

Queensland



Parliamentary Debates
[Hansard]

Legislative Council

WEDNESDAY, 28 NOVEMBER 1894

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LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

WEDNESDAY, 28 NOVEMBER, 1894.

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

MANAGEMENT OF *HANSARD*.

The PRESIDENT announced the receipt of a message from the Assembly, requesting the Council to join in the constitution of a joint committee for the management of *Hansard*.

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL (Hon. A. J. Thynne) in moving that a reply be sent to the Assembly intimating that the Council concurred in the constitution of such joint committee, and appointed the Hon. A. C. Gregory, the Hon. A. Norton, the Hon. T. B. Cribb, and the Hon. A. J. Thynne to be members thereof; and that they named No. 1 Committee Room, Legislative Council, to be the place, and 2 p.m. on Friday, 30th November, to be the time of meeting, said: This committee is a joint committee, which has not been in existence before, but it is one which it is desirable should be brought into existence to take measures for improving, if possible, the reporting, printing, and circulating of *Hansard*. I hope the names I have submitted—all of the hon. members, I may say, have given their consent to act on this committee—will meet with the approval of the House. In regard to the last portion of the message, the naming the time and place for holding the first meeting of a joint committee is a matter that is left to this House to fix.

Question put and passed.

CHILDERS TO CORDALBA RAILWAY.

ADOPTION OF REPORT.

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL, in moving—

That the report of the select committee on the proposed extension of the Isis Branch Railway from Childers to Cordalba be now adopted—

said: The resolution arrived at is one that was unanimously come to by the members of the select committee, and the evidence given by the Chief Commissioner and the Chief Engineer, in addition to the information contained in the Chief Commissioner's report, justifies the conclusion that the committee have arrived at.

Question put and passed.

APPROVAL OF PLANS.

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL, in moving—

1. That this House approves of the plan, section, and book of reference of the proposed extension (Isis branch) from Childers to Cordalba, in length 7 miles 57 chains 11 links, as received by message from the Legislative Assembly on the 21st instant.

2. That such approval be notified to the Legislative Assembly by message in the usual form—

said: I may say that there can scarcely be two opinions as to the desirability of constructing this line. It is one of those lines that will conduce very much to increased traffic. It is a short extension of the line which now stops in the centre of the Isis Scrub sugar district. The Chief Commissioner, in his evidence, states that—

"The Commissioners really think that this is a most desirable extension of the Isis branch line, not only because of the present extent of the sugar industry, but also because of the amount of land that is being taken up just beyond what we call the boundary of sugar cultivation. We believe that this line will assist very materially the selectors in that district, and are very sanguine that the result will be all that we anticipate from it."

He states that this year the Commissioners have carried upwards of 20,000 tons of cane from the Isis. Hon. gentlemen will no doubt have read the evidence, and it is not necessary for me to quote further from it. The cost will not be very great, being at the rate of £4,194 per mile; and it is calculated that the returns will fulfil anticipations more than has been the case on any other line constructed in Queensland, and that the line will be a source of revenue to the Government.

Question put and passed.

SOUTH COAST DEVIATION.

ADOPTION OF REPORT.

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL moved—

That the report of the select committee on the proposed alterations (South Coast Line) between Boggo Road and Yeerongpilly Junctions be now adopted.

Question put and passed.

APPROVAL OF PLANS.

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL, in moving—

1. That this House approves of the plan, section, and book of reference of the proposed alterations (South Coast Line) between Boggo Road and Yeerongpilly Junctions, in length 2 miles 24 chains 70 links, as received by message from the Legislative Assembly on the 21st instant.

2. That such approval be notified to the Legislative Assembly by message in the usual form—

said: It has been our unfortunate experience that almost every slight flood in the river has stopped the traffic upon this line at one or two places near Fairfield. In fact, the Chief Engineer states that it only requires to rise 7 feet to cover the lowest part of the line, the consequence being that traffic on the lines has been constantly stopped at great public inconvenience. Apart from that there are a great many other elements in connection with this line to recommend it. Mr. Mathieson states that the deviation is likely to materially assist in the working of the line. The heavy gradients of 1 in 50 are to be cut down to a maximum of 1 in 80. It has been found necessary to divide heavy trains in order to get them into Woolloongabba. It is also proposed to duplicate the line between Boggo Road and Yeerongpilly Junctions, as the traffic is sometimes blocked on the single line. The work will not cost a great deal, the total cost being estimated at £7,000, which means an interest charge of £280 per annum, and the Commissioners consider it will be well worth the expenditure it will entail. One great element of saving will be that all level crossings will be avoided, which in themselves entail greater expense than the total amount of interest involved. It is anticipated that the traffic, apart

from the normal traffic which existed before the destruction of the Indooroopilly bridge, has increased very much on this line; and it is anticipated that the extension line along the wharves will still further increase it.

Question put and passed.

SOUTH BRISBANE WHARF EXTENSION.

ADOPTION OF REPORT.

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL moved—

That the report of the select committee on the proposed extension of the South Brisbane wharf line to Victoria Bridge be now adopted.

Question put and passed.

APPROVAL OF PLANS.

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL, in moving—

1. That this House approves of the plan, section, and book of reference of the proposed extension of the South Brisbane wharf line to Victoria Bridge, in length 58 chains 50 links, as received by message from the Legislative Assembly on the 21st instant.

2. That such approval be notified to the Legislative Assembly by message in the usual form—

said: This proposed extension is a very short one; the estimated cost of the line is £6,600. The interest charge will be about £260. It is very difficult to estimate the probable traffic; as the Commissioners say, it is to a certain extent problematical; but if hon. members consider the facilities which will be given to the shipment of cold storage exports and the shipment of wool and other produce from the wharves along the line they may reasonably anticipate that the line will be of service to the country, and that it will conduce to some more traffic upon the main lines. It is said by the Chief Commissioner that Mr. Geddes, who is forming the company to establish cold storage works on the Musgrave Wharf, is prepared to guarantee 500 tons of meat for the first year, which means not only 500 tons of meat carried over this three-quarters of a mile of railway but its carriage over a considerable portion of our main line. It is quite evident that if these cold storage works are established—as no doubt they will be—the construction of this short line will ultimately pay handsomely. The Chief Commissioner also refers to the possibility of other traffic being developed on this line. It may appear objectionable to have a line of this character crossing at a level a number of streets which run into the Brisbane River; but, as the Chief Commissioner explained, the line will be really an extension of the Woolloongabba shunting yard, enabling the Commissioners to shunt goods at a low rate of three or four miles an hour from the Woolloongabba yard on to the different wharves from which the goods are to be shipped. The question also arose in the committee whether the construction of the line would prevent a future extension of the dock. At present the dock is constructed to its full size, although the masonry does not extend to the full size at the Stanley-street end, the dock being simply excavated out of the solid rock. It is shown by the evidence of the Chief Engineer that it is quite feasible to extend the dock and still work the line over it by means of a drawbridge.

Question put and passed.

CLOSING OF IPSWICH LEVEL CROSSINGS.

ADOPTION OF REPORT.

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL moved—

That the report of the select committee on the proposed closing of certain level crossings in the town of Ipswich be now adopted.

Question put and passed.

APPROVAL OF PLANS.

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL, in moving—

1. That this House approves of the plan and book of reference in connection with the proposed closing of certain level crossings in the town of Ipswich, as received by message from the Legislative Assembly on the 21st instant.

2. That such approval be notified to the Legislative Assembly by message in the usual way—

said: This is a very small undertaking, which will cost only a few hundred pounds, and it is one which is strongly recommended by the necessity for providing for the safety of traffic as well as by the fact that it will effect a saving in working the lines in Ipswich. The Chief Engineer reports that the closing of these level crossings will be a great improvement from an engineering point of view. The Municipal Council of Ipswich is a consenting party, and the requirements of the street traffic are fully provided for.

Question put and passed.

MINERAL LAND (SALES) BILL.

THIRD READING.

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

PROBATE BILL.

THIRD READING.

On the motion of the POSTMASTER-GENERAL, this Bill was read a third time.

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL: It is necessary to amend the title of the Bill in consequence of amendments having been introduced affecting the Succession Act of 1867. I am not aware of any previous instance in which the title has been amended, but it is clear that no amendment can be made in committee; and the only course I can adopt is to move that there be added to the title the words "and the Succession Act of 1867."

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

The Bill was ordered to be returned to the Legislative Assembly, by message in the usual form.

RABBIT BOARDS ACT OF 1891 AMENDMENT BILL.

ASSEMBLY'S MESSAGE—COMMITTEE.

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL said the amendment made by the Assembly was purely formal, substituting the word "section" for "clause" in clause 18. He moved that the Committee concur in the amendment.

Question put and passed.

The House resumed; and a message was ordered to be forwarded to the Assembly, intimating that their amendment had been agreed to.

RECONSTRUCTED COMPANIES BILL.

The PRESIDENT announced the receipt of a message from the Assembly, returning this Bill with amendments.

Message ordered to be taken into consideration to-morrow.

RAILWAYS CONSTRUCTION (GUARANTEE) BILL.

The PRESIDENT announced the receipt of a message from the Assembly, forwarding this Bill for the concurrence of the Council.

FIRST READING.

