

Queensland



Parliamentary Debates
[Hansard]

Legislative Council

WEDNESDAY, 15 JULY 1896

Electronic reproduction of original hardcopy

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

WEDNESDAY, 15 JULY, 1896.

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

ACTING CHAIRMAN OF COMMITTEES.

On the motion of the POSTMASTER-GENERAL, the Hon. J. C. Heussler was appointed to act as Chairman of Committees from day to day during the continued absence of the President.

LEAVE OF ABSENCE.

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL, in moving that leave of absence be granted to the Hon. W. Brookes for the remainder of the session, said: I regret to say that Mr. Brookes's health is such as not to permit him to attend the House at present; and I am sure all hon. members will join with me in expressing our regret at his continued ill-health.

Question put and passed.

DISEASES IN STOCK BILL.

COMMITTEE.

Clauses 1 and 2 put and passed.

On clause 3—"Interpretation of terms"—

The Hon. W. FORREST suggested that the word "dogs" should be inserted in the definition of "stock." The clause gave the Governor in Council power to bring any other animals than those mentioned under the provisions of the Act, but it was well known that dogs carried ticks about, and it seemed desirable that the fact should be brought under the notice of anyone reading the Act.

The Hon. A. NORTON thought the clause should contain a special definition of "cattle," similar to the one contained in the Brands Act.

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL saw no reason why dogs should be specially mentioned. The clause mentioned pretty well all the economic animals that were depastured for profit under the heading of "stock." If they went outside that by inserting dogs they might as well add all other animals and birds that were the means of carrying ticks about. The subject mentioned by the Hon. Mr. Norton had already been brought under his notice by the Hon. Mr. Buzacott, who suggested that both cattle and horses should be defined. To give effect to that he would move that the words "bulls, oxen, cows, foals, heifers, calves," be omitted with the view of inserting the word "cattle."

Amendment agreed to.

The Hon. C. H. BUZACOTT moved, as a consequential amendment, the insertion of the following words:—"Cattle" includes bulls, cows, oxen, heifers, steers, and calves; 'Horses' includes horses, mares, geldings, colts, fillies, asses, and mules."

The Hon. J. D. MACANSH considered the amendment unnecessary. They might as well define that "sheep" meant rams, ewes, wethers, lambs, hoggets, or that "pigs" meant boars, sows, and so on.

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL pointed out that the object of the amendment was to make the Bill run on the same lines as the Brands Act, in which, for some no doubt good reason, those definitions of "cattle" and "horses" had been inserted. The amendment would do no harm, and it might be an improvement.

Amendment agreed to.

The Hon. A. NORTON said the word "disease" included a great many things which the inspectors would have no experience of. Very few inspectors knew anything about actinomyces, which was comparatively rare. Dr. Bancroft had shown him a specimen, and had described it so that it would be almost impossible for him not to recognise it. The third disease mentioned was cancer, but the Royal Society had been informed by Mr. Pound that out of 600 cattle he saw in the Homebush yards which were supposed to be affected there were only three cases of true cancer. He also told them that the cancer which affected cattle was entirely different from the cancer which affected human beings, so that the disease could not be communicated. Such being the case, it would be very difficult for an inspector to determine what a disease really was, and he might condemn

cattle that had really very little the matter with them. It was a pity that the Government had not confined the Bill to tick fever alone.

The Hon. B. D. MOREHEAD: The remarks of the last speaker proved the necessity for appointing competent persons as inspectors. A clause might be introduced to compel these inspectors to pass some sort of examination in regard to these diseases. At any rate, he hoped appointments would not be made for political reasons.

The Hon. W. FORREST did not think many inspectors would be able to distinguish pleuro from tuberculosis, yet they would primarily have control over all the cattle in the colony. This Bill had been introduced in consequence of the tick pest, and he did not see why other diseases should be included. He felt inclined to throw the whole conduct of the business and the responsibility on the Governor in Council. No one in the colony had ever seen rinderpest, for instance, and yet an inspector would have to decide whether an animal was suffering from it or not.

The Hon. J. D. MACANSH agreed that it would be necessary that the men appointed to be inspectors should know something about these diseases. Many sores called cancers could be removed, but still an ignorant inspector could cause cattle affected with them to be destroyed at once. They should pass some examination before they were appointed.

