the best thing that can be done with the vessel is to sell her. The money she would bring in will about cover the cost to the country of this proposed survey.

The COLONIAL TREASURER: Some hon. members have argued that this work should be undertaken by the colonies on the ground that it is a federal work. As a matter of fact it is a cosmopolitan work. We are not doing the work out of our own funds; all that we are required to pay is a part of the cost and to find the vessel. The Admiralty find all the appliances and the officers and men. If they are spending £4,000 a year it is a great deal more than the colony has been spending.

Mr. McDONALD: They must reap some benefit from it.

The COLONIAL TREASURER: They give the benefit of what they do to the whole world. If we can get the Imperial Government to help us in this important work, why should we refuse their assistance? The work requires a considerable amount of training, and the Admiralty provides officers specially qualified for it. There is no restriction on colonial boys entering the service, but they are considered as part of the navy. They are entered on the navy list and paid by the Imperial Government. As to what we are going to do with the "Paluma," that is a question I can hardly answer. We have four months to consider the matter. In the meantime if the Japanese Government want a boat of the kind I shall be very glad to sell her. This new arrangement will be no loss to the colony, nor will it involve us in any greater expense.

Mr. TURLEY: In what year was the £5,000 expended by the colony?

The COLONIAL TREASURER: In 1892-3. The accounts for the previous year did not reach us in time, and there is an apparent sudden rise from £2,753 to over £5,000, but a great deal of the £5,000 ought to have been paid in the previous year. The average for the four years was about £3,800.

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

COMMITTEE.

On clause 1—"Short title and commencement of Act"—

The Hon. J. R. DICKSON asked whether the moiety paid by the colony was in addition to providing the vessel?

The COLONIAL TREASURER replied that the colony had to provide the vessel. So much a year was allowed for the vessel, and the colony got credit for that amount.

Clause put and passed.

Clause 2—"Treasurer empowered to enter into agreement with Admiralty"—put and passed.

On clause 3—"Annual payment of £3,270 to be made"—

Mr. McDONALD asked if the £3,270 was going to cover the whole cost, or whether a vessel would have to be found to give assistance?

The COLONIAL TREASURER said the great advantage they would have in the new agreement was that the Admiralty would find a much more suitable vessel for the work than the "Paluma"—a vessel with a steam launch and far better appliances, by means of which nearly double the quantity of work done by the "Paluma" could be done in the same time. As to "sweeping," which had been mentioned, it was carried

out now to a very large extent. He might mention that they had a standing advertisement offering a reward to pearl-shell-ers and others who might discover any dangers and buoyed them, or took such observations as would enable them to identify the spot, and left word at the nearest port. A great deal of time had been wasted in looking for a rock that had been reported near Proudfoot Shoal without discovering it.

Mr. FISHER: Will you give the reward to a mariner wrecked on an unknown rock.

The COLONIAL TREASURER said that if he lived and came and told them where the rock was he would get the reward. The reward had been claimed once, and the man reporting the rock got £30 after it was found and surveyed. They would get a great deal more for their money under the agreement proposed than they were getting now. As to the time, he did not propose to alter the agreement, and he had no doubt they would find it satisfactory.

Mr. McDONALD asked if the hon. gentleman had said that if he could arrange for a shorter period he would do so?

The COLONIAL TREASURER: No; he thought they could leave it as it was. If in two, three, or four years' time anything happened to induce them to ask the Home Government to allow them to retire from the agreement, he had no doubt arrangements could be made. He did not care to anticipate that anything was likely to happen that would prevent them carrying out the agreement for six years. If the agreement had only been for three years he would have thought it hardly necessary to bring down a Bill for it. They had been working under an agreement without a Bill for the last nine years, but he thought it much more constitutional to submit the matter in that way to Parliament.

Clause put and passed.

Clause 4—"Treasurer to pay sum as directed by Governor"—put and passed.

On clause 5—"Treasurer to be allowed credit for payments"—

Mr. POWERS hoped that in making the agreement notice would be taken of the suggestion to make it a condition that some colonial youths should be taken into the service, as had been done in connection with the naval defence contribution. He hoped the day was coming when they would be able to do that work for themselves, and the more cadets they could get to learn the profession the better.

The COLONIAL TREASURER: I will make a note of it.

The Hon. J. R. DICKSON agreed with the hon. member for Maryborough, but they could hardly insist upon what was proposed as a condition. It might be offered as a suggestion which the Admiralty might accept. He would go further and advise the Colonial Treasurer to suggest to the Admiralty that the feeling in the colony was in favour of repairs to the vessels being done within the colony.

Clause and preamble put and passed.