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL: In moving that this Bill be read a first time, I will endeavour to give the House a short explanation of its objects. Practically it is to authorise local authorities to enter into guarantees with the Government for the interest on the cost of construction of railway lines made at their request. Under the Bill it will be competent for one or

several local authorities to join with each other in making a request and giving a guarantee. It is also competent for them to join with private firms or individuals to give a guarantee. The conditions upon which these lines are to be constructed is that there is to be a guarantee given that if and so often as the tolls, fares, rates, and charges levied and collected in any year shall amount to less than the cost of maintaining and working the railway during the year, together with interest at the rate of 4 per cent., then the local authority must make good the deficiency. Then the guarantee is to come into effect, and the local authorities and other persons joining in the guarantee are to make good the deficiency. Of course it is provided that if there is a surplus one year it is to go to the credit of the deficiency another year. Provision is made for making surveys, and plans are to be submitted to the local authorities, and then comes an important provision for the protection of the ratepayers. They have a right to demand a poll in the same way as when a local authority proposes to borrow money from the Government. The system which has been in force hitherto with regard to the restrictions on local authorities borrowing money for local works is to be applied to the question as to whether a local authority is to be permitted by its ratepayers to enter into a guarantee or not. That, I submit, is the only method by which the ratepayers can express their wishes—to veto, if they think well, any proposed guarantee. There is a further provision by which the betterment system is, to a certain extent, introduced into the Bill. The rate may be greater in the case of those most benefited, and less in the case of those not so much interested. Provision is made for enforcing the payment of the railway rate by the Commissioners. No endowment is to be paid in respect of railway rates. There is a provision with regard to keeping accounts and the application of the money. There is a further provision for adjusting the amount of credit to be given to any railway for traffic brought to trunk lines, and there is general provision for making regulations. I beg to move that the Bill be now read a first time.

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

CROWN LANDS BILL.

SECOND READING.

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL: I beg to move that this Bill be now read a second time. In explanation of it I desire to say that the first portion of the Bill proposes to make applicable to grazing farms the principle which has been adopted in the Act of 1884 and its amendments with regard to homestead selections—that is, to create a new class of selection which shall not contain in any one selection a larger area than 2,560 acres. The terms upon which these grazing farms may be taken up are as follow: The annual rent during the first ten years is to be 3d. per acre. The lessee is not to be at liberty for the first ten years of the lease, unless he dies and his executors come in, to exercise the right of transfer or assignment. Occupation may be performed after the ten years by the continuous and *bona fide* residence on the holding of the lessee for not less than six months in each year. That is really one attempt to induce a large class of people—carriers and shearers—to settle down on farms of small area, where they will be able to keep their stock and generally carry on their occupation without having to travel long distances away from the places where they are employed. There is one further important addition made in the 4th subsection of the 5th clause, which provides for a system of co-operation between a number of those small homestead

selectors. For instance, a number of carriers working on the same route may take up three or four or more grazing homesteads, and by special permission may obtain the privilege of fencing only the external boundaries of the whole of the adjoining areas. The condition of occupation under those circumstances may be performed by the residents upon one or more selections, but the number of selectors who are to be in actual occupation shall not be at any time less than half the whole number of the selectors to whom the special license has been issued. From time to time schemes have been brought forward by which it was hoped that what are at present more or less a nomadic class of people would have an opportunity of settling together in localities where they might be able to make a living during those portions of the year when they are not actually employed in their work of carrying or shearing. This proposal is one which has been strongly recommended as being the one most likely to be successful. No person who is the holder of an ordinary grazing farm will be allowed to take up one of these grazing homesteads. Clause 7 repeals and re-enacts with some amendments the provisions of the 36th section of the principal Act; that is a clause which deals with travelling stock. The principal alteration which is made in the law by this clause is that the law is to extend to not only drovers driving horses, cattle, and sheep but carriers, hawkers, or other persons driving cattle, sheep, or other live stock. It is also extended so as to include those portions of resumed areas of runs which are now held under occupation licenses. There is another important amendment dealing with the same subject. Where a fence has been erected on one side of the road, and there is a space between it and the nearest fence on the other side of the road at a distance of not less than one mile—if any question arises as to where the boundary of the road is—if there is a clear mile between the fences and no other barrier on the opposite side of the road, the stock have the whole width of that mile, but they are not to be allowed to enter upon the enclosed portions. The third amendment in the clause is an extension of the proviso that drovers, unless prevented by rain or flood, are to travel at least six miles in twenty-four hours. There is an extension of that with regard to hawkers, carriers, and other persons, who are allowed, if other unavoidable causes prevent them from travelling, to travel at less than six miles a day. Following that clause, which is one that will be of great benefit to a large number of people who travel, are a series of amendments in the principal Act and in the Acts of 1885 and 1886. Clause 8 is intended to prevent aliens taking up selections. At present it may not be found out, even when a deed of grant is applied for, that the selector is an alien, and it is not desirable for many reasons that aliens should be allowed to take up land. As an illustration of one inconvenience which may result from it, I may point out that by an oversight an alien may get on to a jury, and the discovery of the fact will involve the whole of the proceedings being rendered invalid. Section 9 gives the Land Board power to extend the time given to selectors to erect improvements from twelve months to two years in cases where from unavoidable causes selectors have not been able to make their improvements. From time to time the Minister for the time being has stretched the law and granted an extension beyond the twelve months, and it is now proposed to make it legal to do so. Section 10 is an amendment of the 74th section of the principal Act. Its object is to prevent an evasion of the law which is now capable of being worked. I intend to propose

a new clause which will be a considerable improvement upon clause 11, which would require one to refer to two if not three Acts in order to ascertain what it means. The 12th section deals with the period in which a mortgagee of a selection is to be allowed to remain in possession. In the principal Act, which is unnecessarily stringent, the time is twelve months, and it is now proposed to extend it to three years. Section 13 proposes a reduction of the minimum rent of grazing farms from $\frac{1}{2}$ d. to $\frac{3}{4}$ d. per acre. Land has not been of good enough quality to be taken up at $\frac{3}{4}$ d. an acre, so the minimum is to be reduced to $\frac{3}{4}$ d. an acre. In the principal Act there is a provision authorising the Governor in Council to dispose of lands in special cases without competition upon the recommendation of the Land Board. It is proposed in the 14th clause to extend the number of cases in which such permission may be granted. In cases where it is impossible owing to floods to reside on a holding, the grantee, licensee, or lessee, can purchase up to half an acre without competition for a residence area. The 15th clause does away with the minimum rent which the principal Act requires to be paid for special leases, leaving it to the Governor in Council to ascertain what is a fair rent in each case, as the rent hitherto has been so high as to be absolutely prohibitive of its being put to profitable use. The 16th section does away with what is practically a useless portion of our land Acts—that is the part dealing with land-orders. Of course the rights of holders of existing land-orders are fully preserved. The 17th section is another extension in favour of agricultural leaseholders. It extends the distance within which a man may hold a second area from ten to fifteen miles. The 18th and 19th sections deal with the destruction of "poison-bush." In the 20th section there is a slight alteration made in the 18th section of the Act of 1891. That Bill deals with the establishment of associations of co-operative settlers. The first paragraph increases the area which each settler can hold from eighty to 160 acres, and the second paragraph consequently doubles the area which each settler can represent from 160 acres to 320 acres. The 21st section gives right of priority to the person who first makes application for a certain piece of land to be thrown open. In the case of an agricultural farm the area shall not exceed 160 acres, and in the case of a grazing homestead 2,560 acres. It is provided that at the time he makes the application he must deposit a sum equal to $1\frac{1}{2}$ d. an acre in the case of a grazing homestead, as a proof of his *bona fides*; but as that is double the first year's rent, it is evident that it is a mistake, and I propose to move an amendment reducing it to $\frac{3}{4}$ d. an acre. The 22nd is another merciful clause, authorising the Minister to suspend the conditions of occupation for six months in any one year for devastation of the holding by flood, fire, or tempest, accident to or illness of the holder, or absence from the holding while *bona fide* earning wages elsewhere. Clause 23 provides that the lessee of an agricultural farm may increase his holding from 160 acres to 640 acres under the 74th section of the principal Act. Clause 24 enables the Land Board to allow a man who has had to forfeit one selection through unavoidable misfortunes to acquire another, not exceeding 160 acres. The 25th clause provides for the making of regulations prescribing fees. The next two clauses deal with the transmission without letters of administration or probate in cases where deceased persons are the holders of small areas. The 28th section defines the word "contiguous," and the last clause empowers the Government to issue deeds of grant in cases where it is proved that

such grants were promised by the Government of New South Wales, prior to the date of separation, to religious bodies. The clause has been inserted at the instance of one of the religious bodies in Ipswich, where it was found, although they had held the land for a great many years they had no deed of grant for it. There may be other cases, and this clause is introduced to enable the Government to carry out the promises made by the Government of New South Wales. In moving the second reading of a Land Bill, one always approaches the question with a certain amount of diffidence, because there is scarcely any subject upon which we are called upon to legislate in which there are so many difficulties. However, the Bill is one which, apart from the introduction of the new principle of grazing homesteads, makes several useful amendments which should commend themselves to this House. I move that the Bill be now read a second time.

THE HON. A. NORTON: I regret that so little time is allowed us for considering a measure of this kind. When the Act of 1884 was passed it was sought to so frame it that it should not be tinkered with, but that it should be for all time; but amendments have been made so frequently that, in looking hurriedly over this Bill, one is very apt, in referring to the sections in the other Acts which are dealt with, to refer to the wrong Act. In one section there is a reference to Part V. of the Act, and inadvertently I thought it referred to Part V. of the principal Act, which deals with occupation licenses, whereas it referred to Part V. of the Act of 1886, which deals with land-orders. That is one of the objections to rushing the Bill through hurriedly. So far as the general principles of the Bill are concerned I think it is a good measure. There is one thing, however, which strikes me as deserving of consideration. I suppose the Land Board can be trusted not to put the minimum price of these selections too low; but the Act of 1884 had the effect of seriously depreciating the value of freehold lands, owing to people being able to select land at a much lower annual rate under that Act than the interest on the money paid to acquire freeholds previously. A number of grazing farms taken up under the Act of 1884 have very much appreciated in value during the last few years; but by now reducing the minimum rent from $\frac{1}{2}$ d. to $\frac{3}{4}$ d. an acre the value of those lands may be greatly depreciated. There is also something which looks like an inconsistency in connection with grazing farms. I am told that it is the invariable practice of the Land Board to offer all forfeited grazing farms at double the rent previously paid; and we may safely presume that if a man forfeits land which he has taken up at $\frac{3}{4}$ d. an acre, he has done so because the land is not worth the rental he is charged. I do not intend discussing the Bill at any great length, because there is not a great deal in it with which I do not agree. There are some clauses in which alterations will have to be made. For instance, in clause 28, it refers to the "said section," although no section is mentioned. Generally I approve of the adoption of the Bill, but I think the more favourable conditions might have been extended to grazing farms already taken up.

