

Queensland



Parliamentary Debates  
[Hansard]

**Legislative Assembly**

**WEDNESDAY, 11 SEPTEMBER 1901**

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## LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY.

WEDNESDAY, 11 SEPTEMBER, 1901.

The SPEAKER (Hon. Arthur Morgan, *Warwick*) took the chair at half-past 3 o'clock.

### PETITIONS.

#### LICENSING ACT—SUNDAY TRADING.

Mr. MACKINTOSH (*Cambooya*) presented a petition from certain persons in Pittsworth and surrounding districts, praying the House to adopt in the Licensing Act a certain provision, which they recite from the Imperial Act, with reference to the sale of intoxicants during prohibited hours.

Petition received.

Petitions of similar purport and prayer were also read and received as follow :—

By Mr. McMASTER (*Fortitude Valley*), from residents of Fortitude Valley.

By Mr. STODART (*Logan*), from residents of the Logan district.

By Mr. RYLAND (*Gympie*), from residents of Red Hill and One-Mile, Gympie.

### QUESTIONS.

#### SUPPOSED LEPER ON THE "RIO LOGE."

Mr. BROWNE (*Croydon*) asked the Premier, without notice—

1. Is it true that a Polynesian named Breckfash (supposed to be a leper) has left Mackay, and is now on board the recruiting vessel "Rio Loge" at Bundaberg?

2. Will he cause the "Rio Loge" to be detained until a thorough search has been made for said Polynesian?

3. Has he any correspondence *re* this supposed leper, and will he lay such correspondence on the table of this House?

The PREMIER (Hon. R. Philp, *Townsville*) replied: I understand that there is no man of that name on the "Rio Loge." All the men that went by that boat have been inspected by the doctor.

Mr. BROWNE: Have you any correspondence bearing upon this?

The PREMIER: None.

#### MAREEBA TO ATHERTON RAILWAY.

Mr. NEWELL (*Woothakata*) asked the Secretary for Railways, without notice—

1. Does the Government intend to call for tenders for the construction of the Mareeba to Atherton line.

2. And, if so, when?

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS (Hon. J. Leahy, *Bulloo*) replied—

In reply to No. 1. Yes. In reply to No. 2. The rails have been ordered, and no unnecessary delay will be allowed to occur when they arrive.

#### DESTRUCTION OF PRICKLY PEAR.

Mr. KATES (*Cunningham*) asked the Secretary for Agriculture—

1. How many acres have been operated upon for the destruction of prickly pear on the Westbrook Experimental Farm?

2. Has the destruction been complete?

3. What was the average cost per acre?

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE (Hon. D. H. Dalrymple, *Mackay*) replied—

1. About 140 acres.

2. Yes.

3. £4 9s. 7d. per acre, including purchase of the necessary plant, or £4 2s. 9d. excluding same. As different formulæ had to be tried, and as Bunker's Hill, where the experiments are in progress, is of a very rocky nature, this cost must not be taken as an average for ordinary infested land.

#### CUSTOM-HOUSE, BUNDABERG.

Mr. BARBER (*Bundaberg*) asked the Secretary for Public Works—

1. Who is the inspector of public works in charge of new building for Custom-house, Bundaberg?

2. Has he made any report *re* bricks used in connection with said building?

3. Is it true that inferior bricks are being used, and a superior class of bricks have been condemned?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS (Hon. T. Leahy, *Bulloo*) replied—

1. Inspector S. Harrington.

2. No.

3. No.

### PAPER.

The following paper, laid on the table, was ordered to be printed :—Report of the Official Trustee in Insolvency for the year 1900.

# PORT NORMAN, NORMANTON, AND CLONCURRY RAILWAY BILL.

## INTRODUCTION.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS (Hon. J. Leahy, *Bullooh*), in moving—

That leave be given to introduce a Bill to authorise the construction and maintenance of a line of railway from Port Norman, by way of Normanton, to Cloncurry, and for other purposes—

said: It is most unusual on an occasion of this kind to call "Not formal" to a motion for leave to introduce a Bill.

Mr. W. HAMILTON: It was done to me the other day.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: The hon. member says it was done to him the other day. I recollect that, on that occasion, the Premier refused to call "Not formal," and entered his protest against any person calling "Not formal" to the motion for the introduction of a Bill. I am not aware that any member of this Government, on any occasion, has called "Not formal" to a motion of this kind when the question is merely for leave to introduce a Bill. The hon. member for Herbert called "Not formal," the other day, to the motion for leave to introduce the Shearers Bill, but that was quite a different matter to the one now before the House. It was a Bill introduced by a private member, and it required an appropriation.

Hon. A. S. COWLEY: Yes, that is so.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: The hon. gentleman wanted to get information on that point. This, on the other hand, is a Bill which is being introduced by the Government, who are responsible to the House and the country for their actions, and it is therefore in quite a different position to a Bill introduced by a private member. In this particular instance, too, it is not a private member altogether who has called, "Not formal" to the motion, but it is called by a gentleman who is filling the responsible position of leader of the Opposition. The action he has taken on this occasion is a challenge to the Government on their policy.

Mr. BROWNE: Hear, hear!

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: Yes, the hon. gentleman says "Hear, hear." If the Government are to be challenged on their policy by the hon. gentleman, there is a formal way of doing it, and I say it is without precedent in the history of constitutional government to challenge the life of a Ministry in the manner in which it is being done by the leader of the Opposition this afternoon. On the other hand, if it is not his intention to challenge the policy of the Government, or their right to introduce this Bill, but is simply a use of the forms of the House for the purpose of obstructing the policy of the Government, then we will know exactly how to deal with the hon. gentleman's tactics.

Mr. BROWNE: Hear, hear! but do not use threats.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: A Bill almost similar to the Bill which I am asking leave to introduce has been before the Chamber on a former occasion, and I believe it was allowed to go formally last year at its introductory stage.

Mr. BROWNE: Nothing of the sort. Only by accident.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: I am not supposed to know that the other side do things by accident. Responsible parties do not act by accident, and I know that this side does not act without full knowledge and responsibility. I am not at present going to argue the merits of this Bill, or give reasons why it should be introduced.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: Which the House is not allowed to see.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: Yes, as my hon. friend reminds me, the House has no knowledge of the Bill at this stage. I simply claim it as the right of the Government to bring their policy before the House, and if the policy of the Government does not meet with its approval, the House will know how to deal with the Government. This has been the declared policy of the Government throughout the length and breadth of the country. It is one of the planks—if I may use the word used by members opposite—of the Government platform.

Mr. W. HAMILTON: Not at the last election.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: If there was anything at all which was put strongly before the country at the last general election it was the matter of the Chillagoe Railway, and this Bill is an almost exact copy of the Chillagoe Railway Act; and members on this side were returned by large majorities, in support of the policy of private railway construction enunciated by the Government. That policy has also been approved of at three or four by-elections.

Mr. TURLEY: That is not so.

Mr. REID: What about the Flinders?

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: This railway goes through only a small portion of the Flinders electorate at all events. It is chiefly through the electorate of Carpentaria that this line will go, and that portion of the Flinders through which it goes is distinctly and decidedly in favour of it, whether the whole of it is or not. However, this policy has been ratified by the country at several by-elections. I think at the whole of the by-elections my hon. friend Mr. Rutledge and myself came before the electors assisting the candidates who were supporting the Government, and on every occasion we enunciated as strongly as possible the policy of the construction of private railways in portions of the country which were not adapted for close settlement, and in which the Government would not be justified in constructing lines themselves. The Premier also, at Rockhampton North, laid down the same policy, and that policy has been ratified on every occasion. It was ratified at Toowoong last year. I will not discuss the Bill at this stage. This is not the proper time to discuss it, and I say the procedure adopted by the hon. gentleman is most unusual. I therefore formally move the motion standing in my name. Whilst I am desirous that this Bill, like every other Bill introduced from this or any part of the House, shall be fairly and reasonably discussed, and whilst every opportunity will be given for doing so, yet if obstructive tactics like this are adopted, the Bill will be handled in a very firm manner.

MEMBERS of the Opposition: Hear, hear! and laughter.

Mr. REID: That is showing your hand.

Mr. BROWNE (*Croydon*): I could not help thinking when the hon. gentleman got up and spoke in such very strung tones, and held out such threats, that some hon. member might have asked where he got his hats made, and how much his head had increased in measurement since he obtained a seat on the front Treasury benches.

MEMBERS on the Government side: Oh, oh!

Hon. A. S. COWLEY: That is very witty.

Mr. BROWNE: Whether it is witty or not, I want to make the true state of the case known. The hon. gentleman stated that this course was unprecedented, when he knows distinctly the opposite. He said he never knew a member of the Government to do such a thing as call "Not

formal" to a motion for leave to introduce a Bill, when he knew that the late Attorney-General, who was a member of that Government—although he would not be Attorney-General with the hon. gentleman in the Ministry—on two occasions pursued the same course in this House, and objected to leave being given to introduce a Bill.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: I said a member of this Government.

Mr. BROWNE: I apologise to the hon. gentleman. I was speaking of a Government with which the Premier was connected; I was not alluding to the Hon. John Leahy's Government at all. With regard to my action being unprecedented, it is not so. If I wanted precedents for my action, I have them in the action of an ex-Attorney-General and an ex-Speaker of this House. But even if I had no precedent whatever to go on, I consider it is my duty, as a member of this House, and that it is also the duty of the party sitting behind me, if we think a thing is essentially bad in principle, to object to the very introduction of it.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: You have not seen it yet.

Mr. BROWNE: I know I have not seen it. The hon. gentleman went on to speak about this measure being introduced by the Government, who were responsible to the country for their actions. With regard to that statement, I consider that I, or any private member of this House, whether sitting behind the Government or behind me or on the cross-benches, where the hon. gentleman used to sit, am just as much responsible for my actions and votes in this House as the Secretary for Railways is at the present time. We are returned by the votes of the people, most of us by a far larger number of votes than have ever been recorded for the hon. gentleman, and as long as I am a member of this House, or as long as I occupy the position which I am proud to do to-day as leader of the Labour party—

Hon. A. S. COWLEY: Who has swelled head now?

Mr. BROWNE: I wish that an ex-Speaker of the House would understand that interjections are very disorderly. (Laughter.) I say that as long as I occupy the position of even the humblest member of this House, I shall do what I think is right and proper, and allow my constituents and the country to say whether my actions are good or bad. I most certainly decline to be dictated to by the Secretary for Railways, or by any other member of the House, and shall do what I consider is right as long as the Speaker allows that I am in order in the action which I take, knowing at the same time that I am responsible for my actions to those whom I represent. The hon. gentlemen also said that we ought not to dictate to the Government what line of policy they should adopt. I say at once, as has been said before by far abler members on this side of the House, that I should not presume to dictate to the Government what action they should take, or how they should carry on their business. At the same time, I most decidedly object to take my instructions as to how I should carry on the business of the party of which I am the leader, from the Secretary for Railways or any other member of the House. The hon. gentleman brought up again the late elections, and said they had ratified the policy of the Government in this particular. He stated how the Premier, the Attorney-General, and himself had spoken at those elections, and stated the policy of the Government with regard to the construction of railways by private enterprise, and how that

policy had been ratified by the return of Government supporters. I remember that on one occasion when the hon. gentleman said the Government were laying this down as one of the planks in the Government platform they were supporting a man who at that election, and since he has been in this House, avowed himself as an opponent of private railways. Was the policy of the Government ratified on that occasion, when they had to return an independent man who did not believe in their policy? If that is the sort of ratification their policy has received, it is a new sort of ratification. It was not, and is not my intention to take up any length of time on this motion. I have no wish to cause a long discussion on the matter, but I consider it my duty to protest against this Bill at every stage. Although the hon. gentleman, "dressed in that little brief authority," which he is so ready to use on every occasion—

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: More than twenty minutes, anyhow.

The HOME SECRETARY: It is not so brief as yours.

Mr. BROWNE: Has started already to make threats—I quite recognise that the Government have beautiful instruments—the gag and the guillotine, which they can use when they wish to have discussion blocked—yet at the same time there is one recourse left to the House—which they may perhaps try to deal with—and that is that they have not yet got the right to refuse us a division. And I may say at once that at every stage of this Bill—hon. gentlemen may call it obstruction or any name they like—we are going to have a division, whether we can get a discussion or not. It is just as well to understand this straight off. With regard to the Bill itself, the hon. gentleman says we have no right to discuss it at the present stage, but that we should wait until we see the Bill. I suppose if the hon. gentleman in the middle of the night found a strange man getting into his house he would consider it his duty to wait patiently until he saw him going through his pockets and knew whether he was a burglar or not! We on this side of the House believe that the principle of this proposed measure is a very evil one and very bad in its effects on Queensland. We do not want to see it brought into Queensland, and it is not our duty to stand and wait until we see whether this fellow is going to take a washing-basin or a gold watch from the side-table, before we raise any objection. It is our duty to object to the measure from its very inception. Of course there is no possibility of blocking it at its present stage, and the probability is that it will go through if the Government force it on the House. At the same time, in objecting to it at the very start, I have done what is within the right of every hon. member to do. Without taking up any more time, or wanting to discuss the measure at all in the way of obstruction, I say I am going to vote against the introduction of the Bill, and shall call for a division on the motion.

Question—That leave be given to introduce the Bill—put; and the House divided:—

In the division, several hon. members moving [4 p.m.] from the Opposition cross-benches to the Government cross-benches—

MEMBERS of the Opposition: Oh, oh!

Mr. JENKINSON: I want to see the Bill.

MEMBERS on the Opposition side: Oh, oh!

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. FOGARTY: According to the motion moved by the Minister for Railways, it is possible that the Government will construct this line.

The SPEAKER: Order!

AYES, 35.

Mr. Annear	Mr. Kates
" Armstrong	" Kent
" Bartholomew	" Keogh
" Bridges	" Leahy
" Callan	" Mackintosh
" Cameron	" McMaster
" Cowley	" Newell
" T. B. Cribb	" O'Connell
" Curtis	" Paget
" Dalrymple	" Philp
" Fogarty	" Plunkett
" Forsyth	" Rutledge
" Fox	" Smith
" Foxton	" Stephenson
" Grimes	" Stodart
" J. Hamilton	" Story
" Hanran	" W. Thorn
" Jenkinson	

Tellers: Mr. Armstrong and Mr. Paget.

NOES, 22.

Mr. Airey	Mr. Jackson
" Barber	" Kerr
" Bowman	" Lesina
" Browne	" Maxwell
" Burrows	" McDonnell
" Dibley	" Mulcahy
" Dunsford	" Reid
" Fitzgerald	" Ryland
" Givens	" Tolmie
" W. Hamilton	" Turley
" Hardacre	" Turner

Tellers: Mr. Airey and Mr. McDonnell.

Resolved in the affirmative.

## FIRST READING.

The Bill was presented and read a first time, and the second reading was made an order for Tuesday next.

## TREASURY BILLS BILL.

## MESSAGE FROM COUNCIL.

The SPEAKER announced the receipt of a message from the Council, intimating that they had agreed to this Bill without amendment.

QUEENSLAND STOCK INSCRIPTION  
ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

## SECOND READING.

The TREASURER (Hon. T. B. Cribb, *Ipswich*): I have previously explained that by the existing law if a judgment is obtained in the British courts against a resident of Queensland, that judgment could not be enforced in Queensland without taking fresh proceedings in our courts. This Bill proposes that if any judgment, order, or decree is obtained against the registrar of Queensland stock arising out of any action taken in the British law courts, the Treasurer shall at once satisfy that judgment. By this greater security is offered to trustees and other investors in our stock in the old country. Without some such provision they would not be able to invest in our stock. I don't think the Bill calls for any further explanation; and I move that it be now read a second time.

Mr. BROWNE (*Croydon*): This is certainly a very small Bill, and the Treasurer did not speak very long when moving the second reading of it, but to an ordinary layman I think it is about the biggest Chinese puzzle you could possibly get hold of. If hon. members will look at the Bill, they will see that the preamble takes up thirty-two lines—it is something like Mr. Wragge's general remarks about the weather conditions and his predictions. There are thirty-two lines in the preamble, two more for the short title, and only really twelve lines for the Bill itself. It may be a very useful measure; but certainly I do not like the way it is drafted and put before us, for

I think no ordinary member of this House can understand it. I understand from what the Treasurer said that it is introduced to give a sort of guarantee of security to trustees who invest in colonial stock now—that is, outside the provisions of the Imperial Act. That may be a good thing. It may increase the profits of these investors; but the question is, will it mean any additional risks to the Queensland Treasurer?

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: No.