The House resumed; the Bill was reported without amendment, and the third reading made an Order of the Day for Monday next.

GOVERNMENT SAVINGS BANK STOCK BILL.

SECOND READING.

The COLONIAL TREASURER: This is a Bill to enable people who have money, which they are not allowed to invest in trade or business in the ordinary way, to invest it in Government stock, and it will form, as it were, a new branch of the Government Savings Bank. The limit of deposits in the Government Savings Bank bearing interest is £200, and there are many large deposits getting no interest on the amount in excess of £200. They are lying there unuseful to

the depositors and also to the Government, as they cannot be used for public works, because they are at call, and we do not know the day the depositors will come and draw them out. I propose, therefore, to give the Governor in Council authority to create stock, to be called "Queensland Government Savings Bank Stock," for a sum which for the present may be any arbitrary amount. I propose £1,000,000 as the limit of the amount for which we may create stock of this sort. This stock will have a currency of a very considerable period. I propose fifty years. Of course that is an arbitrary period, but I have found that where trustees have money to invest, long-dated debentures or stock generally fetch a higher price than short-dated stock, because it saves the trustees the trouble of reinvesting at short periods when the money falls due. It might be thought that issuing paper having such a currency might be inexpedient inasmuch as it binds us to a rate of interest, say, 3½ per cent. for the whole period, whereas the rate of interest may be lowered in the course of years. To meet that it might be provided that at the end of every ten or twenty years the savings bank authorities should have the right to give notice—say, six months' notice—to the holders of stock that the rate of interest would be lowered; but I think that that would be a damaging procedure, and it does not follow that stock which is issued when the rate of interest is lowered, if it does get any lower than it is now, shall actually bear interest at the rate of 3½ per cent., because it is not provided that stock shall be sold at par. It may be sold at a premium or at a discount. Of course, if interest went below 3½ per cent. the stock would go up to a premium. I propose, therefore, to regulate the price of stock by prescribing it in regulations. We will probably start in this way: Say that the London market price of 3½ per cent. stock is 98, then allowing 1 per cent. for exchange and expenses, we would sell our stock here at 99, and whenever an alteration is made in the price it will be advertised, and a new regulation will be issued for that purpose. The stock is proposed to be issued in multiples of £20, but I believe that that will be found to be too large, and that we might very well reduce it to £10, so as to encourage people possessed of small amounts of money to invest them in this way. Just to show how the thing works I will draw attention to a paragraph in the report of the Post Office in London. There it is stated that—

"The amount of stock investment business shows a considerable increase. A sum of £1,544,508 was invested in the year, as compared with £1,264,104 in the previous year, an increase of £280,402. . . . On the 31st December last the total amount of stock held was £6,364,494, being over three-quarters of a million more than at the end of the previous year. The number of stockholders on the 31st December was a little over 69,000."

That shows that the system is largely availed of in the United Kingdom. The 8th clause provides for the application of the money. They have a somewhat similar scheme in New South Wales, where it is provided that the money may be used for public works. I do not think that would be a good thing for Queensland at the present time. I therefore propose to apply the money in the purchase of debentures that are now in the hands of the public and cancel them, and in this way probably reduce the charge for interest that we have to pay annually. It might be said that it is not a good thing to take money from Queensland and send it to England for that purpose; but I may mention that we have over £600,000 worth of Treasury bills in the hands of the public of Queensland just now, and I have provided that the money may be used for redeeming those. They are carrying interest at the rate of 4 per cent.; and

if we can redeem them at a reasonable price, it will be a profitable investment for the colony. I think it would be a good thing for the colony if the money held by trusts and not employed in the ordinary business of the country were invested in stock of this nature. It has this great advantage: That the more of this stock we can sell in the country the more debentures held outside the colony can be cancelled, and the less interest will be sent out of the colony every year. As things are I have to make provision for about £100,000 a month interest, and if we could keep that in the colony it would be much to our advantage. There is no doubt that the financial strength of most civilised countries in the world depends upon the fact that these debentures are held in those countries. In France the peasantry invest all their savings in the public funds. Comparatively speaking, we are only a new country, and the amount available here cannot be expected to be so much per head, as it is in older established countries like England and France, but at the same time we can make a beginning, and I have every reason to believe that the scheme will prove successful. Some people have mentioned to me even to-day that some provision would be necessary to enable trustees to invest in these debentures; but I do not think any provision of the kind is required. They were evidently thinking of the provisions of the legislature in Great Britain, which prevent trustees from investing money in colonial stock. But that does not apply here. A great deal of this Bill consists of provisions giving power to make regulations, and I think it is better to provide the necessary machinery by regulation than by hampering the Bill with it. Forms of certificates and receipts and transfers and such are provided for. I do not think there is anything further I need comment upon now.