THE HON. A. C. GREGORY: This Bill is evidently intended as an experiment, and it goes to the extreme verge of what it is possible to do in lowering the price of land for the purpose of encouraging Western nomads to settle on the land. That is a step in the right direction; but while the Government reduce the minimum for this new class of settlement from $\frac{1}{2}$ d. an acre to $\frac{3}{4}$ d. an acre, so depreciating the value of land, they ought also to consider those who have taken up land under previous Acts, and who pay

from $\frac{1}{4}$ d. an acre to over 1s. an acre. This is a question affecting the vital interests of the country more than the Government imagine. To a great extent the Bill will prove useless, because it will be impossible for a man to maintain himself and his cattle during the first two or three years in a great portion of the country on the area allowed. The Bill will only be availed of in those districts in which a man can maintain himself in average seasons—not such good seasons as we have had during the last three or four years. However, this Bill is an experiment, and I hope it will be successful. Even if it is only partly successful we may congratulate ourselves. At this period of the session it is far better to let the Bill go as it stands, and when we have seen how it works next session we may amend it where necessary. I am satisfied that the administration of the measure will have to be arbitrary, otherwise it will be of no benefit at all. I hope the Bill will pass, so that it may achieve what little success it is capable of achieving. I am satisfied that it will be necessary to amend it very considerably before it is made a really workable measure.

The HON. T. MACDONALD-PATERSON: I have not had time to study the Bill in conjunction with the many Land Acts on our statute-book. Their name is legion. The title of the Bill should be, "A Bill to further befog the land legislation of this country," because there is no selector, no grazier, no lawyer who has a thorough grip of our land laws. An hon. member in another place gave notice of a motion to appoint a Royal Commission to inquire into the land laws, and bring in a draft Bill codifying the law; and something of the kind is certainly wanted. There is a desperate rush of business during the last ten days, for which I do not blame the Government. If the other House wishes to rush the business through, they may do so, but it is desirable that we should have more time. Since the Bill was first introduced I have given it my attention, but so many amendments have been made that it is hard upon the intelligence of any man, between Friday and Wednesday, to make up his mind upon a question of such vital concern to all classes of settlers. This week is the *cul de sac* of the session. Calm, deliberate, wholesome, mental digestion of these matters cannot take place, I do not care how healthy a man is, particularly if he is distracted by other responsibilities. With regard to the reduction in the minimum rental, we have been pleading for that for years. One halfpenny an acre is 26s. 8d. a square mile, and yet in the *Government Gazette* land is offered at 5s. a square mile. The Hon. Mr. Norton and others know hundreds of square miles of country that has been fixed at $\frac{1}{4}$ d. per mile that is not worth $\frac{1}{4}$ d. I think the Government ought to have gone a little lower in the minimum price. Where country is open to selection as grazing farms, and does not even attract occupation licensees, then I say it is the duty of the Government, after it has been open for two or three years, to reduce the rent. We know of country which has been open for ten years which is only the haunt of vermin, reducing alike the value of the Crown interests and those of the surrounding settlers. We are told that the Land Board double the rent of land that has been forfeited. I would like to have those two gentlemen for five years on a grazing farm. I would like to see on the board men who have been practical squatters for fifteen years, then indeed they would have more appreciation of the disasters which have come upon the pioneers of this colony. Practical experience is what is wanted on the board; men who have been involved with their capital and credit and life and health and ability. Then indeed we would have a different appreciation of the circumstances of the

country. I am ashamed of the evidence I have seen taken at Blackall, which shows an absence of appreciation of the circumstances and of the market price of produce. Railway freights sink into insignificance compared with the non-appreciation of the circumstances of the Western country. The whole pastoral interest will break down because of that absence of sympathy which can only come with an intimate knowledge of the markets and producing countries of the world. This country has been cursed with Land Bills innumerable, and amending Bills and amendments upon amending Bills. The whole grazing interest is misunderstood, and it seems to me quite time that steps should be taken to put the whole question on a sound and strong foundation. I say, again, it is no concession to reduce the minimum price to $\frac{1}{4}$ d. an acre. The country I refer to will not be taken up at that price, but will still remain a depôt for the wallaby to prey and disseminate its kind throughout the areas occupied by the struggling settlers. I shall not make any objection to the passing of the Bill. The Government are responsible for its introduction, but I do not think it is quite fair to this Chamber, composed of colonists of large experience, and men who have not jumped in here as newchums and become members of Parliament, to ask them to deal with such a matter so rapidly. We understand from long experience the questions we are discussing, and I am sure the opinions of hon. members here should be respected elsewhere, and I am sure will be respected in the country. We are surely entitled to have a few days for consideration of so important a matter as this. I discard the responsibility of putting my imprimatur on this Bill, simply because I have not had time to digest it, or to wade through the different sections of the existing laws, which are numerous, and see how they are affected by the clauses of this Bill. Doubtless the Postmaster-General has assimilated the changes, and I believe he would not advocate a measure that he did not think worthy of our consideration; but I do protest against this inrush of legislation, and if this sort of thing were to go on I would not hesitate to write out my resignation. If we are to be limited in our time, and hastened in our judgment when debateable matters come before us, and if it goes away from this Chamber undebated and undigested it is unfair to the other Chamber and the country. I am very glad to see section 15 introduced into the Bill, as it repeals a provision which, as the Postmaster-General says, has acted injuriously. Clause 18, I think, is an excellent provision. The country infested with the poisonous plant should be attacked. I should not have risen to speak at all but for the reason that I wished to enter a protest against what appears to be impetuosity in legislation. I do not wish to hamper the Government. The hon. gentleman will have my cordial support in putting the Bill through; but I think it right to put on record these views. As far as I am concerned there is no time to digest the Bill, and I pass it simply because the Government desire it, and the Assembly has sent it to this House.

The HON. F. T. BRENTNALL: I must confess to a considerable amount of sympathy with some of the remarks that have fallen from hon. members with regard to the sudden and serious inrush of business to this Chamber during the last few days. It is highly unjust to this Chamber. I do not think it at all fair to attach blame to the Government. It was utterly impossible during the early portion of the present session, and for two or three months, to expedite business in another place. There is no necessity for going into the cause of the delay, but it has taken place, with the serious consequence that at

the end of a long session there is to be an impetuous rush of business to which no justice can be done in this Chamber. I have noticed for weeks past that there was an amount of business to be done that could not be proceeded with in consequence of delays in another place. Four times, I think, this House has had to adjourn for a fortnight because there was no business before us. I am quite sure that express speed in legislation is not advantageous, and I cannot see why we should be called upon to deal with these measures in a summary way in order that Parliament may adjourn in three or four days. We had much better take a week or two longer and digest the matter before us, and seriously consider where legislation is leading the country. The interests of the country devolve quite as much upon the intelligence and integrity of this Chamber as upon any other part of Parliament, and it will not do for us to neglect any part of the responsibilities that devolve upon us because, for some reason not quite apparent, it seems desirable that Parliament should close this week. I thought we showed a little undue haste yesterday. One or two Bills were passed in a very summary manner, which ought to have had more consideration and discussion. This is an important measure now before us, and should not be passed as a matter of course, simply because it is desired to hasten the conclusion of the session. No doubt the land legislation of this colony is very complex. We have a Crown Lands Bill before us, and we shall have a Pastoral Leases Extension Bill next. We have grazing homesteads dealt with in one Bill, and grazing farms in another, and they are both Orders of the Day for the same day. In 1890 there was an Act to amend the Pastoral Leases Act of 1869; in 1892 a further Act for the same purpose; a Crown Lands Act was passed in 1884; an amending Act in the following year; another amending Act in 1886, and a further amending Act in 1889; another in 1891; a Crown Lands Bill in 1892, and now two Bills dealing with the land laws. I think all this land legislation tends to "make confusion worse confounded." It will be a happy day for the colony when the Government see their way to bring in a consolidation Bill, so that the whole of the land legislation can be embodied in one statute. I hope we shall take our time and consider carefully these important Bills. We shall be doing not only our duty but be conferring a benefit on the country by not too hastily passing the measures brought before us.

The HON. J. LALOR: I look upon this Bill as one of the most liberal measures ever introduced. Under it a grazing homestead can be taken up for 3d. per acre, but I think it is very unfair to those who have already taken up land. For instance, some are paying 6d. per acre a year; others 3d. and 4d., and some 1s. 4d. It will be very unfair to those men when they have grazing homesteaders alongside of them paying only 3d. per acre. I should like to see those who are now paying high rents allowed to take up land under the provisions of this Bill, just as the people who were under the 1876 Act were allowed to come under the operation of the Act of 1884. I notice 2,560 acres is to be the area allowed in the Western country. That area will depasture about 130 head of cattle or 1,000 sheep. Suppose four men join together, they can take up about 10,000 acres, and two of them can fulfil the conditions of residence, while two go to work. That is most liberal, but I lay particular stress on the fact that it is unfair to those who have to pay a higher price. I know a man who was prepared to take up 60,000 acres on a resumed area at £8 a square mile, but under this Bill it is proposed to give the land for £2 a square mile. As to the

provision relating to carriers, I have never known them in any way harassed by pastoral lessees; and as to keeping within a mile of the road, I have known their cattle stray ten miles in a night. Altogether, I believe the Bill is a good one, and I do not desire to offer any objection to its passing.