Mr. BROWNE: And will it place any future stockowners in a better position than the present stockowners are in outside the Imperial Act? Will they receive the same guarantee, or will they go on running the same risks as formerly and not be indemnified by this Government? If that is so, it will be rather unfair to future stockowners, for the old stockowners will only benefit in that case. I do not know whether that will be the case, but I think hon. members would be very glad to get some information on the matter. I do not, and I think most hon. members do not, understand the preamble at all. I think the Attorney-General might interpret it to the House, and I would be very much obliged if he would do so.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL (Hon. A. Rutledge, *Maranoa*): It is perfectly true that the preamble to this Bill is somewhat lengthy, but I think it is quite intelligible if carefully read. It sets out: That the Imperial Parliament passed an Act in 1877, and states what some of the provisions of that Act are. Then it goes on to state that, by an Act passed by this Parliament in 1883 provision was made for the inscription of Queensland stock in a register kept in the United Kingdom under which a registrar was appointed, and then affirms the desirability of applying the provisions of the Imperial Act of 1877 to the registrar so appointed with respect to Queensland inscribed stock. There was formerly no provision by which that registrar should be liable on any judgment obtained in an Imperial court with respect to any part of that inscribed stock or to any interest in the same. The object of the Bill is this: To enable trustees in the United Kingdom to legally invest the moneys they hold on behalf of their *cestui que* trusts in Queensland stock. A similar Bill has been passed in Victoria, and it is regarded there—as I am sure it will be here, if this Bill is passed—as a very great advantage not only to trustees in the United Kingdom, but to the State, as trustees will then be empowered to invest the monies they hold for the benefit of other people in certain of our colonial securities. It will be known, when this Bill is passed, that the London registrar will be liable in respect of Queensland stock upon judgments obtained in relation to that stock in England. If this Bill is passed, it will open up a more extensive market for Queensland securities; you will find that a lot of money which is seeking investment elsewhere will be invested in Queensland stock. Trustees in the United Kingdom are forbidden, by law, to invest money, except in certain specified securities, and the Queensland stock is not amongst the number. If trustees now invested in Queensland stock, they would be guilty of a breach of trust. When they are able to invest money in Queensland stock, it is not at all likely that they will do so in a speculative way. It is incumbent upon trustees to secure good and safe investments, from which they can get a steady income. We think our inscribed securities are quite good enough for this purpose, and the Imperial authorities also think that, with such provisions as we propose to enact by this Bill, they will be good enough. The only difficulty was that if any question arose with regard to any securities held by persons in the United Kingdom, a judgment obtained there would be worthless.

Action, in respect of Queensland inscribed stock, would have to be taken here to enable stockholders to enforce their rights. Now that difficulty is one that it is undesirable to permit any longer to exist. No one will dare to say that Queensland desires to repudiate its liabilities with regard to its stock. All we are doing here is to give people who hold our stock this certainty that if any question arises as to this stock or as to any interest on it they can go to the Imperial courts and get judgment, and that the Queensland Treasurer will have to satisfy such judgment, just as if an action had been brought in the Queensland courts. With that certainty assured by this Bill the provisions of the Imperial Act of 1877 will become applicable to our stock, which will then be a legitimate form of investment for British trustees.

Mr. BROWNE: Will this Act be retrospective?

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: Yes, it will apply to all inscribed stock, whether inscribed in years gone by or now or in the future. I think if this Bill is passed it will be a source of very great advantage to Queensland.

Mr. LESINA (*Clermont*): I would like to point out that there is a great necessity for this measure being passed now. It seems a guileless sort of measure, but it has been said by some authorities on this matter that it is not as guileless as it looks, for it is cleverly drafted. Whether it is guileless or not, it is absolutely certain that the Government desire the passage of this Bill. Why? Because they desire to increase investments here, and by the passage of this Bill an extensive market will be opened up to investors in the old country. That means that the Government will be better able to float their loan of £1,250,000, which they intend to place on the London market. The passage of this Bill will no doubt assist them in this. As the Government are so hard up, I am not going to offer any objection to the passage of this Bill, and I only hope that they will look after things and not spend money in so extravagant a way as they have done in the past.

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

#### COMMITTEE.

The TREASURER: With the permission of the House I would like to move that this Bill be taken into consideration in detail in Committee now. Mr. Speaker, I beg to move that you do now leave the chair.

Question put and passed.

Clauses 1 and 2 put and passed.

On the preamble—

Mr. LESINA (*Clermont*) asked the Minister in charge of the Bill whether the trustees were given any preferential claims over the other creditors in the estate?

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: No.

Mr. LESINA: They are all treated alike?

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: Yes.

Preamble put and passed.

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

### SPECIAL SALES OF LAND BILL.

#### COMMITTEE.

Clause 1 put and passed.

On clause 2, as follows:—

This Act shall be read and construed with and as an amendment of, and shall be deemed to be incorporated in, the Land Act, 1897, hereinafter called the principal Act.

Mr. JENKINSON (*Wide Bay*): He noticed that this clause incorporated with the Bill the

Land Act of 1897. There was, however, no provision such as had been generally inserted in the Bills passed lately, that the amendments made by this Bill should be printed in the principal Act. Unless the Minister for Lands stated that he would follow that course it would make a great deal of confusion. He thought it was very unwise to adopt measures altering other Acts unless they had the alterations printed in those Acts, otherwise people who had to refer to those Acts would be in a muddle. They had an instance the other day when they passed a measure which really amended four other Acts. If the Minister would follow the course he had suggested he had no objection to passing the clause in its present form.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS (Hon. W. B. H. O'Connell, *Musgrave*): He understood that the hon. member wished any amendments made by this Bill printed in the principal Act.

Mr. JENKINSON: Yes.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: But this was a separate Bill, and what this clause did was really to make the provisions of the other Act applicable to this one. They did not require to have this clause in the principal Act, because that was a different Act altogether. What the hon. member wanted was to have the whole of the 1897 Act reprinted with this Act. What it meant was that the provisions of the Act of 1897 formed a part of the Bill now before the Committee, and the procedure under that Act would govern the procedure under this Bill.

Mr. JENKINSON: Would not the words "read and construed" provide for that?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Suppose a definition were given in the Act of 1897, that definition would govern this Act. If you wanted a definition of "country lands," or any other term, you would turn up the interpretation clause of the Act of 1897 to get it.

Mr. JENKINSON: His contention was that the words "read and construed with the Act of 1897" were quite sufficient without the words "and shall be deemed to be incorporated in." Those words were mere surplusage, and he did not think it was wise to embody surplusage in any Bill.

Mr. FITZGERALD (*Mitchell*) thought the hon. member was right in raising this question. He understood that this clause practically incorporated with this Bill the Land Act of 1897, and that meant repealing some portion of the Act.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: The next clause deals with that, "Notwithstanding any of the provisions of the principal Act," etc.

Mr. GIVENS: Why not omit the words "and shall be deemed to be incorporated in."

Mr. FITZGERALD: He did not see any necessity for the words at all. If the [4.30 p.m.] words were allowed in, the clause would be incorporated with the 1897 Act, under which the Government could sell as much land as they liked.

Mr. JACKSON (*Kennedy*) was rather inclined to agree with the Secretary for Lands when he pointed out that there might be some governing clause in the principal Act. He might illustrate the matter in this way: He had given notice of an amendment which proposed to ask the Land Court to do certain things, and there was a clause in the principal Act defining "Land Court." He thought it was necessary that the words should remain in.

Mr. JENKINSON: The words "shall be read and construed with" were to all intents and purposes a reference to the Act of 1897. His contention was that the words "shall be deemed to be incorporated in" were surplusage.

Hon. A. S. COWLEY: Not at all.

Mr. JENKINSON: Then he would like the hon. member for Herbert, with the halo of an ex-Speaker round his head, to throw a little light on the matter.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: One of the highest authorities in the colony in the matter of Bill drafting, Sir Samuel Griffith, had incorporated in clause 8 of the Act of 1891 the words "shall be read and construed with." He did not pretend to be able to say, whether the words were technically and legally necessary, but he could not see how the words could possibly do any harm or alter the reading of the Act of 1897, except so far as concerned the Bill itself. The Bill was not an amendment of the 1897 Act outside of the special sales provided for. He could not agree with the contention of the hon. member for Mitchell that the clause would be a repeal of the clause governing the sale of land under the 1897 Act. The clause provided simply that so far as anything not specially provided for was concerned, the provisions of the 1897 Act should apply.

Mr. FITZGERALD: Under this Bill you can sell any number of acres.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: They could sell an unlimited area, as long as they applied the money in a certain way.

Mr. LESINA: Which you have not done yet.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: He did not know what had been done in the past, or what might be done in the future. He supposed they would be governed, as other people were governed, by the necessities of the case. The Bill gave the Government power to sell an unlimited area for specific purposes, and for the first two years they might take from the fund which was created through the sale of land, such money as the House authorised them to take, and no more. Whenever the amount of the deficit of last year was to the credit of the account, then the operation of the measure would cease; so that the Bill could only be in existence so long as the Treasury bills were not liquidated.

Mr. JENKINSON: His contention was that the words "read and construed with" virtually incorporated the Bill with the Act of 1897. He found on reference to amendments of other Acts passed in 1890 it was not found necessary to include those words. He did not think it necessary to push his objection to a division, but the words were certainly surplusage.

Clause 2 put and passed.

On clause 3, as follows:—

Notwithstanding any provisions of the principal Act, the Governor in Council may cause country lands, not being distant less than twenty miles from a navigable stream, to be offered for sale by public auction in parcels of an area exceeding three hundred and twenty acres, but not exceeding five thousand one hundred and twenty acres.

Mr. KERR (*Barcoo*) said he had given notice of an amendment on line 12. He proposed to insert after the words "navigable stream" the words—

Or any line of railway or permanent survey of any proposed railway for which money has been borrowed. Speaking on the second reading, he intimated that it was his intention to move such an amendment. The provision in the 1891 Act read—

The Governor in Council may cause country lands, not being distant less than twenty miles from any line of railway, or permanent survey of any proposed railway for which money has been borrowed, or navigable stream, to be offered for sale by public auction in parcels of an area exceeding three hundred and twenty acres.

He pointed out on the second reading of the measure that it was necessary to insert a similar safeguard in this Bill, as there were many places which would be injuriously affected by its

operation if the Bill were passed in its present shape and form. At that time he had in his mind particularly the townships of Ilfracombe and Longreach. Here he wished to correct a statement made by the Secretary for Railways during the discussion on the second reading of the Bill, as he had not had an opportunity of doing so before. The hon. gentleman said—

The hon. member for Barcoo said the land out there belonged to the people of Ilfracombe and Barcardine.

As *Hansard* would show, he never made any such statement. The hon. gentlemen further stated that the hon. member for Barcoo said—

These people want the land, and are entitled to get it for a certain price.

He never made any such statement. What he said was that the residents of Ilfracombe and Barcardine had on several occasions petitioned the Lands Department and the Government, asking that those lands should be thrown open for close settlement, but he never said that the people in those places had a prior claim to the land, or that they wanted it at a certain price. The reason he had left the word "borrowed" in the amendment was that last session a motion for the construction of a railway from Dartmouth to Stonehenge was passed by the Assembly without division, but was thrown out in the Upper House. That railway would pass through Wellshot, Portland Downs, and Westlands, where the country was favourable to close settlement, and the terminus would be at Bimerah, where the land was also adapted for close settlement. He believed that the adoption of his amendment would be the means of having those lands thrown open for close settlement when the railway was constructed, but if the Bill was passed in its present form without the amendment he could see that such lands as those on Wellshot, Portland Downs, Westlands, and Bimerah, which were adjacent to the proposed line, would be sold to the lessees of those stations. Bimerah was one of the stations which had the largest amount of freehold in the Central district, and he thought the lands on that run should be made available for close settlement when the lease expired. On the second reading of the Bill the Secretary for Public Lands stated that if the measure had been introduced in the original form of the 1891 Bill no lands would be sold. That conclusively proved that this Bill was brought in for the special purpose of selling land adjacent to railways and blocking close settlement. His object was to prevent that, and he hoped the Minister would see his way clear to accept the amendment.

Mr. FOX (*Normanby*) wished to suggest a compromise with regard to the amendment. If it was necessary to insert the words "navigable rivers," of which they had very few, it was more necessary to insert the word "railways," so that land near to railways should be reserved for close settlement. He would suggest that instead of the word "twenty" they should insert the word "ten," and so make the amendment apply to lands 10 miles from a railway, but if the amendment were insisted upon in its present form he should vote for it.

Mr. SMITH (*Bowen*) was thoroughly in accord with the views expressed by the last speaker.

The CHAIRMAN: I would remind hon. members that the question before the Committee is the insertion of certain words.

Mr. SMITH: He was speaking to the amendment before the Committee. If that amendment were accepted the clause would have a different aspect altogether, because it would exclude not only lands within a certain distance of navigable rivers, but lands within a certain distance of railways. There were three navigable rivers in

the colony, the Brisbane, the Fitzroy, and the Mary, and the land near those rivers was nearly all private property at the present time. If the compromise was not accepted, something should be done. He did not believe in selling lands near a railway for 10s. an acre. Those lands near a railway should bring a higher price than lands removed from a railway. There should be some means of discriminating between land that was good and land that was not good, but the clause as it stood made no distinction in that respect. All they knew was that land was not to be sold at less than 10s. an acre; but under the clause land worth £5 an acre might be sold at 10s. an acre. Some provision should be inserted to prevent lands along railways being sold for less than their present value.

Mr. CURTIS (*Rockhampton*): If land was sold in large blocks alongside a railway that would prove a block to settlement later on. The people of the Central district took a very special interest in this matter. They did not like to see the land sold in large blocks; but their dislike might be minimised to some extent if an amendment like that proposed by the hon. member for Barcoo were inserted in the Bill. He therefore hoped the Minister would see his way to accept the amendment.

Mr. KATES (*Cunningham*): It would be extremely inadvisable to allow the clause to pass in its present form. To sell 5,000-acre blocks alongside a railway would be repeating the disastrous legislation of the past. What was the secret of the success of close settlement? It was the facilities for getting to market which the railways afforded; and it would be a political crime to sell land in large areas alongside our railways. If 5,000 acres were divided into ten portions of 500 acres each, better prices would be obtained, and there would be close settlement, and the railway revenue would be increased. Look at the returns in connection with the Agricultural Lands Purchase Act! We had bought 127,000 acres, and 980 farms had been cut out of that area. He thought the Minister might very well accept the suggestion made by the hon. member for Normanby. He would support any amendment to do away with the power of the Government to let one man have 5,000 acres alongside a railway.

Mr. BARTHOLOMEW (*Maryborough*) considered that the amendment would be tying the hands of the Government. This was a matter of administration, and they could not tie the hands of the Government in this manner. They must give the Administration a certain amount of power, and he thought the clause to be proposed by the hon. member for Kennedy would be sufficient.

Mr. JACKSON: Will you support me in that?

Mr. BARTHOLOMEW: Yes.

HON. A. S. COWLEY (*Herbert*): He trusted the Secretary for Lands would see his way to adopt the proposed amendment. When the Bill was introduced in 1891 this clause was embodied after due consideration, and it was found that the Government were able to sell land to a considerable extent under the Act. Under the present Land Act the Government had power to sell land at any distance from a railway in 320-acre blocks, so that the principle of selling land adjacent to a railway was no new principle. If the hon. gentleman accepted the amendment he would still be able to sell sufficient land for the requirements of the Act; and as much land probably as anyone wished to buy within 20 miles of a railway could be sold in 320-acre blocks.

THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: What the hon. member said was true with regard to the power of the Government to sell land close to a railway in 320-acre blocks; but

the absurdity of selling land out West in 320-acre blocks had been pointed out by the hon. member for Gregory. That hon. member, referring to Northampton Downs, said it would be better to sell the land in larger areas.

Mr. W. HAMILTON: I opposed the sale of it, anyhow.

THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: He did not say the hon. member approved of selling the land, but he understood the hon. member to say, that if the land had to be sold it would be better to sell it in such areas that a man would have a chance of making a living.

It would be useless for a man to buy a 320-acre block on Wellshot. He could not make a living on it.

Mr. GIVENS: It is quite enough when the land is near a railway.

THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: He would not like to try and make a living on it himself. This Bill gave the Government power to sell land in such blocks as would be most suitable for the purpose to which the lands would be put. If the land was to be used as small pastoral holdings, 320-acre blocks would not be sufficient; but if it was going to be used for agricultural purposes then 320-acre blocks might be sufficient. The matter depended on what use the land was going to be put to, and what it was likely to return, and no doubt railway communication in the vicinity had a great deal to do with the value of the land. Land suitable for agriculture or dairying pursuits no doubt would be greatly enhanced in value if there was a railway close by. On the other hand, if land was only suitable for pastoral pursuits, we would only be continuing the old process—allowing the Government to sell the land in 320-acre blocks and permitting persons to purchase a number of these blocks. He did not believe the country would get the best price for land if they were forced to sell land in small areas, and for the reasons he had given he would oppose the amendment.

Mr. GIVENS (*Cairns*): As had been pointed out by the hon. member for Cunningham, the selling of land in large blocks alongside a railway was nothing short of a political crime. It was well known that as soon as a railway was constructed, and even before it was constructed, there was an immediate demand for land in the vicinity of the line, and if land was sold in large blocks close to a railway most undoubtedly it would have a tendency to block close settlement out West and in other places.

THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: What is close settlement in the Central districts?

Mr. W. HAMILTON: Anything from 2,560 to 5,000 acres.

Mr. GIVENS: Supposing they legislated for one or two special cases, the Government had the power to take advantage of such legislation, and deal with portions of land which it would not be desirable for them to sell. And even if there was a desire to sell land suitable for pastoral purposes in the West, close to railways, the Minister still had power to sell 320-acre blocks, and the difficulty could be easily got over by putting up for auction a sufficient number of 320-acre blocks. He was sure that no evil would accrue from the amendment, but on the other hand a great deal of evil might be prevented by its acceptance. He thought the amendment might be improved by substituting the word "voted" for the word "borrowed." Very often money was voted for a purpose while it was not borrowed for the same purpose. If the amendment was carried a railway might be approved of and money might be voted for it, and the Government might continue to sell land in its vicinity because the money was not borrowed. He thought that would be a



mistake. The Minister inserted a proviso in this Bill stating that no land should be sold within 20 miles of a navigable stream, and he thought the same thing held good with regard to a railway, for they were both only means of communication.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Would you like me to omit that proviso?

Mr. GIVENS: No, he would not. He was not asking the Minister to do that, but he thought the same principle should apply to railways. He moved that the proposed amendment be further amended by omitting the word "borrowed" with a view of inserting "voted."

Mr. FOX thought the clause would be improved by striking out the word "twenty" with the view—

The CHAIRMAN: Order! The Committee can only deal with one amendment at a time. The hon. member is not in order.

The PREMIER (Hon. R. Philp, *Townsville*) said they had millions of acres of land alongside lines, from which the State was getting no benefit whatever.

Mr. W. HAMILTON: Where are they?

The PREMIER: They could commence at Dalby and go right to Charleville, and there were hundreds of miles alongside that line where there was no settlement at all, and there was not likely to be under the present conditions. They wanted to try and induce people from the other colonies to come here and take up land in 5,000-acre blocks.

Mr. LESINA: Why don't you induce our own people to take it up?

The PREMIER: They were doing so, but the people of the colony had more land than they could digest. This Bill would give the Government power to sell land on ten yearly payments—1s. per annum for ten years, with interest added. He fully believed that if a lot of land between Dalby and Charleville was thrown open in decent-sized blocks they would get a lot of good settlers from the other colonies, and from among our own people, too. Dairying had begun to get a great hold in Queensland. Mr. Reid, the manager of Hutton and Co., had stated recently that it was expected that the colony would export 4,000 tons of butter this year, which would be equivalent to £400,000 in one year. Victoria exported nearly £2,000,000 worth of butter. They had the land in Queensland, and they only wanted people to settle on it, and if the Bill were passed it would be the means of inducing people to come here from the other colonies. They had built the line already, and they wanted people to go and buy land there.

Mr. LESINA: You want the financial institutions to buy it.

The PREMIER: They were not anxious for the financial institutions to buy it. He believed there were hundreds of settlers, perhaps not in Queensland, but certainly in the other colonies, who were anxious to go in for dairying on a good-sized scale, and they knew that in some portions of that Western country they wanted a large holding.

Mr. LESINA: No, that is not true.

The CHAIRMAN: Order!

The PREMIER: Mr. Grimes, I ask you to request the hon. member to withdraw the statement that what I have just said is not true.

The CHAIRMAN: It is not in order for the hon. member to charge the Premier with saying what is not true. The hon. member must withdraw that remark and apologise.

After a pause,

The CHAIRMAN: I call upon the hon. member for Clermont to withdraw the remark and apologise.

Mr. LESINA: Do not get excited, Mr. Grimes. I beg to withdraw the remark I made just now, in which I alleged that the Premier had made a statement which he knew to be untrue, and I beg to apologise.

The PREMIER: On the railway from Rockhampton to Longreach there were hundreds of miles of country with little or no settlement upon it.

Mr. HARDACRE: Do you think they will pay 10s. an acre for that?

The PREMIER: He hoped that some of the land would be bought.

Mr. W. HAMILTON: Beyond Barcardine?

The PREMIER: There was a lot of land beyond Barcardine, and between Tambo and Winton there was a lot of sheep country, which he believed would be bought under these conditions. Between Townsville and the Prairie there was a lot of good cattle and good dairying country. They must remember that the conditions and the price of cattle were quite different to what they were two or three years ago. Cattle had increased more than twice and sometimes three times in value, and there were good openings in Queensland for people with small herds of cattle to combine dairying with cattle breeding.

Mr. W. HAMILTON: Then the price of grazing land must have increased, too.

The PREMIER: If they could sell a lot of the land which at present they were getting very little rent for, and which in some cases was unoccupied altogether, they might not only benefit the Treasury, but benefit the colony. But if they could not go within any 20 miles of a railway, or surveyed railway, what would become of the land within that 20 miles?

Mr. HARDACRE: You can sell it under the 1897 Act.

The PREMIER: Of course the hon. member for the Barcoo had only got his eyes on the Wellshot lands and the lands about Ilfracombe and Barcardine. They had 480 miles of railway from Brisbane to Charleville, and 450 from Rockhampton to Longreach, besides the lines to Springsure and to Clermont. They had also lines away from Townsville to Winton and from Cooktown, where there was no settlement at all at the present, nor was there much likelihood of much between Normanton and Croydon, but certainly between Townsville and Brisbane he believed they could sell a good deal of land.

Mr. SMITH: But there is no distinction between good and bad.

The PREMIER: He knew that. They could not sell for less than 10s. an acre, and he did not think they were likely to sell their best agricultural land for 10s. an acre. At the present time they were opening land at £2 an acre.

AN HONOURABLE MEMBER: Where is that?

The PREMIER: At Nanango, and he was told that it would go off at that price.

Mr. JENKINSON: It is exceptionally good land there.

The PREMIER: Besides, if the land were put up to auction, he thought there would be competition, especially with these terms. He would like to see 300,000 or 400,000 acres put up for sale within two or three weeks, and advertised in every town in Australia, to induce people to come here and buy it. They could do that if they could offer land conveniently situated; but if they were only to sell land 20 miles away from any railway or proposed railway, he did not think they would sell much. Why, they had surveyed lines all over Queensland. He remembered the hon. member for Leichhardt, when the land-grant railway proposal was brought in, producing a map showing that one-half of the land of the colony had gone.

Mr. HARDACRE: No.

Mr. TURLEY: But that railway was never surveyed.

The PREMIER: At that time the hon. member assured the country that half the land had gone, and now we find that out of our 427,000,000 acres there was only 13,000,000 acres that had been sold. As the Minister for Agriculture had said, it would take them about 2,500 years to sell their land at the rate they were disposing of it now. They were only anxious to get the people to come here, to go on the land, and make some use of it. He contended that if they gave that country between Dalby and Charleville for 10s. an acre, that it would be a good thing for the country, and the people who bought it would make something out of it as well.

Mr. KERR: The Premier said that he had only in his eye the land closely adjacent to Barcardine and Ilfracombe, but that was not so. He had also in view the land which would be opened up by the projected line from Dartmouth to Stonehenge. The Premier had told them about the large quantity of land from Rockhampton to Longreach, but that lay only from where they got out of the bad country to 12 miles beyond Barcardine. None of the country adjacent to the Central Railway from Gogango was good for sheep until you got close to Saltern.

The PREMIER: Is it not good for cattle?

Mr. KERR: There was a good deal of scrub. The Premier had stated that the prices that were likely to be got for cattle would probably be much higher than they were years ago, but if there was going to be a large demand for land, what they heard from the pastoral lessees and from those engaged in the pastoral industry was not such as to indicate that that was so, because they were coming to the Chamber to get reductions of their rents. He had no desire to lock up the whole of the lands of the country, but he had the desire to protect the interests of the people, in that the lands within 20 miles of a railway should not be sacrificed under the provisions of this Bill. The 20-mile limit laid down in the Act of 1897 was not too much—

The CHAIRMAN: I would remind the hon. member that the question before the Committee is whether the word "borrowed" shall be omitted from the clause, with a view to the insertion of another word.

Mr. KERR: He was glad the Chairman had drawn his attention to this. He had only been replying to the speech of the Premier. As to the amendment, if no one else did it, he intended to move that certain of the words should be omitted.

The CHAIRMAN: Before putting the amendment I would remind the hon. member for Normanby that, if he wishes to move a prior amendment, the one moved by the hon. member for Cairns must be withdrawn.

Mr. GIVENS: With the permission of the Committee, he would withdraw his amendment temporarily in order to allow other hon. members to move prior amendments.

Amendment withdrawn.

Mr. FOX moved that clause 3 be amended by omitting the word "twenty" and inserting the word "ten."

The CHAIRMAN: The hon. member will see that he is now seeking to amend the clause. There must be a withdrawal of the amendment moved by the hon. member for Barcoo before that can be done.

Mr. FOX moved that the proposed amendment be amended by inserting after the word "or" the words "within 10 miles of."

Mr. FOGARTY suggested that the hon. member should increase the distance to 15 miles, which would be a fair compromise. He would

support the amendment if it was moved in that form, but otherwise would oppose it. He objected to lands within 10 miles of a railway being sacrificed at 10s. an acre.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS would like again to point out the result of adopting such an amendment. It meant that if the administrator of the Lands Department wished to sell lands adjacent to a railway, he must continue to have them cut up in 320-acre blocks—an area which was no use whatever for the purpose for which the land was required. If it was contended that land adjacent to a railway should not be cut up at all the position would be a logical one, but the amendment did not attempt to prevent land being sold under the principal Act. The right to sell 150,000 acres still remained with the Government, and if they wanted to use that power they must sell in 320-acre blocks. The amendment would not prevent the sale of lands near a railway, and it seemed to him a very stupid thing to compel its sale in 320-acre blocks when it was well known that that was not the area wanted. If the Committee wished to put the Government in that position, well and good; but it was not in the interests of the country that sales of land should be hampered in that way. If the Government were not to be trusted to make the best possible bargain, then of course tie their hands as much as possible.

HON. A. S. COWLEY: After the explanation given by the Secretary for Lands and the Premier he withdrew any objection he had to the clause. It was quite evident that efforts had been made to sell land alongside the railway lines at 10s. an acre in 320-acre blocks, and they had failed.

Mr. KERR: No.

HON. A. S. COWLEY: In some instances they might have been sold, but, as pointed out by the Premier, there were large areas of land of an inferior quality lying alongside railway lines, and the Government had failed to sell it at 10s. an acre.

Mr. JENKINSON: Did the Premier say so?

HON. A. S. COWLEY: He pointed out that large areas were available for sale at 10s. an acre, and they had not gone off in 320-acre blocks.

Mr. JENKINSON: I think you misunderstood him.

HON. A. S. COWLEY: That was the impression the hon. gentleman's speech made upon him. He pointed out that since the 1891 Act was introduced, a very material change had taken place in the settlement of the country, the dairying industry having sprung into existence, and the Secretary for Lands showed conclusively that dairying could not be carried on with 320 acres. Those who travelled over the country knew that the statement of the Premier was perfectly correct. There were enormous areas of country adjacent to the railway lines which failed to find purchasers at 10s. an acre in 320-acre blocks.

Mr. JENKINSON: I think you misunderstood him.

HON. A. S. COWLEY: Very well, the Premier could correct him if he had made a mistake. It was evident that power was vested in the Government to sell land at 10s. an acre in 320-acre blocks. They wanted money, and had wanted it for some time past, and they had failed to sell that land. He did not say they had actually offered it.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: There has been no demand.

HON. A. S. COWLEY: But if the area was increased the probability was that the demand would arise. A man would require at the very least

from 3,000 to 5,000 acres to start dairying in that portion of the country. In giving [5.30 p.m.] the Government power to sell land in 5,000-acre blocks they must regard them as sensible men who would not sell any land at 10s. an acre if they could get £1 an acre. He was quite satisfied that the Government would fix the upset price at what they considered was a reasonable figure. But even if the upset price was fixed at 10s. an acre, it did not follow that the land would be sold at that price, because the sale would be by public auction, and the terms of payment extended over ten years. Not only the bloated capitalist, but the man of small means also might become a purchaser under those conditions.

Mr. W. HAMILTON (*Gregory*): Anyone listening to the hon. member for Herbert and the Secretary for Lands would think it was impossible to get purchasers for lands remote from railways. But that was not the case. The Northampton Downs lands were 50 or 60 miles from a railway; the Bimerah lands were nearly 100 miles from a railway, and yet purchasers could be found for those lands. Adjacent to the railways running out into the interior there was a lot of land suitable for close settlement, and for years the people had been asking that those lands should be made available for settlement, but in many cases where the leases had expired the land had not been made so available. This was the very land which would be sold under the Bill. There would be no difficulty whatever in finding purchasers. He knew that the Government had circulated among pastoralists residing in Melbourne the information that they intended to reintroduce the system of selling land in large blocks.

The PREMIER: This is the first I have heard of it.

Mr. W. HAMILTON: A pastoral lessee who had recently come from Melbourne told him that that information had been given by the authorities in Brisbane. At any rate, he hoped the hon. member for Barcoo would not withdraw his amendment or agree to any lesser distance than 20 miles. He should like to see the distance fixed at 100 miles, because some of the lands most suitable for settlement were a good distance from a railway. If lands were sold in the manner proposed in the Bill it would be the big pastoralists who would be the purchasers, as had been the case in the past. As to the argument that by allowing people to make land freehold they would ensure the prickly pear being kept in check, he would point out that it was the pick of the Western lands which the Government wanted to sell, and the persons who would purchase those lands would, by and by, be coming down to Brisbane with tears in their eyes asking for a reduction in their rents and an extension of their leases. The present pastoral lessees, and not people from the other colonies, as had been suggested by the Minister, would be the purchasers of those 5,000-acre blocks. Instead of selling the land they should throw it open to settlement. The land close to Hughenden and all the way from there to Winton, and also the land from Barcardine to Longreach, which was within 50 miles of a railway, would be taken up to-morrow if it were thrown open for selection. They had no right to sell land within 100 miles of a railway, and he should like to see the amendment apply not only to railways for which money had been borrowed or voted, but also to railways which had been projected. With regard to navigable streams—

The CHAIRMAN: I must call the attention of the hon. member to the question before the Committee, which is to insert the words "within

ten miles off." The hon. member is now discussing a matter which is not relevant to that question.

Mr. W. HAMILTON: He begged pardon if he was out of order, and would conclude by saying that he should support the amendment of the hon. member for Barcoo, and hoped he would not accept any lesser distance than 20 miles.

Mr. HARDACRE (*Leichhardt*): The Premier had said that there was a good deal of land in the vicinity of the Southern and Western and Central lines that they were getting no good from. There was some such land he admitted.

The PREMIER: There is a good deal of it.

Mr. HARDACRE: There were two classes of land that they were getting no good from. One class was land which would not sell at any price, which no one would pay 10s. an acre for, or take up at a rental of 1d. or ½d. per acre, or in some cases under occupation license. There was another class of land which was of good quality, but had not been made available for selection because it had been under lease. The leases were now falling in, and if the land was thrown open to settlement it would be eagerly taken up under the usual conditions at 15s. or £1 per acre, and it would be very injurious to the colony to sell such land at 10s. an acre without conditions. The Minister said that if this safeguard were inserted they would be forced to go back to the old system of selling land in 320-acre blocks close to railways. There was some land near to railways that would be useful in 320-acre blocks. From Alpha to Longreach on the Central line, and from Dalby to Charleville on the Western line, it might be injurious to compel people to take 320-acre blocks; but within those limits there was no need for the Minister to throw the land open in 320-acre blocks. Those lands might be thrown open in larger areas and they would be rapidly selected. Therefore they were tying the hands of the Minister only in regard to a very small portion of the colony, and land could be sold in large areas everywhere else—even in the Gayndah and Burnett districts and on the Darling Downs. He thought it was most reasonable to limit the Minister to some extent. There was good land both on Wellshot and on Saltern Creek, and they were both crossed by the railway, and the leases were now falling in.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Wellshot does not fall in for thirteen years.

Mr. HARDACRE: One-fourth of it would fall in in 1902. There was no necessity to sell that land; and yet if they did not impose a safeguard of the kind proposed, it would possibly be sold in 5,000-acre blocks, and *bonâ fide* settlement would possibly be prevented.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Would you like to see it thrown open in 320-acre blocks?

Mr. HARDACRE: No. He would like to see it thrown open under the present land laws. If it were thrown open in large areas it would pay the pastoral lessee whose lease was falling in to buy the land, because it would be a splendid thing for him to secure the back country of his holding; and the temptation would be there to allow those lands to pass away in large estates to financial institutions interested in the leases to the detriment of *bonâ fide* settlement. He thought some safeguard should be put in. Personally, he would like to see the 20-mile limit, but if they could not get that he would rather have half a loaf than none at all.

HON. G. THORN (*Fassifern*) was astonished at the observations of the hon. member who had just spoken. This was a matter in which they might trust the Government.