MR. FISHER: What about the bank scare?

THE COLONIAL TREASURER: I do not think there is any great likelihood of that happening, because the money we want is not money ordinarily employed in trade. It would not be a good thing for the colony to withdraw money from trade and lock it up in stock, but it does not follow that when a man does invest in stock of this sort the money will be locked up. If he wants money he can sell the scrip, and that is the reason why we have provided for an easy method of transfer. Another convenience will be this: That if a trustee has invested £500 in this stock, and finds he requires £50 to carry on the estate, he can dispose of scrip to that amount without having to realise on the whole of it. I move that the Bill be now read a second time.

MR. POWERS: I do not think there can be very much objection to this Bill from this side of the House. It will be a good thing for the country all round, and there is nothing in the idea that it will lead to money being withdrawn from trade. So far as the State is concerned, clause 8 will be a good thing for us. The money will be transferred and appropriated to pay off other liabilities and the people who receive it will pay it into the banks. At present we are getting in a certain amount of money, and it has to be put in some bank or in a safe; therefore it is paid into a bank, and we remain liable. Under this clause the money will be put into this Government stock, and people will have the Government security. After the full explanation of the Premier I shall support the Bill. I do not know whether the hon. member for Clermont will consider this is trespassing upon his State bank; but we are getting along, and the Bill should go through without opposition.

THE HON. J. R. DICKSON: This is a very important measure, and demands very full con-

sideration. To some extent it will be a great boon to trustees and others who have to exercise fiduciary powers, and who will be relieved of a great deal of that responsibility which attaches to them should they make unsound investments. But a Bill of this kind is a measure that ought to be dealt with tentatively and upon very guarded lines. I would regard it as a great public calamity that circulating funds which promote business and provide for the industries of the colony should be withdrawn from legitimate circulation and locked up in Government debentures. While I certainly do not wish to see our outside liabilities enlarged, I do not agree with the Premier that it would be beneficial to the colony if we transferred the whole of our liability to British investors on to the shoulders of local residents, whose funds could be far more profitably employed in developing our industries. We must bear in mind the times in which this scheme is proposed. If we were in ordinary times of commercial prosperity and financial activity, and money was coming into the colony through confidence in our resources and a desire on the part of capitalists abroad to invest money here to develop our industries, then there would not be the same danger that there is now. But we are now in a state of panic. Financial distrust has arisen which has tended to load the Government Savings Bank with moneys put there for the sake of being covered by a Government guarantee, though they are not earning any interest. There is about £70,000 or £80,000 of what I call panic money lodged in the Government Savings Bank, and it would be a great deal better for the community if that money were circulating in channels of industry and thereby promoting the prosperity of the colony.

AN HONOURABLE MEMBER: It is in the Queensland National Bank.

THE HON. J. R. DICKSON: Those who are in the position of trustees and put their trust moneys into the Government Savings Bank come under a different class altogether; and so far as they are concerned I contend that the Bill will be of considerable benefit. But at present money is not flowing into us; gold is flowing out of the colony; and that is occasioned by the lamentable fact of the short value of our exports in the European markets. In normal times a measure of this sort might be introduced on a more comprehensive scale than is now desirable; and it would be wise for the Premier to limit to a certain amount the emission of these debentures annually. I believe a better price would be got, the value of the stock would be maintained, and the trading currency would not be interfered with. What I mostly apprehend is that people will refrain from putting their money into any enterprise or industry, but will prefer to continue to place it in the Government Savings Bank, which is departing from its true character of being merely a repository for the savings of the industrious. The Colonial Treasurer stated that any person who bought this stock would be able to transfer it; but we know that in Queensland there is no regular or fixed market price for Government stock. There is not the money to buy it. The trading community need all their money, and will continue to do so as long as the stream of money is flowing out of the colony. I approve of the Bill as affording great facilities to the class I have referred to; at the same time I would recommend the Colonial Treasurer to accept an amendment limiting the issue of these debentures to a certain sum periodically.

