Queensland

Parliamentary Debates
[Hansard]

Legislative Assembly

FRIDAY, 5 NOVEMBER 1897

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The SPEAKER took the chair at 3 o'clock.

ROMBERG ESTATE ENABLING BILL—CHARTERS TOWERS GAS COMPANY BILL—ELECTIONS BILL.

THIRD READING.

These Bills were read a third time, passed, and ordered to be transmitted to the Council for their concurrence.

BRISBANE CRICKET GROUND BILL.

APPOINTMENT OF SELECT COMMITTEE.

On the motion of Mr. ARMSTRONG, it was resolved—

1. That the Brsbane Cricket Ground Bill be referred for the consideration and report of a select committee.

2. That such committee have power to send for persons and papers, and leave to sit during any adjournment of the House; and that it consist of the following members:—Mr. Corfield, Mr. Hamilton, Mr. Turley, Mr. Stephenson, and the mover.

ADDITIONAL SITTING DAY.

On the motion of the HOME SECRETARY (for the Premier), it was resolved—

That, unless otherwise ordered, the House will meet for despatch of business at half-past 2 o'clock p.m. on Monday in each week, in addition to the days already provided by Sessional Orders; and that Government business take precedence of all other business on that day.

ATTACHMENT OF WAGES ABOLITION BILL.

SECOND READING—RESUMPTION OF DEBATE.

Mr. KERR: I did not move the adjournment of the debate on the second reading of this Bill with any idea of prolonging it, because I believe the hon. member who has introduced it wishes to get a vote upon it. As one who has worked for wages, and also as an employer of labour in the colony, I do not hold the strong opinion held by some that there should be no attachment of wages. I believe that if a person earning fair wages incurs any liabilities he should meet them, and I consider the amount provided for in this Bill—£3—is too high. I believe that workmen should be protected to the extent of an amount sufficient to enable their wives and families to live, but the balance of their earnings should certainly go to pay all just debts they may have incurred. During the debate most of the speakers held that it is not right that a garnishee order should be issued against wages. The hon. member for Rosewood said he had been in business for twenty years, and from his experience he did not think that garnishee orders should be issued in any form. The hon. member may have met a certain class of persons who always pay their just debts, but I am sorry to say there are other people in business in the colony who do not always meet with that class. The hon. member for Mitchell admitted that there are persons who shirk payment; that he had some experience of them when acting for clients in the West. I am sorry to say that within the last few years there have been people in the Western portion of the country who have shirked payment of their just debts.

Mr. STEWART: Blacklegs.

Mr. KERR: I am not going to say who they are, but they did not live in the district formerly, and those persons have been ready to get into the books of the tradespeople, and when they get their cheques from stations they shirk payment and go away and leave their debts unpaid. I speak with experience as a person doing business in the West when I say that before the time I mention carriers and other Western workers could be depended upon to pay their just debts, if not at once, as soon as they earned the money.

I was in this Chamber when the provision for garnishee orders was passed, and as a business man, and one who worked for wages, I thoroughly believed in it, and I believe in it still. I can give a little experience that came under my own notice in the West. A carrier asked a tradesman to execute certain repairs to his wagon, without which he would have been unable to earn his livelihood. He stated to the tradesman that he would pay a certain amount the first load of wool he got and the balance before Christmas. That was in June, and the repairs amounted to £29. The carrier, who came from the Southern portion of the colony, got the work, went to the railway station at Alpha, went home to near Brisbane and spent the money. When he came back in January or February and was asked for payment he told the tradesman he could pay nothing. The tradesman then issued a summons and obtained a verdict; but before the verdict was given the carrier sold his wagon and team to a grazier in the district for a certain amount in cash and a £25 promissory-note. He made the boast that he would never pay the tradesman who had executed the repairs; but the tradesman, getting to know that there was a £25 promissory-note, took steps to obtain a garnishee order, and got something like £19 for his £29, the expenses in connection with the garnishee order amounting to something like £6. If he had not been able to take proceedings with the garnishee order he would have been clean done out of his £29. A large number of persons who are against the garnishee order say that the bench will grant garnishee orders indiscriminately up to the full amount of a man's wages. I have sat on the bench and have found that the police magistrates will not issue orders up to the full amount of a man's wages. They consider that a man and his family ought to have something to live upon. If the hon. member for Clermont will reduce the amount from £3 to £2 I will support him; but I think the amount put down in the Bill is a little too high.

The SPEAKER: That is a matter that can be adjusted in committee. It is not in order to discuss it now.

Mr. KERR: A great deal has also been said about garnisheeing sick pay, but it is well known to everybody who has had any experience of friendly societies that the secretary of the society, under the rules, has to pay the allowance, whatever it may be, to the wife or children of a sick member. And we had the opinion of the Attorney-General that the sick pay of a man is protected for those who are dependent on him. It is to the honour of the colony that in only one place has it been attempted to garnishee sick pay—namely, in Gympie; and I believe we shall never hear of sick pay being garnisheed again. I believe the hon. member for Clermont is willing to reduce the amount, and that being so I will not take up the time of the House any further.

Mr. HOOLAN: This Bill, which aims at destroying the drastic tendency of the Act passed some time ago, is a very necessary one in my opinion; and every hon. member who gave his assent to the passing of that Act—which works so disastrously to workmen in many parts of the colony, which hangs like the sword of Damocles over their heads—should take this opportunity to retrieve the false step they took at that time, and try to lift what is a tremendous burden from the poorest of the working classes—namely, the wages men. When a man works for wages now, if he has a wife and family, he is likely to remain a wages man all his life. He has only his labour to depend upon. That is necessary for the subsistence of himself and his family, and it is the duty of persons engaged in commerce—shopkeepers, landlords, and others—to give credit in a proper way, if they give credit at all. When they give credit beyond a man's power to pay they are giving charity, and they should give it as such, not use their influence as members of the legislature to pass a law under which they can shelter themselves. Innocent, misguided, ignorant persons are very often tempted through the inducements held out by the shopkeeping class to incur debts which they cannot possibly pay. A number of persons—shopkeepers and lenders of small sums of money—bring about a system of vile indebtedness, mischievous in every way; damaging to themselves as citizens, damaging to the State, and thrice damaging to the workmen who are induced to run into debt. For that reason there should be no such Act as we have on the statute-book, and no such horrible, barbarous institution as we have in our law courts in the hands of designing persons aimed at the poor man and inflicted on him daily. I allude to garnishee orders. The fact of that Act passing in this enlightened age, when we are supposed to have a strong radical party in this House, the Labour party, emphasises the saying that we so often hear—there is one law for the rich and another for the poor. There are fifty laws for the rich and none for the poor. There is no law for the protection of the poor man who is incapable of helping himself, and who has to submit in many instances to lying orders and wrong judgments obtained by dishonesty and false affidavits, and yet he has to suffer the garnishee order because he is poor, because he has no money and not the intelligence or capacity to help himself, and no friends behind to give him any assistance. The Act is an abomination and a disgrace. I should be sorry indeed if my name were attached to the passing of such a hideous measure, and my voice will be raised against it until it is removed from the statute-book.

The HOME SECRETARY: It was supported by the Labour party.

Mr. HOOLAN: It may have been, but the Labour party must have been asleep. I am only one small member of the Labour party, and I suppose their collective wisdom is greater than my individual wisdom. They know their mind about the matter, and I know mine. If I had been in the House at that time, when there were suspensions and Peace Preservation Acts and horrible turmoil such as was taking place then, and which I hope will never take place again, I also might have been rendered insensible to the position. I do not know how I should have acted, but I think I should have denounced and condemned such a hideous measure. In the first place, why should there be a Garnishee Act at all to attach a man's wages? Like everything else, it was asked for by persons who had given credit. It was not asked for by the working man or by the general public. A small section of persons asked for an easy way to recover money from persons who had no land or real estate, and who might have no household goods to levy upon, and who were allowed to incur debts. That gave rise to the Small Debts Court Amendment Act under which the garnishee order is such a beautiful instrument. The working section of the community want many Acts of Parliament which will better their position and consequently better the position of the State. My stand is that the working man should be the first consideration of the State. Once you let him down and allow him to be depressed so you depress the State and destroy the prosperity of the State. Therefore, you must keep him up and help him. You must make him smile, and, if necessary, take off your coat and watch him all day in order to encourage him and keep up his spirits. You must do nothing which will discourage him, or depress him, or destroy his natural rest so necessary for recuperation that he may be in sound health and spirits for his next day's labour, so that his wife may be strong and in good spirits and his children robust and healthy—in order that they may grow up healthy boys and girls, and take their places in the world of labour. That is the view to take of the working man. There are thousands of ways one could point to in which the State and the legislature might be engaged in assisting the working man, but they are not. Strange to say the legislature is got at by a dishonest and unscrupulous class—the shopkeeping class, the publicans, the boarding-house keepers, the small money-lenders—and we find there is not the slightest trouble in getting an Act of Parliament through which is merely a tomahawk over the heads of the working men, their wives, and their families. That is what the Garnishee Act is.

The HOME SECRETARY: I don't think you should garnishee wages, but I don't think the Garnishee Act need do that.

Mr. HOOLAN: You apply a remedy and say it will not do this, that, or the other. You put a soap-and-sugar plaster upon a boil and hope it will not bring it to a head and cause pain, but it does. It is not what this Act ought to do, but what it does in fact. I am trying to deal with what it has done, what it is doing, and what it is likely to do in the future. The law is a tremendous lever to the man who gives credit, and a tremendous engine of opression to the man who receives credit. The first severe experience of it was at Croydon. I don't know whether it was intended to apply specially to that place, but at all events there are a lot of dishonest tradesmen there, over-speculative tradesmen I might say, who have gone beyond the limits of legitimate trade. They gave credit for all it was worth, and received credit themselves in the same way. That I consider is tantamount to dishonesty. They gave credit unscrupulously, without the slightest care or discrimination. Why? The sentimental person will say to put the working miner in a proper position, to help him in his labour, to give an impetus to the goldfield, to enable men to get their clothing and tobacco, their picks, and shovels, and drills, their powder and their fuses, in order that they might win gold from the earth. I say it was no such thing. They gave credit simply on account of keen competition, and they tried to dispose of their goods in the quickest method, and bring in the largest possible profit. Competition became keener, and they became more reckless. When they had a bad week, or fortnight, or month in which trade was dull, they looked round for a remedy. They had goods in hand and goods on the wharf, and goods to arrive, and they had to pay for them. Trade would not come in the ordinary trade methods, so they sent out agents. If it is necessary to make a law to attach the wages of those persons it is most necessary to make a law to attach and put in prison the unscrupulous agents of dishonest tradesmen who go about from house to house and induce persons to buy goods they do not want. I look upon those persons as inducers, or seducers, for often by seductive arts they induce the female in charge of the home to buy many things that she does not require; they are put down in the husband's name and he is held responsible. There is the bicycle man, the sewing machine man, the picture man, and the Bible man; and there are Muir and Morcom and many others I could name who have carried out a system of horrors under the Garnishee Act. Such things should be provided against by Act of Parliament. If you insist that the working man who sells his work for daily hire shall pay debts incurred in all sorts of ways and by most improper methods, with many of which he has had nothing whatever to do, you are doing a wrong; he should be made to pay only debts justly and lawfully incurred. I contend that numbers of debts of all sizes and shapes, from the 2d. drinks in the public-house bar to big overdrafts of thousands, are dishonest and improperly incurred; but this legislature has come in and passed a law allowing the persons to whom those debts are owing to pounce upon the working man's wages, giving no consideration whatever to his circumstances. The storekeeper sends out his agents who induce persons to buy a number of things they do not want, and in that way debts have been incurred on Croydon from the time it was opened until the present. Persons had become insolvent, compounded with their creditors on Croydon, and in the settlement of their estates those debts were written off as bad after being inquired into by the agents of the creditors. When the Garnishee Act was passed through with such splendid speed, and with so little acrimony of debate, what did those business people do? They took out garnishee orders in respect of old debts which had been written off as wholly bad, and compelled the debtors to pay up as far as they could. I believe that that kind of thing has been practised more largely in the township of Croydon than in any other town in the colony, but it has been done all over the colony. To what end was it practised? Did it do any good? Most decidedly not. Is the garnishee order doing any good to-day? Certainly not. It is most unsatisfactory and depressing to the working man, and it does not relieve the storekeeper one iota. Hon. members will, I dare say, point to cases, as the hon. member for Barcoo did, in which men have recovered sums of money. But I say that taken in a general way it has acted with most hideous effects to the colony. Since the Garnishee Act was passed eighty-five persons from the goldfield of Croydon alone have been driven into the Insolvency Court. I do not think that is a good thing for the individual, and I am sure it is a very bad job for the State. Under the garnishee system working men were compelled to continue months of hard toil to pay off a "dead horse," to pay up debts, some of which were very doubtfully incurred, and many of which have been on the storekeeper's books for years, interest and compound interest being charged on those debts, though the prices for the goods in the first instance were from 150 to 200 per cent. above the retail prices charged in Queen street, Brisbane. To avoid all that 200 persons have gone to Western Australia and other places, and I maintain that such a system is not a good thing for the colony. In what way has it acted on the working classes? It has brought the knowledge of the Insolvency Court right within their means. The Insolvency Court is of course open to everybody, but it is not a good thing to see working men taking shelter in that court. As one of the judges said from the bench, the Insolvency Court was never intended for paupers; there is no necessity for a pauper who has no assets to go insolvent. But here we have a certain set of persons in the colony who have nothing but their daily labour, and Parliament in its wisdom has made a law levying the most fearful exactions on their daily labour, no matter what was their daily wage—whether it was a pauper rate, or the minimum rate, or the poor rate paid by divisional boards and municipal councils, or the high rate paid by some of the Northern mines. Parliament passed that law without making any distinction as to the rates of wages men received, gave power to levy on a man's wages even though he might have a wife sick in bed, perhaps in her confinement, or with twins in her arms. The

Secretary for Lands said to repeal that law would be to encourage dishonesty. I say that dishonesty is rampant in the State; it is dishonesty that encourages the garnishee. Debts are encouraged by people being too ready to lend money for mercenary considerations, and to sell for profit. They set themselves up, not to get a living in the first instance; the person who starts to get his living is the working man. The working man is the only true and honest man in the State. But when the working man sets himself up as a publican, or a storekeeper, or a legal or medical practitioner, he sets himself up as a more or less dishonest person, because he tries to live out of the labour of others.