MEMBERS of the Opposition: Oh, oh! What! Trust the Government!

HON. G. THORN: The Government would not be here for ever. Probably hon. members on the other side would be coming into power some day, and then the hon. member for Leichhardt would be Minister for Lands. He would be willing to trust that hon. member if he were Minister, and he thought this matter should be left to the Government. In the Western districts—along the Southern line, and along the Central line, and along the Northern line—the rainfall was scanty and capricious, and it was no matter how the land was sold so long as it was sold. If people could buy large enough areas of land in those districts where bore water was obtainable it would pay them to irrigate. If he had the money he would buy land there for that purpose. There was plenty of land along the three railway lines that he would not have as a present; but there was a chance of some of the land selling at a low rate in large lots to capitalists outside the colony, and he did not see why they should have the chance to buy them. He considered that this was splitting straws over trifles, and that the matter should be left to the Government and the Land Court. A great deal had been said by hon. members on the other side about close settlement, but not one of them had yet given a proper definition of "close settlement." Land must be sold because money must be got, and he trusted that the clause would be allowed to remain as it stood.

MR. LESINA (*Clermont*) was in favour of the amendment proposed by the hon. member for Barcoo, and he thought the suggestion of the hon. member for Normanby was not a good one. The majority of members who had spoken on the other side appealed to members on the Opposition side to trust the Government. They might be content to trust the Government if they did not know the Government; but they had a long and bitter experience of the administration of the Government, and they had also the admission of the Minister for Land, the Secretary for Railways, and the Premier, that they had been an absolute failure in the administration of the public estate. They made that admission.

THE SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: They did not.

MR. LESINA: The Premier said the State was absolutely the worst landlord in the country.

THE SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: The State is an abstraction in that connection.

MR. LESINA: Did that mean that the gentlemen who had been carrying on the administration had been failures? And if they had been failures in administering the public estate, why should they be trusted any further?

THE CHAIRMAN: Order! The hon. member must speak to the question before the Committee.

MR. LESINA: He was striving to keep within the four corners of the Standing Orders in replying to the arguments of hon. members on the other side; and with the Chairman's kind consent he would reply to those arguments.

THE CHAIRMAN: The hon. member can only reply to arguments that have been used with reference to this amendment. He cannot refer to the trustworthiness of the Government.

MR. LESINA had no desire to base his remarks on the trustworthiness of the Government. That was a subject upon which "the least said the soonest mended." The hon. member for Fassfern asked them to trust the Government in the matter. Well, he refused to trust the Government.

THE CHAIRMAN: Order! The hon. member should know that I called the hon. member for Fassfern to order when he made that remark, and the hon. member is not in order now in referring to it. The question before the Com-

mittee is the insertion of the words "within ten miles of," and I again ask the hon. member to direct his remarks to that amendment.

MR. LESINA: He would do so. The hon. member for Gregory stated that when he was in Melbourne some time ago he met certain persons who assured him that the Government intended to reintroduce the system of selling land in large blocks. He himself had seen paragraphs in the *Adelaide Qui* and the *Melbourne Punch*, in the financial columns, suggesting to their readers that, if they wanted bargains, before long the Queensland Government would be selling land at something like 10s. per acre for Treasury purposes. It was proposed under that clause to sell land within a specified distance of a railway line, and the Government were undoubtedly desirous of selling land under those conditions, because they would have a better chance of selling land within a specified distance of a railway than further out. Now, it was generally financial institutions which purchased lands under the Special Sales of Land Acts, and, as members of the Government were members of some of those corporations, they were desirous of purchasing lands within a specified distance of a railway line, and, *ergo*, of reaping a profit.

THE SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: Or a loss.

MR. LESINA: Fancy the Secretary for Railways—a member of a financial corporation—buying anything at a loss. Would he give £3 13s. an acre for the Seaforth Estate? (Opposition laughter.) Hon. members on the other side knew those facts just as well as he did. They knew that there was a better chance of selling lands within a specified distance of a railway line than there was further away, and if they were on the Opposition side, they would take up the same position with regard to the Bill that was taken up by hon. members now in Opposition. They knew the facts, but it did not pay them to admit them. Very likely members on the Opposition side might not be ready to admit them if they were sitting on the other side and were trying to feather their nest. The Premier, when speaking on the amendment a few minutes ago, said that he desired to settle small persons upon the soil within a reasonable distance of a railway line, so that those people might build themselves comfortable homes and rear decent and respectable families. That was a very ideal and sentimental view, but he would like to give the names of some of the purchasers of land under the Special Sales of Land Act of 1892 to show whom the small struggling selectors who bought that land consisted of:—South Australian Pastoral Company, Limited; Portland Downs Pastoral Company, Limited; Australian Mortgage, Land, and Finance Company, Limited; Scottish Australian Investment Company, Limited; New Zealand Loan and Mercantile Company, Limited; Western Pastoral Company, Limited; and so on. These were the small struggling selectors to whom the land was sold. Many hon. members sitting on the other side were shareholders in some of those companies.

THE SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: They are not.

MR. LESINA: The hon. gentleman who interjected undoubtedly took a most remarkable interest in one of those corporations.

MR. CALLAN: Not a single penny has any hon. member in one of those companies.

MR. LESINA: Of course not. An important point was that the Government asked the Committee to trust them with the right to sell land in any part of Queensland within 10 miles—under the amendment of the hon. member for Normanby—of a railway, and, as they had many surveyed railway lines now running throughout the country, much of the land that would be sold under that particular

clause would undoubtedly drop into the hands of financial corporations. If he was a member of a financial corporation, and he wished to purchase land under that Act, undoubtedly he would try and purchase it at a profit, and, on whichever side of the House he sat, he would be prepared to vote in support of a proposition which would enable him to make that profit. Hon. members might be actuated by the very highest motives, but if they came down to the facts, the statements of hon. members who were members of corporations which purchased those lands should be taken with a certain amount of suspicion. It had been stated that under sections 176 and 177 of the Land Act, 1897, the Government had power at the present time to sell land anywhere—alongside a railway line, even, or a navigable river. Section 176 provided—

The Governor in Council may cause country lands to be offered for sale by public auction:

Provided that no more than one hundred and fifty thousand acres of country lands shall be sold in any one year.

Section 177 said—

The area of any portion of country lands so sold shall not exceed three hundred and twenty acres. The upset price in the case of land which in the opinion of the court is agricultural land shall not be less than one pound per acre, and in the case of other lands shall not be less than ten shillings per acre.

The Bill gave the Government power to sell land at 10s. per acre within a specified distance of a railway line. The provision with respect to navigable rivers had been left out of that particular Act. He believed the hon. member for Normanby had been advised by members of the Government, if not by the Secretary for Lands, to propose the amendment he had, and he believed his object in proposing that amendment was to prevent the Government being defeated.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: That is not true.

Mr. LESINA: Of course, the hon. member for Normanby might not do such a thing.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: He has not been advised to do it, either.

Mr. LESINA: The hon. member for Leichhardt gave several illustrations to show that the Government might throw open for selection lands bordering on railways, which would realise bigger prices than if they were sold by public auction under the Bill. That was a very important point, and one which the Committee should consider very carefully before they passed the amendment in its present form.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS (Hon. J. Leahy, *Bulloo*): The hon. member who last spoke made reference to hon.

[7 p.m.] members sitting on the Government side of the House as being members of, or associated with, certain companies, the names of which he read out—companies which had purchased areas of land in Queensland recently within a certain distance of railway lines. The hon. member went on to argue from that that those companies which had bought land in that part were likely to buy land under this Special Sales of Land Act, and that, consequently, hon. members on that side of the House, making special reference by implication to Ministers, were pressing this measure through for the purpose of gain to themselves thereby. He knew the names of all the companies the hon. member read out—they were all big pastoral companies—and he had no hesitation in saying that there was not a member on that side of the House, or on the other side, who was in any way connected with any one of them.

Mr. BROWNE: Hear, hear!

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: He knew all the pastoralists in the House; he knew the financial institutions they were connected

with; and he knew for a fact that they were not connected with any of the companies named by the hon. member.

Mr. W. HAMILTON: You were the manager of one of them.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: The hon. member was wrong. He was never the manager, or in any way connected with any of the companies.

Mr. W. HAMILTON: Union Trustee.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: That was not one of those read out. He should not have risen but for the fact that a member of that House had a certain position and was supposed to have some weight; and if those charges were to go to the country uncontradicted, the country would naturally come to the conclusion that what the hon. member said was correct. He was reluctant to think that any hon. member would make such sweeping charges if he did not believe they were true. Still, when an hon. member made such charges, there was the responsibility thrown upon that assertion in advance if they had any foundation. If what the hon. member said was true—that there were persons on that side of the House who were connected with companies to whom gain was likely to accrue from the passing of the Bill—he should say who those members were. There were many persons throughout the country who did not know the hon. member for Clermont. They knew the hon. member was a member of the House, and for that reason his words would carry weight unless they were contradicted. He did not know whether there was a great deal in the hon. member's statement whether it was contradicted or not. In a large territory like Queensland, with a population of only 500,000, many things must necessarily come before the House in which hon. members might have some small interest. He did not know of any matter that could come before them in which they had not an interest more or less as citizens. But as to interests which were likely to make a member swerve in his judgment or influence his vote, he believed Queensland was as free from that as any colony in the world. Having said so much he would now say a word or two on the amendment under consideration, which he understood from the other side to be an attempt to restrict the power of the Government and thereby safeguard the interests of the State. If it could be shown that it was a safeguard there might be something in it. But if that could not be shown, and if, on the other hand, it could be shown that injury was likely to come to the country from it, that would be a very good reason for dispensing not only with that restriction, but with any other restriction that could be put. The same principle underlay both the amendment and the amendment upon the amendment. It was only a question of degree whether there should be a restriction of 20 miles or a restriction of 10 miles. As had been pointed out both by the Secretary for Lands and by the Premier, there was already a power in existence with which the House was not likely to interfere, which gave the Government the right, if they chose to exercise it, to sell 150,000 acres of land every year within half-a-mile of a railway. They could sell the whole linear frontage if they liked, with no restriction as to shape, form, or dimensions, except that there should not be above 320 acres in one block. If that was so, and there was only power taken in the Financial Statement this year to sell £150,000 worth of land altogether—

Mr. CURTIS: For ordinary revenue.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: Yes. But he did not think the sales were likely to be very heavy for a year or two because the times were not financially very good. However, that

was beside the question. The question was that under the existing law the Government could sell as much land as they desired within 10 miles of a railway with the restriction he had mentioned. That was not disputed. What the Government contended was that it might be possible in certain cases to get a larger price for land in the interests of the country. If they had to sell land, at all events it was desirable that they should get as much as possible for it. Under the provisions of this Bill they had the right to sell land in large or small areas, whichever way would bring the best return to the country, and if the Government could get a better price for land by selling it in 5,000-acre blocks he thought they should do so. Possibly, the Government might sell lands under both systems to suit requirements of the different classes of settlers.

Mr. JENKINSON: That has not been carried out in the past. The best price has not been obtained by the Government for lands.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: All he could say was that the lands had been put up for sale by public auction in every case. There might have been some cases in the Burnett district and elsewhere where the sales of land were not advertised in the local newspapers; but it must be remembered that they were advertised in the *Gazette* and the leading newspapers of the colony. No doubt the local newspapers had a grievance—they wanted their share of the plunder.

Mr. JENKINSON: That is not so.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: He knew something about newspapers, and the large majority of them wanted a share in the way of advertisements, and if they did not get that, they cried out about it. The Government had the right now, if they wished, to sell lands round about railways; but he did not think they intended to sell such lands except under conditions which would be in the interests of the country, and conditions which could be defended.

Mr. JENKINSON: I am glad to hear you say that. Some of the actions of the Government in the past I do not think can be defended.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS said he was not responsible for the actions of the Government in the past. As far as he knew, lands had not been sold unless they were put up by public auction. The hon. member who interjected was a capitalist of considerable proportions, and he would probably know that the value of a thing was what it would bring in the market. There was no better test of the value of anything than public auction, by which it was sold to the highest bidder. It might have a higher value in the future than in the past.

Mr. JENKINSON: Provided due publicity is given.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: Yes.

Mr. JENKINSON: I maintain that that has not been done in the past.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS did not know the cases the hon. member referred to. As far as he knew, these matters had always had publicity. By the amendment no restriction would be placed on the Government in the way of selling lands within 10 miles of a railway. If the Government wished to sell lands within the two parallel lines, they could do it under the present law. What was the object in refusing the Government a second power or a second opportunity which might enable them to get a higher price for lands than under the present system? No hon. member on the other side had got up and showed that the Government would be fettered in this way, or that there would be any prevention of lands being sold. It might be desirable that lands within a certain distance of

a railway should not be sold. Where such lands were fitted for close settlement—where there was a good rainfall, and where the soil was good for agriculture—they should not be sold, and it was the policy of the Government that such land should not be sold. There might be land alongside a railway which would be worthless for close settlement. There might be land about Tambo, within a specified distance from the railway, which was excellent land, but nothing would be gained by the State by reserving land between Toowoomba and Charleville within 10 miles of the line and at the same time selling good land. The amendment would be very spasmodic in its action, even if the Bill was passed in its present form, and he did not think that any good would result by restricting the Government in the way suggested. No doubt hon. members on the other side prided themselves on carrying anything against the Government, because it gave them a kind of political kudos, and he believed that was the object in this instance. He would like it to be shown that if this amendment were carried, that the Government would not have the power to sell lands within 10 miles of a railway.

Mr. BROWNE (*Croydon*): He had listened very attentively to what the Minister for Railways and the Premier had said, and he thought it was quite right to have a straightout statement from a Minister when certain rumours were going about, and had been voiced by an hon. member. He did not think that there was one man in the Committee who would not accept the statement made by the Minister for Railways in answer to the statements made by the hon. member for Clermont. He was not saying that the hon. member for Clermont was right or wrong in his statements; the responsibility rested on that hon. member. He thought it was very desirable when such rumours were going about to have a straightout denial from the Minister.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: Let the hon. member show that I am wrong.

Mr. BROWNE: The hon. gentleman said that this amendment would not restrict the Government in selling land. He knew that; but he was very much astonished at one thing the Premier had said. In the first place the hon. gentleman said that there was a large amount of land alongside railways which was available for dairying, and the argument from the front Treasury bench had been that it was situated so near the railway that they should not sell it. Now they were told that there were thousands of acres off the railway which were available for dairying. It might be said that 320-acre blocks were not large enough area for dairying. Admitting that to be so, he contended that if a short amendment had been introduced into the Agricultural Lands Purchase Act to give the Government the right to sell dairy land along the railway lines in larger blocks than 320 acres, scarcely a member of the House would object to it. But this was a different thing. In addition to the powers the Government had at present under the present Land Act and the Special Sales of Land Act of 1891, they wanted additional powers to sell 150,000 acres more land than they were allowed to sell before.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: They want to sell it in other ways if necessary.

Mr. BROWNE: They wanted to sell it in a very bad way. He quite agreed with the Premier and the Minister for Railways that the more people they settled on the lands the better it would be for the colony and for everybody in it, but it would have been better if instead of trying to force this matter through the Government had introduced a short provision imposing

conditions as to personal residence and improvement, very much the same as was done by the Mining Acts. If the Government had done that he did not think any hon. member would have objected. The Hon. the Minister for Railways had said that he objected in certain cases to the sale of land himself, but that was dealing with the question as one of abstract principle.

**THE SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS:** Are there any conditions under the Act of 1897?

**MR. BROWNE:** No, but under this Bill the Government were claiming additional powers, and he and other members on his side of the House objected to that. The Premier and the Minister for Railways mentioned the land from Dalby to Charleville, and further out west, as land which might be sold, but they might just as well have mentioned the land from Dalby to Brisbane—the very pick of the land.

**THE SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS:** The land from Dalby to Brisbane is sold.

**MR. BROWNE:** Of course that was sold. He believed that the amendment moved by the hon. member for Barcoo and the amendment moved upon it by the hon. member for Normanby were practically the same. It was practically only a question of degree. He thought that the amendment of the hon. member for Barcoo was a reasonable one. If the Minister for Lands thought the area he had the right to sell alongside the railway lines was not big enough, it would have been better, instead of asking for extra powers in this Bill, to have introduced a short amending Bill giving the right under the ordinary land laws to sell lands under conditions in larger areas. He believed if the Government would do that, they would get that Bill through the House in a very short time. What the Government asked now was too big an order altogether. If this clause were passed in its present form, they would practically have the right to sell land in any part of Queensland at 10s. an acre. Of course that was the minimum price, and they would get a higher price if they could, but he would point out that, in the sale of the Telemon land, the Government had made a clear loss of £17,000. If that land had been properly advertised, there were people in the neighbourhood who would have paid £1 an acre for it.

**THE SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS:** They will have a chance of getting some in the neighbourhood, and we shall see.