MR. FISHER: I congratulate the Government on bringing in a Bill of this sort. The hon. member for Bulimba views it with alarm, because if taken advantage of to a large extent it will create a shortage in the money deposited in the various commercial banks, but

I do not agree with him in that. I agree with him that people have invested their spare money over and above what may be called "savings" in the Government Savings Bank, and I believe it is the duty of the Government to find a safe place to invest the money belonging to the people. It has been found that the Government have been paying for their own money far more than they can get it for here now; and the issuing of debentures, as proposed in the Bill, will not only be of advantage to people who are bound to invest in good securities but also to the country as a whole. As to the withdrawal of money from the commercial banks, I may remind the hon. member for Bulimba that the money deposited in the Government Savings Bank is in the Queensland National Bank. I would like to hear the opinion of the hon. member for Clermont, who is specially fitted to deal with this question. I do not intend to go into the question of State paper, although I have grave doubts as to the utility of any such method. Some credit is due to the Government which carries out proposals such as are contained in the Bill. I am not competent to go into the whole question, but I am sure that enabling people with small sums of money to invest to take up these debentures will benefit a large class. I agree with the Premier that the debentures might be issued for £10. I also think that it would be better to fix the rate of interest for the whole currency of the debentures, and not allow it to be fixed from time to time by either the Governor in Council or Parliament. We cannot do better than pass the Bill as soon as possible. I believe some of my colleagues are prepared to speak upon the question of the investment of trust moneys, and it should be made clear by some hon. member representing the Government if it is not necessary to have special powers given to trustees to enable them to take up these debentures. The objection in England to allowing trustees to invest in colonial stocks was due, I believe, to the fear that in case any of the colonies cut the painter they might repudiate payment. That cannot apply in this case. I have no fear of any harm being done to the commercial banks by the passage of the Bill, and I have every confidence that many people will take advantage of it.

Mr. HARDACRE: I am opposed to the Bill, and even if I am the only member on this side, I shall vote against it, because I think hon. members on this side are being "had." I entirely agree with the principle of the Government finding safe investments for the savings of the people. The establishment of any bank on a true foundation is a good thing. The object of a bank is to collect small sums and lend them in large amounts. It brings the borrower and the lender together; but the Bill will not do that at all. It is solely intended to use the money in the Government Savings Bank to pay off the Treasury bills.

The COLONIAL TREASURER: No.

Mr. HARDACRE: Yes; and that is a great danger. I find that the total liabilities of the savings bank at present is £1,899,107. That is invested in this way—£940,499 is already invested in Government debentures; £225,000 is invested in Treasury bills; lent on mortgage, £300; and at fixed deposit in the Queensland National Bank, £520,000. That means that there is locked up a sum of £1,683,299, the liquid assets only amounting to £215,808. That being so, I strongly object to any more of the liquid assets being converted into fixed deposits in Queensland Treasury bills. If there was to be even a small run on the savings bank it would be impossible for the Government to pay the credi-

tors. If there is one thing we should see to it is that the savings of the people are ready for them whenever they go for them.

Mr. KINGSBURY: How would you pay interest if you keep the money in the savings bank?

Mr. HARDACRE: There is already £1,683,000 lent out, and the higher rate of interest at which it is lent enables the Government to pay interest on the whole amount. If there are no liquid assets it makes the bank utterly insecure.

The COLONIAL TREASURER: You defame everything. You cannot even let the Government Savings Bank alone.

Mr. HARDACRE: Not one word in my speech has defamed the bank.

The COLONIAL TREASURER: You are trying to create a scare.

Mr. HARDACRE: I am trying to do nothing of the sort. I say that at present the institution is secure; but if this programme is carried out it will not be secure, because there will be no liquid assets.

The Hon. J. R. DICKSON: It is reducing its deposit liability, and transferring it to stock.

Mr. HARDACRE: If we take the liquid assets, and place them at a more fixed deposit, how are the creditors to be paid? I know there is no rush at the present time, but that is because the people know their money is absolutely safe; but if we take away the liquid assets, then there may be a rush. That is the reason why I am opposed to the Bill. We ought to safeguard the savings bank as much as possible; and I think the present proposal is a danger to the institution. If it was for the purpose of getting investments outside the institution I should have no objection whatever, but it will cause those persons who have money in the institution to divert it into the purchase of Treasury bills. I think if it were proposed that £300,000 worth of savings bank money should be expended in the purchase of Treasury bills, every member would oppose it. This Bill proposes to do a somewhat similar thing, and for that reason I am opposed to it.

Mr. STEVENS: I think there is a great deal in the contention of the hon. member for Bulimba, that this will be the means of withdrawing large sums of money from circulation and having it locked up in a manner that it cannot be used as quickly as persons may desire. When I saw the Bill first I had that impression, and it has been confirmed by what fell from the hon. member for Bulimba, who may be considered an authority on the subject. The answer to his argument was that there was a certain amount of money not being used at the present time. That would only apply to the £70,000 deposited in the bank and on which no interest is payable. That money is undoubtedly placed there on account of the fear people have of investing it elsewhere, but before long confidence may be restored, and that large sum of money be put into circulation. I believe this Bill will induce people to withdraw their money from other financial institutions, and place it in Government funds. It would undoubtedly be perfectly secure so long as the Government had any assets, but it would not be so available as the money in the bank. We all know there are times of depression, when employment is scarce, and if persons invest their money in Government stock and wish to realise, they will only be able to do so at some loss, and the money lenders will reap a rich harvest. I am not quite convinced on this subject. I have my doubts, and if I felt a little more strongly than I do I should be inclined to oppose the Bill. At any rate, I hope the Government will agree to the amendment suggested by the hon.

member for Bulimba, that only a certain amount of money should be placed on the market annually.