The Hon. W. FORREST thought the proper persons to be inspectors would be intelligent common-sense men who had been amongst stock all their lives. He had seen hundreds of cases of so-called cancer cured, and yet an ignorant inspector might have had such cattle destroyed.

The Hon. B. D. MOREHEAD: He would destroy the evidence against himself.

The Hon. A. NORTON said the Bill was really passed to deal with the ticks, which any practical man could easily recognise, but when they came to deal with other matters they would have to appoint men who knew something about them. The whole difficulty arose through introducing so many diseases.

The Hon. J. LALOR thought the inspectors should pass veterinary examinations.

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL said one hon. gentleman advocated compelling these inspectors to pass examinations, while another seemed disposed to rely entirely upon practical experience amongst stock. The proper course would probably be between those extremes. One of the first functions of the board of commissioners under the Bill would be to select persons to act as inspectors. Before they could ask the Government to deal with this disease they would have to give the Government great powers, and it would be a very short-sighted policy to refuse those powers. No doubt there would be a great deal of responsibility in regard to the inspectors, but any person prejudiced by the action of an inspector would have a right of appeal to the Minister, which would be an effective check. The Bill was no more drastic than the Diseases in Sheep Act, which they were all familiar with, and no one could say that the operation of that Act had been oppressive or unjust. Instead of looking microscopically at the provisions of this Bill, hon. members should remember their experience of similar laws which had been in force for years.

The Hon. A. NORTON said the difficulty with those whose financial position was at stake was that they were being asked to deal with a disease which they did not know much about. If they were in a hurry they might make mistakes which would have to be amended afterwards. He did not blame the Government for trying to pass the measure without delay.

The HON. W. FORREST said the Diseases in Sheep Act was passed in consequence of an outbreak of scab, and it applied to scab alone, which was a disease that could be easily recognised. This Bill would be similar to that if it dealt only with ticks, but the other diseases referred to would require more careful inspection. The rules and regulations applying to one might not apply to others.

The HON. C. H. BUZACOTT pointed out that the Bill proposed to repeal several existing Acts, and many of its clauses were merely re-enactments. The 1st clause of the Diseases in Cattle Act of 1866 enabled the Governor in Council to prohibit the introduction of cattle or horses supposed to be affected with a malignant disease, and the same Act provided that it should be lawful for the Governor to appoint commissioners and inspectors with power to destroy diseased animals, and so on. The powers complained of as being excessive in the Bill already existed, and those powers were necessary to make a measure of that kind effective. It was no defect in the Bill that it aimed to include every malignant disease known to exist in the colony; and inspectors ought to be able to discover whether animals were infected by those diseases or not. He agreed with what the Hon. Mr. Norton said about hurrying the Bill through, but it was an urgent measure, and did not confer substantially greater powers than now existed.

The HON. A. NORTON said the Bill proposed to re-enact the statutes it repealed, and there was a great deal in those statutes which was very objectionable. What he was objecting to was that the Government were trying to make a perfect Bill of what must necessarily be an imperfect one. He had another amendment to propose in the subsection defining "inoculated." One of the meanings of the word was "or treated by any other method known to science as inoculation." He moved that the words "or vaccination" be added.

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

Clause 4 put and passed.

On clause 5—"Board of stock commissioners"—

The HON. A. NORTON asked whether the Government had arrived at any sort of idea what class of men should be appointed to the board? He trusted the field of selection would not be limited to pastoralists in one part of the colony.

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL had no doubt the Minister in charge of the measure would endeavour to select expert men from all parts of the colony and not restrict the board to any class or section.

The HON. C. H. BUZACOTT asked whether members of either House of Parliament would be eligible for seats on the board, and, if so, whether they would be able to draw fees under clause 11?

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL said the usual course would no doubt be followed, when members of Parliament receiving payment would not be allowed to receive fees.

The HON. C. H. BUZACOTT said he could speak without the slightest imputation of personal feeling in the matter; but it seemed hard that if a member of the Council were selected he should be compelled to give his services gratuitously.