Mr. FINNEY: Do you put a newspaper man in, too?

Mr. HOOLAN: Yes, the newspaper man is a highly dishonest person.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: What is a member of Parliament, then?

Mr. HOOLAN: I am not going to classify hon. members, because they are such a heterogeneous lot, and have been ever since I first entered this Chamber, although they are more easily seen through now than they used to be. I say that all persons who set themselves up to get a living out of the working man are more or less dishonest—some of them very much so. It may be considered an insult to call tradesmen dishonest, but I say that they are. I am not going to classify dishonesty in its various forms, to ticket dishonest persons from A to Z; but I take the stand that the moment a man leaves the paths of industry—from working in the fields, in the mines, or at his craft, at which he creates something for his own benefit and the benefit of mankind—and lives on the labours of others, he becomes dishonest. In that category I include storekeepers. As soon as they creep into business they desire to get into a large way. Why do they do this? To gain enormous profits. Will any hon. member tell me that storekeepers add to their businesses, and mortgage themselves, passing sleepless nights, and undergoing the worry and turmoil of business, for the benefit of their fellow-creatures? It is absurd on the face of it. Then how can the Secretary for Lands reconcile his assertion that the Bill, if passed, will encourage dishonesty? The Bill will increase honesty; it will protect the only honest persons we have in the State—that is the working man. I do not say that he is born honest any more than any other person. Of course it is his environment that makes him honest. When he becomes a wages-man, and hires out both his body and his time, the whole of his enjoyment in this life, and very often his hopes of salvation in the next, he is forced to be honest. He is the only truly honest person in the State, and the only one who should receive the protection of the State from the designing, unscrupulous, and reckless persons who constitute the shopkeeping and money-lending classes. It is a crying shame to see in every town in the colony the way in which working people are enticed into spending their money. Even clergymen are guilty of this. They are beset on all sides by sharks and harpies, and if they turn to the State to protect them against the results of their foolishness in a weak moment—to protect them from sharks and harpies of all sorts and sizes, of all grades and classes, of all creeds and colours—the State will pass a law in a few minutes—and, I am sorry to say, with the silence if not with the sanction of the Labour party—a law which will torture them into their graves. There is no distinction of sex. Aged spinsters, who are earning their livings at their sewing-machines and in other places where they are poorly paid for their labour, are subjected to this infernal machine passed by the Queensland Parliament, and which the hon. member for Clermont desires to abolish, and which I am willing to assist him to abolish.

The HOME SECRETARY: He is not desirous of abolishing it—he only wants the Bill to apply to the case of wages. The machine works well in some cases.

Mr. HOOLAN: Of course that is another question. I candidly confess that to that aspect of the question I have given no attention. The machinery may work well in some cases, but I distinctly avow, without the slightest pretence of denial, that I am here as the advocate of one class which seems to be entirely destitute of advocates. I regret to say that the unflinching advocates who will take up a decided stand on a matter like this have dwindled down to a very few, of whom I am one. I am facing the question from the side of its being a tax on wages. Whether it is a useful part of the law machine, as the Home Secretary says, which is cumbrous in its action, I am not here to say.

The HOME SECRETARY: It is a benefit to working men in some instances.

Mr. HOOLAN: The machinery is so hideous that magistrates of the territory have positively decided not to obey it. One of the very best officials in the service of the State—Mr. Macdonald, the warden at Georgetown—has refused to administer the Act.

The HOME SECRETARY: He did not refuse.

Mr. HOOLAN: I was on the bench with him and egged him on all I knew how not to. The solicitor said, "This is the law." I said, "I know it is the law, but I am the law while I am here, and until the Government strike me off I am going to be the law so far as in me lies. You write to the Home Secretary, or appeal to the District Court"—he was going to apply for some order to compel us to do certain things. That did not trouble me any more than the dissent of hon. members at the present time to my arguments. I thought it was necessary to go further, and enlighten the public with regard to this machinery. I may also point to the fact that Warden Towner and other police magistrates in the West have considered this law so abominable that they refuse to sanction it, and they give the law to themselves.

The HOME SECRETARY: They carry out the law—they have discretion to refuse an order.

Mr. HOOLAN: Hon. members say it is optional, but I have heard the Act interpreted by three different sets of lawyers, and they all read it differently. The point was raised in Georgetown whether the police magistrate had power to mitigate the severity of the law, and the solicitors wired down to Messrs. Thynne and Macartney, Messrs. Hart and Flower, and to Messrs. Chambers, Bruce, and McNab. Messrs. Hart and Flower declared that the police magistrate had the option; Messrs. Thynne and Macartney declared he had no option; while Messrs. Chambers, Bruce, and McNab said it was very doubtful. It is a most fearful machine, and the sooner the Government take some steps to do away with it the better. It is necessary constantly to impress upon the working men and women the fact that it is an injustice, and unless a politician does that he is in a false position, because he is not doing his duty to the State in a proper way. It should be the duty of every politician who has the interests of the State constantly at heart to further the interests of the working men, and tell what he thinks to be the truth. I never lie to the working men under any circumstances whatever, although I may lie to politicians, who are doubtful characters; but I am above lying to working men. The present law is an abominable thing put upon the statute-book by an abominable Government. There are a dozen ways in which the working men could be relieved of the burdens which have been imposed upon them by a few unscrupulous persons who carry on large businesses for the sake of profit.

The HOME SECRETARY: The Government passed a Bill in 1895, but it got smothered in another place.

Mr. HOOLAN: That was the Workmen's Lien Bill, but if there is any Bill that is necessary for the salvation of the working men, or that will conduce to their happiness or contribute to their comfort, it is their duty to keep that Bill at the head of the business-paper until it is passed into law, and not submit to any rebuke from any source whatever. The destinies of the country are in the hands of the working men, and it is the duty of the Government to see that they get sufficient to enable them to pay their just debts. Hon. members opposite may say that working people should not get into debt, but under the present system of commerce everybody gets into debt, and thinks there is no harm in it. Therefore it is the duty of the State to prevent people getting into debt, because when a working man gets into debt he ought to be looked after by the State. When a working man owes eight weeks rent and money to his baker and butcher and storekeeper, he has no possible hope of paying, because it takes all he can earn to enable him to live, and when there is any inroad made upon his wages it becomes the duty of those who are his superiors to step in and protect him in every way. I trust that this Bill will be brought forward every session until the Government are compelled to recognise it and abolish the drastic tendencies of the present garnishee order. The present law was passed without due consideration, and it has operated so injuriously to working men that it does not meet with the favour of the State officials who are paid to do justice between man and man, and interpret the laws of the country. The law should not be allowed to remain in such a confused state that magistrates may interpret it in different ways. We should not leave an Act of Parliament in such a slipshod, threadbare, ragged condition, but should amend it so that it must be interpreted properly, and so that a solicitor, however educated he may be, will not be able to try to turn black into white. The magistrate should be able to say to him, "This is the law, and I am going to carry it out according to the letter; I shall not allow any sentimental considerations to influence me, but will interpret the law as it comes before me." I am sorry that we should be forced into such a position that the Government of the country have to admit their inability to amend a law which is known to be drastic, and to have been the outcome of the importunate entreaties of certain persons. The Government shilly-shally and say that the drastic tendency of the law is optional; but no law should be left in that position, more particularly when the working people are the ones who will suffer. They depend for their daily existence upon their daily hire, and very often cannot afford a day to attend the court to defend themselves from this cruelty and horrid brutality of the garnishee order. It does not matter to me how this Assembly considers the matter; I have my own feelings in regard to it, and I know what my mission is. That is, to denounce it at every opportunity, both privately as a citizen and publicly from my place in the Assembly and as a pressman writing for the public. Irrespective of how it may be taken, I get up to denounce it here and to strongly support the hon. member for Clermont in this measure. It is no use whispering about it; I disdain such an attitude. I challenge hon. members on the other side who wish to continue the garnishee-order system to say it is right and to show why it is right. I challenge hon. members opposite not to shelter themselves under the cover of silence when this question is brought up. That is a false position for any hon. member to take up. They all bow to the working man and issue addresses to him when they are appealing for his suffrages. They will do anything, even to filling him up with beer——

The SPEAKER: Order! The hon. member must not make imputations of that kind.

Mr. HOOLAN: I believe you are quite right in pulling me up. My language is getting a bit strong, but I want hon. members to express an opinion on this subject so that we may pin them down to it. I am quite willing to be pinned down to mine. That is the way to make a proper politician. It keeps their minds alert and up to the mark when they are pinned down to their opinions. I have given my opinion unhesitatingly, and I ask those who have not to give theirs. I want it for my guidance. I once more say that the attachment of wages as now existing under the garnishee-order system should be immediately abolished. It is necessary for the happiness of our working classes that it should be, and the sooner it is done the better it will be for the colony.

Mr. DUNSFORD: I can understand how the hon. member's feelings have led him to speak strongly on this matter. We all know that in the administration of this Act great injustice has been done. The intention of the legislature in passing it was that dishonest people should be compelled to pay their debts. The actual result of its administration had been to compel those who are honest but unfortunate to pay what rightly belongs to their families, depriving them sometimes of the necessaries of life. I think it is a very wrong thing that women and children should be compelled to suffer—sometimes semi-starvation—because of the mistakes or misfortunes of the husband and father. Even if he gets into debt deliberately, I do not know that that is any reason why the State should aid any person in causing suffering to his wife and children. And we know that in many cases sickness and want of employment prevent men from paying their just debts. What I chiefly rise for is to point out that the hon. member for Burke hardly did justice to hon. members in what he said. I do not think he is fully conversant with the history of the question; he was not a member of the House in 1894 or 1895, and is not aware of all that was done in the House during that period. During the passing of the Bill to amend the Small Debts Act, the leader of the Labour party spoke very strongly on the subject, as likewise did other members on this side. However the Bill became law; but it was understood by hon. members, from the speeches of the Attorney-General and others, that there should be no unfair garnisheeing of wages under it. But the experience of twelve months showed us that gross injustice was being done under it, and the House set to work to remedy the evil, by introducing, in 1895, the Workmen's Lien Bill, clause 3 of which specifically provided that there should be no attachment of workmen's wages in any case. The Attorney-General, in moving the second reading of the Bill, made these observations—

> This Bill proposes that wages shall not be liable to attachment by the order of any court, and that was made a law of England by an Act passed quite recently; there is nothing novel in it. The fact that a man's wages may be attached destroys his energies, as he knows he is merely working as the servant of another man who keeps the judgment hanging over his head. Apart from that, it is entirely in keeping with the legislation of the colony that wages should be free in this particular respect. The clause dealing with that ought not to meet with opposition.