**MR. BROWNE:** Owing to some bungling with the advertisements, or something of that sort, the people who would have given that money for the Telemon lands knew nothing about it, and the proprietors of the station bought in the whole of the blocks. He thought they were all opposed to the aggregation of large areas of land close to the railways, and he trusted the Minister would accept the amendment of the hon. member for Barcoo.

**MR. FITZGERALD (Mitchell):** The Ministers said that they had not power to sell under the Act of 1897. They had that power, but there was the limitation that they should not sell more than 150,000 acres of land a year.

**THE SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS:** They have never sold up to that.

**MR. FITZGERALD:** They had never sold up to that amount, and if they only wanted to stay where they were there would be absolutely no necessity for this Bill, but they knew that the Government had to raise half-a-million of money, or at least they said they had, and the sale of 150,000 acres would not do that.

**THE SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS:** In ten years?  
**MR. FITZGERALD:** The Minister knew perfectly well that they wanted to give certain terms to purchasers, and they wanted to raise a certain amount within a certain time. If the

limit were 150,000 acres the result would be that out of that area only a small proportion would be within 20 miles of a railway. If this clause were passed without the protection which the hon. member for the Barcoo wished to introduce, the Government would be able to sell the one-fourth of Wellshot, Saltern, and Corina, which fell in soon, no matter how close the land was to a railway. The proviso about a navigable stream was of little value, for they knew there was not a navigable stream in the whole of the West. The endeavour of the Government to pass this clause showed that they intended to sell the lands on the coast, or within a reasonable distance of the coast, and to sell the pastoral lands out West. If that were so—hon. members could talk as much as they liked about bad country—they would never get more than 10s. an acre for it. The pastoral lessees would certainly never buy

it. They were not going to spend [7.30 p.m.] their money for nothing because they wanted good land. All that land would be available for selection in a very short time, and that was the land which was going to be sold. That was why the Government would not accept the amendment. One argument against the amendment was that it would give the Minister power to sell land in 5,000-acre blocks and so bring about competition. That argument cut both ways. He remembered when the Evesham land was sold one man who could afford to buy a 320-acre block ran the station people up to about three times the value of the land.

**MR. W. HAMILTON:** Nearly 30s.

**MR. FITZGERALD:** Yes, between 27s. and 30s. an acre, and the station people had to pay the Government that amount because they wanted that particular block of 320 acres which was the key to the situation. But supposing the land had been cut up in 5,000-acre blocks, that man could not have afforded to bid for it, and the result would be that the station people would buy the whole of the land in big blocks, as they had financial institutions at their back with plenty of money available for that purpose. If he wanted to select a 5,000-acre block tomorrow he would not give 10s. an acre for it. He would rather wait until it was thrown open, and take it up at 2d. or 2½d. an acre.

**THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS:** You think 10s. an acre too much for it.

**MR. FITZGERALD:** Ten shillings an acre would be too much for him; but, on the other hand, the pastoral lessee who wanted the command of the country would be willing to pay that price for it. The proof of that was that the pastoral lessees were actually buying land around their leases at 10s. an acre. It paid them to do it, but it did not pay anybody else. So that really the alteration from the 320 to 5,000 acres limit gave the owners of adjoining land a far better chance of getting the land without competition than if the land was cut up into 320-acre blocks. If a certain paddock was thrown open in 320-acre blocks there were probably three or four blocks which commanded the whole situation, and, indeed, if the pastoral lessee bought one or two he generally commanded the balance of the land. The small man had really no chance whatever of competing against the pastoral lessee, and, if the land was put up in 5,000-acre blocks, the man who desired to take up land as a farm or selection would not give 10s. an acre. So that the suggestion to change the minimum from 320 to 5,000 acres was really a change in favour of the pastoral lessee.

**MR. REID (Enoggera)** could not say he had much sympathy with the amendment moved by the hon. member for Normanby for the simple reason that he thought it was too narrow. If the intention was to sell land, and reserve a strip 10



miles wide alongside the railways, he thought it would put the Government into a hole. It would not pay the country, and would not carry out the intentions of members on his side. Mention had been made of the poor land between Dalby and Charleville. From Dalby up to Mitchell Downs there was very little the matter with the country, but if 10 miles was reserved along the line from Mitchell Downs up to Wyandra, no one would take it up. The Premier talked about opening up such land as that for dairying purposes. What was the use of humbugging the Committee by talking in that way? One could not feed a lengthman's goat on the land between Mitchell Downs and Wyandra. If they reserved 10 miles along the line in that district they would simply be reserving the bad land, and selling the good land beyond it. The same thing applied to some other railway lines. Those who knew the Central line would know that exactly the same conditions prevailed there, and the same also on the Northern line. A goat could not be fed on the main range above Charters Towers, though lower down the land was good. What was the use of reserving 10 miles of that poor country? It was simply waste of time discussing such a proposition. He was of opinion that if such an amendment was adopted, it would simply interfere with the Government in making the best possible bargain. The amendment moved by the hon. member for Barcoo was altogether different, because if they reserved 20 miles along the railway lines they would take in a fair proportion of good country. On the other hand, if a narrow strip of 10 miles was reserved, operations would be simply hampered. From the attitude the Government had adopted, it did not appear as if either amendment would be carried, but if the hon. member for Normanby succeeded in carrying his amendment it would be impossible afterwards to extend the distance, and the amendment of the hon. member for Barcoo would be thrown out. Now, take the land between Wyandra and Cunnamulla. Since the drought that had recently been experienced it had become a disputed point amongst experienced men how much land it was necessary to take up in order to tide one over such a drought. Not that there was any want of water, because it could be obtained in quantities by sinking for it. It was simply that the seasons had been so bad that there was absolutely nothing for stock to eat. Therefore, they could never sell that land for dairying purposes, and it was a disputed point whether it would pay to dairy on 5,000-acre blocks. The same condition of things prevailed in the Winton district. From the Prairie, right through the Valley and Hughenden up to Winton, the country was in perhaps a worse condition, for on the plains between Hughenden and Winton one could not get enough wood to boil a billy. Notwithstanding the strides made by the dairying industry within the last six or seven years, it was nonsense to talk about settling dairy farmers on small blocks in that part of the country. With regard to Teleton, he knew that country exceptionally well. The present owner of that station, to whom the land had been sold, had already a very big freehold on Teleton. In fact the freehold on that run had simply spoiled the whole of the Flinders route for stock driving. Coming off Marathon run and going up the Flinders there was only a 4 or 5 chain road for nearly 35 miles, and it meant starvation to stock to take them by that route. Two or three years ago the people of Hughenden were waiting for the land on Teleton to be thrown open to selection, and there was no better land in Queensland for settlement than was to be found on that run. It was not a question of party politics with the people who desired to have that land thrown open to selec-

tion. Business people who had sons anxious to settle on the land, and storekeepers who wanted land for themselves, desired to see it thrown open. But instead of that it was sold to the lessees, who lived in Melbourne. Anyone who knew the feeling of the people in the back districts knew that notwithstanding the losses and severe hardships which they had suffered during the drought they were still willing to invest their money in taking up selections. But if the Government sold the land in the manner proposed in the Bill it was not the small man who would buy it, because unfortunately he had not got the money to pay for it. It was the people who had money that would buy the land.

**THE SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS:** This Bill will enable us to sell it to the man who has not got the money, because it gives him a long time to pay for the land.

**MR. REID:** He was going on the experience they had had in the past, and judging by that it was the people with money who would secure the land sold under the provisions of this Bill. At the present time it would be a hard job to sell some of the lands as far as the people of Queensland were concerned, as they had had such a gruelling during the late drought that they were not likely to buy. He should like to see fresh blood coming into the country and buying the land, but his opinion was that pastoral companies or financial institutions would buy the lands sold under the Bill. The Western parts of Queensland would in time be held by financial institutions, and would not be available for resumption when it was wanted for close settlement. That was the difficulty. The Government was in such straits, the deficit was pressing upon them so heavily, that they would strain every nerve to get rid of the land and save themselves before the next election, or, if there was not about to be an election, before the next meeting of the House.

**MR. ANNEAR:** All this is electioneering.

**MR. REID:** The hon. member for Maryborough generally made electioneering speeches, and no doubt thought he was doing the same, but he was not interested one iota in those lands.

**MR. ANNEAR:** What about the Baramba lands and the Gayndah lands—all electioneering?

**MR. REID:** He knew that the hon. member had been electioneering in connection with the Gayndah line for many years, but he did not think the hon. member would be the member for the district when that railway was finished.

**MR. ANNEAR:** You are not game to come there and oppose me.

**THE CHAIRMAN:** I must call the attention of the hon. member to the question before the Committee. The remarks the hon. member is now making are very wide of the question.

**MR. REID:** If he was courteous enough to answer interjections that were away from the question, he trusted he would not be hauled up by the Chairman. If hon. members did not make interjections he should not get off the track; he was on the track right enough before, but was drawn off by the interjections.

**THE CHAIRMAN:** I think the hon. member has heard me say before that interjections, when they become interruptions, are disorderly, and there is no one more disorderly on that ground than the hon. member who has just resumed his seat. (Laughter.)

**MR. REID:** He was astonished at the Chairman taking up a party position in giving a ruling, and giving him a lecture as being the worst obstructionist in the House. If the hon. member were not in the chair he would have a round five minutes at him, but he was precluded from doing so. (Laughter.) He was referring to Teleton as an illustration of what might be done under



the Bill if the Committee did not adopt the amendment moved by the hon. member for Barcoo. He did not see a bit of good in the hon. member for Normanby's 10-mile strip. Of course, 10 miles looked a lot, but if they wanted the land settled he did not think 10 miles would answer. Though the Government had power under the 1897 Act to sell land near a railway, they had never attempted to do so. Was it from want of courage, or was it because they thought it better to reserve the land near the railways?

**THE SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS:** It is a question of judgment—the best interests of the country.

**MR. REID:** He would admit that the Government had shown good judgment in not attempting to sell any of those lands near the railways; but they were now in such hard straits that they might possibly do it after this Bill was passed; and though the Premier said 10s. an acre was to be the minimum price, they knew very well that when a man was hard up he had to make the best bargain he could, and the probability was that the Government would sell the land for 10s. an acre, and be glad to get the money to put into the Treasury. He could not say that he was in favour of selling lands; but if they had to be sold, the present time was not the time to sell as far as close settlement was concerned, and the land sold would simply be acquired by financial companies. The amendment of the hon. member for Barcoo would prevent the small people from being crushed out.

**THE SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS:** There is plenty of land for all.

**MR. REID:** There was plenty of land, but it was not always suitable land. He would like to see settlement on the land, and he trusted that the amendment of the hon. member for Normanby would not be carried. He thought the hon. member for Barcoo's amendment was most practicable and desirable.

The PREMIER protested against the hon. member for Enoggera saying that he was trying to humbug the Committee. He honestly believed that a lot of the land along the existing lines of railway would be taken up and settled under the Bill.

**MR. REID:** For dairying?

**THE PREMIER:** Yes.

**MR. REID:** Where?

**THE PREMIER:** From Dalby to Roma there was a lot of land which he believed would be sold and taken up. Along the Central line also there was a lot of good cattle country, and if it was good for cattle it was good for dairying. There was also land along the Northern Railway that would be taken up. There was a population of 25,000 people in Charters Towers. Those people wanted a lot of butter and milk, and why should people not be allowed to get land within 30 or 40 miles of Charters Towers and supply that place with dairy produce? The conditions in connection with grazing cattle had entirely changed within the last three or four years. It was well known that the value of cattle had permanently risen in Australia, and people were now raising cattle on small holdings where they would not have attempted it a few years ago. He believed that dairying and fattening cattle would be combined; and there were hundreds of thousands of acres along our railway lines which ought to be utilised.

**MR. REID:** I thought that climatic conditions prohibited that.

**THE PREMIER:** Within two or three hundred miles of the coast there was a fair rainfall, and a lot of the land there was not taken up. They wanted that land settled.

**MR. GIVENS:** This Bill does not compel settlement.

**THE PREMIER:** It encouraged settlement. There was so much good land in Queensland that they were apt to say that indifferent land was no good at all. If hon. members went to the other colonies they would find land selling there at 30s. to £2 an acre which we would be glad to sell for 10s. an acre.

**MR. BROWNE:** Still we are buying back land at £3 and £4 an acre.

**THE PREMIER:** That was different kind of land altogether. He thought that if the Bill was allowed to pass it would not in

[8 p.m.] any way interfere with close settlement in the future. The hon. mem-

ber for Enoggera said that if they tied up 10 miles it would be a great mistake, but if they tied up 20 miles it would be a good thing. He could not understand that. Why tie up any, for, if it was a mistake to tie up 10 miles it was a mistake to tie up 1 mile? There was plenty of land in Queensland for all classes of settlers, and they wanted them all here. The more freehold they had the better the land would be looked after. At the present time the freehold land in Queensland was in the best condition of any land in the colony. They would not get leaseholders, with only a few years' tenure, to keep their leaseholds free from pests in the same way that freeholders did.

**MR. LESINA:** The statement just made by the Premier was not borne out by experience anywhere. In some individual instances it might be true; but, when a person obtained a freehold he put it to the best possible use, because it was to his profit to do so; but if it did not suit him to put the land to use he could allow it to lie idle for half a century, if necessary; and, as they had no law to compel him to put the land to use, he had the right to allow it to lie idle. The Bill was not a Bill for the purpose of promoting settlement at all. It was a Bill for the purpose of selling land, and the conditions to be imposed would not compel the buyer of land to use it. If the Premier's statement was true, that freeholds were better looked after than leaseholds, whose fault was that? Why did not the Government insist upon leaseholders, under penalties, keeping their holdings free from all kinds of pests?

**THE PREMIER:** You would want about 10,000 inspectors in the colony to do that.

**MR. LESINA:** The hon. gentleman did not object to appointing inspectors when he considered it necessary to do so, especially if the inspector was a brother-in-law.

**THE CHAIRMAN:** Order!

**MR. LESINA:** Although he would like to see the amendment apply to lands 15 or 20 miles from a railway, still he would support it in preference to having no such limit; but he was afraid that, when a division took place, all those who had promised to vote for the amendment would not be found on that side of the Chamber, because he had noticed the Premier going round canvassing his supporters against the amendment.

**THE PREMIER:** That is not a fact. I never canvassed a single vote.

**MR. LESINA:** It was rather extraordinary then that the hon. gentleman had only been speaking to those who had threatened to vote for the amendment. He did not know if it was correct to draw that inference, but that was the inference he and others on that side had drawn from the hon. gentleman's action.

**THE CHAIRMAN:** Order! The hon. member is not in order in imputing motives to hon. members.

**MR. CURTIS** considered it advisable for hon. members who desired to see the amendment of the hon. member for Barcoo carried to vote for

the amendment of the hon. member for Normanby, because if they could not carry that they were not likely to carry the amendment of the hon. member for Barcoo, and there was no possibility of moving another amendment.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: Would that prevent the Government selling the land if they want to? They have power now to sell land right up to the railway line.

Mr. CURTIS: They could only sell it in small blocks.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: What would be the practical effect if the amendment is carried? Would there be any?

Mr. CURTIS: It would prevent any land being sold under the provisions of that Act within 10 miles of a railway line.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: It would be sold under another Act.

Mr. CURTIS: Under the present Land Act they could sell land in 320-acre sections, but they had not been successful in doing so in the past. His contention was that it was not desirable that land should be sold in large blocks in close proximity to a railway line at all. If it was to be sold in close proximity to a railway line, it should be sold in small blocks to suit closer settlement. If 320-acre sections were too small, then, as suggested by the leader of Labour Opposition, the Land Act might be amended in the direction of giving the Government power to increase the area to, say, 500 or 1,000 acres.

The PREMIER: We want the land settled upon.

Mr. CURTIS: Yes. And that reminded him that the Premier said he believed there would be a demand for land along the Southern Railway, between Dalby and Charleville, for dairying purposes. But it seemed to him that the best way to achieve that would be to throw the land open for selection on very easy terms, with the right of making the holdings freehold eventually. That would be better than to sell the land in large blocks by auction. If sold at all they should be sold in smaller areas than 5,000-acre blocks. He was aware that under the existing Act there was nothing to prevent any person from buying any number of 320-acre blocks, and thereby aggregating a very large estate. It might be advisable to amend the Act by increasing the area to 500 or 1,000 acres. As there was no probability of the amendment of the hon. member for Barcoo being carried, he should vote for the amendment of the hon. member for Normanby.

Mr. TOLMIE (*Drayton and Toowoomba*): It was his intention to vote for the amendment of the hon. member for Normanby, and he should have contented himself with merely recording his vote had it not been for the imputation of the hon. member for Clermont that the Premier, a few minutes ago, came round conversing with members whom he knew had expressed a desire to vote in favour of that amendment. The Premier certainly came to that part of the House and spoke to himself and several other members within his hearing, but he would assure the Committee that the Premier made not the slightest overture to anybody to vote either for the amendment or against it. He felt it his duty to make that statement, otherwise an impression might get abroad that the Premier was endeavouring to coerce members with regard to the measure. Nothing of the kind occurred. He intended to support the amendment because he believed it would be to the subsequent advantage of the colony.