The HON. B. D. MOREHEAD proposed the insertion of the following new subsection:—

It shall be the duty of the board to examine, or cause to be examined by some competent person, every applicant for the appointment of inspector under this Act, and to report the result of such examination to the Minister.

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL said that if the board had to examine every applicant it would give them continuous work all the year

round. For every vacancy they might reckon on at least 100 or 200 applicants. Besides, for some time under the present system all inspectors had had to undergo an examination. The only exception to that had been recently when, owing to the urgency of the occasion, the Colonial Secretary had had to take the best man he could find at the moment. There might have been one or two failures; but on the whole the appointments so made had given satisfaction. He would ask the hon. gentleman to leave the clause as it stood, on the assurance that the practice already instituted would be followed as far as it could possibly be. There were circumstances under which it would be unwise not to give a man temporary employment because he had not undergone an examination.

The HON. B. D. MOREHEAD did not see how the Postmaster-General could have any objection to this being included in the measure when he considered the tremendous powers given to the inspectors. The powers given under clause 21 were such that no ignorant man should possess, and the best thing to do was to make inspectors pass a stringent examination as to their competency.

The HON. C. H. BUZACOTT suggested that the word "recommended" should be inserted after the word "applicants."

The HON. A. NORTON thought this a very important question. He believed that some of the inspectors under the Brands Act had been acting as inspectors under the Diseases in Stock Act, and he knew that some of them were incompetent to deal with the question. He should, therefore, like it to be made clear that any reappointments should only be of men who were known to be fit to carry on the work. It had been reported to him upon more than one occasion that stock from infected districts had crossed the southern line. He did not say that those stock were infected themselves, but it was no use issuing a proclamation and then allowing stock to cross over.

The HON. W. F. TAYLOR said that as the Bill dealt with most of the diseases to which horses and cattle were liable, it was highly necessary that the inspectors should be perfectly qualified to do the work. He would go even further than the amendment, and insist that every inspector should be a qualified veterinary surgeon or give such evidence of his competency as would prevent any such errors as would undoubtedly arise otherwise. If the Bill dealt simply with the tick disease, there would be some force in the remarks of the Postmaster-General, who wished to have the Bill put through as soon as possible, and did not wish to have the present inspectors interfered with. No inspectors would be competent to carry out the provisions of the Bill unless they received a proper education, and it might be necessary to pay high salaries; but that was a matter that ought not to be considered, because their work would amply compensate those who had to contribute the salaries.

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL was delighted to hear the views expressed by the Hon. Dr. Taylor, because they were a strong argument in favour of the establishment of an agricultural college in which those diseases might be studied by the young men of the colony.

The HON. W. FORREST said there was a great deal in what had fallen from the Postmaster-General. An emergency might arise, and there might be no time for an examination, so that they should not tie themselves up so tightly that they could not send out men temporarily. The argument applied more especially to the tick disease, because anyone who had seen them once would know them again.

The HON. J. D. MACANSH said the more he considered the Bill the more clear it was to him that the measure should deal with ticks alone. If that had been the case it would have been a much simpler Bill, and it would have been through Committee before this. As it was, it dealt with diseases that did not exist at present, and it would necessitate their appointing more competent men as inspectors. Every inspector would have to be a veterinary surgeon.

The HON. B. D. MOREHEAD said that, with the permission of the Committee, he would withdraw his amendment.

Amendment withdrawn accordingly.

The HON. B. D. MOREHEAD moved that the following subsection be added to the clause:—

It shall be the duty of the board to hold or cause to be held periodical examinations for candidates for permanent appointments under the Act, and to report the results of such examinations to the Minister.

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL said the amendment embodied the practice which had hitherto been in force, and he did not see any objection to it.

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

Clause 6 put and passed.

On clause 7—"Assessment to be levied"—

The HON. A. NORTON said he did not see any reason why a person owning less than fifty head of stock should be exempt from assessment. He was protected as much as other persons were.

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL: It is too much trouble to collect the 15d.

The HON. A. NORTON pointed out that the spread of this disease had been attributed, rightly or wrongly, to the passage of teams through the country, and if that were so, why should they not pay the tax?

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL said it had been found in connection with the Brands Act, that the collection of the tax on less than fifty head was more trouble than the proceeds were worth.