Question put and passed; and the committal of the Bill made an Order of the Day for Monday next.

AGRICULTURAL LANDS PURCHASE BILL.

RESUMPTION OF COMMITTEE.

On clause 5—

Question—That the following words be added to the clause, "Provided that not more than £50,000 shall be available for this purpose in any one year without special appropriation by Parliament"—put; and the Committee divided:—

AYES, 21.

Messrs. Powers, Drake, Fisher, Jackson, Wilkinson, Browne, Dunford, McDonald, Turley, Dawson, King, Rawlings, Reid, Leahy, Kerr, Ogden, Boles, Hardacre, Cross, Archer, and Murray.

NOES, 26.

Messrs. Nelson, Barlow, Tozer, Philp, Dickson, Callan, Morehead, Cameron, McMaster, Watson, Morgan, Bell, Thomas, Dalrymple, Corfield, Armstrong, Crombie, Lord, Kingsbury, Midson, Battersby, Chataway, Smith, Agnew, Stephens, and Phillips.

Resolved in the negative.

Clause put and passed.

The Hon. J. R. DICKSON moved the following new clause, to follow clause 5:—

The total amount expended in payment for land under this Act shall not exceed, in any period from the 1st day of July in any one year to the 30th day of June in the following year, the sum of £100,000.

Mr. POWERS questioned whether the amendment meant anything. The object of the Committee was to limit the amount of the liability to be incurred in any one year; but debentures might be taken in exchange for land up to £300,000, on which only £100,000 might be paid. It would depend upon how the debentures were made payable.

The Hon. J. R. DICKSON thought the meaning was perfectly clear that the total amount to be expended in one year, whether the land was paid for in debentures or in cash, should not exceed £100,000.

Mr. POWERS said what he meant was that under the clause as proposed the Government might incur liabilities for the purchase of land to any amount by making only £100,000 payable in each year. He understood the Secretary for Lands to say that he was prepared to accept £100,000 as the limit of liability that could be incurred in any one year.

The SECRETARY FOR LANDS: I did say so.

The Hon. J. R. DICKSON said he would withdraw his clause to give way to the hon. member for Leichhardt, and would propose it later.

New clause, by leave, withdrawn.

Mr. HARDACRE moved a new clause to provide that the particulars of every contract involving in itself or in the aggregate with others an expenditure of more than £10,000 for any one piece of land, or adjacent portions of land, should, before the contract was entered into, be affirmed by Parliament. The purpose of the amendment was to provide some little safeguard, and prevent the Government giving a higher sum than £10,000 for any one piece of land without the knowledge of the House. He was not going to discuss the amendment, but would simply move it and go to a vote on it.

The SECRETARY FOR LANDS said that last night the Committee negatived a much wider proposal on the motion of the hon. member for Albert, and the present amendment was wholly inadmissible.

New clause put and negatived.

The Hon. J. R. DICKSON moved a new clause, providing that the total liability incurred

in the purchase of land under the Bill in any one year should not exceed £100,000.

New clause put and passed.

Mr. CURTIS moved a proviso to the last new clause providing that the amount of land unsold at any time, and held by the Minister under the provisions of the Bill, should not exceed in value £100,000. That would not limit the buying power of the Government so long as they could find purchasers for the land they bought. They could under the proviso buy £500,000 worth of land so long as they could get rid of it, but it would prevent a liability for perhaps £500,000 expended in the purchase of land which the Government might subsequently be unable to sell.

The SECRETARY FOR LANDS said the proposal to regulate the buying of land by the selling of it meant that the Government would have to look out for purchasers before they could buy land, and that would cripple the Bill. Such an amendment was unnecessary, as Parliament could review the doings of the Government every year, and could pull them up if they did anything wrong.

Mr. CURTIS pointed out that the Government was only limited to the expenditure of £100,000 in one year, and if they bought £100,000 worth of land and sold £50,000 worth they could then buy another £50,000 worth.