The hon. member for Clermont, therefore, is only introducing legislation which has already been found necessary in older countries, and he is to be congratulated on having done so. There was no opposition to that particular clause; it was carried unanimously. There can be no two opinions that a judgment hanging over the head of an honest man who has been unfortunate removes from him all incentive to work. The operation of the law is unfair to the merchant and storekeeper as well, because the butcher and baker supplying a working man with the necessaries of life do not know that there is a judgment hanging over him until pay-day comes round, when they find the money goes to some other man. I would prefer to go further than this Bill goes, because I do not believe that the State should collect private debts at all. I think a greater proportion of debts would be paid if there were no collection by the State, because we know that a larger proportion of debts of honour are paid than of debts which have to be recovered by the machinery of the courts. I merely wished to show that there was a protest in 1894, and that the House and the Labour party strongly supported the Workmen's Lien Bill in 1895, which, through an unfortunate absence of a quorum, was slaughtered with the innocents in the Legislative Council after having passed the Assembly. I hope this Bill will be passed, and that all will be done that is necessary to prevent the continuance of the evil.

Mr. GRIMES: We have heard a great deal about the wages men this evening, and from the description of them given by the hon. member for Burke one could almost consider them angels.

Mr. DUNSFORD: They are a long way from being that.

Mr. GRIMES: I quite agree with the hon. member that they are a long way from that. There are wages men who are thoroughly honest and straightforward, but this Bill will in no way assist them. It will rather have the contrary effect, as has been pointed out by the hon. members for Fortitude Valley and Ipswich. Their opinion is that it will operate to prevent those who have honest intentions to pay up from getting the accommodation they require in times of sickness and distress. I am not in favour of this Bill, which I look upon as class legislation for a few, comparatively. Although the argument has been denounced, I think this may operate as a premium on dishonesty.

Mr. CROSS: It is the English law.

Mr. GRIMES: I do not care whether it is the English law or not. I have no experience of the people in England. I am speaking from my knowledge of a number of so-called wages men, and I say a great many of them would take a mean advantage of this Bill to run up scores, and then defy the people who had let them have goods on credit.

Mr. CROSS: The Home Secretary is in favour of it.

Mr. GRIMES: I do not care whether the Home Secretary or the whole Government are in favour of it. I have opinions of my own on the subject, and I express them fearlessly. I never supported the Bill.

Mr. CROSS: You never opposed it in 1895.

Mr. GRIMES: There may have been a hundred reasons why I did not speak then. Though we may allow a thing to go without dissent it does not follow that we are in favour of it; not calling for a division may arise from a desire not to disclose who are for and against a Bill. I cannot see why wages men alone should have their earnings protected. Why should not those engaged in an industry on their own hook have a living protected for them? There is nothing said about the protection of poor men, who are not in as good a position as wages men. If they get into debt their few household goods will be sold, and afterwards, unless they take advantage of the Insolvency Court, what they make by their calling is liable to be pounced upon. We hear of no protection for those persons. There are many small farmers who are in an infinitely worse position than a wages man getting £3 a week. I am confident that many of them after working fourteen hours a day do not realise the half of £3 a week; their total income is not above £1 a week. There is nothing said of a provision for their protection; that their goods shall not be sold at such a low price as to deprive them or their wives and families of a living. I can see no necessity for this distinction in the case of men working for wages, who in these times are in the very best position, with money coming in regularly week after week, with no anxiety, and in many cases with very little work. I can say, from my own experience of working men likely to be benefited by this Bill, that as a rule they are very extravagant and improvident. I make that statement with a full knowledge of a large number of so-called wages men. I am not speaking of those who regularly pay their way and would get into debt only through sickness or misfortune, but I am confident that if the Bill passes in its present form it will encourage improvidence and extravagance in people who will get into debt, and snap their fingers at those who have been foolish enough to give them credit. I have heard opinions from the other side in favour of the garnishee order. It was a petition from Croydon, I think, that led the Attorney-General to establish the system. It was very strongly supported, and the hon. member for Croydon mentioned, as an instance, an individual who, while he was a wages man, took good care to protect himself by keeping no goods that could be seized, was at the same time taking proceedings against other individuals against whom he could proceed. If this Bill becomes law it will increase the number of those unprincipled individuals.

Mr. CROSS: Is that a general characteristic of the working man?

Mr. GRIMES: I am not saying that; I am speaking of the wages men this Bill is supposed to protect. I do not hold the opinion that all wages men are honest. From the time of their engagement with you they show signs of dishonesty. From the want of proper education they may not look upon it as dishonesty, but if a man wastes your time when he is engaged by the day or the week or the year he is robbing you. We seldom get wandering labouring men that are at all faithful to their employers. That is my experience. Seeing that there is a divided opinion about the Bill, I think there should be further consideration given to it, and I beg to move, as an amendment, that the Bill be read a second time this day six months.

Mr. CROSS: I am not at all surprised at the amendment moved by the hon. member for Oxley, whose antipathy to working men is well known. The hon. member is an agriculturist; he has employed a large number of men in his time in connection with sugar, arrowroot, and other products, and he evidently speaks as one with very large experience. On several occasions the hon. gentleman has given his experience of workmen, and from his account of them you would think the whole of the working classes of the colony, especially those who are forced by circumstances to wander from plantation to plantation, from station to station, and from town to town, are robbers.

Mr. GRIMES: I would like to explain that I made a distinction between working men. The hon. member is replying to my remarks as if I spoke of the whole of those who are working for wages, but I did nothing of the kind.

Mr. CROSS: He was referring to the wandering labouring men.

Mr. GRIMES: The class that would be protected under the Bill.

Mr. CROSS: Now, we have had the employers' side from the hon. gentleman, I would ask what are the wages the hon. gentleman pays, and under what conditions his men work? I have heard men who have worked for the hon. member complain very bitterly of the unfair conditions; and if we had the statements of men who have worked for him the other side of the shield would probably not reflect much credit on the hon. gentleman. I think the amendment is a very unfair one. It is a subterfuge to escape a vote on the principle of the Bill, and is seldom resorted to. No honest legislator cares to evade his responsibility in that way.

The SPEAKER: Order! It is laid down in the Standing Orders that such an amendment can be moved as one way of disposing of a measure for the time being; and the hon. member, in accusing another hon. member of dishonesty when he moves an amendment, is distinctly out of order.

Mr. CROSS: I meant to use the word in the Scotch colloquial sense; I have no desire to impute dishonesty in the ordinary sense of the word. But I say it is a course very seldom resorted to in this House. During my experience it has been resorted to only twice, and both times in connection with measures introduced by myself. The hon. member for Oxley, in a political sense, is evading the responsibility which every man in this House ought to face boldly, and that is to vote for the issue before us, "Yea" or "Nay." I may say that I have no hope of passing the Bill. I believe the hon. member by recording his vote with the "Noes" would have satisfied all fair demands, but this is an evasion. Whether it is an evasion to get out of expressing his opinion by vote or simply for the purpose of wasting time I do not know; but I do not look upon it as a fair thing, especially when we know that the hon. member for Oxley has been a member of a party who passed a Bill containing this principle in a more drastic and emphatic form. The clause of the Bill to which I refer reads "After the passing of this Act no order for the attachment of wages of any working man shall be made by the court." Although the Secretary for Lands did not oppose the Bill in 1895, he opposed this Bill in very strong language; yet is not as drastic as the Bill of 1895, which was thrown out by the nominee House. The Attorney-General moved the Bill, and it seemed to meet with a lot of approval, because the principle was contained in the English statute, and had been the law since 1870. Why does not the hon. member for Oxley recognise that? He says he has had no experience of the working man in England, that he draws his experience from Queensland only, and he assumes that the working man of Queensland is more dishonest than the working man in the old country. He ought to remember that the English statute specifically states that wages shall be protected up to £3 a week, so that the imputation of the hon. member that this Bill is a premium upon dishonesty is practically making a charge of dishonesty against English legislators. Surely, after all, we are much the same people in Queensland that they are in England. In England the average rate of wages is a long way below £3 a week. The average rate for manual labour in this colony is a long way above that paid in the old country, and I should think that that would meet the objection of the hon. member. He says we confine the operation of the Bill to what are called "the wage-earners." It certainly would protect the manual labourers, but it would also protect a large number of persons employed in warehouses and behind counters. It often happens that persons following so-called genteel occupations get as low wages as manual workers, and persons of that sort consider themselves well paid in the old country if they get £1 17s. a week. That is the wage paid under the engineers' society which is at present engaged in a great struggle in England. The ordinary artisan in the old country does not get more than £1 5s. or £1 6s. a week, and the labourer from 15s. to £1. In this country the employees at such a place as Walkers, Limited, would get their 9s., 10s., and 12s. a day, and when the building trade is brisk carpenters get 9s. and 10s., and stonemasons 12s. a day; whereas in the old country they would consider themselves well paid at 7s. a day.

The SPEAKER: The hon. member seems to me to be defending the amount mentioned in the Bill, and not discussing the principle.

Mr. CROSS: I am simply trying to show that the amount mentioned in the Bill makes it far less drastic than the measure passed by the Government through this House.

The SPEAKER: The hon. member is out of order in doing that.

Mr. CROSS: The hon. member for Oxley has said that because he did not speak against the 1895 Bill it did not follow that it met with his approval. I take it, however, that he was one of the members of the party who in 1895 agreed with the proposals of the Government. I am sorry that he did not on that occasion inform the House that he had very strong convictions on the subject. As the hon. member for Barcoo rightly said, I am not wedded to the amount mentioned in the Bill. I am not anxious that any man should evade his obligations. The only intention I have is to give a certain amount of protection in order that men with their wives and families may be enabled to live. Surely the colony got on well enough before this law was passed! There was no great outcry against the working classes before 1895 for not paying their debts. The hon. member must know, as a business man, that the working classes are undeniably the most honest and straightforward persons with whom tradesmen have to deal. Any tradesman in Queen street will tell you that his best class of customers, as far as paying their debts is concerned, are working men, and that it is the well-to-do classes who most frequently evade their obligations. My Bill will not protect the well-to-do classes, and I therefore ask the hon. member to withdraw his amendment, and let us get to a division on the whole question.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: I can hardly follow the hon. member in his argument that the hon. member for Oxley in moving an amendment, which he has a perfect right to do, is doing anything improper; nor do I think the hon. member should be charged with doing it to obstruct the Bill. In following the ordinary procedure of the House, an hon. member should be given credit for *bonâ fide* intentions, and I do not see why, if the hon. member wishes to push his Bill through, he should attack the hon. member for Oxley and bring into this question the wages which that hon. member pays. I have no reason to believe that in dealing with his employees the hon. member has not treated them fairly and honestly, and I must protest against imputations of that kind being made against hon. members who move resolutions or take part in discussions. The hon. member for Burke seemed exceedingly anxious that members on this side should take part in this debate. Probably the hon. member was at the time oblivious of the fact that many of us had already spoken, but I may say that I shall be exceedingly glad on all occasions to oblige the hon. member who frequently gives us instruction and entertainment, so long as I can do so in accordance with the Standing Orders of the House. There are several reasons for the postponement of this question. In the first instance, it does not seem to be a very live question, for the hon. member for Clermont is no longer to be seen. He has shot his bolt, and got his two speeches into *Hansard*, and apparently he is not to take any further part in the battle. Again, the hon. member has informed us that the Attorney-General brought forward a similar or analogous Bill, which found an untimely grave in another place. As the Attorney-General had the credit of bringing in a Bill previously, and he will be back here in due course, I think it is just as well that we should wait until his return, so that he may be able to give us the benefit of his undoubted abilities, and put forward the measure on another occasion. One reason why I prefer that this Bill should be read a second time this day six months is that it is characteristically a piece of class legislation. It proposes to prevent an order being issued for the attachment of the wages or salary of any servant, or labourer, or working man whose wages or salary are at the rate of £3 or under. If certain people require to be protected in consequence of the smallness of their earnings, why should the manual labourer only be protected? Does not the clerical labourer suffer as many pains as the manual labourer? Do not hunger and thirst cause him as much distress as they do the manual labourer? Why, then, should a person be left out of this measure who does not necessarily come within the description of manual labourer or servant? Under this clause members of the Assembly can at any rate be sure of £3 a week, though the wife and family of the other man, who may be a tradesman, are starving. I wonder if it struck the hon. member, who I notice has returned to the Chamber, that in proposing legislation of this kind he is proposing a measure which will protect him, but will not protect a good many other people in the country who are equally as deserving of protection. I hold that if the principle of the Bill is a good one, any man or woman, no matter who he or she may be, who is in the receipt of £3 a week should have his or her wages or salary protected in the same way as it is proposed to protect the wages of a manual labourer or servant. That is a tenable position, and the author of the Bill is open to the charge of not having dealt with this question in a more liberal spirit, and with having narrowed its application. But assuming that the Bill is brought into operation what will be its results to the working man, or the person who is to be protected by it? Will it protect him, or will it injure him? And what will be its effect with regard to the trader? I regretted to hear the hon. member for Burke say that the only honest persons in the colony were the men who worked at manual labour, the men who worked for wages.