The HON. A. NORTON said that was because the inspectors did not do their duty. He remembered one case where the salary of the inspector was more than covered in consequence of the number of cases he brought before the court, of persons who had not paid the required amounts.

The HON. A. H. BARLOW said they had found a great deal of difficulty in consequence of clause 52 of the Justices Act, which limited the time within which the amounts could be recovered to six months. He did not see why the amounts should not be sued for at any time.

Clause put and passed.

Clauses 8, 9, and 10 put and passed.

On clause 11—"Regulations may be made"—

The HON. W. FORREST asked, with reference to paragraph 24, prescribing the fees and allowances to be paid to members of the board, whether a member of the Legislative Council, if appointed, would be allowed to take fees?

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL replied that there was nothing in the law to prevent any member of the Legislative Council taking such fees as might be prescribed.

Clause put and passed.

On clause 12—"Indemnity for unauthorised expenditure"—

The HON. A. NORTON asked what was the amount at present to the credit of the brands fund?

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL: Between £12,000 and £14,000.

The HON. A. NORTON said the brands fund seemed to be used for every purpose under the sun. It was used for the establishment and

maintenance of the Stock Institute, from which sheepowners got quite as much benefit as those who contributed the money; and it was advanced to meat and dairy export companies.

The HON. W. FORREST: Who repay it with interest.

The HON. A. NORTON: The effect of the tick plague would inevitably be to increase the value of sheep, for as cattle increased in value there would be more demand for mutton; and he failed to see why the cattle men alone should be taxed in connection with the working of the Bill. The Bill would be most unfair in its operation. It had been proved that sheep carried ticks from one district to another, and such being the case, sheepowners should be asked to contribute their share of the expense of eradicating the disease.

Clause put and passed.

Clause 13 put and passed.

On clause 14—"Minister may burn pasture"—

The HON. A. NORTON said the power was a dangerous one to put in the hands of a Minister, who would of necessity have to delegate that power to somebody else.

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL said the clause was certainly a novel one, but it had been suggested as probably an effective aid in checking the spread of ticks. They knew that the tick, at certain stages of its existence, was constantly on the leaves of grass, ready to attach itself to anything passing, and it might be an effective mode of getting rid of at least an enormous quantity of ticks, when the pasture was dry, to use fire. It was not likely the Minister would direct the wholesale burning of country. Experiments would have to be tried to see whether fire was an effective check before it would be acted upon largely.

The HON. A. NORTON believed burning grass would prove a check, but only a check. The question was how the burning clause was to be administered. If by capable men, the chances were no harm might be done, but he was afraid it might fall into the hands of men who were unfit to be trusted.

The HON. B. D. MOREHEAD said the clause gave power to the Minister which might mean destruction to the unfortunate pastoral tenant. How was the Minister going to limit the burning to any particular run? Would he have men stationed at every point to beat out the fire when it had destroyed a specified area? A whole country side might be swept because the Minister thought there were ticks on a certain individual's property. It might lead to the destruction not only of an enormous quantity of pasture but of the animals depastured thereon. He hoped the Committee would negative the clause.

The HON. J. D. MACANSH said there was no knowing where such a fire would stop. It might not only be ruin to the squatter on whose run the fire was started, but to many of his neighbours. It would destroy all food for stock, all fences, and probably buildings.

The HON. J. LALOR also hoped the clause would be negated. It was a monstrous power to give to anyone, and would work an immense amount of harm.

The HON. W. FORREST said it was almost proved beyond a doubt that burning grass was ineffectual in the destruction of ticks. Only yesterday he read a letter from a man in the North of Queensland who had been travelling with a large draft of cattle. Having to go about 200 miles in a different direction himself, the man left his cattle on ground where the grass had been previously burnt off, and on returning a fortnight afterwards he found them covered with ticks, and several of them died in consequence. He had no faith in burning grass unless the burning was continuous. And what

was to become of the cattle when the grass was burned? An hon. member had characterised the clause as monstrous. He might apply that term to almost every clause in the Bill. He had never seen such an outrageous measure, or one which it would be so utterly impossible to carry out.