The HON. C. H. BUZACOTT: I concur to a large extent in the observations which have fallen from members who have spoken previously. It seems rather farcical that the representative of the Government should move the second reading of a Bill, making a long explanatory speech of its provisions, which it is impossible for us to discuss. We have a serious responsibility thrown upon us to determine whether we shall accept all these Bills that have come in upon us, or refuse to pass them without careful consideration. I think we are placed in a somewhat difficult position, but at the same time I would point out that the measure before us is a very simple one indeed, with the exception of the clause which provides for grazing homesteads. The whole of the amendments are such as might have been made were a reasonable state of things existing here by departmental regulations. They are all matters of detail in the administration of the law, and it is very unfortunate that so much suspicion attaches to the administration of our land laws that not a single detail can be altered by the Governor in Council, but that every change required must be submitted to the legislature. Of course we can complain of this state of things, but cannot alter them. It must be remembered when considering this measure that although it appears intricate to us, who have to compare clause with clause of the existing and proposed legislation, yet it will not present itself in that way to the public. The Act of 1891 authorises the Government Printer to publish the Land Act with the clauses as they have been amended, and that can be done now, so that the outside public will not be confused as to the exact law. This principle of publishing Acts as amended has been adopted in the Imperial legislature of late years. The grazing homesteads are the only new feature in the Bill, and it is desirable that some inducement should be given to those who are wandering about the West to obtain homesteads on which they can do more for the advantage of the country than by continuing their nomadic existence. I notice that the rent which is to be imposed is not to be more than £2 a square mile, whereas it is usual to provide that it shall not be less than a certain amount. No matter how good the land may be the rental for the first ten years is not to bear a rental greater than £2 a square mile. There is a good deal in what has been said by the Hon. Mr. Lalor. The low rent will cause discontent among other settlers, and there will be an irresistible demand next year to get pastoral and grazing rents reduced. How the Treasury can afford that I do not know. We want to get increased revenue from the land. I think, although the Premier gave the deputation which waited on him no encouragement to hope for reduced rents, that they made out a case for consideration for one year, and almost simultaneously with that answer by the Premier we find this Bill introduced offering these grazing homesteads at reduced rents. Although there may not be many besides carriers who will take advantage of the Bill, it will make other settlers feel that they are not receiving fair treatment. That question deserves very serious consideration. It would be unfortunate if this House refused to acquiesce in the Bill, and I am sure that will not be done. Considering the rapid changes in a country like this, I think thirty years is too long a period for these leases. It is true there are conditions as to residence and

improvements for the first ten years, but at the expiration of that term there is nothing to prevent these holdings getting into the hands of large holders. The improvements will not be very expensive, and will probably be only of a temporary nature, and seeing that they have to be paid for by the incoming tenant, fifteen years is quite long enough to lock up the land. The Bill, although there are some minor matters to amend, is a very desirable one, and one that we can very safely pass. At the same time I protest against the rush of business.

The HON. P. PERKINS: The last two speeches fortify what I said yesterday. I am not going to argue about the abusive treatment I received from hon. members then. I claim to know a little about the land question, and I contend that there are enough facilities in the present law for settling on the land. Instead of puzzling people with more Land Acts, it would be better to let them alone. I never had any trouble in settling people on the land, and all this legislation is unnecessary. It depreciates the value of all property, having all these Bills passed; and the more that are passed, the greater the doubt raised in the minds of people. Wherever you go you find that people who are competent to express an opinion, hold that in Queensland all our legislation tends to cause doubt in the minds of the people. Hon. members owe me an apology for the way in which they treated me yesterday when I raised this question.

The HON. F. CLEWETT: The hon. gentleman takes some credit to himself for the character of this debate, but we have all been under the impression that too much is expected of this House within the limited time supposed to be at its disposal to consider these measures. In my remarks yesterday I did not take exception to what the hon. gentleman said about rushing legislation through this House, but to the manner in which he made his remarks; and the hon. gentleman appears to recognise to-day, from the manner in which he has now spoken, that a certain respect, if not due to the House, is due to himself. If he will refrain from such remarks as he made yesterday he will always get a patient hearing. I entirely agree with everything that has been said in protest against the manner in which business is being sent up to us. Possibly hon. members in another place have more than enough time for discussing the various measures from their point of view, and they appear to expect us to deal with them also from their point of view without consideration. I am not prepared to be a party to that. If we want time to discuss any measure, we should take it. I have seen most important measures rushed through with scarcely a word of comment except from the hon. gentleman in charge of the Bill. That does not tend to maintain the dignity of this House, nor is it in accordance with its traditions. We should take full time for consideration of every question which comes before us, or else let them stand over. I hope this discussion will have the effect of awakening hon. gentlemen to the importance of the position which they occupy. I am astonished that it has taken until now for hon. gentlemen to see that our land legislation is trending in the direction of depreciating values. This is a matter which presented itself to me a very considerable time back. I am not prepared to say that it may not be a desirable thing. The Act of 1876 had the effect of depreciating the value of freeholds, and it has been the tendency of every Act since then to depreciate values, although I never heard the matter alluded to forcibly before this afternoon. With regard to the value of land, I have long held the opinion that land is of no value unless some return is got from it, and if I were sure that

people would put the land to a good use I would give it to them for nothing, as there would be a greater revenue derived through other sources than would be obtained in rent. The object of the present reduction is to induce people in the West to settle on the land. I take it that there is sufficient inducement at present for people to take up coast lands in comparatively small areas; but this Bill is intended to give people in the West an interest in the country which they are not considered to have at present. I agree with that principle; and we would not lose anything if the rent was made still lower. Land that may be taken up under this Bill would not probably, under existing circumstances, be occupied for close settlement. I am not at all sure that the area is not unnecessarily large, because in many cases failure is due to men having taken up larger areas than they are able to profitably work. I do not expect that many besides carriers will take advantage of the Bill; but I shall be pleased if the Western workers take up land under it. The Hon. Mr. Lalor said that the area mentioned in the Bill is sufficient to keep 130 head of cattle. That is more than carriers keep for working purposes. He also said that it would carry 1,000 sheep. Well, if several men combined under the co-operative system, they could keep 3,000 or 4,000 sheep; and that is a method of settlement that should be encouraged. One question that will have to be taken into consideration later on is that of water. The men for whom this legislation is intended will not have sufficient funds to provide for water, and some provision will have to be made. If that is done, it will have a very marked effect on the settlement under this Bill, because there are large areas of country entirely suitable for settlement, except in the matter of water. The clauses, as a whole, are satisfactory, though there will have to be some minor amendments. Clause 14, for instance, provides that when a man's holding is liable to inundation he shall be able to acquire half an acre for a homestead; but that area is altogether insufficient for the purpose. It is not too much for his house alone, to say nothing of the outhouses he requires. I would be inclined to make the area ten acres, if the land is available. When we get into committee I shall be prepared to move an amendment to clause 14 in the direction I have pointed out. Referring to clause 16, as to which the Hon. Mr. Norton made some remarks regarding repeals, it has occurred to me, in connection with these Bills as submitted to us, that if a system were introduced by which we might be able to see what it is proposed to do with regard to repeals, and what is to be substituted for them, it would make the matter much clearer. I have put on paper a suggestion for the purpose which I will submit to the Postmaster-General, not with the view of its being given effect to this session, but with the view to something being done in this direction in the future. Clause 24 seems to me to be one which requires some consideration. It imposes conditions which I think are unnecessary on selectors who have already held land in fee-simple, have parted with the land through no fault of their own, and wish to acquire land under this Bill. I take it that the fact of a selector having obtained his deed of grant may be assumed as proof that if any conditions surrounded the possession he had complied with those conditions, otherwise he would not have obtained his deed. That being so, I do not understand why conditions should be attempted to be imposed on the man who has complied with the requirements on a previous occasion in connection with further land selection. If a man has complied with all the conditions and

obtained his deed of grant, and parts with his interest in that land, why should he not be able to go into the market and become a selector or owner without having to ask permission, which is practically the effect of this clause? First of all the applicant has to prove certain facts to the Land Board, on which a certificate is granted. Then, if such certificate is confirmed by the Minister, the applicant shall be competent to acquire in fee-simple a grant of an additional holding not exceeding 160 acres. It seems to me that, having complied with all the conditions in the first instance, got his deeds, and parted with them, he is quite as competent to become a selector again as a man who has never been a selector under any previous Act. I do not see why he should be harassed by conditions of any sort. When we get to clause 25 in committee, I should like to ask what is the meaning of an under-lease. It is a term of which I do not quite understand the meaning. I will not detain the House any longer now. I shall have some further remarks to make on the subject in committee, and shall be prepared to move the amendments I have indicated in clause 14, and probably in clause 24. With regard to the suggestion I referred to about repeals and part repeals of sections of Acts proposed to be dealt with, and which are very confusing when submitted in this manner because it entails a loss of time to hon. gentlemen who are not conversant with the statutes, I will offer the suggestion to the Postmaster-General; and if he can see his way to adopt it I shall be gratified in having concurred to the better understanding of business, and possibly the expediting of business when it comes before us.