Mr. HOOLAN: I said, in the strict acceptation of the term.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: I should have been glad if the hon. member had told us what he meant by "strict acceptation of the term." He told us shopkeepers were dishonest. I am not aware that as a class they are any more dishonest than any other class in the community. I have found in the course of my pilgrimage through life rascals in a good many walks, and I have found honest men wherever I have been. I do not know why the hon. member should be so severe on those who do not happen to be manual labourers, more particularly as he is not a manual labourer himself. It is desirable that persons who owe money and are able to pay should pay, and I do not think the House generally is desirous of allowing any class in the community to victimise any other class. It may be desirable in some instances that protection should be given to persons against whom judgments have been given, on the same grounds on which the court lays down the principle that the tools of a working man shall not be distrained upon—because they are his means of making his living. The court makes no distinction whether an insolvent is a working man or a tradesman. It recognises him as a citizen, subject to the same wants and necessities as other people, and directs that a certain amount shall be set aside out of his estate to keep him and his family from absolute want. That appears to be a rational provision. The present law, speaking generally, is a sound law. The hon. member for Burke told us of one clause which gives some discretionary power which is by no means clear. He gave us a very interesting illustration. Two firms of solicitors gave diametrically opposite opinions, and the other firm was unable to come to any conclusion at all. That, at any rate, shows pretty clearly that the clause in question would gain by being re-enacted with some amount of precision. The remedy is to make the law such that magistrates will clearly understand that in cases where a man's wages are small—say £3 per week—and when he has a wife and family to keep, there is not the slightest necessity for them granting a garnishee order—that they can use their own discretion. On the other hand, it may happen that a single man with £3 a week gets his washing done by a widow with a large family, and he declines to pay her. She may only be able to earn £1 a week, and be dependent upon what this man owes for food for herself and her children.

Mr. STEWART: She should decline to give up the washing until she is paid.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: Then the hon. member does not trust the people. This washerwoman may be strongly seized with a belief in the doctrine which is at the foundation of the political beliefs of the Labour party, and may trust the people. Why should the man, who has no more liabilities than those which are covered by his hat, be able to refuse to pay this supposititious widow when it would be unmanly not to pay her? There are some cases—I am happy to say there are not many—in which people decline to pay their debts because they are self-indulgent and have no principle.

Mr. DUNSFORD: Those people will escape in spite of all laws.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: Some of them may, but the hon. member wants to insure that they shall escape with absolute impunity.

Mr. HOOLAN: You cite a weak case in the washerwoman. Washerwomen invariably do not give "tick."

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: I cannot say that I have a very large experience of laundresses. At times I have washed my own clothes and given myself credit, but in that case a garnishee order would not be operative. The effect of passing the Bill would be that people would not get as much credit as they get at present. I do not take it that the shopkeepers would suffer. I do not regard shopkeepers at all in the light in which the hon. member for Burke regarded them. I am not referring now to his imputation of dishonesty, but to his other allegation that the shopkeeper is always a creeping serpent. The hon. member's picture of the shopkeeper as a man who pervades the country and gets hold of persons with very small means, and insists upon their buying—if they are males, stores of all descriptions, including refreshments; and silk dresses, clothes of all kinds and ribbons, if they are females. My impression of the shopkeeper—and it is not altogether derived from my personal experience, but partly from that of others—is that he does not generally so much press people to buy as refuse to give credit to people who want it. That is a far better picture of the normal shopkeeper than the one drawn by the fancy of the hon. member. Every day the shopkeeper refuses credit, and presses those who owe him money to pay up.

Mr. HOOLAN: My experience is entirely different.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: Then the hon. member must be dealing with an exceedingly wealthy community. First of all the shopkeepers possess an enormous amount of capital which they cannot well use, and the customers are well off—or so honourable that they invariably pay their accounts. There are many circumstances under which a perfectly honest man cannot pay his debts. If a crop fail a farmer may not be able to pay, because he is not in the same position as a miner who possesses a claim in which the gold is always distributed in the same quantities, as may be the case at Croydon. In industries which depend upon the weather, credit is exceedingly useful, and although it may be true that the persons I refer to are not servants or labourers, the hon. member should remember that they may employ working men to whom they may not be able to pay their wages. The working men in their turn owe money to the storekeeper who has given them credit, and they in their turn have given credit to the farmer. It may be as inconvenient for the storekeeper not to be paid as it is for the labourer, and a serious injury may be done by both. Now this may occur: The labourer may sue the farmer, and get a verdict against him, and may levy upon his property. If the levy is not satisfied the farmer goes to gaol for six months, and his wife and family will suffer all the evils which the hon. member depicted. But the other position is this: The labourer owes something to the storekeeper, and although the former may have received six months' wages from the farmer at £3 per week, still under this Bill the storekeeper will not be able to get anything from him whatever. That is why I think it would be better to amend the present Act than to adopt this Bill without further consideration.

Mr. HOOLAN: Do you approve of the storekeeper giving large credit to the ordinary labourer?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: I should not do it. In the course of my trading experience I often gave credit to people without any personal guarantee, because I knew they were honourable and would pay up what they owed when they could, but there were other men who might not be working men at all, but tradesmen or clerks, or even men who were supposed to have property, to whom I would not give any credit at all. The question as to whether it is wise to give credit is one which must be determined by the knowledge of the seller as to his customer's character. When we look upon a Bill of this sort we have to consider the result. Nothing is more certain than the uncertainty as to what will follow legislation. Hon. members will know that there are certain debts which cannot be recovered in a court of justice, because it was considered that they might be debts which were improperly contracted, and which it would be inadvisable to lend the aid of the State to recover. Certain laws were passed to discourage people from contracting gaming debts, the intention being to render it unsafe to give credit in such transactions; but, as the hon. member for Charters Towers said, a man who will not pay tradesmen, or even pay his labourers, will go and pay debts contracted with a bookmaker. Nothing can show more strongly than that how difficult it is for us to determine what is going to follow our actions. There is another useful illustration which the hon. member might have given. A barrister cannot possibly recover a fee. It is a fiction of law that a barrister is such a high-minded gentleman that he does not charge anything for his services; but if a client will insist upon pouring money into his purse he is allowed to receive it, and the consequence is that he gets round this want of protection by protecting himself. He insists upon cash down. If the State had been less careful in that matter, had permitted a barrister to give credit, and had given him an opportunity of recovering his money like a tradesman, possibly he would have done so. We all know that credit is affected by personal knowledge of a customer; and when a man without a situation is known to be honest, a storekeeper will often give him credit when he would not otherwise obtain it. It has been stated by an hon. member that this garnishee Bill was brought in at the express instance of the business men of Croydon.

Mr. BROWNE: That is not correct.

The SPEAKER: Order! The hon. member distinctly said that statement had been made, and the hon. member for Croydon is not in order in contradicting.

Mr. BROWNE: I do not mean that the hon. gentleman was not correct, but that the statement was not correct.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: I have no desire to make statements that are not correct, but a statement of that sort was certainly made; and what I want to show is that business men have said that in their opinion it is to some extent a protection. I think, then, that if the Bill is operative at all it will operate in this direction—that some men who ought to have credit, and who get credit at present, will not get it; that men who might be assisted very much by obtaining credit will not be able to obtain it. Credit is of no advantage to the storekeeper. I hold that that storekeeper is the wisest who puts on the outside of his premises the words "For cash only," and who adheres to that. We all know that in the early days of mining communities if it were not for credit a great many claims would never be opened up, and a great many men, some of whom do well, would be deprived of their means of getting a livelihood. The credit given by the storekeeper, the butcher, and the baker has not been looked upon as something which affected them only, but as something which is beneficial and convenient. It does not follow that because some persons make a wrong use of credit that credit in itself is a bad thing or that it is advisable to do away with it.

Mr. HOOLAN: Do you favour the system of doubtful credit?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: It is exceedingly difficult to quite understand the hon. member's question. There is always a doubt about anything except cash down. Past times have shown that there was a doubt even about a bank note, which the hon. member would now perhaps regard as the equivalent to cash. There is certainly a doubt about credit until the debt is discharged. If there is a considerable doubt on the part of the ordinary trader, I should say he would probably not give credit. But that is beside the question.

I am arguing that you are going to prevent certain recourse, and that the moment you prevent the traders having the recourse they will take that into consideration. That alters the whole position. At present, if a debtor is not willing or honest enough to pay, the creditor knows he can recover the debt by a process of law; and that undoubtedly leads in some cases to credit being given where it would otherwise not be given. If you take away this recourse—and it may be advisable; I am not speaking as a very strong partisan—you are, undoubtedly, in many cases preventing a man who would like to obtain credit from obtaining it. Take the case of two men, both equally honest, one of whom has a surplus of capital that can be levied on, and the other has not. The man who has honesty and has capital on which recourse can be had is in a far better position to obtain credit than the man who has nothing but his honesty. In the same way a man who gets so much a week, who goes to a storekeeper and says, "I am working for So-and-so; I have a stable position; I want credit; and if I am not willing to pay you you can recover it by a process of law whether I like it or not," is in a much better position to get credit than he will be if this measure becomes law. I am aware there is a law of the kind in England, and that we have passed a measure of this sort before, and I admit that there is a great deal to be said on both sides of the question. I had no desire to speak further on the subject. I said all I thought it necessary to say on the previous occasion, and it is only the disposition I feel to satisfy the request of the hon. member for Burke that has led me on this occasion to speak when otherwise I should have remained silent. Much remains to be said, and, as I hardly think that at this stage of the session there is much chance of the Bill getting through, it would perhaps be just as well to consent to the amendment, and postpone further consideration of the Bill until next session, when we can discuss it at an earlier period, and when we shall have the assistance of the Attorney-General.

Mr. McMASTER: I would like to say a few words in response to the challenge of the hon. member for Burke, who said that members on this side were perfectly dumb, and were not manly enough to express their opinions on this Bill. I do not know that anything can be added to the arguments that have been used on the Bill. As to how tradesmen allow people to get into their books, I may say that the hon. member for Burke may know something about how roosters become curlews, but he does not know much about how tradesmen get bad debts on their books. He said they sent people about the country to press people to buy their goods, irrespective of who they were, knowing that they could get payment through the garnishee order. I know that the great difficulty with tradesmen is to prevent people getting into their books, but, as I said on the main question, when a man has been dealing with a tradesman for years, it would be cruel on his part to refuse to supply him with goods when sickness got into his family or work was scarce, and he could not earn 30s. a week, let alone £3. Even the hon. member for Burke, if he were in business, would not refuse to supply a man under those circumstances. But this Bill says that if a man only earns £3 a week he need not pay his debts, because he requires £3 a week to keep himself and his family. What about the tradesman who at the end of the week must find the wages of the men he employs to carry the goods to this man's house, who must feed his horses and keep up all the requirements of his business? How is he to do that, and how is he to meet his bills? The man from whom he gets his goods does not trouble himself about garnishee orders, but goes to the Supreme Court, takes out a writ, and in eight days he can sell his debtor up. The hon. member for Burke would not have made the speech he made this afternoon if he knew how trade was carried on. I would be glad to negotiate with the hon. member; I will give him all my good debts if he will pay all my bad debts. The Secretary for Public Instruction had referred to instructions given not to open fresh accounts, and I can say that I have given such instructions over and over again in the last twelve months. I have been deceived so much that unless I am thoroughly well acquainted with a man I am afraid to open a fresh account. I have had honest men on my books for years, and though the accounts are higher than I care for, I know that they are hardworking honest men who have managed to make a home of their own, and whose families have grown, and they have as much as they can do to keep themselves. When such men, in slack times, are thrown out of work for a week or a month, who have they to fall back upon but the grocer, the butcher, and the baker? But pass this Bill, and let the tradesman know that there is no means by which he can recover what is owing to him, and he will be much more careful before he will allow his goods go out when he may be pressed into a corner and get into difficulties himself. The hon. member for Burke must know that many men on goldfields and living in boarding-houses leave them when the end of the month comes round and go to some other place without paying for their board, but the persons who supply the boarding-house keeper can insist on being paid. As already pointed out, this Bill protects one class only. I do not know of many garnishee orders being taken out in Brisbane, and I do not think there are many tradesmen who care whether the Bill passes or not. I know that there was some outcry at the number of garnishee orders taken out at Croydon some time ago, and the hon. member for Croydon spoke out manfully and protested against men earning good wages not paying their debts. We have been told that there is a law for the rich and none for the poor, but if the hon. member will make inquiry he will find that tradesmen are far more lenient and generous to the working classes than to those who fly about at entertainments spending their money. The hon. member spoke this afternoon as if there was not an honest man in business, but I do not think he meant what he said or that he believed his own words when he talked about tradesmen trying to entrap the working classes and get them on their books so that they might avail themselves of the garnishee. He has more common sense than to believe such rubbish. The last application I had to open a fresh account I did not know the person. He said I would be paid on the Saturday night, but when I made inquiries I found his name in the Insolvency Court three days afterwards. Had I been like the tradesmen spoken of by the hon. member for Burke, had I been so anxious to get the trade of this individual, I would have supplied him with the goods at once.