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL said burning grass had been recommended as a method which might have the effect of cleansing infected areas. When once a place was infested with ticks it was hard to get rid of them without using strong remedies. This was a drastic measure, but the enemy they were contending with was not actuated by any considerations of right or wrong. He did not say that it was necessary that the clause should be in the Bill, but it had been recommended, and the Committee would see that it was not wise to deprive the Stock Department of a useful ally.

The HON. A. NORTON thought it might be a very useful ally, but the consent of the owner should be first obtained. No owner would object to his grass being burned to prevent the spread of ticks if it could be done safely; but a man whose run was infested could not move his stock, and if the run were burned they would die of starvation. It would be better for the Government to accept the good judgment of the owner of the run, who would not want his cattle to die either of starvation or ticks, and allow the clause to be negatived.

The HON. W. D. BOX said he did not know much about stock, but he thought this power should not rest with the Minister entirely. If an inspector under the clause ordered the grass to be burned off a run, what was to become of the cattle? The owner ought to have some say in the matter, because if the cattle died of starvation he would get no compensation.

The HON. W. FORREST thought grass should only be burned with the consent of the owners, who were sufficiently alive to the danger that threatened them. Most cattle runs were more or less burned every year, but this clause proposed to take the entire management out of the hands of the stockowner, who was only permitted to pay the piper. Otherwise he had no privileges whatever. How funds were to be collected from men who were practically ruined by the ticks was more than he could understand.

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL said he almost thought the hon. member had forgotten a great deal of his experience in the colony. He spoke as if the Bill were introduced by some person opposed to the cattle industry of the colony, but he ought to know that this measure was brought forward in the best interests of the graziers, to protect them against those who were unwilling to take their part in assisting to resist a state of things injurious to the total interest. It was only a few years ago that the Government were forced to compel stockowners to combine to enable them, for their own benefit, to try to get an additional market for their produce. Did the hon. member forget how difficult it was to make some obstinate men take any part in a step they did not approve of? They might just as well negative the clause as make it necessary to obtain the consent of the owner to burn the grass. The measure had been recommended by many people, and it seemed to recommend itself, and he was prepared to take a division at once.

The HON. J. D. MACANSH thought it might very well be left to the owners of the runs to burn the grass. Every owner would be ready to burn the infected part, but he would choose his own time to do it, when he had men ready to prevent the fire from spreading too far. Under the Bill they would not be allowed to take infected cattle off the run, and then they were to

have their food burned. Anyone who had been in the Western country would know that in some states of the weather it was impossible to put a fire out even with an army of men. This power should not be vested in any person but the owner.

The HON. A. NORTON said the Postmaster-General had said that the Government had been advised by certain persons to insert this clause, but here was a remarkable fact: Mr. Forrest, Mr. Macansh, Mr. Morehead, and himself represented a considerable number of persons interested in cattle runs, and although they had had no conferences with each other they were all opposed to this clause. Surely they were entitled to consideration as much as those who made this recommendation to the Government. He contended that they should negative the clause, and leave the whole thing to the judgment of the owner, who would burn his paddocks when he thought proper. It was more cruel to let the cattle die of starvation than of ticks.

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL said hon. members must be aware that there were certain portions of land near Rockhampton occupied by the Lake's Creek Company which had become infested, and there were certain stockowners in the Central district to whom this infested spot was a menace. Those men had asked that power should be given to compel this place to be burned off for their own protection, and that was the reason for the introduction of this clause. He offered that concrete instance for the consideration of those who were opposed to the clause, and submitted that it disposed of all the arguments that had been advanced against it.

Question—That clause 14 stand part of the Bill—put; and the Committee divided:—

CONTENTS, 5.

The Hons. A. J. Thynne, A. H. Barlow, F. T. Brentnall, R. Bulcock, and W. F. Taylor.

NOT-CONTENTS, 12.

The Hons. A. C. Gregory, C. H. Buzacott, A. Norton, W. Forrest, J. O. Smyth, J. D. Macansh, B. D. Morehead, J. Cowlishaw, J. Lalor, W. D. Box, G. W. Gray, and H. Mosman.

Resolved in the negative.

Clause 15 put and passed.