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

PASTORAL LEASES EXTENSION ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

SECOND READING.

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL: In rising to move the second reading of this Bill, I may explain shortly its provisions and its objects. It is an amendment of the Pastoral Leases Act passed in 1892. The 2nd clause is an amendment of sections 4 and 5 of the principal Act, and the effect of the amendment is to give the holders of runs another year within which to put up their rabbit fences, on the ground of which they make the claim for the extended lease. Section 4 of the principal Act refers to lessees holding under the Crown Lands Act of 1884, and section 5 to those who hold under the Pastoral Leases Act of 1869, to whom the same privilege is given. It has been found that the period originally intended was scarcely sufficient to allow the pastoral tenants to really complete the fencing which was necessary to entitle them to this privilege. Similar provisions are intended to be introduced by clause 3, in relation to grazing farms. The grazing farmer will be entitled to an extension of his lease for five years if he complies with the conditions. The 4th clause is a repeal of section 7 of the principal Act, and it provides that in the case of every grazing farm selected after the 1st November, 1892, the fence with which the holding is required to be fenced under the provisions of the Crown Lands Acts shall be of such a character as to prevent the passage of rabbits. The other section rather misplaced the order of events, because the selector of a grazing farm is not entitled to a lease until he has complied with the conditions of fencing. The section has been found to work awkwardly in one or two instances, and, the defect having been pointed out, this clause proposes to remedy it. Clause 5 enables the holders of two or more con-

tiguous grazing farms, not exceeding four, to fence only the external boundaries of the whole area comprised in the several farms. For this purpose the lessees have to obtain a special license from the Land Board. On obtaining the license, if they surround the whole of their holdings with a suitable rabbit fence, the condition of fencing will be considered as having been complied with. The Bill is one of the measures we have been submitting for some time in our war against the rabbit invasion, and it is to be hoped it will have some effect in resisting their incursions. I move that the Bill be read a second time.

The HON. F. CLEWETT: In dealing with this rabbit question, it seems to me that we are considerably in the dark. I do not know that any of us here has any personal or practical experience in the matter, so that we are left to a large extent in the hands of the framers of the measures. I assume—I do not know whether the assumption is correct—that those measures are prepared at the instance of men who are experienced in the matter. It seems to me that to make a hard-and-fast rule with regard to time in dealing with these fences may not always be found to work satisfactorily. It appears to me that if discretion as to time were left in the hands of the local boards possibly in some cases a more satisfactory result would be obtained. In some instances it may be necessary to push on the fencing more quickly than the occupant of the run or the grazing farm is prepared to do, for various reasons, and the result might be that the effect of the Act would be frustrated. If it was at the discretion of the board that a man should get notice to complete his fence within a less time than is specified in the Bill, possibly a better result might be obtained from the proposed legislation. I merely throw out the suggestion. I have no practical acquaintance with the position, but it seems to me that leaving the matter in the hands of the local boards would bring about a better result than the hard-and-fast rule proposed by the Bill.

The HON. A. NORTON: So far as the pastoral lessees are concerned, there can be no objection to the Act. But why should it be made to apply to all grazing farms taken up after the 1st November, 1892? There is a great deal of country where there can be no incursion of rabbits for many years. Allowing that rabbits are spreading as rapidly as they are said to be, still there are many portions of the country where there can be no rabbits for a very long time. Why are we to force on the grazing farmers who may take up land after that date in those places to put up rabbit-proof fences? That is what I cannot understand. A rabbit-proof fence only lasts a certain number of years. In some places it will last longer than in others. The nearer the sea the sooner it will go, on account of the action of the salt water on the galvanised wire. I cannot imagine why grazing farmers all over the colony should be compelled to erect a rabbit-proof fence.

The Hon. E. B. FORREST: It is not compulsory.

The Hon. A. NORTON: It seems to me, according to the wording of the clause, that it is compulsory. May I ask the Postmaster-General if that is the case?

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL: The Act of 1892 provides that all grazing farms taken up after that date shall be taken up subject to the condition of erecting rabbit-proof fences. That is continued under this Bill. The grazing farmers are not put in a worse position than they occupied before.

The Hon. A. NORTON: That is one of the objections to bringing in a number of these Bills at once. I do not blame the Postmaster-General;

he understands that perfectly well. We cannot have time to go through them properly. Until shortly before the House met yesterday I was under the impression that we had to discuss the report of the joint committee on the Railway Commissioners, and spent my time in going through the report until we met here. The consequence is that when all these Bills are thrown on our hands at once we are very apt to be led into error. I do not care whether this Bill introduces a new principle or not. I say that all grazing farmers ought not to be compelled to put up rabbit-proof fences. If they have to do it now, the Act wants to be amended so as to enable them not to do it unless there is reason to expect the rabbits will come upon their selections in a comparatively short time. I do not want to detain the House, but I should certainly like to get the facts of the case a little more clearly than I do at present. To compel grazing farmers to erect rabbit-proof fences in places where no rabbits can come for years is exceptionally hard, not only on them, but on the pastoral lessees whose boundaries may be contiguous, because they will be obliged to pay for half of that rabbit-proof fence whether it is of any use to them or not.

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

MEAT AND DAIRY PRODUCE ENCOURAGEMENT ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

SECOND READING.

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL: This is a Bill to graft another principle on the Meat and Dairy Produce Encouragement Act of last year. In the first place it is proposed to initiate the system of offering a bonus for the manufacture and export beyond the colony of dairy produce. And here I would point out that there is one amendment which it will be very desirable to make. In the 3rd clause the words are used, "who exports the same to a market outside of Queensland." It should be to any market outside of Australia, otherwise our dairymen will be entitled to a bonus on all the butter they send to Sydney or Melbourne or anywhere in the colonies, which would not be a wise or a judicious thing to do. I shall propose in committee to substitute "Australia" for "Queensland." Under such a system as is proposed there must, as a necessary consequence, follow a system of inspection. It is a very vital part of the scheme, and one that ought to be strictly carried out. The first ten clauses deal practically with the methods by which this system of bonus is to be carried out, the power to make regulations, the mode of payment of bonus, the bonus itself, the appointment of inspectors, and the application of the moneys standing to the credit of the dairy fund. It is provided that one-fourth of such moneys shall be applied to the erection of factories, and the remaining three-fourths in payment of the bonus for the export of dairy manufacture; but it is provided that the operation of this provision shall only apply to the Southern district of the colony, as defined by proclamation under the principal Act. We have already in the Southern district a considerable number of factories at work, and it is believed that they are so well established as to stand in little need of further assistance. Under that Act the assessment became payable at the end of 1893, and another one, strictly speaking, should have become payable at the beginning of 1894, so that there would have been two payments almost within the year. It is proposed to alter the termination of the year in such a way as to allow of payments being made within a

reasonable time after the annual returns are sent in. The 13th clause substitutes a more convenient period for the date of payment than is provided in section 5 of the principal Act. The 14th clause provides for allowing interest on the balances standing to the credit of the funds, and there is a small provision with regard to the date upon which interest will become payable. There is an important provision in clause 16 that the Governor in Council may authorise the spending, in places outside the colony, of money standing to the credit of the meat and dairy funds for purposes that will be conducive to the encouragement of the export of meat and dairy produce. That is a useful provision to prevent the blocking of our products in other parts of the world. I beg to move that the Bill be now read a second time.

The HON. A. NORTON: I believe this is the Bill of the session. It just shows what may be done by putting through Bills with too little attention. The 7th clause provides that stampers and inspectors may be appointed, who are to be paid by moneys derived from these funds. The 9th clause provides that the money standing to the credit of the meat fund is appropriated for the payment of fees and salaries for inspection and stamping, and the money to the credit of the dairy fund is appropriated for the purpose of any bonus fees or salaries. The 16th clause provides for spending money out of the colony for any purpose conducive to the encouragement of the export of meat and dairy produce; and if we turn to the 8th clause we find that the dairy fund is to be applied—one quarter to the erection of factories, and three-fourths for the payment of bonuses and for no other purpose. Now if the whole of the fund is going to be devoted, one quarter for one purpose and three-fourths for another, where does the money come from to pay the inspectors and the other purposes for which money will be required? I think there is something wrong about the Bill in that respect. The 9th clause is quite at variance with the 8th. Then, again, if we look at the 12th clause we see that it says "there shall be raised, levied, collected, and paid in each of the years one thousand eight hundred and ninety-three," etc. That money is collected already; and why should we make it leviable now?

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL: This clause is simply substituted for what is now in the other Bill.

The HON. A. NORTON: I am not so farseeing as to see that. This substitutes a clause for one which exists already, and the operation of which has ceased to exist. I never heard of an Act being amended in that way before. It may be quite right, but it is misleading. We find the same thing in the 13th clause. The amount payable by each owner of cattle and sheep under this Act during the year 1893 shall be paid by him into the Treasury. That also deals with the past as though it were the future. I do not think any intelligent person would understand it without explanation.

The HON. F. CLEWETT: I think there is something in the contention of the Hon. Mr. Norton. I confess I was somewhat fogged when I first looked over these clauses, and could not understand the object of introducing 1893 into a Bill proposed to be passed at the end of 1894. I observed that 1894 was left out altogether from clause 12, and, assuming there was some object, I sought for information, and I think I understand the position now. The object of leaving out 1894 is that the method of collecting the assessment is altered. Previously it was supposed to be collected on the 31st December, on the returns made in the previous January. That was discovered to be a hardship, and impracticable in application.

Last year the method of making the stock returns was altered, and the assessment is now collected in connection with the returns under the Stock Assessment Act. Instead of the 31st December the assessment is payable at the end of the following January or within one month after that.