Mr. HOOLAN: Do you say there are no canvassers for custom?

Mr. McMASTER: Tradesmen send round to their customers for orders every week, and afterwards supply the goods. That is the practice so far as grocers and butchers are concerned. The case instanced by the hon. member for Barcoo was a very good illustration of the way tradesmen are treated by unprincipled men. The hon. member spoke from practical knowledge that came under his own observation, and I am sure the hon. member for Burke cannot say the same in regard to what he said. This Bill, I am convinced, will do more harm than good to the class of people the hon. members for Clermont and Burke want to benefit, because it will give tradesmen an excuse to say, when credit is asked for, "No; the Labour party have passed an Act which prevents me recovering my lawful debts, you can keep your money, and I will keep my goods." In that way it will operate most adversely to the working man. Their wives and children must be fed and clothed, their rent and taxes must be paid, and if the men are out of work and cannot get credit from the tradesmen what are they to do? I don't care one straw whether the Bill becomes law or not. I have never issued a garnishee order against a working man in my life, and I have only issued one garnishee order since I have been in business.

The SPEAKER: I would remind the hon. member that his speech is mainly a repetition of what he said on this subject on a former occasion. He is now using identically the same words.

Mr. McMASTER: Very well, I will say no more.

Mr. McDONNELL moved the adjournment of the debate.

Question put and passed; and the resumption of the debate made an Order of the Day for 25th instant.

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

LAND BILL.

RESUMPTION OF COMMITTEE.

On postponed clause 153—"Lessee of agricultural farm may come under the preceding provisions"—

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS explained that the reason the clause was postponed on the last occasion when the Bill was before the Committee was to enable the hon. member for Bundaberg to propose a new clause at the end of Part IV. The hon. member was not sufficiently well to enter upon the matter when they arrived at that stage, and asked him to postpone the clause. He had received a note stating that the hon. member was again too unwell to be in his place this evening, and therefore moved that the clause be further postponed until after the consideration of clause 216.

Question put and passed.

On clause 156—"Governor may cause town or suburban lands to be sold by auction"—

Mr. HARDACRE: It seemed rather strange that although they had adopted the leasing principle with regard to grazing farms, grazing homesteads, agricultural farms, agricultural homesteads, and so on, yet they had never had any idea of applying it to town and suburban lands. He would not go so far as to say that no town or suburban lands should not be sold, but those who desired to lease such lands should have an opportunity to do so, and where the Crown desired to lease rather than sell they should have that power. About five or six years ago some very valuable lands just outside the railway gates in Brisbane were sold, and it would have been very much better to have leased them. When town lands were sold it was very difficult for the poorer classes to get an allotment, as they could not raise the money required. The result was that the lands passed into the hands of people who had money, and after a while they leased them to the smaller men at a much higher rent than would have been charged if leased by the Crown in the first instance. He proposed to raise the question of leasing town and suburban lands by moving the insertion of the words "lease or" after the words "offered for." In the book entitled "The Genesis of Queensland" it was stated that at the first land sale held in Brisbane on the 16th of July, 1842, eight allotments in Queen street realised only £1,340. The largest sum paid for any one allotment was £250. The allotment on which the Bank of New South Wales now stood was sold in 1843 for £25, and the municipal valuation was now £25,000. The allotment next the town hall was sold for £50; where Chapman and Co.'s shop now stood, for £112; the site of Hunter's boot shop for £25, and it was now worth £25,000. In 1852 the site of the Union Bank was sold for £25, whilst the municipal valuation was now £25,000, and the Bank of Australasia paid £25 for a property which was now valued at £25,000.

Mr. LORD: That was half a century ago.

Mr. HARDACRE admitted that, but even at compound interest the money then paid would amount to nothing like the present values.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: There have been heavy rates to pay during all that time.

Mr. HARDACRE: Quite so, but the rates have been spent in improving the properties. According to the returns of the Lands Department, the State had received from sales of land some £7,000,000, whilst the present municipal valuations of freehold lands amounted to £32,000,000. He therefore moved the insertion of the words "lease or" before the words "unconditional sale."

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: In the clause as it stood it was not necessary to impose any conditions, because when the fee-simple passed out of the hands of the Crown there was an end of it; but in the case of leaseholds the land reverted to the Crown at the termination of the lease, and it was necessary to define the terms of the lease.

Mr. KIDSTON: That will come in another clause.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS wanted the whole scheme at once. He did not want to get it piecemeal. What sort of a lease did the hon. member propose?

Mr. HARDACRE: Thirty years.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: They could do that without any amendment at all. The matter was provided for by clause 180, which said that the Governor in Council might issue leases of any portion of land not exceeding twenty-five acres to any person for the erection of wharves; storehouses, slips for building or repairing vessels, baths, works for supplying water, gas, or electricity, or market gardens, or for any manufacturing or industrial purpose, the term of the lease not exceeding thirty years, and the rent not being less than 2s. 6d. per acre. If they added residential purposes and business purposes to that list, as he proposed to do, they would have all that the hon. member wanted. He believed in these special leases; it was a most satisfactory tenure both for the Crown and for the lessee.

Mr. KIDSTON: The idea of the hon. member for Leichhardt was to substitute the leasing for the sale of Crown lands, and to give a lessee the preference over a purchaser. If the amendment were carried an additional clause would have to be inserted stipulating the terms and conditions of the lease. So far as the use of land was concerned, people could get all they wanted in a lease, but what they could not get in a lease was the unearned increment. The two and a-half square miles upon which Brisbane was built was sold years ago by the Government for a very few thousands, but now its ratable value was £5,761,000. If that land had been let on lease the value would not have been so great, because it would not have offered the same inducements to speculators; but assuming that it was worth only half the sum he had stated, and that the rent charge was $2\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. only, it would have meant an income of £72,000.

There was no doubt that in the end the leasing system brought in a greater revenue than they could get by selling it, and it might be a very good way of endowing local authorities to give them the lands upon which their towns were built. Certainly it would have been a rich heritage to the municipality of Brisbane if it had £72,000 coming in in rents, especially when the present revenue from rates was only about £32,000. As things were, the increased value of city property had gone into the pockets of private individuals, while those who had assisted to bring about that value had been robbed of it, because the reason of the increase was the fact that population had increased, and that population had now to bear the cost of the local and State governments in addition to the rent charges which went into private pockets. Recognising that the selling of land in the past had caused this tax to be laid upon the people, it would be a wise thing to provide that in future the unearned increment should go into the coffers of the State, and that was the proposal of the hon. member for Leichhardt. A lease might be granted for ten years, or any multiple of ten years, with a reappraisement of rent every ten years. That would give the lessee security of tenure and the absolute right to his improvements, which was all that the user of land wanted. Where the owner was the user it was no harm to give it him as freehold. The objection to freehold was that it tended to the owner not being the user.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: It is very much cheaper in Queensland to lease land than to buy it.

Mr. KIDSTON: That was an additional proof of his contention that men who got land in freehold leased it to others who were going to use it. Some of the best buildings in Rockhampton were built on leased land. The owner got the freehold; he was not going to use it himself, but for a consideration he permitted somebody else to use it. Why could not the Government do that as well as permit private individuals to do it? It would be a permanent source of revenue that could be counted on for all future time, and it would be better for the user of the land, because he would only pay the real value of it.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: Would there be no speculation in leaseholds?

Mr. KIDSTON: No doubt speculation could not be stopped altogether, but with a reappraisement of value and rent every ten years it would limit speculation in leaseholds, because the speculator would know that the more he bid for it the higher his rent would be in the next period. He hoped the Committee would accept the amendment, which if given a fair trial would be a great improvement on the present method of dealing with our lands.

Mr. JACKSON was prepared to go further than the hon. member, as he would like to see the words "unconditional sale" left out. He believed in leasing town and suburban lands, because it was in the case of those lands that the unearned increment had most effect. There was not the same objection to the freehold of country, and especially of agricultural, lands in a new country where inducements might be held out to get people to take up such lands and settle down. In dealing with that subject he might be permitted to express a few words of regret at the recent death of one of the most eminent land nationalisers the world had ever known—Henry George. He was sure that every member of the Committee would agree that Henry George was one of the most brilliant writers and thinkers who had ever lived. The Labour party had already placed on record their regret at his death, and he did not think the Committee would do itself any discredit in allowing a few words of regret to be expressed during that debate. The Minister professed not to be able to understand the amendment, but it simply spelt land nationalisation so far as town and suburban lands were concerned. The argument that it was necessary to sell lands to keep up the revenue was easily answered. That was the position the Secretary for Lands took up in apologising for the sale of Western lands recently—that he sold those lands to meet a Treasury necessity.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: All our rents are gathered for the same purpose. There is no apology about that.

Mr. JACKSON: Just so; but he thought it was easy to dispense with the sale of town or country lands.

Mr. CROSS: How would you make up the loss?

Mr. JACKSON: In the first instance by a land and income tax; but it should be remembered that if they leased those lands they would always be getting a revenue from them.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: We are trying it now on Croydon.

Mr. JACKSON: They had always tried it on goldfields, and if on goldfields and country lands why not in the case of town and suburban lands? He believed that under such a system they could get sufficient revenue to enable them to continue public works. That there was a difference of opinion on the question was shown by the division they had had on the motion against the sale of Western lands, but he had not expected to find so many voting for the principle on that motion. The Minister had stated that he proposed to make provision in a clause further on for a residential lease, and it appeared from that that there was not the power now to issue such leases. That amendment would go a good way to meet the amendment of the hon. member for Leichhardt. He did not expect that this amendment would be carried, but he hoped they would get some members from the other side to support it and encourage them in the work they had in hand.

Mr. SMITH: The hon. gentleman who introduced the amendment referred to the sale of land in the early days, and said that if those lands had been retained in the hands of the Crown a great rental would have been derived from them now. But what had made those lands valuable? The expenditure of private money and the increase of population. The money spent by the municipalities was derived from private individuals in the first instance. Few people would be likely to make very valuable improvements on leasehold. If the land was in the hands of the Government the leaseholder would be subject to having his land periodically appraised and very likely increased in consequence of his own improvements, and that would prevent to a great extent the expenditure of private money in increasing the value of land, which would not be a good thing for the colony. Speculation in land was a thing that could not be prevented; but he had no doubt that persons who held land in fee-simple were more likely to put it to the best use than persons who were merely leaseholders, and he intended to oppose the amendment.

Mr. KERR: The hon. member for Bowen thought that people were not likely to improve leaseholds; but he must know that in London the Duke of Westminster leased land on which splendid buildings had been erected by the tenants.

Mr. FRASER: That is a ninety-nine years' lease.

Mr. KERR: The lease was for ninety-nine years, and when the term of the lease expired the buildings become the property of the landlord. He did not see why that principle should not be adopted in Queensland. He would not object to the leases being extended to ninety-nine years with a reappraisement every ten years. That would be better than selling the land outright because the Government—that was, the people—would participate in the unearned increment. He believed that a person who leased land was in a much better position than a person who spent his capital in acquiring the freehold to make necessary improvements on the land. Splendid buildings had been erected on leased land in Rockhampton and in Brisbane as well as in England. The hon. member stated that property had been improved mostly by the expenditure of private money, but he must allow that there had been a great deal of public money expended which had increased the value of property. All that the hon. member for Leichhardt asked was that the Government should participate in the increased value of the land.

Mr. HARDACRE: The reason why he had moved the amendment now instead of waiting until they came to clause 180 was because that clause only applied to special leases and exceptional cases. That principle had been almost a dead letter, although he admitted that there were a few cases in which those special leases had been granted.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: There are some thousands of cases.

Mr. HARDACRE: It was evident that the clause only applied to special cases, and what he wanted was that the principle should be made of general application to town and suburban lands. They must remember that if the Government did not put on a tax to get revenue the man who bought the land put on a tax. It was a system of indirect taxation; the men who bought land at a cheap rate in 1848 in Brisbane were in reality taxing the rest of the community. Every station that sent wool to Brisbane contributed something to the British-India Steam Navigation Company for the use of their wharves and warehouses. The whole of the rest of the community were in the same position, but if his proposal were accepted the Crown would get the revenue instead of the individual. The present system was simply farming out taxation. It was no argument to say that the system should have been started when the colony was first founded. They could make a start from to-day, and the opportunity was at hand. He thought the amendment was of sufficient importance to take a division upon.