On clause 16—"Owners to give notice"—

The HON. W. FORREST said that was the most drastic clause in the Bill. An owner had to give notice to an inspector within seven days if he found disease in a malignant form appearing in his stock. He might not be able to find an inspector in that time, or he might not be aware that the disease had assumed a malignant form. If there was malignant disease certainly notice should be given, but a week was not long enough.

Clause put and passed.

Clause 17 put and passed.

On clause 18—"Powers of inspector"—

The HON. A. NORTON said he took strong objection to the 5th subsection, which provided that an inspector could impound any stock when in his opinion there existed a risk of the stock straying on an infected area or coming in contact with infected stock. He did not object to giving power to have them removed, but why should an owner of clean stock have his cattle impounded, and be put to all the expense connected therewith, when he had done nothing that was wrong?

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL said the object of the clause was to deal with stray cattle that might be roaming about a district and impound them if necessary. It was not likely any inspector would be so insane as to go to a station and impound the whole of the proprietor's cattle. If the Committee took away the power to impound straying cattle disease might spread to all points of the compass wherever there was an infected area.

The HON. A. NORTON said the provision went a great deal further than that, and it might be ruin to some persons if the power was enforced as it could be. How was an inspector to know that the power was only intended to be used in a restricted form.

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL said the clause was limited in its operation by the fact that existing pounds were so small in their capacity. It would be impracticable to apply it even to the stock on a large grazing farm.

The HON. A. C. GREGORY said the meaning of impounding under the Act was not putting them into a pound. It was sufficient to take possession of them and declare them impounded.

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL: For twenty-four hours only.

The HON. A. C. GREGORY said the subsection gave an inspector power to go on to a person's run that was not infected, and amongst cattle that were not infected, and to impound them because they might stray on to an infected area near them. It was such a very arbitrary power, that unless there was something to control it it seemed unreasonable.

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL said that unless they gave power to inspectors to keep sound stock away from infected areas, any measure for their protection against ticks would be simply so much waste paper.

The HON. A. NORTON said what the hon. gentleman wished was to get power to impound straying cattle without owners or on country that did not belong to the owner; but the clause did not apply to them only. It might apply to a paddock with 300 or 400 head of cattle; those cattle might be put into a pound where they would starve and lose their chance of getting fat for a year.

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL said the context showed that the clause did not apply to cattle in paddocks, but only to places where there was no boundary and cattle were likely to stray on infected areas.

The HON. A. NORTON said that, although no one had been ruined through the operation of the present Stock Acts, it was quite possible that through the default of some inspector under this Bill great loss would ensue.

The HON. F. T. BRENTNALL said this Bill had been brought in to deal with an emergency. The tick disease had caused the southern colonies to take measures which threatened to exclude all the cattle of this colony from entering there, and in dealing with the difficulty it was proposed to endow the inspectors with what appeared to be an excessive power. But there must be an excessive power to deal with an excessive danger, which had already ruined a good many small stockowners, especially dairymen. It did not seem to be unreasonable that some person should have power to proceed to the length which this clause proposed; and when an inspector saw that stock were in danger of entering, unknown to the owner, upon infested country, it was right that he should have power to impound them to prevent their being totally lost. It was apparent to him that this matter must be dealt with in an emergent manner, and there must be some hardships which must be looked in the face.

The HON. A. NORTON asked the hon. member if he supposed that those who derived their living by rearing cattle did not realise the danger as well as he did? But they were bound to look at it from both sides. He did not object to some of the drastic powers conferred by the Bill, but he had pointed out the defective parts. Too great powers were given with regard to impounding, but he accepted the statement of the Postmaster-General that these provisions would only apply to stray stock, and he would offer no further opposition.

The HON. J. D. MACANSH thought the clause might apply very well where there were only a few cattle, but it would not apply to stations carrying thousands. The neighbouring station might be infected with some disease, and there might only be a creek between them at which both herds watered. How could they possibly impound several thousand head of cattle? The clause would be unworkable if it applied to such stations.

The HON. W. FORREST said if the clause was only intended to apply to stray stock it should say so.

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL said if the hon. member had some valuable cattle which had strayed near infected country he would bless the memory of an inspector who drove them away from danger. As the Hon. Mr. Macansh said, it would be impossible to impound several thousand head of cattle.

Clause put and passed.