Mr. STEVENS thought the amendment was based on sound business principles. There were very few estates in any part of the colony which consisted entirely of first-class land, and would be likely to be sold at a paying price; and the probability was that, unless some safeguard like that contained in the amendment were adopted, portions of estates would be left on the hands of the Government from time to time, so that in the course of years they might have a considerable area unsold. The amendment would have the effect of making the Government more cautious in their purchases.

The Hon. J. R. DICKSON thought the amendment would cripple the operation of the Bill. The Government would not purchase small areas of land, but large estates; and if after they had bought £100,000 worth of land, and had sold £50,000 worth, they were offered an estate for £75,000 or £100,000, they would be debarred by the amendment from purchasing it. The limitation of the expenditure to £100,000 in any one year was quite sufficient safeguard without imposing such a condition.

The SECRETARY FOR LANDS said the clause meant that they should issue debentures for the purchase of land, and Parliament would have full control in the matter. Each year Parliament could ascertain how much land had been sold, and if it chose instruct the Government not to buy any more next year.

Mr. STEVENS: By passing another Act.

The SECRETARY FOR LANDS: Or by a resolution, which no Government would dare to disregard.

Mr. POWERS said if that was the only safeguard they might just as well adopt the amendment, which simply meant that the Government could buy as much land as they liked so long as they could find purchasers.

The SECRETARY FOR LANDS asked if the hon. member did not see that they would then have to get purchasers in advance? They would have to get a whole lot of purchasers on their books before they could buy land. However, if the Committee insisted on such an amendment, he had not the slightest objection.

Mr. POWERS said the Government would not have to look for purchasers, but could buy

£100,000 worth of land right off, and when purchasers were found for £50,000 worth they could buy another £50,000 worth.

The SECRETARY FOR LANDS said large estates could not be bought like a cabbage in the market, but would have to be bought when they were offered, and on the best terms the Government could get.

Mr. CROSS said there would be heaps of people ready to sell land to the Government, and get 4 per cent. interest. At present they could get nothing for land, and every time the Secretary for Lands spoke he was more convinced that he knew of many offers that would be made. The new clause proposed by the hon. member for Rockhampton was an excellent one, and had been moved by a thorough business man. The Secretary for Lands did not give the hon. member credit for sincerity, and treated the clause as nonsense. He seemed inclined to dictate to the House what should be done and what should not.

The SECRETARY FOR LANDS had no doubt he should receive heaps of offers from persons willing to sell land, but he was not going to take the first offer that was made. The Government would invest the money to the best advantage and drive the hardest bargains they could. When he was discussing the matter with the hon. member for Rockhampton he could understand what he was about, but he could not understand the finance of the hon. member for Clermont.

Mr. STEVENS admitted that the Secretary for Lands had been very long-suffering, and had shown a great amount of good temper, but still he must give hon. members credit for good intentions. He had not lost faith in the amendment by anything that had been said. It was not necessary that the whole sum should be spent on one estate. There might be smaller areas quite as good for the purposes of the Bill.

The SECRETARY FOR LANDS said it was not proposed that all the money should be put into one estate. It might be invested in three or four different portions of the colony. With a limit of £100,000 in one year and the sharp eye of Parliament, there would be a sufficient check upon the Government, who would have to inform them what had been done up to the end of each financial year. Then if Parliament were not satisfied it could put on the brake. There would not be such a craving for land that the Government would want to exceed the powers given by Parliament.

Mr. STEVENS did not think a resolution brought in to limit the power of Parliament would have the least chance of being carried. The Government could bring forward arguments that would be sound at the time, and say that there was a better chance of selling land in future, or point out that land was rising and should be bought at once.

Mr. CURTIS said in the other colonies where legislation of this kind had been passed the contracts made were provisional and depended upon ratification by Parliament. The Government here had a great objection to that, but it was desirable that some limit should be placed upon their power to pledge the credit of the country. The effect of his amendment was that the power of the Government to purchase land should be limited by their ability to sell it.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY did not think that a reasonable proposition. The same objections were offered when the Land-Grant Railway Act was before them. There was always a suspicion on the other side of the Committee that Ministers were not capable or were not honest in their conduct of affairs, but he had never found in the history of the colony any instance in which this limiting

power had to be exercised. If he thought there would be any danger it would be different. He could not see what harm there could be in the Government being empowered to purchase land to the extent of £100,000 a year under the provisions of the Bill. The effect of the proposition would be to so cripple the hands of the Government as to make the Bill worthless.

Mr. POWERS said that nobody ever mistrusted a Government more than the hon. member himself when in opposition. On one occasion he spoke seven hours against the administration with which he was now connected, and said he would not trust any Government with anything for unspecified railways, though they had to be submitted to the House afterwards.