Mr. SIM: Thought the hon. member for Leichhardt had made out a case which must commend itself to the acceptance of every sensible man. He agreed with the hon. member for Barcoo who ejaculated "It is never too late to mend." They had a population of less than half-a-million, with a territory as large as half-a-dozen European States, and there was no difficulty in initiating a new policy. He was surprised to hear the hon. member for Bowen advocate freeholds in preference to leaseholds. He would point to the fact that in the city of Manchester there was a street called Moseley street, the most valuable street in the city. The Moseley family held that land when the cotton spinner came to the front to make Manchester what it was, but the aristocratic Moseleys objected to the smell and the smoke, and threw every obstacle in the way of Manchester becoming the splendid city it was. Now that family were deriving an enormous revenue from the land in spite of their efforts to prevent the creation of the cotton industry, but the city of Manchester was deriving no benefit whatever from the land of the Moseleys. The town of Huddersfield, a very important town in the West Riding of Yorkshire, belonged absolutely to Sir John W. Ramsay. The land was let by his father on ninety-nine years' leases, and the tenants had to erect certain buildings which at the expiration of the tenancy were to become the property of the owner of the land. There was one little bit of ground in the town which belonged to a Quaker, and Sir John Ramsay, like the gentleman mentioned in Scripture in connection with Naboth's vineyard, wanted to acquire that little bit of land in order that he might say that all Huddersfield belonged to him. Negotiations were entered into, and eventually the Quaker agreed to sell for as much money as would cover the land in gold, but when they came to complete the bargain the Quaker said he wanted the sovereigns put down edgeways, and there was an end of the matter. Arguing from the Quaker's standpoint, he asked why should not the State step in and prevent the competition between individuals to secure a profit, and he held that that was a fair and reasonable argument.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS hoped that hon. members would confine themselves as much as possible to Queensland. He did not want to go into the whole question of leasehold *versus* freehold, because that was a matter that they had all discussed, and they had all made up their mind on the principle. The hon. member had not met his objection that in proposing to insert the word "lease" he had not defined in any way what the lease was to be. Clause 180 provided for all that the hon. member desired, for although the leases mentioned there were called "special leases" that was not because the leases were to be for special purposes—though that might be said as the law stood—but because of the special terms of the lease, which could be fixed at the sweet will of the authorities. The terms were not set out in any Act of Parliament, but might be whatever the Land Board considered proper, just, and fair, and he did not hesitate to say that the Crown did very well under the leases which had been granted. If the provision for residential and business purposes, which he had no objection to, were introduced, then those leases would be of general application. All hon. members must know that a lease was about as long a document as they could get hold of in connection with conveyancing; and if they were to abandon freeholds for leaseholds in towns in this colony, the Lands Department would have to be ten times as large as it was in order to look after the leases and see that the provisions of every particular lease were carried out. Having had some experience in the Lands Department, and also as a lawyer, he could say that it was quite impossible to lay down in an Act of Parliament conditions to meet all cases throughout Queensland.

Mr. HARDACRE: I did not suggest the conditions of the leases.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: The hon. member said something about the appraisement of rent. But if he did not, was he going to give a man land on a thirty-years' lease for the rental the land was worth at the time he took it up? That would be no better than disposing of the land in freehold. If lands were leased on such conditions there would be more speculation in them than there was in freeholds, because they would be so much more easily got. If the two or three words he proposed were inserted in clause 180, dealing with special leases, there would be nothing to prevent any Secretary for Lands offering town lands under special lease as an alternative to selling the freeholds. He would have no objection to making such an experiment—not that he believed in leasehold in preference to freehold, because the genius of the British people desired freehold.

Mr. DUNSFORD: The hon. gentleman appeared to forget that there were whole towns in Queensland upon leaseholds. Croydon was an example of that, and the system was most satisfactory. The hon. gentleman seemed to think that there would be insurmountable difficulties in the way of issuing leases on account of the annual reappraisements of rents, but the local authorities made annual reappraisements. The only unsatisfactory feature of the leasing system was that they had made the rent everywhere, irrespective of locality, 1s. an acre. Still the system had been a success. All the fine suburban residences on Charters Towers were on leaseholds. The hon. gentleman would only take exceptional cases, such as machine areas and things of that sort, but they wanted the principle applied generally. Notwithstanding what the hon. gentleman had said, there was no machinery in the Bill for leasing town lands. The Bill only provided the same machinery that was to be found in the present law.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: The hon. member raised another issue altogether. The proposal before the Committee was not to substitute leaseholds entirely for freeholds. The hon. member was deceived in thinking that the machinery in the Bill was just the same as the machinery already in existence. The purposes for which special leases were now issued were very limited; but even then they had been very generally adopted, and had proved most satisfactory both to the Crown and to the tenants.

Mr. DUNSFORD: Where is it applied in the case of town lands?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Very often. If clause 180 had been in existence in its amended form, the whole of the allotments recently offered for sale at Broadmount might have been offered under special lease; but he ventured to say that the people who went to the sale would very much prefer to have the freehold.

Mr. CROSS: The Secretary for Lands had stated that mining leases had not proved as satisfactory as other leases.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: No; in preventing speculation.

Mr. CROSS: The local authorities always rated mining leases upon the improved values. That was not the time or place to discuss the question of land nationalisation or a land tax. If it had been he would have had a great deal to say in favour of both principles. The amendment was a good one, and he intended to vote for it.

Mr. KIDSTON: It had been objected that if they leased those lands instead of selling them the revenue would suffer, but it was pretty well understood that the poorer classes of the people were taxed about as far as they could be, so that if there were to be any addition to the revenue it would have to be raised from the richer classes; and in objecting to this method of dealing with the lands of the colony they were simply objecting to the rich bearing their proper share of the public burdens. That was not a sufficient reason for opposing the amendment.

Mr. HARDACRE: In deference to the wishes of the Minister he would not delay the passage of the Bill. Of course every hon. member had a right to think as he liked, but he only wanted to make it clear that he did not wish to be responsible for the delay.

Mr. McDONALD could not understand the hon. member for Leichhardt falling into the arms of the Secretary for Lands, although he was sure they all wanted to get on with the Bill. This was a most important amendment; there was a very strong principle contained in it. He did not think the State should alienate a single inch of land, and if revenue were required it could easily be obtained by a direct tax upon land values. It was no use talking about raising revenue by the sale of land, because the land was their national asset, and while they were raising revenue they would be parting with their assets, which would ultimately be of great value. Instead of leasing land they proposed to part with the fee-simple, which would give the purchasers an opportunity of levying blackmail upon the community generally. It was no use saying that people who bought land lost by it, because they knew such was not the case, except in a few isolated instances. Up to the present they had received some £3,000,000 from the sale of land, but they all knew that the value of that land was seven or eight times that amount now, and all the energy expended upon the land increased the value of that land as well, and the private owners would reap the benefit. If they confined themselves to leasing land, in time that revenue from that land would be sufficient to enable them to relieve the wage-earners of a large proportion of the taxation they had to bear, but of course it was not much use talking about land nationalisation to a man who held a 16-perch allotment. They all admitted that they had made a mistake in the past in selling land.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: It was not a mistake; you are only making an assertion.

Mr. McDONALD: It was an assertion that could be proved, and if hon. members thought as he did they would make a very strong stand against more alienation. At present only about 3½ per cent. of the area of the colony had been alienated, and therefore this was the proper time for the State to preserve what was left for the people generally. He would not mind what length of lease were given so long as provision was made for periodical reappraisements of the rents on the basis of the unimproved values. It was all very well to talk about selling land for revenue purposes, but they would be lessening the value of the national estate by just so much as they sold. Then look at the difficulty it put in the way of land settlement! There was a central market at Brisbane and a local market at Ipswich; yet persons desirous of settling on the land and making a living on it could not get it near either of those markets; they had to pass through hundreds of thousands of acres of land fit for settlement which they could not touch.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Most of that land is leasehold.

Mr. McDONALD: He was referring to the freehold. The consequence was that those people were enormously handicapped in trying to earn a living from the soil, while the magnificent land he spoke of was lying idle close to a market. They were in fact locked up. If people when buying land were compelled to use it in a manner beneficial to the State he could understand it; but as long as it was bought for speculative purposes the country would not benefit by it. Under the leasehold system, where those who had the land would be compelled to use it, the whole country would become more prosperous, and the Treasury would be in a better position to deal with the public works that were so urgently required throughout the colony.

Question—That the words proposed to be inserted be so inserted—put; and the Committee divided:—

AYES, 19.

Messrs. Hoolan, Kidston, McDonnell, Kerr, Hardacre, McDonald, Drake, King, Fitzgerald, Dibley, Dunsford, Turley, Browne, Jackson, Cross, Dawson, Stewart, Sim, and Keogh.

NOES, 26.

Sir H. Tozer, Messrs. Dickson, Foxton, Philp, Smith, Dalrymple, O'Connell, McMaster, Callan, Fraser, Finney, Stephenson, Newell, Story, Lord, Stodart, McGahan, Castling, Stumm, Bridges, Grimes, Cribb, Hamilton, Petrie, Lissner, and Leahy.

Resolved in the negative, and the clause put and passed.

Clauses 157 to 166, inclusive, put and passed.

Mr. HARDACRE desired to move some new clauses to follow clause 166 to provide for workmen's residence blocks, which had met with a great deal of success in South Australia, and was one of the most popular forms of settlement they had ever had. The system was one for which there was a great need in this colony, and around the outside towns there was still Crown lands which could be thrown open for workmen's residence blocks. The blocks had become so popular in South Australia that they were actually now repurchasing town estates and cutting them up into blocks. One member of the South Australian Parliament said in 1896 that the workmen's blocks had done a very great deal of good for the colony, and many hundreds of people had been enabled to make homes upon them. Another member said that the system was one of the best that had ever been introduced into the colony for solving the unemployed difficulty, and it had been the means of establishing many happy homes in different parts of the colony. The system had only been in force for about nine years, but the inspector in his report for 1896 reported that there were in that short time a total of 3,494 blocks taken up. Two thousand nine hundred and sixty had houses, 423 had tanks, 1,167 had gardens fenced in, and there were no less than 90,000 fruit trees, 196,000 vines, and 20,600 nursery plants. There were also 2,690 horses, 3,361 cows, and a large number of pigs and fowls on them, and the value of permanent improvements amounted to £186,000.

An HONOURABLE MEMBER: Are they freeholds?

Mr. HARDACRE: The majority were under lease, but some had the right to purchase.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: What is the maximum area?

Mr. HARDACRE: In some cases the area was as small as half-an-acre, but 20 acres was the maximum, the same as he proposed. The inspector pointed out that a number of the blockers were employed regularly in business in Adelaide, others whose hours were longer, went up and down from the city to the block once a week, and others left their blocks for a time and went away for shearing or harvesting. The clauses he proposed were substantially the same as the South Australian clauses; but while personal residence was necessary in South Australia, he proposed to allow a certain amount of cultivation, performed to the satisfaction of the commissioner, to be accepted instead of residence. His object was to make them not only workmen's residence blocks but also orchard blocks. In South Australia the system was confined to those who lived by their own labour, but his proposal was wider—that anyone prepared to reside upon them or cultivate them to the satisfaction of the commissioner should be able to get one of those blocks. His idea was that around such towns as Barcaldine, Longreach, Charleville, Emerald, Hughenden, and Winton, bushmen and others might be able to get small blocks on which they could make a home, cultivate them for a portion of the year, and leave them when necessary to go shearing or to other work. At present they were not able to pay the price of suburban blocks sold at auction. He hoped every mining member would support this amendment, because it was really applying the goldfield homestead principle to other towns of the colony, and it was well known how successful that principle had been. He might say that if the Minister made a general application of the special leases clause he would not be carrying out the purposes of the Act, and he did not think permission should be given to carry out a general system of land settlement under one clause. He was not wedded to the details of the scheme, but he hoped the Committee would adopt the principle. He therefore moved the insertion of the following new clause, to follow clause 166:—

The Governor in Council may cause any town or suburban lands to be surveyed in blocks of not exceeding twenty acres, and may cause leases of such lands to be offered for sale at an upset rental of not less than sixpence per acre.

The highest bidder at any such auction shall, on being declared the purchaser, pay his first year s rent, and shall be entitled to a lease as hereinafter provided.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: The clause rather commended itself to him, but this was not the place for it. The proper place would be in the next part of the Bill.