Clauses 19, 20, and 21 passed as printed.

On clause 22—"Powers of local authorities"—

The HON. C. H. BUZACOTT moved the insertion after the words "local authority" of the words "constituted under the laws in force for the time being for the government of municipalities or divisions."

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

Clause 23 put and passed.

On clause 24—"Offences"—

The HON. A. NORTON said the 3rd subsection made it an offence to leave, or cause to be left, the carcass of any diseased beast on or within half-a-mile of any public road without destroying the carcass. It should also be made an offence to leave an infected animal to stray on a road. There was a penalty provided for anyone who travelled infected stock, and if such person left an infected beast behind it might do far greater harm than leaving a carcass on the road.

The HON. W. FORREST said a beast might be left behind accidentally, and it might be very difficult for the drover or owner to show that it was not done intentionally.

The HON. J. D. MACANSH said attention had been called to the fact that there was much more danger in leaving infected stock on the road than the infected carcasses. He quite agreed with that. Diseases sometimes broke out in cattle when travelling, especially pleuro. It was necessary to amend the clause so that the penalty should apply to diseased animals as well as carcasses.

The HON. W. LALOR said such a provision would be rather rough on the drover, who might have no knowledge of the existence of disease. It frequently happened that stock were left behind without the knowledge of the drover.

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL: Clause 8, subsection 3, gave power to prescribe by Order in Council the routes which suspected stock were required to take to their destination. Cattle travelling must always keep to the road or within half a mile of it. If therefore such an amendment were put in, drovers would not be able to leave diseased stock on the road, nor could he take them off the road. As the Hon. Mr. Lalor pointed out, it would place drovers in a very awkward position. He was as anxious as anyone to prevent the establishment of centres of inspection, but he did not see how that could be done in the way suggested.

The HON. A. NORTON admitted there were many difficulties in the way, but was surprised at the weakness of the Postmaster-General's argument. Drovers did not leave their cattle on the road. The amendment would provide for cattle being left behind. One objection he had was that drovers might leave behind cattle not suffering from any particular disease; they

might be weak and miserable, and an incompetent inspector might take them for diseased cattle. In that case the drover might be penalised for leaving infected cattle behind. That was a serious difficulty.

The HON. F. T. BRENTNALL: If a carcass was destroyed, it could not be said to be left behind. He therefore moved the omission of the words "without destroying the carcass."

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

Clauses 25 and 26 put and passed.

The HON. W. FORREST moved the following new clause:—

This Act shall come into operation and take effect from and after the twenty-second day of July, one thousand eight hundred and ninety-six, and shall remain in force for two years, and thenceforth until the end of the next session of Parliament.

Before two years had elapsed they should have added considerably to their knowledge of stock diseases, and be able to place a better Act on the statute-book. The amendment cast upon the Government the necessity of reconsidering the matter at an early date, and that was specially necessary considering the crudeness of the measure. It had been further suggested to him that the present legislation was to a great extent experimental.

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL said the Hon. Mr. Forrest had raised the question as to whether this was to be a permanent or temporary measure. If he thought that at the end of two years there was any reasonable hope that disease in cattle would be stamped out, he would have no objection to the hon. member's proposal; but he wished to point out that objection had been taken by people interested in stock in the other colonies to the meagre nature of Queensland's legislation on the subject, and it had been suggested that this colony should seek for more complete powers. The other colonies had hitherto been large consumers of Queensland produce, and it would be greatly to the advantage of the colony if any reasonable cause of objection upon the part of those who were their customers could be removed. At the present time a proclamation was in force in New South Wales dealing with the importation of hides from Queensland, and at any time they might absolutely prohibit the importation of cattle across the border. That would be not only a serious matter to the stockowners of this colony, but to New South Wales also. It was a mere matter of business on the part of that colony to protect itself as far as it could, and to ask this colony to protect its own herds as well as theirs. It was the duty of Parliament to provide, even in the absence of disease, for the possibility of disease breaking out, so that it could be checked in time. Why should they, because they were threatened by one danger, shut their eyes to the possibility of other dangers? The hon. gentleman who moved the new clause evidently looked upon it as quite unnecessary to take precautions against the introduction of diseased stock. The effect of the clause would be that the Bill would come into operation, be in force for two years, and probably expire unless Parliament, under the impulse of a threatened danger, passed further legislation. They would then be in the position of not having any legal authority whatever for dealing effectively with an outbreak of disease in the herds of the colony. If it was thought desirable to limit the operation of the measure, then it threw upon Parliament the onus of taking further action, but there was always the serious danger of the Act lapsing and there being no existing law to cope with an outbreak of disease. It might not be a bad thing to revise their legislation on the subject two years hence, but he did