The HON. J. COWLISHAW : It appears to me that under clause 13, if any person has not paid his assessment on the 31st December, 1893, he has incurred a penalty of £5 for every day since that time. Surely that cannot be intended, although it appears to be the meaning of the clause.

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

LOAN BALANCES DIVERSION BILL.

SECOND READING.

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL : I rise to move the second reading of this Bill. I took occasion on the first reading to make an explanation of the measure, and, as it appears to me it is really a formal matter dealing with the method of keeping accounts and the disposal of the surplus balances, it is not necessary for me to detain the House any further.

The HON. F. CLEWETT : I would like to raise a question with regard to boundaries. I believe this is considered to be a formal matter, but being identified with the Central district I should like to have it on record from the Minister that the boundaries referred to here will not be made a precedent in regard to any legislation which may be required in connection with any other business as applied to the Central or other districts.

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

QUEENSLAND COAST SURVEY BILL.

SECOND READING.

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL : I have already explained to the House, on the first reading, that this is a Bill to authorise the Government to enter into a contract with the Admiralty for the continuation of the Queensland coast survey. It is a saving of expense to us, and it can be just as well done under the new arrangement as under the old. I beg to move that the Bill be read a second time.

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

AGRICULTURAL LANDS PURCHASE BILL.

SECOND READING.

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL : This Bill is a very important one, and I have no doubt it has received the attention of hon. members. As I have clearly explained it on the first reading in as full detail as I think necessary, I will content myself by formally moving that it be now read a second time.

The HON. A. NORTON : I would like to refer to the interpretation to be put on the term "agricultural land." We know that under the Act of 1884 an agricultural farm does not necessarily consist of land fitted for agriculture. The object of this Bill is to enable the Government to secure lands fitted for agriculture and no other; but, considering we have that misused term in the Act of 1884, there ought to be a definition of the word "agricultural," in order to prevent any confusion between the land to be dealt with under this Bill and what are called "agricultural farms" under the Act of 1884. If it is definitely laid down that the land to be purchased by the Government is to be land

which is adapted only for agriculture, then there can be no mistake, but unless that is done it may place some person who has the administration of the Act and who is not acquainted with the circumstances in a difficulty, or if he wished to evade the intention of the Act it might lead him into accepting lands which were totally unfit for agriculture. I have no objection to the Bill otherwise, but I point that out so that no loophole shall be left by which difficulty may arise in future.

The HON. F. CLEWETT : Hearing what we have heard in connection with land legislation, it seems to me it is a system of loopholes. I must say I do not like the principle of this Bill at all. It is an extraordinary thing to me, when dealing with the land question, that we cannot arrive at a definite conclusion without going in for everlasting amendments. Under previous land legislation there must be a large quantity of land falling in which might be made available for operations intended to be provided for by this Bill. It would appear as though people's minds were altogether directed towards the Darling Downs. Surely there must be other parts of the colony available for agricultural settlement. I believe, if land were offered in other suitable localities, the Government would take it up; but it would appear as though this Bill were intended exclusively for the Darling Downs. This is not the first time we have had legislation of this character submitted, and I have never seen it indicated that any other part of the colony was intended. Is there any certainty that the end of this legislation will be what is anticipated? As far as I see, this is purely experimental legislation; and I think it would have been wise to have limited the amount of the purchase in any one year to £50,000 or even a lesser amount, and if the experiment were a success it could be extended. I think, however, that our first operations should be of a cautious character. If it were possible, I agree with the Hon. Mr. Norton that it would be well to lay down a definition of what are agricultural lands. The colony ought, if possible, to be safeguarded from getting into its possession land which would be totally unsuited for the purposes contemplated by the Bill, because in any large area there is almost sure to be some portion which is not agricultural land. From the discussion which took place in another place it seems that there is a demand for something to be done in the Southern portion of the colony in this direction; but whether the operations of the Bill will be conducive to the advancement of the rest of the colony is an open question. I do not raise the question of locality when the general welfare of the community is at stake, because, if one part of the colony is benefited, necessarily other parts must also be benefited, although not in the same degree. At any rate, no injury will be done them. If the Bill becomes law and its operations prove successful, I shall be very glad. I shall not oppose its passage, although I shall be pleased if some safeguard is inserted in regard to the matters to which I have referred.

The HON. G. W. GRAY : I think that clause 5 fully meets the difficulty raised by the two last speakers, as that clause says that the land offered is to be suitable for agricultural settlement. This is one of the best Bills that has been introduced in this colony for inducing settlement. Twenty-four years ago the population of Queensland was 100,000, and now it is only 400,000. This Bill will cause a rapid flow of population from the southern colonies. Already I am aware that a number of people are only waiting until the Bill is passed to take advantage of its liberal provisions. I know of many people from South Australia who are leaving North

Queensland owing to the cost of bringing the scrub lands under sugar cultivation, and those people will gladly settle on the agricultural land in the South, where they have simply to put the plough in, and where there is a better climate. The small prices of agricultural produce will not deter them from making homes in this colony, which even at the present rates is far ahead of South Australia. In the best seasons there the yield of wheat per acre is six or seven bushels to the acre, while twenty bushels is a very ordinary yield on the Downs. The price of the land with interest will only be about £3 an acre. Before long many agriculturists will have to leave the southern colonies, and I am not the least afraid but that the whole of the estates which will be acquired will be taken up in six months. I have much pleasure in supporting the Bill.

The HON. C. H. BUZACOTT: I have been for years agitating for the introduction of a measure of this sort, and it is unfortunate that the Bill brought in four or five years ago did not pass through the other House. Anyone who is in the habit of visiting the Darling Downs, and who is familiar with the condition of settlement there, knows that the district has become unhealthy for sheep, and that the land is lying unused alongside one of our main railways, and that our whole railway system is suffering by reason of the circumstance that the land alongside is not cut up into holdings suitable for farmers. It has been argued that because those who bought the land have not made a good use of it, that is no reason why the State should come to their rescue and buy back the land. It is said, "Why don't those men throw open the land themselves?" and it is said that on some estates which have been thrown open on reasonable terms a good deal of land is being sold. I do not vote for this Bill because I wish to assist the present proprietors. Unfortunately for them and for the colony, the investment has not proved a success, and it is because they are unable to subdivide the lands themselves for sale on easy terms that the land is lying idle. We have to look at the question in a business light. Will it pay the country to buy these lands and sell them to the farmers? I have made a great deal of inquiry for some years, and I feel sure that if the lands are judiciously purchased, and if the prices are not too high and the area thrown open is not too large, the investment will be a very good one for the State, directly as well as indirectly. It will be a very good thing for Brisbane, and it will do no harm to any other part of the colony. With regard to what the Hon. Mr. Clewett said, I believe there are lands in his district which could be easily disposed of on these terms. The Bill is an experiment which, no doubt, will first be tried on the Darling Downs, and there are all sorts of safeguards. I have no fear that the Land Board will not give sensible advice regarding the lands to be thrown open. If they do not, a very strong case would be made out for their abolition. I think that £50,000 would have been plenty for an experiment, and I rather regret that it is fixed at £100,000, because there will be such a large amount of land offered that political pressure may be brought to bear to get the Minister to purchase larger areas than will be required for immediate settlement. However, we must trust to the authorities in such matters; and with judicious administration very extensive settlement will take place, greatly to the advantage of the colony and the Railway Department. It would have made the Bill much clearer if it had been made complete in itself, and if it had contained no references to the Act of 1884. Half a dozen additional clauses would have been all that was required. The Act of 1884 does not in any way apply to settlement under this Bill.

The HON. J. T. SMITH: I am very pleased that there is some probability of the Bill being passed, as it will be of very great advantage to the district in which I live. I remember the time when the lands in the neighbourhood of Toowoomba passed into the hands of those gentlemen who are now disposed to part with them. At the time of the crisis of 1866 the land was reserved to a depth of seven miles on either side of the railway for agricultural purposes, which was afterwards reduced to a depth of three miles on either side. The colony was in an impecunious state, and the agriculturists had no money, and when the land was thrown open at £1 per acre there was scarcely one purchaser. The land was then left open to selection, with the result that it was selected by those who now hold it. When I was connected with the railways I had an opportunity of showing Mr. Dunn, the great Adelaide miller, over a great part of the land on the Downs. He came up to inspect the land, as farmers in South Australia were anxious to leave the land in that colony, which were worked out. He said that he had never seen better land anywhere. This Bill gives us another chance of putting those valuable lands in the hands of those who will utilise them to the best advantage. I have travelled on the lines through the district hundreds of times, and I have rarely seen an animal on it; but by cutting it up we will be able to settle a large agricultural population near to a market. I admire the manner in which the Government have attempted to settle people on the land. It is the concentration of people in the cities that has led to the discontent which has existed, and by getting the surplus population settled on the lands we will prevent the ranks of the discontented being recruited, and in that way we shall be doing a great service to the country. There is no country which has made greater advances in prosperity than France, and that is due to the subdivision of the land and the large proportion of the population which is living on the land. I shall support the Bill.

The HON. J. LALOR: I am not so sanguine about the Bill as some hon. gentlemen. Some land about Roma has yielded as high as thirty bushels of wheat to the acre, and the average is about twenty bushels; but, taking it at 2s. 6d. per bushel, that is only £2 10s. per acre, and after paying for ploughing, sowing, and stripping it does not leave much for the farmer. The farmers say they are doomed, and can make nothing out of the land. Everyone knows that the value of agricultural land depends entirely upon the rainfall. I have hardly ever seen land on which crops could not be grown, provided there was plenty of rain. The Downs have a heavier rainfall than further west, but the farmers there are always complaining that they cannot make farming pay. Then how could they pay £7 12s. 10d. every year for every £100 of the price of the land? That is pretty stiff to begin with. Men can get homestead areas at 5s. and even 2s. 6d. per acre, and have five years in which to pay; and if they cannot make farming pay under such conditions, how will they make it pay on the Darling Downs? We want more consumers, not more farmers. We want an outlet for our produce. This is altogether a Darling Downs Bill. There are hundreds of thousands of acres of land about Roma quite as good as the Downs land, although perhaps the rainfall is not so great. I hope the predictions of hon. gentlemen will come out all right, but I am afraid they will not.