The SECRETARY FOR LANDS said the hon. member for Maryborough was a member—or very nearly a member—of the Government that wanted the House to vote £1,000,000 for unspecified railways. The effect of the amendment would be to keep men waiting for land, and that was exactly what they did not want. The Government were responsible to Parliament every year, and that was a sufficient check.

Mr. MURRAY did not think it was desirable that the Government should be encouraged to go too extensively into the business. If they had no land of their own it would be different; but they had 400,000,000 acres to dispose of; and it was utter nonsense to buy private land. He did not see why any objection should be taken to the proposal of the hon. member for Rockhampton.

New clause put; and the Committee divided:—

AYES, 21.

Messrs. Archer, Curtis, Cross, Kerr, Ogden, Murray, Jackson, Boies, Hamilton, Browne, Reid, Stevens, King, McDonald, Powers, Dawson, Dunsford, Rawlings, Drake, Fisher, and Hardacre.

NOES, 30.

Messrs. Nelson, Barlow, Tozer, Dickson, Morehead, Philp, Watson, Thomas, Turley, Wilkinson, Battersby, Kingsbury, O'Connell, Callan, Cameron, Corfield, Bell, Dalrymple, Morgan, McMaster, Armstrong, Crombie, Foxton, Stephens, Chataway, Lord, Smith, Midson, Phillips, and Agnew.

Resolved in the negative.

On clause 6—"Owner may receive price by way of grants of Crown lands"—

The SECRETARY FOR LANDS said he proposed to negative the clause.

The HON. B. D. MOREHEAD said he hoped the clause would not be negated. By surrounding the clause with proper safeguards it would enable lands on the Darling Downs, say, to be exchanged for Western lands. He knew of cases in which individuals and companies had freeholds on the Darling Downs and also large leaseholds in the West, and it would be greatly to the interest of the State if those people and companies were given grants of land on their leaseholds in the West in exchange for freeholds on the Downs. He would not allow freeholds to be exchanged for land in the West on another person's leasehold, as that would be robbing Peter to pay Paul. He asked the Secretary for Lands to allow the clause to remain in the Bill. It was not a matter of compensation, but of contract. He would only allow the exchange in the case of a man who was in the dual position of a freeholder inside, where the land was required for close settlement, and also a leaseholder outside.

Mr. CURTIS said that the argument of the hon. gentleman practically meant that land in one division of the colony should be given for land taken back by the Government to the detriment of the State and of the district in which the exchanged land was situated. The people of the Central district knew that the evil of landlordism existed in the Southern division, and they objected to it being created in an intensified form in their district. If the proposal he had made the previous evening had

been agreed to, and the operations of the Bill had been confined to the South, the people in the Central and Northern divisions would have had no objection to the clause. But they certainly would object to the holders of land on the Darling Downs being paid by means of their land at the rate of five or six acres for every one acre on the Downs. He trusted the Government would adhere to their resolution to abandon the clause, otherwise it would give intense dissatisfaction to people in other parts of the colony. The best way to pay people for their land was by debentures.

Mr. BELL said the hon. member alluded to the Darling Downs as if it were an "awful example," and the only landlord-ridden district in the colony. A few months ago he was in the Central district, and passed through miles of alienated country between Clermont and Springsure which was quite equal to any on the Darling Downs, and he ventured to say that, if the people in the Central district ever got separation, the first thing they would do would be to make a similar proposition to that which the Government were now making—to buy back those lands. He agreed with the hon. member that there was no necessity for the clause, and if they passed it they would be laying in store for future generations the same difficulty as they were suffering under now.

The SECRETARY FOR LANDS said he had promised some hon. members that that clause should be negatived. The principle had been given up by the Government, and he trusted hon. members would come to a decision.

Clause put and negatived.

On the motion of the SECRETARY FOR LANDS, clause 7 was amended by the omission of the words "or by granting to the owner any Crown lands specified in the contract in exchange for the land so acquired."

Mr. CROSS said the principle involved in that clause was most vicious. It perpetuated an evil under which the people of the colony would be "sweated" to the extent of cent. per cent. in interest in less than twenty-five years. He protested against the clause. It was no credit to any Government which introduced it. He thought the Government ought to do exactly what the banks did—pay for the land by issuing credit against values.

The CHAIRMAN: I hope the hon. member will confine his remarks to the clause.

Mr. CROSS said he was endeavouring to do so, and thought he was perfectly justified in pointing out that the people of the colony would be weighed down and "sweated" to an enormous extent by the interest charges under the clause. He could back his objection to the clause by quoting those of the Premier.