not like the idea of exposing the colony to a serious danger in consequence of some oversight. In the debate on the measure it had been pointed out strongly and effectively the necessity for having none but the most experienced inspectors. If they were to employ well-trained men for two years, and then dispense with their services, who were going to replace them? They must maintain a succession of competent men as inspectors; it had even been suggested that they should be veterinary surgeons, but he did not see how that would be possible if those men were to be turned adrift at the end of two years without any prospect of further employment. He submitted that consideration with the utmost earnestness. If, however, hon. members came to the conclusion that it would be better to make the Bill terminable at the end of two or three years, then the matter should be dealt with in the 2nd section, and, instead of repealing the Acts dealt with in that section, suspend their operation during the continuance in force of the Bill before them. He thought, however, it would be better to pass the Bill as it stood, and, if it was found necessary, as it probably would be, to amend it after they had had experience of its operation.

The HON. W. FORREST wished to impress upon the Government the necessity of finding out where the danger was, with the view of having proper legislation. This was the crudest Bill that he had ever seen, and he had quietly listened to the most outrageous propositions because he recognised the urgency of the matter. It would be the duty of the new Secretary for Agriculture to see that the Bill did not lapse, and that either it was re-enacted or a better one introduced. The Postmaster-General used a strong argument in favour of the amendment when he said the Bill would want amending next year. If it could be amended next year it could be better amended in two years, and they had no right to delegate their powers except in cases of emergency. He hoped the Committee would agree to the limitation in order to compel the Government to see that a better measure was brought forward later on.

The HON. A. NORTON said the Hon. Mr. Forrest had introduced this amendment because he thought they were not in a position to deal properly with this subject now, and to compel further legislation within the time suggested. He did not think the argument of the Postmaster-General was quite sound, because other measures, such as the Marsupial Acts, had been brought in to extend only for a year or two. At the same time he would point out that the existing Acts contained far greater powers than this, and those powers had not been abused; but still they should not give greater powers than were absolutely necessary. It would be a great advantage to the colony if the Government introduced fresh legislation on this subject when they had gained more experience. So far as their friends in the other colonies were concerned, they could not know of the existence of the Acts it was now proposed to repeal. He contended that they had too much power, and they had not used it to its fullest extent. They got tuberculosis and pleuro from the other colonies. In Victoria a Royal commission was appointed to inquire into pleuro-pneumonia, which took about a year to cogitate over the matter. They eventually brought up a report, in which they declared that that disease was not infectious or contagious, and the result was that the whole colony was infected, and the disease came here. However, he did not wish to pay them back for the harm that had been done to Queensland, and hoped that those colonies would give every assistance. If they did that it would do more to bring about federation than all the Conventions and speeches that had been made on the subject. Although

he would like to see the amendment carried, still he did not want it to be pressed, as they could amend the Bill next year if any inconvenience arose.

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL said the hon. member was under a misapprehension. The Stock Departments of New South Wales had given a great deal of attention to this matter, and their attitude towards the Colonial Secretary had been most courteous. They had pointed out that the Queensland statutes were defective, and that had been found to be the case in regard to the ticks. He would be glad if the amendment were not pressed, because if any alteration were needed in the future, it would be made quickly enough.

The HON. J. D. MACANSH hoped the new clause would be passed. If the Bill were found to be workable it could be re-enacted, and if it were faulty another could be brought in, which would be much better than having it frequently amended.

The HON. W. FORREST said after the assurance that had been given that fresh legislation would be brought in without delay if found necessary, he would withdraw his amendment.

Amendment, by leave, withdrawn.

Schedule put and passed.

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

THIRD READING.

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

The House adjourned at 8 o'clock till Tuesday next.