Mr. KEOGH (*Rosewood*) said he was going to support the Government in their proposals, not the Labour party, who knew nothing about land and did not own a perch of land among them. He would support anything that was calculated to foster settlement on the land, whether it was

within 10 miles or within 1 mile of a railway. No doubt the Government would receive a higher price for land in the immediate vicinity of a railway than for land 10 miles away from it, and they ought to be allowed to sell such land if they could get a sufficient price for it. His friends on that side knew nothing about agricultural or pastoral land. (Laughter.) They had never been engaged in agricultural pursuits, and they seemed to be there for the purpose of blocking a very good proposal to sell land for the purpose of settling a good class of people upon it. He would like to show those hon. members the close settlement that had taken place in his electorate. Those settlers were a happy and contented class. Six or seven years ago, it was said, they lived on wallaby and paddymelon; to-day, he was happy to say, they drove in their carriages. (Laughter.) He thought the Government would be remiss in its duty if they allowed an amendment of that kind to pass. He wanted to see many parts of the colony settled with a somewhat similar class to those in his own electorate, and when the Government were attempting to do that they were attempting to do a good thing.

Mr. KERR: The hon. member for Rosewood seemed to think that by allowing land to be sold right up to a railway it would be the means of settling population, and that was the contention of those who were in favour of the amendment of the hon. member for Normanby. But if the lands were sold in large blocks it would be a means of preventing closer settlement. Anyone who knew anything about the large companies that had bought large areas in the past knew that it had been the means of settling people on the land. There were no more people settled upon Bimera, for instance, where there was a very large amount of purchased land, or on any other of the large pastoral holdings he knew of, than there was before the land was sold.

The PREMIER: They are not on a railway line.

Mr. KERR: They were not at present, but they might, and no doubt would, be at some future period. The Premier desired to impress the Committee with the fact that by selling these lands it would be the means of populating the colony. He would ask the Premier whether he honestly believed that, because he (Mr. Kerr) did not believe it? He was sorry to hear the Minister for Railways drag into the debate the statement that this amendment was moved for political kudos. As the mover of the amendment, he (Mr. Kerr) disclaimed that statement, because it was very well known that he had always been opposed to the selling of land, even in small blocks, in the Western portion of the colony. Then with regard to gaining political kudos for the next general election, he might say that he had contested the Barcoo election three times, and he was quite prepared to contest it again without any idea of political kudos. After mature consideration, it was his opinion that it would be for the benefit of the people of the colony if land was reserved within 20 miles of railways. Some hon. members had spoken in favour of the amendment of the hon. member for Normanby—to reserve the land within 10 miles of railways—and the Minister for Railways, the Premier, and the Minister for Lands pointed out that under the Act of 1897 the Government could sell land in 320-acre blocks close to a railway, if either amendment was carried. But the Government had never been game to sell one 320-acre block within a short distance of a railway since the Act had been passed. They had the power to sell 150,000 acres in 320-acre blocks, but he would ask the Minister to give one instance where land had been sold within a short distance of a railway. That had never been done since the

Act had been brought into force without a strong protest being entered against it. The hon. member for Normanby asked that the reserve should be 10 miles from a railway, but he (Mr. Kerr) was still convinced that 20 miles was the proper reserve. However, seeing that there were a number of hon. members who were in favour of the 10-mile radius, and after the statements made by Ministers, he would not say anything further on the matter at present, but he would reserve to himself the right to speak on his amendment. His object in moving his amendment was not to benefit any particular class of the community, but to protect the rights of the people, and give them all an equal opportunity to get land in close proximity to railways. They had been told by the Premier that the dairying industry was increasing, that the price of cattle was going up, and that small men were likely to make a living on the land; and he (Mr. Kerr) claimed that there was land situated outside 20 miles of railways, on both sides of the lines, which could be profitably used for dairying. Therefore he contended that the 20-mile radius was small enough.

\* Mr. ANNEAR (*Maryborough*): It had been very refreshing and pleasing to listen to the straightforward speech just made by his old friend—whom he had known since 1863—the hon. member for Rosewood. (Opposition laughter.) It was very pleasing to learn that all the independence in the House was not on the Government side, but that some of it was on the other side. With regard to the amendment, he could not see why land should not be sold on either side of a railway. He believed he was correct in saying that most of the estates that had been repurchased for agricultural settlement were alongside railway lines. And what had been the result? At the present time a large majority of these selectors, who would no doubt ultimately become freeholders, were unable to meet the obligations they had undertaken. He had always advocated the construction of railways through good lands in order to facilitate the settlement of the people on the land. Why should they not sell land alongside railways in 320-acre blocks? It would have to be put up for auction, and he was sure it would fetch a price equal to the price obtained for the estates which had been repurchased. Therefore he would vote against both amendments. If such lands were put up for sale, he believed they would fetch a fair price. They had heard from the hon. members for Clermont and Wide Bay that certain lands in the Wide Bay and Burnett districts were sold at 12s. 6d. per acre, which, if properly advertised, would have brought £5 per acre.

Mr. JENKINSON: When did I say that?

Mr. ANNEAR: Some few weeks ago, when speaking about the Baramba lands. It was recorded in *Hansard*. He was surprised that the Minister for Lands had not explained to the House the result of the sale of the lands on Baramba Station.

Mr. GIVENS: What did the *Maryborough Chronicle* say?

Mr. ANNEAR: He did not care what the *Maryborough Chronicle* said. The *Maryborough Chronicle* said what the hon. gentleman had said, and which he could not substantiate by facts. He would say that, of the land sold on Baramba Station, there was not 50 acres into which you could put the plough; the land chiefly consisted of stony ridges. The hon. members for Woolloongabba and Wide Bay, and other hon. members who had spoken about this land, had hurled a serious charge against the officer of the Government who valued that land. He could tell those hon. gentlemen that that officer had not been noted as a friend of the

pastoralist. He had been the friend of the settler ever since he (Mr. Annear) had known him and members of his family, which was over thirty years. That gentleman valued the land at 10s. an acre, which he said was its full value. The Minister for Lands, however, would not accept that valuation, but decided that the land should not be sold for less than 12s. 6d. an acre. That land was purchased by a gentleman who, though he was a pastoralist, had hundreds of acres of land cultivated, than which there was no better cultivated land in Queensland. That endorsed the statement of the hon. member for Rockhampton that when a man obtained a freehold, he would take care that that freehold was put to the best purpose, in order to obtain the best financial results from it.

Mr. LESINA: They do not always do it.

Mr. ANNEAR: The hon. member who has just spoken read from a paper called the *Nanango News*.

Mr. LESINA: No; the *Maryborough Chronicle*.

Mr. ANNEAR: A paper that complimented the hon. gentleman and the hon. member for Woolloongabba on the speeches they made—speeches which were from the Labour party to the electors of the Wide Bay and the Burnett district. (Opposition laughter.) He contended that this Baramba land fetched the full price. The sale of the land was advertised throughout the local papers in the Wide Bay and Burnett district, and a special circular was issued by the Department of Lands drawing attention to it. He objected to the statement which the hon. member for Clermont had made, as on the authority of a man who was a great authority on the value of this land.

Mr. GIVENS: I rise to a point of order. What has the sale of the Baramba land to do with this amendment?

The CHAIRMAN: I do not think the hon. member is strictly in order. We have an amendment before us, and hon. members must be aware that they must speak to the amendment before the Committee.

Mr. ANNEAR: He had not interrupted the hon. gentlemen on the other side, but had listened to their speeches with great patience. They had stated that this land was not far from a railway. He believed it was within 12 miles of a railway, which was now being constructed. The hon. member for Clermont gave as his authority for the statement he made the editor of the *Nanango News*, one of the leaders who left Queensland for Paraguay, to found a new Australia—he gave this gentleman as an authority on the land in the Burnett district. He (Mr. Annear) was satisfied that if this land were put up for auction now it would not fetch a penny more than had been paid for it.

Mr. LESINA: He wished to put the hon. member who had just spoken right. He would give the exact words that he used, quoting them from *Hansard*, and he would show him that he had been misinformed or was mistaken. He (Mr. Lesina) did not quote from the *Nanango News*. He would give the hon. member the exact words he used; the hon. member would find them on page 709 of *Hansard*—

The *Nanango* correspondent—

The CHAIRMAN: I would ask the hon. member if that is the *Hansard* of this session, and if it is a speech made this session that he is quoting from?

Mr. LESINA: Yes.

The CHAIRMAN: Then the hon. member will not be in order.

Mr. GIVENS: You ruled against me when I raised that point of order before this session.

Mr. LESINA: He was slightly mixed as to the Standing Orders. There seemed to be one ruling for his side of the House, and another ruling for the hon. members on the other side.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! The hon. member is not in order in reflecting on the ruling of the Chair. He is at liberty to move that the Chairman's ruling be disagreed to, but he has no business to reflect on the ruling of the Chair.

Mr. LESINA: Well, he would give, so far as his memory served him, the words that he used. He said that the Nanango correspondent of the *Maryborough Chronicle*—

Mr. ANNEAR: That is the editor of the paper—I know him.

Mr. LESINA: He did not know the gentleman.

Mr. ANNEAR: I make the statement that he is the editor of the *Nanango News*.

Mr. LESINA: He quoted him as the correspondent of the *Maryborough Chronicle*, and in his correspondence that gentleman condemned the sale of that particular estate.

Mr. JENKINSON: He also desired to correct a statement made by the hon. the junior member for Maryborough, who was constantly flinging charges against members on that side of the House without any warrant for so doing. He had accused him (Mr. Jenkinson) of saying that this Baramba land would have fetched £5 an acre. He said distinctly that he did not make that statement, and if the hon. member would only read what he said, or if he could not read it correctly, get someone else to do it for him—

Mr. ANNEAR: I will not get you to read for me anyway.

The CHAIRMAN: Order, order!

Mr. JENKINSON: What he said was that if due publicity had been given to the proposed sale he had it on reliable authority that portion of the land would have realised £5 an acre.

Mr. ANNEAR: That is right.

Mr. JENKINSON: The hon. member, as he generally did, had only made the statement for the purpose of damaging him (Mr. Jenkinson). The hon. member never got up in the House without having a dig at him.

The CHAIRMAN: Order!

Mr. JENKINSON: The hon. member accused him of deliberately making the statement that that land would have realised £5 an acre, whereas he said nothing of the kind. He seemed to be very wild because a number of papers which hitherto had supported him in his own district had gone against him.

The CHAIRMAN: Order, order! The hon. member is not in order in referring to that.

Mr. HARDACRE pointed out they could sell conditional selections alongside of railway lines at the present time in areas of 1,280 acres at 13s. 4d. an acre; so that there was ample power to induce settlement along the railway without giving the extreme power asked for by the Government. All they asked was that the Government should not have power to sell 5,000-acre blocks alongside the railway lines, and he thought that was a reasonable request. The senior member for Maryborough also objected to the amendment because no restriction should be placed on the Government; yet they had the

Government placing a restriction upon themselves by providing that no land should be sold within 20 miles of a navigable river. If that was a reasonable restriction, what objection could there possibly be to applying the same principle to the railway lines? The Bill was unlike the Bill of 1891 to the extent that it remained in force for a period of ten years, and no matter how trustworthy the present or the next Government might be, they could not tell what might happen within ten years from now. Let anyone look back on the *personnel* of that Chamber during the last nine years.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Has it deteriorated?

Mr. HARDACRE: No, he was not saying anything about that, but he was pointing out that the *personnel* of the Ministry might change altogether. The Labour party might be in power. It might be an entirely new Ministry altogether, the members of which not a single member of the House knew at the present time; and yet it was proposed to place the enormous power contained in that Bill in the hands of men they did not know.

The PREMIER: They must be elected by the people of the colony.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: And they must have the confidence of the House.

Mr. HARDACRE: He knew that past Ministries had done strange things, and they might do strange things again. He would point out that they wanted practically the restriction to apply to one part of the colony; that was the pastoral lands at the far end of the Western and Southern line. Take, for instance, the proposed line in the Gayndah district. There was plenty of agricultural land, and if no such restriction as that which was proposed was placed in the Bill, the Government would have power to sell 5,000-acre blocks of that land, and in a year or two's time might be compelled to repurchase it. He asked the junior member for Maryborough if he was in favour of that proceeding.

Mr. ANNEAR: Do you think any Government would dare do it?

Mr. HARDACRE: He did not know what they would dare to do. He would ask the House not to give any Government the power to do it, and if they had no inclination to do it, the existence of such a provision in the Bill would do no harm. As a matter of fact, by not accepting the amendment they were actually instructing them to do that which the hon. member said they would not dare do. He hoped the amendment would be accepted, because he objected to giving the Government a free hand when they had already ample means under the present law of selling what land they desired to sell.

Mr. LESINA did not think the matter should go through until the Ministry took some notice of the very important reasons given by an ex-Minister for Lands in favour of the proposed amendment. Why should not such a reasonable safeguard be inserted? When that question was asked not a single member of the Ministry, or a single supporter got up to answer it. Why should not the Government be prevented from selling 5,000-acre blocks in the Gayndah district, and which they might have to repurchase in twelve months' time?

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: They can sell it anywhere now?

Mr. LESINA: But not in 5,000-acre blocks.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: They have only to multiply the blocks.

Mr. LESINA: Anyway, that was getting away from the point. What reason had the Government why such a reasonable safeguard should not be inserted, when they had a similar safeguard in regard to lands within 20 miles of navigable rivers? Members opposite were face to face with that proposition, and would not answer it.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: We cannot all speak at once.

Mr. LESINA: Was there any hon. member on the other side who was willing to answer that proposition?

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: You have only just come into the House. It has been answered twice over.

Mr. LESINA: If an answer had been given members on his side would have allowed the clause to go through long ago. The hon. member for Normanby proposed that the Government should not be allowed to sell land within 10 miles of a railway, and the hon. member for Barcoo wanted to make it 20 miles, but the Government would accept neither one proposition nor the other. If they prevented them from selling land within 20 miles of a navigable river what earthly reason was there for not preventing them from selling it within 20 miles of a railway? If the amendment would not be accepted, then the safeguard already in the Bill was a fraud, and should be omitted.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: We will take it out if you do not want it.

Mr. LESINA: Although it might not have any effect when all the rivers were dry, yet in flood time, when they were navigable, the position was altered somewhat. If the Government were in earnest and thought the one was a necessary safeguard, why not accept the other? Say, in two years' time they constructed the Gayndah railway, and spent £500,000 upon it? They had it on the authority of Sir George Dibbs, when he was in London, that for every £1 expended in railway construction in New South Wales land values were increased by £5.

The PREMIER: That is not the case in Queensland.

Mr. LESINA: It might not be the case in Queensland, but land here might have increased £2 in value on the average. If, then, for every £1 expended on railway construction £2 had been made in land values, the Government would lose by selling land in the Gayndah district at 10s. an acre. It was only a reasonable thing that the amendment should be inserted in the Bill. No hon. member opposite had given any valid reason why the amendment should not be adopted. Around Capella, in the Central district, the people had established a butter factory with assistance received from the Government. There was a railway running within a short distance of the factory, and along that line there was land under lease. The leases would fall in shortly, and the Government would probably sell the land to the lessees, who would keep it idle, whereas if persons were allowed to settle on small areas they would be able to put the land to a profitable use. He thought that under the circumstances hon. members on that side of the House might justly accuse the Government of pretending with their lips to be in favour of close settlement, and by their acts giving the lie to that pretension. A similar provision to that which was now proposed was in the Special Sales of Land Act of 1891, and he saw no reason why it should not be inserted in this Bill.

Question—That the words “within ten miles of” (*Mr. For's amendment*) proposed to be inserted in the proposed amendment be so inserted—put; and the Committee divided:—

## AYES, 29.

Mr. Airey	Mr. Jenkinson
„ Barber	„ Kates
„ Bowman	„ Kerr
„ Browne	„ Lesina
„ Burrows	„ Maxwell
„ Curtis	„ McDonnell
„ Dibley	„ Mulcahy
„ Dunsford	„ Plunkett
„ Fitzgerald	„ Reid
„ Fogarty	„ Ryland
„ Fox	„ Smith
„ Givens	„ Tolmie
„ W. Hamilton	„ Turley
„ Hardacre	„ Turner.
„ Jackson	

Tellers: Mr. Burrows and Mr. Kerr.

## NOES, 32.

Mr. Annear	Mr. Kent
„ Barnes	„ Keogh
„ Bartholomew	„ Leahy
„ Bridges	„ Macartney
„ Callan	„ Mackintosh
„ Cameron	„ McMaster
„ Campbell	„ Newell
„ Cowley	„ O'Connell
„ J. C. Cribb	„ Paget
„ T. B. Cribb	„ Philp
„ Dalrymple	„ Rutledge
„ Forrest	„ Stephens
„ Forsyth	„ Stodart
„ Foxton	„ Story
„ J. Hamilton	„ G. Thorn
„ Hanrahan	„ W. Thorn

Tellers: Mr. Newell and Mr. Story.