The HON. P. PERKINS: I am sorry to hear the Hon. Mr. Lalor making invidious comparisons between one acre of land and another. We are all aware that one acre of good land is worth twenty acres of bad land, especially where the rainfall is uncertain. I will not harrow the ground

which the Hon. Mr. Thorneloe Smith has ploughed up to ascertain how the lands on the Darling Downs were acquired. It has been a standing grievance for twenty years that the people who want to settle on those lands cannot do so. Of my own knowledge I can say that the experiment some years ago of making an exchange of land there has been a great success. As to the Bill itself, I take a neutral stand, although I am inclined to favour it, because the people are hungering for these particular lands. Some time ago I happened to be travelling over the Downs by train with a Yankee, who said to me, "Mister, where are your people? I do not see any; I only see some sheep." I confessed my inability to explain the matter, when he said, "If we had this land in America, from Warwick to Toowoomba, we would have millions of people settled upon it." Of course I took that with a little salt, but I have no doubt there is some truth in it. The land is good enough, and the people want it. We have Land Bills presented to us at the rate of two per session to decoy the people to go on the land, to settle in a certain way, under certain pretences, some of which I call false pretences. However, there it is; and if this land is so valuable for settlement, they should be allowed to settle there. People have come from South Australia, Victoria, and other places, have seen this land, and asked, "Can we get it?" When I told them they could not get it, that it belonged to so-and-so, and that there was plenty of good land if they would go further out, they said, "No, we want to be near a market and near a railway." And they wanted other impossibilities which I could not find for them, not from want of inclination. Looking at the provisions of the Bill, the mode of borrowing, the price to be paid, and the interest to be charged, I see nothing wrong in it. It has been a howling cry at Toowoomba for years that they wanted these lands. It may be said that this is a Darling Downs transaction, but those who go farming now have made the discovery that it will not do to go to places where the rainfall is uncertain; they want to be where they can rely on a fair average fall of rain. While not disputing the Hon. Mr. Lalor's statement as to what may happen at Roma, I would remind him that wheat-growing is not everything. Men must be content now not to make fortunes in five or ten years. They must be content to live decently, and if wheat will not pay they can take to something else.

The PRESIDENT: I think if the hon. member would confine himself to the Bill it would be a great improvement.

The Hon. P. PERKINS: I am endeavouring to do so.

The PRESIDENT: The hon. member is not touching on the Bill in any way.

The Hon. P. PERKINS: With regard to the Bill itself, I think it is a most useful measure, and one that will be beneficial to the country; and there will be no loss to the country should the measure be passed.

The Hon. W. F. TAYLOR: This is a useful Bill that has long been wanted, but there is one omission which I think ought to be rectified, and that is the power to exchange lands. In one instance where that was done—I am alluding to the Goomburra lands, in the neighbourhood of Allora—the experiment was remarkably successful. The Government lost nothing by the exchange, and the farmers, who bought at very high prices, were satisfied. If power were given to exchange lands it would involve no loss to the Treasury, while it would relieve the consolidated revenue to a corresponding extent. I merely rise to throw out this suggestion with the hope

that, in committee, provision will be made for the exchange of those agricultural lands for land in the West.

The Hon. W. G. POWER: This Bill, and the other Land Bills the Government have brought in this session, are most creditable to them. It shows that they are undoubtedly desirous to settle people on the land. Some hon. gentlemen who have spoken say that farming does not pay. That is all nonsense. The farmers at Roma are getting 2s. 6d. a bushel for their wheat, which is more than double the price obtainable in the other colonies. There is one point with respect to which I think the Bill may be improved. Clause 18 provides that the Governor in Council, on the recommendation of the Land Board, shall sell improvements. I think the improvements ought to be sold by auction. Otherwise their full value might not be obtained.

The Hon. F. T. BRENTNALL: Everybody who passes over the Darling Downs, and takes any notice of the country, must regret that those splendid lands are not put to a better purpose. I have met with many people from the other colonies, and from the other side of the world, who have visited the Downs, and who simply marvelled that they were not filled with an agricultural population. Even supposing that during the first year the whole sum of £100,000 should be spent in the purchase of Darling Downs properties, it will be no very great thing. I do not suppose that any really good land could be purchased for much under 50s. per acre. At that rate £100,000 would buy 40,000 acres. The Land Act of 1884 provides that selections in agricultural areas shall not exceed 1,280 acres, nor be less than 320 acres. If you divide 40,000 by 320 how many families do you settle? Only 125. At that rate the population would not be increased so rapidly as the Hon. Mr. Gray anticipates. That hon. gentleman seems to think the Bill will have a tendency to increase the population at a much faster ratio than has been the case for the last twenty-four years; but it would not do so. Nevertheless, if we can by this legislation be the means of settling 125 extra families on land which at present only produces a few sheep we shall have done a really good thing for the colony. The reason why the Darling Downs lands are so much in favour with agriculturists is their easy access to a market; and this is proved by the fact that numbers of farmers have taken up land there at as much as £4 or £5 per acre on some of the runs on the Downs, and have done well. But none of the proprietors there can afford to give such terms as are proposed to be given under this Bill. As far as I can ascertain, the longest term they are willing to give is something like seven years. If on those terms men can take up land and make it pay, how much more profitable will it be for them to take up land under the provisions of this measure. There is no doubt that easy access to a market is a primary condition with people who are on the lookout for agricultural land. I think the Government are going in the right direction. It is another indication of the tendency there is amongst politicians generally to look upon settlement on the land, for agricultural purposes, as one of the helps, at any rate, to a return of prosperity. But I, like the Hon. Mr. Lalor, do not anticipate that we are going to revive things in this country by agricultural settlement only. We want to develop other resources which will be a far stronger attraction to outside people and outside capital. We want to open up our mineral country. Nevertheless, there is the fact that people are purchasing these Darling Downs lands at something like the price I have named, and doing well; and if the Government can give facilities for settling a larger

number of people there on easier terms, they will have done a good thing for the farmers and a good thing for the colony.

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

GOVERNMENT SAVINGS BANK STOCK BILL.

SECOND READING.

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL: On the occasion of moving the first reading of this Bill, I made what was really a second-reading speech; and as I do not desire to inflict a repetition of it on the House on this occasion, I shall content myself by moving that the Bill be read a second time.

The HON. C. H. BUZACOTT: I regard this Bill as one of the most important that has come before Parliament this year. At first sight it seems only intended to enable savings bank depositors to transfer deposits, which they may have at call, into Government stock bearing the same rate of interest. As far as that goes, it would be very simple and very desirable, and in strict accordance with the English Post Office Savings Bank Act. That Act provides that any depositor may transfer his deposit, not exceeding £100 in any one year, into stock, but no depositor can hold more than £300 worth altogether. We are told that there is at present a sum of £70,000 in the savings bank earning no interest. By the Bill the amount that can be converted into stock is £1,000,000; but we all know that if the scheme proves a success, there is nothing to prevent the Government next year from making it £2,000,000 or £3,000,000, or whatever amount they desire. What I want to draw attention to is this: that the Bill is really a Bill to enable the Government to convert the revenue deficiency represented by Treasury bills into funded stock. The evident intention is to enable the Government to retire those bills as they fall due during the next three or four years. I do not complain of that. What I do complain of is that the Bill is brought in under cover of being a Savings Bank Stock Bill on the lines of the English Act, while it is practically an unlimited funded stock Bill for converting the floating debt of the colony into a permanent debt. I do not say I shall vote against the Bill, but I wish the House thoroughly to understand what it means. There is a great deal to be said for it, but there is a great deal of doubt as to whether it is desirable to pass a Bill which practically gives unlimited power in the direction I have mentioned. There is another matter I want to refer to. The stock issued is to have a currency of fifty years. I ask whether we are justified, knowing the constant downward tendency of the rate of interest, in authorising the Government to issue stock on fifty years' currency. I think it is not, and I have therefore circulated an amendment giving the Government the optional power of redeeming the stock after the expiration of twenty years. The proposal is a reasonable one, and it is in force in most of the continental countries with regard to their loans. Another matter worthy of attention is the fact that the Treasurer may issue the stock at either par or at any price he chooses. He may issue £100 worth of stock at 99, or 89, or 79. We have seen Queensland stock issued at as low as 84. But with the ordinary inscribed stock of the colony there is the guarantee that it is advertised for by public tender, and a minimum is prescribed lower than which tenders will not be accepted. This stock is issued by the Treasurer, but I do not think the House can put on a limitation. It is one of those things that Parliament must leave to the Executive of the day, and hold the Executive responsible. Still it shows that if this fifty years' stock were

issued to-day it might be issued at 80, and that would mean before its currency expired a great deal more than 3½ per cent. Then there is another thing I find in the English Savings Bank Act. There is a commission charged for the transfer of savings bank deposits into Government stock. I see no provision for that in this Bill. I suppose it is intended that the transfer shall be made free of charge. There is another matter on which the Bill needs amendment. There is no express power given to trustees to invest in stock. The Trustees Act authorises investment in English stock, but not in colonial stock. No doubt under the authority of the Supreme Court trustees can legally invest in colonial stock; but they must get the authority of the court. I have prepared an amendment authorising trustees to invest at discretion in colonial stock, which I trust will be favourably received. In other respects the Bill is everything that could be desired. The main principle is that it creates an internal loan, and gives means for converting a temporary into a permanent funded loan, and so long as Parliament passes the Bill knowing that I do not think there can be any objection. We have many business men in the Chamber connected with financial institutions, and it would be a serious matter that an important measure like this should be rushed through at the last moment without due consideration. I think it will be a good thing if the people invest in Government loans to a certain extent, but I cannot help thinking it would be a good thing if the money comprising the savings of the humbler classes could be lent to farmers and others who have to pay high rates of interest. I hope at some future day Parliament will be willing to lend a favourable ear to proposals of that sort. I have much pleasure in supporting the Bill, and hope the Postmaster-General will accept absolutely necessary amendments in committee.