The SECRETARY FOR LANDS pointed out to the hon. member that if the Government was going to be "sweated" at 4 per cent. they were going to "sweat" the purchasers at 5 per cent.

Mr. CROSS said that in 1891, when the same Bill was being debated, the Hon. B. D. Morehead expressed opinions precisely similar to those he had just set forth. [The hon. member read a passage from Mr. Morehead's speech showing that a transaction to the extent of £250,000 on those conditions would leave £7,500 as an additional burden on the taxpayers of the colony.] Perhaps the Secretary for Lands would sneer at that opinion also.

The SECRETARY FOR LANDS said he would not take the opinion of any man, not even of Mr. Gladstone, on a matter of that kind. If he could borrow money at 4 per cent. and lend it at 5 per cent., he would snap his fingers at all the political economists in the universe.

Clause, as amended, passed.

Clause 8 passed as printed.

On clause 9—

Mr. BROWNE moved that the following words be added: "Provided that the interest charge on all moneys expended under the provisions of this Act shall be charged to the account of the division of the colony in which the debt is incurred, under the provisions of the Financial Districts Bill of 1887."

The SECRETARY FOR LANDS said the amendment was not required. What the hon. member wanted would follow as a matter of course in the adjustment of accounts.

Amendment withdrawn; and clause put and passed.

Clauses 10, 11, and 12 passed as printed.

On clause 13—"Price at which land is to be sold"—

Mr. HARDACRE moved the omission of certain words, in order to substitute "leasehold" for "freehold." They were all aware of the evils that had resulted from the alienation of some of the best land in the colony, and if the clause were passed in its present form the evil would only be perpetuated. The adoption of the leasehold system would reduce the initial expenses of the selector very considerably. When a selector purchased land he had to pay a much larger sum at the first than he would under the principle of rental. At that late hour he would not discuss the question of leaseholds as against freeholds, but would leave the question to the Committee to decide.

The SECRETARY FOR LANDS said the amendment was totally opposed to the principle of the Bill and to the principle of all their land laws dealing with agricultural land. He could not accept it.

Question—That the words proposed to be omitted stand part of the clause—put; and the Committee divided:—

AYES, 30.

Messrs. Nelson, Barlow, Tozer, Stephens, Dalrymple, Chataway, Battersby, Watson, Lord, Archer, McMaster, Armstrong, Crombie, Callan, Corfield, O'Connell, Bell, Murray, Phillips, Cameron, Agnew, Morgan, Philp, Kingsbury, Smith, Foxton, Dickson, Morehead, Midson, and Hamilton.

NOES, 15.

Messrs. Boles, Curtis, Cross, Fisher, Dunford, King, McDonald, Reid, Dawson, Turley, Hardacre, Daniels, Ogden, Drake, and Kerr.

Resolved in the affirmative.

The SECRETARY FOR LANDS moved the clause in a modified form, so as to enable the land to be thrown open to conditional or unconditional selection, but to exclude it from the operation of section 74 of the Act of 1884, because the Government, purchasing land at £5 per acre, could not sell it at 2s. 6d. per acre.

Clause, as amended, put and passed.

On clause 14—"Annual rent"—

The SECRETARY FOR LANDS said he had previously mentioned that a mistake had been made in the Bill from which that was copied, as it contained the local works payments instead of advance payments. The payments under the Local Works Loans Act were made at the end of the year, and those payments would be made at the beginning of the year, which would save a year's interest. He moved that the clause be amended by omitting the words "eight pounds and sixpence," with the view of inserting "seven pounds twelve shillings and tenpence."

Amendment agreed to; and clause passed with a further consequential amendment.

Clauses 15 to 17, inclusive, put and passed.

Mr. TURLEY moved the following new clause:—

Within thirty days after the meeting of Parliament in each year a report shall be presented to both Houses of Parliament showing—

(a.) The locality and area of each block of land purchased under this Act, and the name of the person or company from whom it was acquired, the price paid for the same, and the valuation for taxation purposes as shown in the books of the local authority;

(b.) The report of the board upon each transaction, and the conditions of settlement of all land acquired under this Act.

New clause put and passed.

Clause 18 was amended by the substitution of the words “twenty-one” for the word “fourteen,” in the 1st line of the clause; and, as amended, put and passed.

Clause 19 was agreed to with an amendment omitting the word “unconditional,” in the 3rd line.

On the motion of the SECRETARY FOR LANDS, the schedule, as printed, was negatived, and a new schedule, which he stated had been certified to by the Auditor-General, was adopted.

The House resumed; the CHAIRMAN reported the Bill with amendments, and the third reading was made an Order of the Day for Monday next.

The House adjourned at eighteen minutes past 11 o'clock.