Resolved in the negative.

Mr. GIVENS proposed to amend the amendment before the Committee by striking out the words “for which money has been borrowed.” It must be

evident to hon. members that there were several railways which had been proposed, and which had been passed by Parliament, but for which the money had not been borrowed.

Mr. KERR said he had no objection to the amendment.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: The same objection applied to this amendment as to the other, and he could not accept either.

Mr. TURLEY (*Brisbane South*): It was well known that a number of railways were passed only last session, a great many of which had not been gone on with; and under the Bill as it stood the Government would be able to sell land along the routes of those railways. They had been told that the Government were prepared to sell land anywhere if they could get the money; and this amendment simply proposed to restrict the Government from selling the lands along what would eventually be the highways of the colony. He supposed everyone engaged in grazing pursuits knew where railway lines had been surveyed, and their object would be to try to get the Government to put up lands on those surveyed lines, so that they might have an opportunity of purchasing them; and that simply meant that the Government was prepared to go in for a wholesale system of speculation. When railways were surveyed and passed by Parliament, though the money might not be available for some time, they were satisfied that these railways would be built; and to give the Government power to sell lands for speculative purposes along the routes of those lines seemed to him altogether wrong. There was nothing in such a proposal to safeguard the interests of the colony. They knew what had taken place previously. He knew an instance where a railway had been adopted where the land

had been bought up on the route of the line; then there was a change of Government, and the railway was afterwards resurveyed, and the route of the line changed; and speculators who got hold of information regarding the proposals of the Government were able to step in and scoop the pool by buying lands in the vicinity of the resurveyed railway. The same thing could happen under a Bill like this.

Mr. McMASTER: Where was this?

Mr. TURLEY: It had happened in two or three cases, the hon. member might know one or two of them. This Bill would give people the opportunity to approach the Government to put up lands where railways had been surveyed and practically adopted, and speculators would be able to scoop the pool to the detriment of the interests of the people.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: Tell us one of the cases you refer to.

Mr. TURLEY: The hon. gentleman knew perfectly well numbers of cases of a similar nature, not only here, but in other places.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: I do not know of a single instance.

Mr. TURLEY: The only reason he could assign for the Government declining to accept such a reasonable amendment was that they would be able in this way to give facilities to people to get hold of the land on these surveyed routes, with the result that they would make a great deal at the expense of the community.

Mr. LESINA: Ministers seemed to be under the impression that it was unnecessary to attempt to traverse the arguments advanced from the other side. Perhaps hon. members on the Government side had already made up their minds on a question of that kind. In the interests of Queensland it was advisable that such a safeguard should be inserted in the Bill, but, by some curious mental process, the Government instinctively arrived at an idea of what was right, and reasoning was therefore an unnecessary waste of time. Perhaps their followers were in the same position. The Secretary for Railways must be a very raw individual if he did not know of instances that had occurred in Queensland, as well as in other places, where speculators had purchased land through which railways afterwards ran, and by such purchases made big profits.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: He said surveys were cancelled afterwards and other surveys were made.

Mr. LESINA: There had been such cases as that alluded to by the hon. member for South Brisbane. Where the Government proposed to expend public money in the construction of railways, it appeared to him to be a wise thing not to sell land in that particular district, or within a certain radius of the proposed railway line. If that was done it would prevent speculators reaping the unearned increment. It was a fact that could not be gainsaid that the construction of railways by the expenditure of public money enhanced the value of all the surrounding land, and by taking steps to safeguard the interests of the general public, the Government would be doing their duty to the country.

Amendment (Mr. Givens's) put and negatived.

The original amendment (Mr. Kerr's) was then put and negatived.

Mr. HARDACRE moved the insertion, after the word "acres" in line 15, of the words—

Every such auction shall be held at the appointed time at the office of the land agent within whose district the land proposed to be sold is situated.

In moving this amendment he was merely proposing that they should follow the procedure adopted in the case of ordinary selections. At present all selections proclaimed open had

to be applied for at the land agent's office in the district in which the land was situated, and that was found to be a very proper precaution. One of the grievances in the past with regard to land sales had been that land, say, in the Maranoa, Barcoo, or Mitchell districts, or in the far Northern portions of the colony, had not been put up to auction in the district where the land was situated, but in Brisbane, where it was impossible for residents of the locality, who would possibly in many cases have been glad to obtain it, to be present. In many cases they had not known of the sales at all, while in other cases they only became aware of the fact a day or two before the sale. If the Government were really sincere in their desire that this land should be taken up for *bona fide* settlement, then the sales should take place locally. Surely the residents of a district had a special claim to have a chance to obtain this land. He did not know whether the land in any district belonged to the people in that district, but, at any rate, it would be admitted that at least they ought to have a preferential chance of obtaining it. They should at least have the right sooner than someone in a distant part of the colony, or in a distant part of Australia.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: There is no preferential chance at auction, is there? It is an auction sale.

Mr. HARDACRE: It was an auction sale; but if the sale was held in Brisbane the difficulty of getting to where the sale was held would actually preclude, in a great number of cases, the people in the district where the land was from getting that land.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: The sale ought to be where the most people are.

Mr. HARDACRE: Not necessarily. The sale ought to be where most people were who are likely to want the land, and that should be in the district where the land was situated. These people knew the land best, and they ought to be given a chance of obtaining it in preference to a financial institution which could easily get to the place where the sale was being held in Brisbane. He hoped the Minister would accept the amendment.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: In the sheaf of amendments which the hon. member for Leichhardt had circulated, there were some which he thought he should be able to accept, and the next one, if accepted, would make the one now before the Committee unnecessary. He thought it would be very unsatisfactory to have the action of the department hampered in the way proposed. The hon. member was quite right in his next amendment in providing that proper notice of sale should be given in the locality where the land to be sold was situated. That was all that was desired, and if it was not carried out with regard to some sales that had taken place lately, it was not owing to any wish on the part of the Minister that such want of advertising occurred. As hon. members knew, it was not the duty of the Minister to see that advertisements were inserted. As the amendment would tie the hands of the department as to where land should be sold, he was not prepared to accept it. The following amendment would make it impossible for anybody to pretend they did not know that land in their district was going to be sold. If land was not sold in the district where it was situated it would be quite possible for the people there to appoint an agent to bid for them at the place where it was sold.

Mr. HARDACRE said the Minister had given no reason for refusing to accept the amendment.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Is there any reason for it?

Mr. HARDACRE said he had given very good reasons for it. The experience of the past had shown that having the sales held in Brisbane had led to the land getting into the hands of financial institutions. That was shown over and over again by the return of land sold under the Special Sales of Land Act which had lately been laid on the table. And there had been complaints made that if land had been sold in the district it would have got into the hands of carriers, shearers, and others for settlement.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Do you honestly believe that?

Mr. HARDACRE said he thoroughly believed it, for he knew that protests had been made, and a case had been cited by the hon. member for Mitchell. The Minister said the men in the district who wanted to buy land could appoint an agent in Brisbane. Could not the financial institutions in Brisbane just as easily appoint an agent in the district?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: They probably have their manager on the spot.

Mr. HARDACRE: Then all inconvenience would be done away with, and the people in the district would have a chance of getting the land. Take his own district of Springsure; perhaps one man in a hundred could forward his money to an agent in Brisbane and get him to bid for him. It would not pay any of them to come to Brisbane, and in any case it would mean a large expense with the chance of not getting the land after all.

Mr. BARNES: Your argument cuts both ways.

Mr. HARDACRE said he was aware of that, but surely if there was to be any preference it should be given to the people of the district who resided there with their families.

The PREMIER: The Government gave no preference to anybody. They wanted the land sold where there was likely to be the most competition. There was no desire to prevent anyone in the district from purchasing, which they could easily do through the local bank manager getting the manager here to bid for the land. But land sales did not necessarily take place in Brisbane. They might be held at Toowoomba, or Rockhampton, or Townsville, or Hughenden.

Mr. CURTIS: But the sale should be well advertised locally.

The PREMIER: Certainly, and he admitted that in some cases that had not been done in the past. The Government did not want to hold hole-and-corner sales. They wanted it sold publicly and at the highest price, and they get that done by not restricting the sales to any one part of the colony. In some districts there might be no bank, and it would be very inconvenient to sell land there. If it was left an open question, the Government would take care to sell it in the place where they thought there would be most competition. In Brisbane, people might buy land who would never think of going to some outside place to buy it. Local publicity was the main thing, and that would be given in all cases.

Mr. KERR thought the amendment a very good one, and the Minister gave a very good reason for accepting it when he said the manager of the station—the man with the full information—would be on the spot. He was very glad to

hear the Premier state that the [9.30 p.m.] sales of the lands would be well advertised in well-informed papers, such as the Rockhampton *Bulletin* and other papers of that kind. He did not know whether the hon. member for Leichhardt had attended any of these land sales in Brisbane, but they were the greatest farces one could see. He had

gone down to the auction room, and perhaps only saw there a clerk from a bank and the auctioneer, and many valuable areas of land had been put up and knocked down in that way. He and the hon. member for Burke had attended one of these sales, and who did they find in the auction room? Only two or three agents who were only bidding for certain portions of the land they wanted. He had not thought that the hon. member for Leichhardt was so unsophisticated, for surely he knew that these sales were all arranged beforehand. If he had read the papers in connection with the Northampton Downs land sale, which had been laid on the table of the House, he would know that arrangements had been made beforehand through the Bank of New South Wales. The Premier had pointed out if there was a bank near the place of sale the matter could be easily arranged. If this amendment was passed, it would remove a great deal of the dissatisfaction out West at the present time, for the people out there thought that something was being done in Brisbane that was not right. This system should be tried for a time, and if it was thought that it was not a wise system, then the department could revert back to the old principle, under which they were working now. The fullest notice should be given of the sale of lands, and he was certain that the amendment of the hon. member for Leichhardt would not in any way encumber the Bill; but that it would be the means of making it clearer and removing some of the difficulties which were at present in the way. He was sorry to hear that the Minister for Lands could not accept the amendment, and if the Government did not give greater publicity to these sales of lands, the same thing would take place in the future as had taken place in the past, and they would still have people complaining. If he was going to dispose of any property, he would make it as widely known to the public as he possibly could. He would not endeavour to cloak it up. He believed the intention—

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I would like to remind the hon. member that the amendment with regard to the publication of the notice of sales is not before the Committee.

Mr. KERR: The amendment moved by the hon. member for Leichhardt was a very good one, and provided that sales should take place in the district where the land was to be sold. They had commissioners and land agents in every district, who were capable men—quite as capable as any auctioneer in Brisbane when dealing with the quality of lands. He thought it would remove a great deal of discontent if the amendment moved by the hon. member for Leichhardt was accepted.

Mr. LESINA: He was also in favour of the amendment, for in his district the attempt had been made to sell lands on the Logan Downs, but happily that was not accomplished. Owing to a very strong protest by people there of all political creeds the land was withdrawn from sale. But he was sure that if that sale had taken place, it would have taken place in Brisbane. Then the majority of the people in Clermont would not have been able to engage agents to bid for the land in Brisbane. If the land had been sold up there the people there would have been able to give the best value for it, for they were well acquainted with it; whereas, if the sale had taken place in Brisbane, the agents here or the bank clerks would not have known anything about the land—they would merely have some surplus cash to spend in this way, and they would only hope that the investment would turn up trumps. If the Government accepted the amendment and these land sales were held at the appointed time at the office of

the local land agent within whose district the land proposed to be sold was situated, then selectors within a radius of 100 miles or more would turn up to the sale, there would be spirited bidding, and the Government would get a better price. In the past, the sales of land had not been beneficial to the State or to the community where the land was. The Telemon lands were sold in a Brisbane auction room for 10s. per acre long before the people in the Hughenden district knew anything about the matter.

THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: They held a meeting, at any rate, protesting against the sale.

MR. LESINA: Yes; after the sale.

THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: No, before the sale, and Mr. McDonald came and saw me before the sale.

MR. LESINA: In the Nanango district lands were sold under somewhat the same conditions—land on the Baramba Estate, which had good water frontages—and the people in the district knew nothing about the sale. If land had to be sold, why should these sales be conducted in such a secret fashion? Why, the selling of lands in an obscure auction room, by an obscure auctioneer, to some obscure bank clerk, was an infamous thing. If it was necessary to sacrifice lands, they should be sacrificed at the best possible price, after having been well advertised, and they should be sold in the district where the land was situated. The Rockhampton *Bulletin*, in speaking about the sale of the Logan Downs land, said that these sales were wrong in principle and in law; practically, but not technically, they were an evasion of the Act, and that in most cases the whole thing was arranged beforehand. The sale of land by auction in the district in which the land was situated would not be only beneficial to the district, but it would prevent all those nasty, narrow suspicions arising in connection with the administration of the department. The community as a whole would benefit, because the Treasurer would reap a large reward from the compulsory sale of these estates. For these reasons he thought the Government ought to adopt the amendment. If they were in earnest in their desire to promote the settlement of small men on the land, they would not continue to sell large areas of land in obscure auction rooms in Brisbane. If they did it would only justify the suspicion that the Government really were not sincere in their desire to settle small people on the soil. The big financial institutions were all situated in Brisbane, and they merely sent over their men to the auction rooms to bid the lowest possible price they could get the land for. The land was then fenced in, and it remained idle for years and years. That was not promoting settlement, and for that reason he would support the amendment.

THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: It might be possible at times to do as hon. members asked—namely, that land should be put up for sale in the land agent's district, or somewhere near it; but he would object to it being made necessary for that to be done. He was quite prepared to say that at times it might be desirable to sell the land in some other portion of the colony besides Brisbane. He did not quite follow the hon. member for Clermont when he talked about obscure auction rooms in Brisbane. Did he mean that the auction rooms in Clermont were palaces of light?

MR. JACKSON: That is only a little padding.

THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: The auction rooms in Brisbane were very well-known to the persons who patronised auction rooms.

MR. HARDACRE asked why should there be any exception in this case from the practice in ordinary cases?

THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: All ordinary sales have not to take place in the land agent's district.

MR. HARDACRE: The ordinary sales of town and suburban allotments were all held in the district where the land was situated.

THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Not necessarily. I say do not make it a hard-and-fast rule, but I do not say it would not be a good thing to do it in some cases.

MR. HARDACRE contended that it would be better in most cases to sell the land in the district in which it was situated. He would not object—in order to meet the Minister's objection—to it being provided that all land, unless it was specially provided otherwise, should be sold at the appointed time in the district where the land was situated.

THE PREMIER: It will still be in the hands of the Minister.

MR. HARDACRE: It would be still in the hands of the Minister, but it would declare what was the intention of the legislature in the matter. Then, generally speaking, the sales would be held in that way, but the Minister's hands would not be tied absolutely. He thought that that ought to meet the Minister's objection, and he was quite convinced that it would cause less dissatisfaction, and would lead to better prices being obtained by the Treasury.

THE PREMIER: We want to obtain the best prices.

MR. HARDACRE: There might be rare exceptions where financial institutions were interested, and in such cases they could appoint their manager to attend the sale. On the other hand, if the sale were held away from the land agent's district in which it was situated, there would be quite a number of people who would not be able to bid for it at all.

THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: He thought the hon. member ought to be satisfied with having brought the matter up. In arranging future sales, he would take into consideration whether the land should be sold locally or otherwise.

Amendment (Mr. Hardacre's) put and negatived.

MR. HARDACRE said he had another amendment, but he believed the hon. member for Cairns had a similar amendment, and as it was a prior one to his, he had no wish to jump that hon. gentleman's claim.

THE PREMIER: It is to the same purport.

THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: I am prepared to take your amendment. I think it is rather better than that of the hon. member for Cairns.

MR. GIVENS: It was only a question of degree. It was admitted a few minutes ago by the Premier that unfortunately some sales in the immediate past had not had sufficient publicity given to them. While he believed the amendment of the hon. member for Leichhardt was a good one, he did not think it would be quite effective enough. His amendment provided that publicity should be given to the sale in the district in which the land was to be sold. They had it on the authority of the Minister for Lands and the Premier that they wanted to get the utmost competition for the land to be offered, and if that were so it would be necessary to give the utmost publicity to the fact that there was about to be a sale by auction. Therefore, not only should it be advertised in the district in which the land was situated, but also in the principal centres of population.



The CHAIRMAN: I would point out to the hon. member that neither amendment is at present before the Committee.

Mr. HARDACRE: He could move his amendment in the shape of a new clause later on. It would provide that the people in the other colonies, as well as those in the district concerned, should have a chance of knowing what land sales were going to be conducted.

The PREMIER: Your present clause will meet the case.

Mr. JACKSON: He had given notice of a new clause to follow clause 3, which he hoped the Minister for Lands would accept. He had given notice of it in the interests of the Minister as well as in the interests of the country. He did not mean to say that he mistrusted the administration of the Minister, but still he thought his clause provided wise safeguards. He had somewhat altered the clause as originally printed, and it now read—

No land shall be notified for sale or sold under the provisions of this Act unless or until the Land Court, upon a reference by the Minister in that behalf, has certified to the Minister that no part of the land proposed to be sold is likely to be required for purposes of agricultural or grazing farm selection under the Crown Lands Act of 1897.