Mr. HARDACRE: I will put it there if you will accept it.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: There was a right place and a wrong place; but he did not say he would accept the new clause even if the hon. gentleman moved it in the right place. As the hon. gentleman had made his speech, it would perhaps be as well to have the discussion now. There were very few places in Queensland to which this would be applicable; and wherever it was applicable it seemed to him that either a special lease could be brought in or provision could be made for very small agricultural homesteads. There was no reason why there should not be an agricultural homestead of five acres.

Mr. HARDACRE: The department would never throw open town lands as agricultural homesteads.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: As far as town lands were concerned he would have serious objection to the clause. Even suburban lands, properly so-called, ought not to go at a minimum of 6d. an acre; £1 an acre was little enough to pay for suburban land. If the amendment were to apply to country lands there would be some sense in it. The hon. member had sprung the amendment upon the Committee, and might have done as other members did—get his amendment printed and circulated. The hon. member did moot the matter to him at Emerald, and pointed out that that would be a place where such a provision would be useful, but he did not know of any other place where it would be useful. It could not be brought into operation in Brisbane, Ipswich, Townsville, Rockhampton, or Charters Towers. It was only in places yet in their infancy where it could be brought into operation, and he had grave doubts whether it would be desirable to lock up suburban lands at 6d. an acre for fourteen years with the right of renewal for another fourteen years. When they were able to sell suburban lands at £2 an acre he did not see the use of such a provision. If a man wanted to build a house and make a residence, the mere purchase of the land was a small consideration compared with the improvements he would have to put on it for residential purposes. He was sure the majority of people would very much prefer to have a place that they could call their own. Had there been any difficulty in getting land at Emerald? Did the hon. member mean to tell him that he had asked that suburban land should be put up for sale, and there had been a refusal?

Mr. HARDACRE: People there were summoned twice while they were asking to have the land put up.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: That was a case of trespass upon Crown lands. Until they were off the land it was not desirable to put it up to auction, because the men who bid for the land would be marked men. That matter had now been arranged by the land commissioner putting a proper value on the land, and that would be the upset price. That was not a case in point at all. There was really nothing in the amendment when it was considered that people could get suburban lands at £2 an acre. In South Australia it could not be got at that price. He was informed by a recent arrival from that colony that a freeholder could not take up a selection, and he did not want to follow an example of that kind. The matter required a great deal more consideration than he had been able to give it up to the present time.

Mr. HARDACRE was surprised at the Minister making objection about the 6d. an acre minimum. It showed that he made trivial objections. He proposed £1 an acre as the minimum, when under special leases for town lands the minimum was 2s. 6d. an acre. That might be the price for a river frontage in Brisbane. He had said already that he was not wedded to the details of his amendment. He did not object to making the minimum 5s. or 10s. an acre, but in some of the outside places it would be absurd to fix a minimum of £1 an acre. The hon. gentleman talked about locking up suburban lands. Did he not lock them up if he sold them? Under his proposal the matter went to public auction, so that a proper value was obtained. The scheme had been successful on goldfields, and he wanted to make it equally successful in regard to carriers, bushmen, and artisans generally. The hon. gentleman talked about agricultural homesteads of five acres, but was not that reducing agricultural homesteads to an absurdity? Generally there was a reserve round a town, sometimes a very large reserve, and where that was the case land could not be thrown open in blocks of five, ten, or twenty acres; if that could be done the land would be selected and cultivated. It was in order to meet a need that he had introduced these clauses, and he hoped they would be accepted by the Minister. It could not he said that he had sprung the matter on the Minister, because he called his attention to it at Emerald some time ago, and he believed on several occasions since that time. He also spoke to him twice on the subject yesterday, and showed him the South Australian Act. But it seemed to him that the hon. gentleman would have his Bill and nothing but the Bill; that he would not accept the amendment because it was not his own.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS did not know why the hon. member should say that he had made up his mind that he would have nothing but the Bill, and that he would not accept any amendments that he did not bring forward himself, because the hon. member must know that he had accepted a large number of amendments from various parts of the House. The hon. member had certainly asked him once or twice since he saw him in Emerald whether he would accept something of the sort. He told the hon. member that he thought it was a good idea, but that he would like to see what the proposal was. The hon. member showed him the South Australian scheme last night, but the first time he saw the amendments, as printed, was when he came into the Chamber this afternoon. They were full of difficulties, which it was impossible to deal with without consideration. For instance, one clause stated that the lessee should "personally reside on the land for six months in every year of the term." Further on it was provided that personal residence by the wife or family of the lessee should "be considered personal residence by the lessee," that was to say that although personal residence was required, a man might never go near the land at all; that so long as his wife or family live on it for six months in the year he could get it at 6d. an acre. Personal residence was a mere chimera, for even the wife of the lessee need not reside on the land, as in the same clause it was provided that the "cultivation of any block leased under these provisions with vines or fruit trees to the satisfaction of the commissioner, shall be accepted in lieu of personal residence." So that there was no compulsory personal residence about the thing at all. Then the hon. member had not said what was to happen to a lease in the event of the death of the lessee. There was no provision as to who was to succeed him.

Mr. HARDACRE: He can assign with the consent of the Minister.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: How could he assign after he was dead? The whole thing was full of difficulties. If the hon. member had come to him he should have been very glad to have given him assistance to knock the amendments into shape, but he had had no time to do so. If the Committee chose to force that sort of thing into the Bill, he disclaimed all responsibility for it. Another thing in the hon. member's proposal which was contrary to the principles of the Bill was that the rent was to be payable annually in advance, and on the lessee making default for a period of sixty days —he only proposed to allow sixty days—or on making default in the performance of the conditions of personal residence, the land with all improvements was to revert to the Crown. The whole thing was a contradiction from beginning to end.

Mr. HARDACRE: You are in great difficulties when you descend to what you are doing now.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: The hon. member was getting impertinent. He was not descending to anything. It was his duty as Minister in charge of the Bill to point out the absurdities of the hon. member's proposals. He had let the hon. member down as lightly as possible, but he now told him that his amendments were full of absurdities; no man of common sense would have proposed such things. In the 5th clause the hon. member distinctly said that if the conditions of personal residence were not fulfilled the lease with all improvements would be absolutely forfeited. There was no such drastic provision in the Bill, because all through tenant-right was given. Yet, although in that clause if personal residence was not fulfilled the whole thing was to be forfeited, in the preceding clause the hon. member proposed that a man might put in fruit trees instead of personal residence. That was a contradiction in terms. The 5th clause should further state that if no fruit trees were put in the lease should be forfeited. How could he knock the amendments into shape when the hon. member had not let him have the clauses until 3 o'clock this afternoon? The hon. member, in finding fault with him for not having raised his objections six months before, was forgetting what was due to him and to the Committee.

Mr. HARDACRE: The hon. gentleman was descending to trivialities in raising such objections. There was no more absurdity in his proposals with regard to forfeiture in the event of the conditions as to personal residence not being fulfilled than there was in the hon. gentleman's proposal that *bonâ fide* personal residence on an agricultural farm must take place, otherwise the farm would be forfeited, and then going on to provide that *bonâ fide* residence might be performed on another holding.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: That is personal residence by fruit trees.

Mr. HARDACRE: It was a mean thing for the hon. gentleman to raise such frivolous objections, especially as he had appealed to him at Clermont, and since he had seen him there to incorporate some such provisions in the Bill. He was not wedded to the details, and the hon. gentleman could draft the clauses to please himself. As to the sixty days' default in paying the rent, in the South Australian Act the time was only twenty days, but the hon. gentleman could make it 160 days if he liked.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: It ought to be subject to the ordinary penalties. You cannot expect me to draft the clauses for you —you have not given me time.

Mr. HARDACRE: If the hon. gentleman would agree to the principle he could go on with the Bill in the meantime, and put the amendments in in their proper place.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: The objections he had raised were not frivolous. The hon. member wanted to introduce a new Bill at a moment's notice. It was not fair for the hon. member to spring these amendments upon him, and as for drafting them himself he would not do it. The hon. member should have given notice of the amendments the same as other hon. members had done with theirs, especially as the Land Commission recommended that there was no necessity for any other form of tenure.

Mr. HARDACRE: They recommended this very thing.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: The amendments involved many important things, and the hon. member did him a great injustice in supposing that he would not do his best to assist him. He wished to get through the Bill on Monday night, so that it might come before the Council on Wednesday, and hon. members had not had time to consider these amendments. He had admitted that the principle rather appealed to his sympathy, but from a cursory glance he could see that there were many objections to the amendments in their present form, and if the Committee rejected them the hon. member had only himself to blame.

Mr. MURRAY thought it was a pity that they had not seen these amendments before, because there was a good deal to recommend the scheme, and he was prepared to give the hon. member some assistance. He had spoken to the Secretary for Lands regarding some similar proposals, and had had letters from his constituents asking that something of the kind should be done. They pointed out that meatworks were established in the district, and the workmen had not sufficient means to purchase homes for themselves. But he would confine this tenure to suburban lands, as town allotments were required for business purposes. He would also advise the hon. member to amend his motion by including a right of purchase, which would make the tenure more attractive. With very little amendment, clause 180 could be made to cover nearly everything the hon. member for Leichhardt required.

Mr. KIDSTON thought that if the Secretary for Lands would promise to try to incorporate this principle in clause 180 the hon. member for Leichhardt would accept it. The hon. gentleman had admitted that the principle had his sympathy, and although the hon. member for Leichhardt might be to blame for the way in which the matter had been brought before the Committee, that was a matter altogether apart from the principle involved in the amendments. They were trying to pass a Land Bill that would settle people on the land, and the Secretary for Lands admitted that this amendment would have that tendency, so that whatever difficulty there might be in incorporating the scheme in the Bill it was advisable to try to get over that difficulty, and put the principle into operation. It would make very little difference whether the condition of the lease was cultivation or residence, but he believed the former was more profitable to the colony. Would the Secretary for Lands give the assurance he had asked?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS thought the suggestion he had already made with respect to amending clause 180 would meet the case.

Mr. HARDACRE: He was quite willing to accept the suggestion of the hon. gentleman. His only fear was lest, being in the special leases clause, it would be a dead letter. With the permission of the Committee he would withdraw his amendment.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: The special leases, within the limits imposed by the Act of 1884, had been by no means a dead letter; and the only limit had been the fact that the legislature would not trust the administration in 1884. But with residential or business purposes put in, special leases would become a very live thing in the colony.

Mr. LEAHY: He did not see how the principle could be engrafted on the Bill. The conditions here and in South Australia were very different. He knew something of the working of the system in that colony, and the Minister for Lands there was so much pleased with it that he had recommended it to him very strongly as a system that might be introduced with advantage into Queensland. But in South Australia the whole of the blocks were around the city of Adelaide, and the Government had had to repurchase estates at a very high price; sometimes as much as £200 an acre had been given. The object of the system was to find homes for hundreds of people round large centres of population, so near, in fact, that a man could walk in to his work in the morning. Here the Government had no suitable land within reasonable distance of a town; it was all sold already. The only way to bring about the system would be to incorporate it in the Agricultural Lands Purchase Act, under which the Government could buy large areas and subdivide them, as had been done in South Australia; and the Government must get such an amount of rent as would recoup them for the outlay.

Amendment withdrawn.

On clause 167—"Sale of country lands by auction; limit of area to be sold annually"—

Mr. KERR: The clause was one that the people in the Western portion of the colony did not believe in, and he intended to move its omission. Their great objection to it was that it would be the means, in future years, of blocking closer settlement. A large number of people were opposed to the sale of country lands as a means of raising revenue. There would be a certain loss of revenue if the lands were not sold, but they had not yet exhausted the means of direct taxation which would cover that loss. They had as yet neither an absentee, an income, or a land tax, and that taxation would cover the loss. The extension of the Central Railway would go in close proximity, if not through, some of the lands which had recently been sold in large estates in the Central division at 10s. an acre. The consequence of such a policy would be that in a very short time they would have to have a Repurchase Act passed to buy those lands back, as they were buying back the lands sold on the Darling Downs. Almost all the people of the Central district had expressed a strong opinion against the sale of those lands, and the Minister should take some notice of that expression of opinion. If he could not do without selling some land he could at least limit the area sold.

Mr. McDONALD was not going to delay the Committee, but there was a strong feeling on his side against the principle of the sale of Crown lands. The matter had already been discussed, and he would content himself with moving the omission of the words "one hundred and," in the 3rd line of the clause.

Mr. DUNSFORD protested against hon. members making long speeches, in which they repeated what had been said before on the same subject. Though this was a very important matter it had been fully discussed, and what they wanted now was a vote upon it.

Mr. McDONALD: He had spoken twice on the Land Bill, and his remarks occupied twenty-five lines of *Hansard*. The hon. gentleman's remarks on the Bill occupied nearly 300 lines, so that he ought to be the last to talk about other members.