The HON. A. NORTON: This Bill is one of the most important brought forward this session, because it deals largely not only with money that will be invested in permanent Government securities, but it also affects the financial condition of the colony to a large extent. I believe in the principle of the Bill, but I think there is a great deal in what has been said by the Hon. Mr. Buzacott. I do not see why the £70,000 not bearing interest in the savings bank should not be invested in 3½ per cent. stock, which would be much better for the people who own it and for the Government. Of course the effect of this will be that where money is lying idle it will be withdrawn from the banks and invested in Government stock. That is not altogether a bad thing to happen. I think it is desirable to raise money in this way rather than by floating Treasury bills at high rates of interest, or by going to the money-lenders of the colony asking for advances on ordinary debentures. I believe it will be a very good thing for the colony if trustees and others are enabled to invest money in stock of this kind. The Hon. Mr. Buzacott points out that such stock may be sold as low as 84 or 85 per 100. I do not think there is much danger of that, because we know very well there are large sums of money lying idle producing no interest, and very large sums producing small interest, and I do not think there will be any difficulty in getting such money as the Government are likely to require.

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL: The Government get no money through this Bill at all. They do not increase their debt.

The HON. A. NORTON: In one sense they do, and in another they do not. It enables them to utilise the money in the savings bank.

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL: Money invested in these funds must be applied towards taking up debentures.

THE HON. A. NORTON: I know that, and that is the great recommendation of the Bill. Instead of having debentures which fall due at short limits, it would be better to have arrangements for paying at long periods when the colony will have recovered from its depression. What appears to me an objection to the Bill is that in the banks there are large sums lying absolutely unproductive, and large sums which produce a very small rate. Notwithstanding that the banks hold these sums at fixed deposit, they charge on advances a high rate of interest. If that money is withdrawn it will place the banks in a different position, and instead of the rate of interest going down it will have a tendency to go up. Practically a large sum of money is locked up now, but if we provide a means by which that money can be diverted and become interest-producing, the effect will be to lock it up for a further period. I am not afraid of the Government obtaining control of too much money; but a large amount of money will become locked up in funded stock. On the whole I think the Bill a very valuable one, which I believe will produce in most respects good results.

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

MESSAGE FROM THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY.

CRIMINAL LAW AMENDMENT BILL.

THE PRESIDENT announced the receipt of a message from the Legislative Assembly, intimating that they disagreed with the Council's amendment, because it was considered that the provisions of clause 6 should be of general application.

Message ordered to be taken into consideration to-morrow.

CIVIL SERVICE ACTS AMENDMENT BILL.

COMMITTEE.

Preamble postponed.

Clause 1 passed as printed.

On clause 2—

THE HON. C. H. BUZACOTT said there were several hon. members who had left the House who were anxious to discuss that measure, but with regard to their relation to the other House it was thought there was no use in discussing it, although they might possibly think the Bill not quite fair to some of the older Civil servants. Had time permitted he should have been very anxious to have had a little discussion on the subject.

THE HON. T. MACDONALD-PATERSON said a very valuable precedent had been established that evening in regard to the conduct of business, and he hoped it would be taken note of at the next general election. It was very likely that it would take the shape of that House meeting once a month, and half an hour would be quite sufficient to dispose of the business in a formal way. He took that opportunity of indicating what he thought would be the result of the last few days' treatment of the business of the colony. It would be a great relief to them to know that they had only to attend there for an hour and a half once a month, and that the whole business would be carried out just as satisfactorily as it had been during the last few days. Business was tumbling out of the House like water that had spent its force on a water-wheel and sent into a ditch.

THE HON. A. NORTON thought the hon. member might have compared the rush of legislation to sausages coming out of a sausage machine. They should rather sympathise with the Government in being compelled to ask the House to

deal with measures in that way. The Bill was one of great importance to a large number of people who were relying upon its being passed, and what was said by the Hon. Mr. Paterson was very much to the point, but he did not think he was saying anything disrespectful when he said that he had heard outside statements that the House did not as a rule criticise measures as much as might be expected of them, even though they had the time. If they passed measures without discussion it would, no doubt, encourage the idea that the House was not a revising Chamber, but one which was simply meant to carry out the will of the popular Chamber. He had not spoken on the second reading of the Bill because he saw that hon. members were anxious not to be detained, but he had spoken with those who represented a very large number of Civil servants in the colony, amongst whom the Bill was regarded as a very popular measure. In many cases when the 4 per cent. was compulsorily deducted from their salaries, they had had either to sacrifice their policies of insurance or considerably reduce them, and they would really have been in a better position if they had continued to pay the premiums upon their policies. He never did believe much in that portion of the Act, and knowing what the common feeling in regard to the Bill was, he had very much pleasure in supporting it.

THE POSTMASTER-GENERAL said he might say a few words in reference to the comments which had been made upon the rush of business that had occurred. In the past, no member of the House had been more active in opposing the rushing through of business at the end of the session than he, and on the present occasion he would have hesitated in asking the House to take the second reading of these Bills so early, had it not been that hon. members had had reasonable time for becoming familiar with their provisions. There were two or three measures that had only recently been introduced into the Assembly, but the Land Bill had been three months before that Chamber; so that the whole of its provisions had been insensibly instilled into the minds of hon. members through what they had read in the newspapers. As to the expressions that had been made use of with regard to the treatment that Chamber had received from another place, he thought there were one or two similes which would perhaps have been better unused. He had not the slightest desire to hurry through any measure, and if hon. members felt that they wished to debate more fully any question that came before them he would be only too glad to have an opportunity of obtaining their ideas; but, with the exception of two or three measures, most hon. members were familiar with the business that had come before them. There were one or two measures which had that evening received most serious discussion, and he thought when they came to consider the question, hon. members would be of opinion that they had received proper attention. So far as the Government were concerned they had no desire to rush unduly the business through the House. He would point out that he had deferred giving notice of the suspension of the Standing Orders until such time as they had got through the most important measures in committee; so that the suspension would really only apply to the third reading of Bills. He was very grateful for the assistance hon. members had given him, but he hoped they would acquit him of any desire to rush business through without any discussion. He had always sought discussion on every Bill he had introduced to the House. It was not in his power to check discussion, and it was not his desire to offer any objection or opposition to it.

The HON. T. MACDONALD-PATERSON thought the hon. gentleman misapprehended the attitude of hon. members. He took the objection as a personal one. He could assure the hon. gentleman that he had the deepest sympathy of the House, and it was the treatment of the business of the House to which hon. members took exception. They deplored the circumstances which had brought about the congestion of business on the paper. The Land Bill, for instance, had been before the country for several months, and, although they might make themselves familiar with its principles, it was not their duty to consider its clauses until it had been passed by the other House. He remembered a big debate which had taken place on a clause that had been eliminated in committee in the Assembly just before the Bill had come to the Council, and it was not found out that the clause was not in the Bill at all until a shorthand reporter suggested where they would be likely to find out what had become of it. It was desirable that those protests should be put on record, and it was also desirable to have it on record that they sympathised with the representative of the Government.

The HON. SIR A. H. PALMER did not think the Postmaster-General should attempt to force such an important Bill through a Committee which consisted of a bare quorum. There was no hurry for it, and he hoped it would be deferred until there was a fuller attendance.

The HON. F. CLEWETT was pleased to hear the remarks of the President, because his opinion was entitled to considerable weight. He had expressed himself more than once in the direction of the President's remarks. In all questions where the time of the House was at stake it was in the hands of hon. members themselves. If they thought fit to allow important questions to pass without criticism, it was their own fault and not that of the Postmaster-General. Exception had been taken to the amount of business put upon them at the present time. He had a great deal of sympathy with the Government. A great deal of time was taken up in the Assembly in debating questions, and it was expected that the Council should pass them almost immediately. There was something in what the Postmaster-General had said about hon. members making themselves familiar with the principles of Bills before they were submitted to them; but there was something in the remark of the Hon. Mr. Macdonald-Paterson that it was necessary to examine them when they did come before them, or they might be placed in an awkward position. He remembered an instance in which they had discussed a clause which was found afterwards not to be in the Bill at all. Hon. members were generally fairly acquainted with the general provisions of Bills before they came before them, so that it did not follow that they would require so much time for examination when they were submitted. If the Hon. Mr. Buzacott considered the Bill should be further considered, he would be consulting his own interests and the interests of the Committee if he endeavoured to get the debate adjourned. The Bill affected a large number of people, and there was a large sum of money involved, as well as the public policy with regard to the Civil Service, and it was entitled to full consideration.

The HON. P. MACPHERSON hoped the Postmaster-General would take the advice which had been so kindly tendered by the President.

On the motion of the POSTMASTER-GENERAL, the House resumed; the CHAIRMAN reported progress, and the Committee obtained leave to sit again to-morrow.

The House adjourned at twenty-three minutes to 10 o'clock.