He did not think it was necessary to insert the word "dairying," because "agricultural" would cover that.

The PREMIER: This would cover the whole of the lands of the colony.

Mr. JACKSON: If the Government were going to object to the clause, it seemed to him that they were prepared to sell lands that otherwise would be available for agricultural or grazing farm selection.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: The whole country is more or less available for agricultural or grazing farm settlement.

Mr. JACKSON thought the contention of the Government was that they proposed to sell lands that were not likely to be available for close settlement. He knew the Premier had pointed out that it was proposed to sell land for dairying purposes. They all knew that the Land Court was a very responsible body, and they ought at least to have a report from that body on any land that the Government proposed to sell. Under the Agricultural Lands Purchase Act the Land Court was called upon to report before the Government purchased any land, and it seemed to him that it was just as necessary to have a report from them on the lands proposed to be sold as upon lands proposed to be repurchased. A clause of this sort would to a large extent be a safeguard against the Ministry selling lands that were likely to be required in the near future for close settlement.

The PREMIER: This includes the whole of the lands of the colony.

Mr. JACKSON: The Premier only a moment ago admitted that mistakes had been made in regard to advertising land sold by auction. If the Government had blundered in that respect in the past, were they not quite as likely to blunder in the future in regard to the class of land they sold? He had not laid down the lines upon which the Land Court should report; he left that an open question. He would give an idea of the lines on which the Minister should act in this matter. He thought the Land Court should be asked to report on the demand for land in the neighbourhood for agricultural, dairying, or grazing farm settlement. Although they had no special form of "dairying" selection, he thought it was just as well to use that word. They should be called upon to report upon the suitability of the land proposed to be sold, for agricultural, dairying, or grazing farm settlement; the permanency of the water supply; the probability of

the immediate use of the land if thrown open for selection; and the absence of a sufficient quantity of Crown land in the neighbourhood available for agricultural, dairying, or grazing farm settlement. Those were very much the lines on which the Land Court reported under the Agricultural Lands Purchase Act, and he had taken many of those points from that Act. He had no desire that the matters upon which the court were to report should appear in the Bill.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Those conditions do not prevail now with regard to auction sales.

Mr. JACKSON: The Minister did not get a report from the Land Court?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Yes, as to the different classes—whether agricultural or pastoral.

Mr. JACKSON: Did the Minister always call for a report from the Land Court before selling by auction?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: No, the Land Court classifies it. There is a special minimum of £1 for agricultural land, and 10s. for pastoral land.

Mr. JACKSON: Was that so under the Act?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Under the Lands Act of 1897.

Mr. JACKSON: He was not aware that there was such a section in the Act requiring the Minister to get a report, but although that might be so as regarded the classification of the land, he did not think it was sufficient, and the amendment he proposed would go much further.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: There is no doubt about that.

Mr. JACKSON: He did not think he need occupy very much more time in speaking about the clause, because it was a very reasonable provision.

Mr. BRIDGES: Why not confine it to agricultural land?

Mr. JACKSON: If he did the Minister would probably take up the same objection. Why should the hon. member for Nundah wish to confine it to agricultural land? Surely the hon. member had sympathy with the men out West who wanted to get grazing farms? He thought Parliament should consider the interests of the Western men as well as the interests of those on the coast. They all knew the advantages of close settlement. Last night, when speaking on the second reading of the Bill, he pointed out that although they were now suffering from the effects of a very severe drought, yet they did not find any evidence of it in and around Brisbane. It appeared to be more flourishing than ever, and in South Brisbane during the last twelve months he was able to count a couple of dozen houses which had been built within sight of his own residence. That did not look as if Brisbane were going down the hill. And what was the

[10 p.m.] cause of it? The real cause was that men were settling on the lands at the back of Brisbane and engaging in agricultural and dairying operations. He should not need to appeal to hon. members representing Brisbane constituencies to support the new clause, because they could see the necessity of encouraging close settlement as much as possible. He had much pleasure in moving the new clause.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS was quite sure that if the hon. member would think for a moment he would see that if this new clause were inserted in the Bill they might just as well drop the measure at once. It was not at all likely that land which was not required for agricultural or grazing farm settlement was going to be bought at 10s. an acre. If the Land Court were required to report on the matter they could

return only one answer to the question submitted to them, and that was that the land was suitable and required for the purposes of either grazing or agricultural farm settlement. The new clause would take the whole colony away from the operation of the Bill. If that was the intention of the hon. member, he could accomplish it by inducing the Committee to pass the new clause, but he could not possibly think of accepting it. The object of the Special Sales of Land Bill was to give the Government ampler powers than they already possessed with regard to the sale of land by auction and not to take away power which now existed. They could at the present time sell 150,000 acres of land a year without any reference to the Land Court, and the adoption of the proposed new clause would make the Bill so much waste paper. They might as well abandon it straight away.

Mr. W. HAMILTON considered the new clause one of the most useful amendments so far introduced into the Bill. The Government said that they wanted to promote close settlement. If that was their policy, the best way to accomplish it was to throw the land open for selection, because for one man who was able to purchase land as a freehold there were twenty or thirty persons who would take it up as a selection; and when selectors took up land they put improvements on it in the shape of fencing, etc. But where land was acquired as freehold in the West not one shilling was expended on it; it was simply worked in conjunction with the leased portion of the station. If there was land in close proximity to a railway, or within 20 or 30 miles of a railway, and it was suitable for close settlement, it was the duty of the Government to make that land available for close settlement. It was very easy for the land commissioner to send in a report stating whether the land was likely to be taken up in the form of selection; and if he reported in that way the land should not be put up to auction. If, however, he reported that there was evidence that the land would not be taken up by selection, then he could recommend that it should be sold by auction in 5,000-acre blocks. There was any amount of land that would be taken up to-morrow in small areas if it was made available for selection. Most of the land which would be sold under the provisions of this Bill was not agricultural land, and there was no doubt that the pastoral lessees would endeavour to buy up the best portions of their runs which commanded strategic positions. That course had been followed in the past, and he presumed it would be followed in the future under this Bill. The amendment was a good one, and would serve a useful purpose.

Mr. LESINA: It appeared to him that the statement made by the hon. member for Gregory—that this amendment was one of the best amendments which had so far been introduced in connection with the Bill—sealed its fate. If an amendment was proposed which would allow powerful corporations to acquire the freehold of land it would be immediately accepted by the Government, but when an amendment was proposed to reserve land for common persons who wished to engage in agricultural or grazing farming it was disapproved by the Government. This particular amendment was an excellent one, and would operate advantageously to the colony. Evidently the attitude assumed by the Government in regard to the amendment was significant of their action in regard to settlement. They said on various occasions inside this Chamber, and at banquets outside, that they wanted to promote settlement; but when it came to securing settlement by legislation, they did all they could to prevent settlement taking place. They would not accept the amendment because it

might promote settlement and prevent large blocks of land going into the hands of financial corporations.

Mr. HARDACRE thought the Minister misunderstood the proposed new clause to a certain extent. It did not mean that no land should be sold which the board said was suitable for grazing or agricultural purposes. All it said was that no land should be sold under the provisions of the Bill if the Land Court said it was actually required for ordinary selection purposes under the Lands Act of 1897. If it was really required for selection purposes, why sell it?

THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: To get money.

Mr. HARDACRE: They would get both settlement and money the other way.

THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Only 2½ per cent. on the nominal value in twenty years.

Mr. HARDACRE: They would get from 15s. to £1 an acre under ordinary circumstances, and under the Bill they would get 10s. an acre. The thing he was afraid of was that with the one-fourth of the leases falling in there would be a tremendous temptation, and there would be pressure brought to bear on the Minister to have some of those lands put up at auction—land which would be required under the provisions of the Act of 1897—and when the land was put up it would pay the lessee to bid more for it than any ordinary person, because he would want it for a special purpose. He would not need to put any improvements on it, and in many cases it would command a large area of back country, without which it would be of no use to anybody else. The amendment would not prevent land from being sold, but it would prevent land from being sold to the exclusion of *bona fide* settlement.

Mr. BOWMAN (*Warrego*) did not see why the Government should not accept the amendment. He knew several runs which were being anxiously looked forward to by intending selectors. A return that had been furnished in connection with sales of land that had already taken place showed that the tendency was for those lands to be bought by the large lessees. The Premier and other Ministers said that their object was to encourage close settlement; but there would be very little chance of getting the men who would be the best settlers to purchase the estates likely to be purchased under this Bill. He knew some runs in the South-west part of the colony which could be thrown open with great advantage to selectors, and by refusing to accept this amendment the Government would be practically precluding those men from getting the opportunity to select on those runs.

Mr. BARTHOLOMEW: This new clause specially referred to the Land Court; and as another Bill required the full court to certify as to the land to be purchased, that was one of his chief reasons for supporting this amendment, because he thought they should have power to certify in all cases. He would support the amendment if the hon. member would alter it so as to include land "likely to be required in the near future for agricultural and dairying purposes."

THE PREMIER: We want to sell land for dairying purposes.

Mr. BARTHOLOMEW had no objection to selling all the land in the colony if it was properly classified—so that agricultural land should be sold as agricultural land, and dairying land should be sold as dairying land, and so on. He hoped the hon. member for Kennedy could see his way to include dairying land in his amendment.

Mr. JACKSON: You move the amendment.

Mr. BARTHOLOMEW moved the insertion of the word "dairying" after the word "agriculture."

The PREMIER: To his mind there were only two classes of land in the colony—lands that were fit for agriculture, and lands that were fit for grazing.

Mr. BOWMAN: What about dairying lands?

The PREMIER: Grazing included dairying.

Mr. TURLEY: We were told the other day that agriculture included dairying.

The PREMIER: He had never said so. They had no wish to sell agricultural land under the Bill at all, and they were prepared to accept an amendment providing that if land was required for agricultural settlement they could not sell it. But to say that they should not sell land that was fit for dairying or for grazing selections meant that they could not sell any land at all, because all the land in the colony would be required for one of those purposes some day. Hon. members talked about selling valuable agricultural land in the neighbourhood of Gayndah, but the Government had no wish to sell that land by auction at all; but certainly land that was fit for dairying was good grazing country.

Mr. BOWMAN: You would not sell good grazing land?

The PREMIER: Oh, yes; they would.

Mr. BOWMAN: Where it is wanted for closer settlement?

The PREMIER: It all depended on what was meant by "closer settlement." There was a tremendous area along the Southern and Western Railway that he would like to see taken up for dairying. It had been open for fifteen or twenty years, but none of it had been taken up. There was also a great deal of land along the Central Railway, which could be sold, and also on the Northern Railway, before they came to sheep country at all.

Mr. W. HAMILTON: That shows you will be able to get increased rentals from the land.

The PREMIER: Some people would not take up land unless they could buy it. Some of the best settlers in New South Wales had taken up land in that colony under the Conditional Purchases Act, paying £1 an acre for land rather than be hampered with conditions, which in nine cases out of ten were never complied with. Sometimes land was parted with in Queensland for one-tenth of its real value on certain conditions, and those conditions, he was sorry to say, were rarely fulfilled.

Mr. JENKINSON: Whose fault is that?

The PREMIER: It was impossible for the small staff they had to look after such a great colony. The Government were quite prepared to accept the amendment of the hon. member for Kennedy if he confined it to agricultural land, but that was as much as they were prepared to accept.

Mr. BARTHOLOMEW: With the leave of the Committee, he desired to withdraw his amendment.

Amendment, by leave, withdrawn.

Mr. W. HAMILTON hoped the hon. member for Kennedy would not withdraw his amendment. It seemed to him that all the Southern members thought of was the South. Simply because there was agriculture and dairying going on there they wanted to preserve all the land in that portion of the colony, but they did not care if all the rest of the colony was sold. In the West and North there was not a lot of agricultural and dairying land.

The PREMIER: There is a lot of agricultural land in the North.

Mr. W. HAMILTON: Most of the land out there was taken up in the form of grazing selections, and the amendment of the hon. member for Maryborough would not meet the difficulty there at all.

Mr. BARTHOLOMEW: There are agricultural lands up North, surely.

Mr. W. HAMILTON: Yes, on the coast, but there was no danger of the Government selling that. The Premier spoke of an immense area along the Northern Railway west from Charters Towers that he thought people would purchase in small freeholds. Well, if there was such a call for dairy produce to supply the needs of Charters Towers and those places, that land, if it was made available for selection, would be taken up more readily, and a great many more people could be settled there than if it was sold. In view of the protests that had been made by the people of the North and West against the sale of land, some consideration ought to be given to them, but all the Southern members seemed to think of was selling land in the North and West and repurchasing estates in the South.

The CHAIRMAN: Order!

Mr. W. HAMILTON: There were a lot of people in the colony besides those who were engaged in agriculture and dairying, and it was a good thing for those who were engaged in those industries that that was so, otherwise they would not have purchasers for their produce.

Mr. LESINA: The hon. member for Gregory seemed not to have realised the important truth, which had been borne into his (Mr. Lesina's) mind by a close study of the Government and of its characteristics, that the Central district was merely a milch cow for the Southern district. The mere statement that there were people in Central Queensland who required consideration under that Bill was regarded by the Government as a declaration of hostility to them. To say that the people of the Central district required—not more consideration than the people of the South, but a little consideration—was sufficient to bring an hon. member into collision with the Government. The people of the Central and Northern districts had no rights at all under the present Administration.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! The hon. member is now digressing from the question before the Committee.

Mr. LESINA: He was talking about land sales. He said that the Government sold land in the Central and Northern districts, and that the money realised by those sales was used to purchase land in the South.

The PREMIER: We buy land in the Centre and North, too.

Mr. LESINA: The Government sold those lands without any reference to the needs of the settlers in those districts. That had been pointed out frequently, but apparently the Government did not realise the fact. They were selling those lands under conditions that were not altogether honest to the people in Central and Northern Queensland; and particularly in the Central district had that policy been followed. They sold land that was required for close settlement in the Central district, because Southern members were under the impression that there was no need for land for close settlement in the Central district. Queensland to them meant Brisbane and its surroundings. He considered the [10:30 p.m.] amendment a very sensible one, and one which the Government, if they really desired to bring about close settlement, would adopt. It had been suggested to him by

the hon. member for Flinders that the title of the Bill should have been "The Virtuous Intentions Bill." In the clause they were striving to amend the intentions of the Government were undoubtedly virtuous; but the road to a certain place was paved with intentions of that particular kind. After past experience, he questioned whether there was a single member on the other side of the Chamber who believed in close settlement; and he could prophesy that when that amendment—which was intended to promote close settlement—was put to the vote, they would rush to the other side to snuff it out. The object of the amendment was to enable the men in the back blocks to get on the land. If that was also the object of the Government they would have accepted it without a word. It was a pity that so much time should be wasted in trying to improve a Bill of that kind, and if the Government was virtuous in its intentions they would receive such attempts with alacrity.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! The hon. member is again departing from the question before the Committee. I have repeatedly called him to order. He is also tediously repeating himself. I call his attention to that, and warn him that if he continues to do so, I shall call upon him to resume his seat.

Amendment put; and the Committee divided:—

## AYES, 22.

Mr. Airey	Mr. Hardacre
" Barber	" Jackson
" Bowman	" Jenkinson
" Browne	" Kerr
" Burrows	" Lesina
" Curtis	" Maxwell
" Dibley	" Mulcahy
" Dunsford	" Plunkett
" Fitzgerald	" Ryland
" Givens	" Turley
" W. Hamilton	" Turner

Tellers: Mr. Ryland and Mr. Bowman.

## NOES, 32.

Mr. Annear	Mr. Kent
" Barnes	" Keogh
" Bartholomew	" Leahy
" Bridges	" Macartney
" Callan	" Mackintosh
" Cameron	" McMaster
" Campbell	" Newell
" Cowley	" O'Connell
" J. C. Cribb	" Paget
" T. B. Cribb	" Philip
" Dalrymple	" Rutledge
" Forrest	" Stephens
" Fox	" Stodart
" Foxton	" Story
" J. Hamilton	" W. Thorn
" Hanran	" Tolmie

Tellers: Mr. J. C. Cribb and Mr. McMaster.

Resolved in the negative.

The House resumed; the CHAIRMAN reported progress, and obtained leave to sit again tomorrow.

## ADJOURNMENT.

The PREMIER: I beg to move that this House do now adjourn.

Mr. BROWNE: I would like to ask the hon. gentleman at the head of the Government, seeing that we are in the middle of September, whether he does not think it advisable that we should have an extra sitting day? We have the Estimates to deal with, and a lot of other work to do, and if we sit an extra day it may facilitate the end of the session.

The PREMIER: It is intended to sit on Fridays the week after next, and to take the whole of every Tuesday for discussion of the Estimates.

Question put and passed.

The House adjourned at a quarter to 11 o'clock.