Mr. BELL did not agree with those who contended that this most important system had received adequate discussion because it had been the subject of an abstract resolution that had been dealt with already. He regarded such a resolution merely as blank cartridge to which no Government worthy of the name would pay the slightest attention. Now that a Bill dealing with the matter was under consideration was the time for serious discussion; but the fact that members had probably all made up their minds might be a reason for not going into the matter at any length. His mind was made up, and his opinion found expression in the 48th paragraph of the report of the Royal Commission on land settlement. He only regretted that the hon. member for Flinders in moving his amendment did not make the maximum smaller than 50,000 acres. There was no political principle he held more strongly than that which opposed the sale of our country lands. The history of Queensland and of Australia was a prominent argument against the wisdom of selling those lands, and before many years an agitation would arise for the reacquirement of those lands now being sold at 10s. an acre, and the State would have to repurchase at a much higher price. He was unable to sympathise with the policy which with one hand sold lands in the West, and with the other bought back lands alienated a few years ago under similar conditions. Strong supporter as he was of the present Government, if there was a vote of want of confidence moved to-morrow on the question of the sale of country lands he would deem it his duty to vote against the Government on that question. He would vote against any Government on that question because he regarded the sale of those Western lands as a fatal policy in our administration.

Mr. KIDSTON agreed with the remarks of the last speaker. The people of Rockhampton, even those who ordinarily supported the Government, were unanimously against the sale of those Western lands. He had a letter from the Rockhampton Chamber of Commerce, asking the representatives of that town to try and get provision made in the Land Bill whereby the practice of selling the public lands of the colony should be discontinued. In the Central district particularly it was most important that the practice should be stopped, and he did not think it was very creditable to the Minister to include this clause in the Bill, because it was well known that a few years ago the hon. gentleman was opposed to the sale of land in any shape or form. For the sake of securing a certain amount of revenue the hon. gentleman was willing to abandon his principles. In view of what the Lands Commission had said on the point, the House should pause before incorporating the provision in the Bill. An attempt was made in 1884 to do away with the selling of the public lands, but in 1886 and again in 1889 the old system was reverted to. He felt very much inclined to oppose the clause by every justifiable means, because he felt quite convinced that something was being proposed which was not for the present or future welfare of Queensland. So far as the Central portion of Queensland was concerned the system of selling land led to the very worst form of absentee landlordism, and it was highly undesirable that that blight should be intensified. He thought it very desirable that the amendment should be accepted.

Mr. KEOGH was opposed to the sale of the public estate, and had expressed his views on the question shortly after entering the House. While the Government had sufficient land of their own they had no right to repurchase land, but if they did repurchase, then they had no right to continue selling, and thus create the necessity for buying back again at an early date. There was a great deal of land in the West Moreton district which he believed was under offer to the Government, and while he believed it would be judicious to accept some of those offers, it was certainly unwise to continue selling.

Mr. STEWART: This was one of the most important clauses in the whole Bill; it affected not only the welfare of the present but the future inhabitants of Queensland. He was quite well aware that the Government were satisfied with the clause, and that they did not want any discussion upon it, but the Minister must remember that there was a very strong feeling against the sale of country lands all over the colony. He would therefore suggest that they should now adjourn, and that the Committee should be given an opportunity of discussing such an important question as fully and as exhaustively as it ought to be discussed.

Mr. BATTERSBY had never seen anything in the public Press to show that there was a strong feeling all over the colony against the sale of land, and he did not think the Government should be tied down to the sale of 50,000 acres a year. They should be trusted to sell 150,000 acres a year at a fair price. He was not prepared to see taxes levied on the people while they had land which they could sell for revenue purposes. He should vote against the amendment.

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

AYES, 25.

Sir H. Tozer, Messrs. Dickson, Foxton, Philp, Finney, Dalrymple, Grimes, Leahy, McGahan, Stumm, Cribb, Newell, Petrie, Callan, Collins, Battersby, Bridges, Lord, Story, Lissner, O'Connell, Castling, Hamilton, Stodart, and Corfield.

NOES, 19.

Messrs. Dunsford, Hoolan, Turley, Sim, King, Murray, McDonald, Drake, Bell, McDonnell, Dibley, Jackson, Browne, Kerr, Dawson, Kidston, Hardacre, Stewart, and Fitzgerald.

Resolved in the affirmative.

Mr. KIDSTON moved the addition of the following proviso:—

Provided further that no land within twenty miles of a railway or the surveyed route of a railway be so offered.

Question—That the words proposed to be added be so added—put; and the Committee divided:—

AYES, 18.

Messrs. Hoolan, Kidston, Kerr, Hardacre, Fitzgerald, McDonald, Jackson, Bell, Turley, Drake, Dibley, King, Browne, Dunsford, Dawson, McDonnell, Stewart, and Sim.

NOES, 24.

Sir H. Tozer, Messrs. Foxton, Dickson, Dalrymple, Philp, McGahan, Finney, Newell, Collins, Leahy, Petrie, Castling, Stumm, Bridges, Cribb, Battersby, Grimes, Lord, Story, Lissner, Callan, Corfield, Stodart, and Hamilton.

Resolved in the negative.

Clauses 167, 168, and 169 put and passed.

On clause 170—"Mortgages of certain holdings under this Act and repealed Acts"—

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Through an oversight the clause did not apply to existing grazing farms, which could be mortgaged under the provisions of the Act of 1884; and he therefore moved the insertion of the words "or under Part IV. of the Crown Lands Act of 1884" after the words "grazing homestead."

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

Clause 171 put and passed.

On clause 172—"Rights of mortgagee"—

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS moved the insertion of the words "whether the memorandum of mortgage was made under the provisions of this Act or under the Crown Lands Act of 1884." The amendment was consequential on the amendments in clause 170.

Amendment agreed to.

Mr. STEWART asked whether it was safe to allow sales by private contract? Would it not be better that all sales should be by public auction?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Except under the Act of 1884 mortgagees had the right to sell by private contract, but they did it at their own risk. A mortgagee would have to show that he had not sacrificed the property. In fact, he was a sort of trustee, and had to get the best price he could. The thirty days' notice required was a safeguard, but the real object was not to protect the mortgagor so much as to prevent collusion between mortgagees and mortgagors for the purpose of dummying.

Mr. JACKSON called attention to the fact that under the State Advances Act of South Australia all mortgages had to be prepared at the cost of the State. If they had a similar law in Queensland it would be a great advantage to the farmers who had to seek the assistance of financial institutions.

Clause, as amended, put and passed.

Clauses 173 to 178, inclusive, put and passed.

On clause 179—"Power to grant lands promised to religious bodies by the Government of New South Wales"—

Mr. HARDACRE asked for some information regarding the clause. Some religious bodies had been promised lands by the Government of New South Wales, and this clause would enable them to get titles, which were rather dubious in some cases.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Only one title had actually been put through, so far as he remembered, but several claims were under consideration. One grant was in favour of the Wesleyan body, and the other of a Roman Catholic body. They were mostly town allotments, of which they had been in possession ever since the foundation of the colony.

Clause put and passed.

On clause 180, after a verbal amendment—

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS moved that the words "residential or business" be inserted after "industrial," in line 19.

Mr. DRAKE: This clause gave power to the Government to issue leases for special purposes, and the whole reason for giving this power was that it was considered desirable that these purposes should be carried out. But there was no national benefit in giving a man twenty-five acres of land for a residence, and he was sure that was not in accordance with the intention of the clause. If the amendment were carried they might as well strike out all the special purposes referred to in the clause, and say the Government might issue a lease for any purpose whatever.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS pointed out that the court had to certify for anything not specified. The amendment simply added two more special purposes.

Mr. DRAKE: The court could be asked to certify if an application was made for a lease of twenty-five acres for residential purposes. It was a most dangerous power to give to the Governor in Council.

Mr. LEAHY: He had already pointed out that the amendment would not bring about what the hon. member for Leichhardt wanted, and he would suggest that the clause be left as it stood.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: If the Governor in Council could be trusted to give leases, as at present, for baths or other public purposes, they were not more likely to work swindles for residential purposes.

Mr. DRAKE: But all the things mentioned in the clause were public purposes, not for a private residence.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: They could make it for residential purposes now by calling it a market garden, but that would be an evasion.

Mr. DRAKE: It was part of the settled policy of the country to encourage all kinds of manufactures and industries.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: The people engaged in them must live somewhere.

Mr. DRAKE: But they did not want twenty-five acres for their residence. If the hon. gentleman was going to introduce those words he might just as well strike out all the other special purposes, and then any person who wanted twenty-five acres for a residence could get it without the necessity of the court certifying.

Mr. JACKSON: He did not anticipate any great danger from the objection raised by the hon. member for Enoggera, although it might be more satisfactory if there was a direction that the leases should be submitted to public auction. That would prevent any collusion, which the hon. member seemed to suspect.

Mr. HARDACRE: The hon. member for Enoggera was not present when the discussion took place which led up to the amendment, or perhaps he would not have objected to it. It was unlikely the power would be abused, and it would almost certainly be productive of good.

Question—That the words proposed to be inserted be so inserted—put; and the Committee divided:—

AYES, 27.

Sir H. Tozer, Messrs. Dickson, Foxton, Philp, Callan, Dalrymple, McDonnell, Kidston, McDonald, Dawson, Sim, Bell, Jackson, Browne, Finney, Stumm, Newell, King, Hardacre, Battersby, Hamilton, Story, Lissner, Stewart, Castling, Corfield, and Stodart.

NOES, 4.

Messrs. Hoolan, Kerr, Leahy, and Drake.

Resolved in the affirmative, and clause put and passed.

Clauses 181 to 184, inclusive, put and passed.

On clause 185—"Licenses to mine for coal"—

Mr. HARDACRE asked if there was any necessity for the clause, seeing that it was dealt with under the Mining Acts?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: The applications had to be made to the Secretary for Mines, and there were special reasons why the clause should be left in.

Clause put and passed.

Clauses 186 to 195, inclusive, put and passed.

On clause 196—"Provision as to resumption"—

Mr. LEAHY had no objection to the clause, but after it was passed they should adjourn, as they then came to a part of the Bill which required some consideration.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: I thought we might go on to clause 216.

Mr. LEAHY: Personally, he had no objection, but he thought they might adjourn after clause 196, as the subsequent clauses in that part of the Bill were important, and might require discussion.

Mr. JACKSON thought it would be a fair thing to adjourn after this clause was passed, because they would then come to a rather important part of the Bill. Besides, the leader of the Labour party was absent through sickness, and that was another reason why they might adjourn at this hour.

Clause put and passed.

On clause 197—"Extension of meaning of terms 'lease,' etc., in this part"—

Mr. HARDACRE hoped the Minister would not go on with these clauses to-night. They were perhaps the most important in the Bill.

Mr. BROWNE: Considering that they had passed forty clauses of the Bill since tea-time, he thought they had done very fair work; and seeing that they were going to sit five days next week, he thought they might adjourn now. They could finish the Bill on Monday night.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: If there was to be any discussion on this part of the Bill, he would rather take it now, otherwise they would not be able to finish the Bill on Monday. He would be satisfied if they got as far as the 207th clause to-night. If there had been any serious objection to any of the clauses in this part, he would have heard of it, but nobody had any objection to them as far as he knew.

The CHAIRMAN: In accordance with Standing Order 171, I call upon the hon. member for Dalby, Mr. Bell, to take the chair.

Mr. BELL took the chair.

Mr. HARDACRE hoped the hon. gentleman would postpone Part VIII., and go on with Part IX. Clause 199 was important, as it said that the improvements should be assessed at their value to the incoming tenant. That had been objected to over and over again. Then there was clause 200, which provided that the Governor in Council might resume one-quarter of the area without compensation. He was very strongly of opinion that that should apply to grazing farms as well as pastoral leases. The grazing-farm system, when large areas were held, was going to be one of the big dangers of the future, because a powerful interest would grow up which would block settlement. He hoped the hon. gentleman would adjourn those important clauses, more especially as the hon. member for Bundaberg was away through illness, and they should be discussed. They might go on with the other clauses of the Bill which were merely formal, and there would be no delay he was sure in passing the Bill through committee on Monday next.

Clause put and passed.

On clause 198—"Resumption from holdings"—

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS was willing to meet the Committee in every reasonable way. The hon. member had given the best reason for going on when he said that the clauses were important, and would require discussion. On the understanding that hon. members would come to an arrangement that the committal of the Bill would be completed on Monday, he would move the Acting Chairman out of the chair.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

The House resumed; the ACTING CHAIRMAN reported progress, and obtained leave to sit again on Monday next.

The House adjourned at twenty minutes to 12 o'clock.