**CROWN LANDS CONSOLIDATION BILL 1877**

**House of Assembly. 12 June 1877, pages 61-8**

Second reading

**The COMMISSIONER of CROWN LANDS (Hon. J. Carr),** in moving the second reading of this Bill, reminded hon. members that a similar one was introduced in that House last session and discussed at considerable length. In most of its leading features the present Bill was the same as the last, and as its main principles had been before the country for ten months, he felt sure hon. members would be tolerably conversant with its details. He had the more pleasure in moving the second reading because he knew a large number of hon. members were well acquainted with the subject with which it dealt. The Bill was principally one of consolidation. It was the sum and substance of thirty three Acts, which had been carefully gone through, and it would form one consistent and valuable whole. Some of the amendments proposed were of little importance, and need not be dwelt on at length. In saying this he referred to an alteration in the amounts of fines, to an increase in the time given pastoral lessees to send in returns, to the provision of opening new land offices in various parts of the colony, and to other matters of detail. The first important alteration to which he would direct attention was one dealing with the laws relating to our mineral interest. (Hear, hear.) If hon. members would turn to clause 88 and those succeeding it they would see what the Government proposed to do in this direction. He felt that the importance to us of our mining industry could scarcely be exaggerated. In times of former depression the discovery of the Burra Mine was of incalculable benefit, and since then the Moonta and Wallaroo Mines had greatly contributed to the public advantage. A large population was engaged upon the mines; indeed he might say that no other industry employed so large a number of persons in proportion to the capital expended. It was true that there were occasionally great prizes gained by many, but there were also a great many blanks. (Hear, hear, and laughter.) Those who won the prizes deserved them by the risk they ran and the enterprise they exhibited. In seeking their own benefit such persons promoted the public weai, and therefore the Government felt satisfied in offering to the mining interest the extra advantages which would be found in the Bill. First it was proposed to substitute a 99 years’ lease for the present system of 14 years’ lease with renewals. (Hear, hear.) Of course the Government had struck out renewal fines, which in many cases amounted to large sums. Sometimes, too—and hon. members would have a particular case in their minds at that time—a large renewal fine had to be paid when the mine was scarcely paying its way. Sometimes those fines amounted to j£20,000. In view of the great fluctuations in mining matters the Government had felt justified in giving owners of mineral leases an extended term, so that they might be able to develop the mines properly with a regard to the future as well as the present. He thought if this were done the lessees ought to have the use of the mines for their lifetime, and to be able to pass it on for two or three generations. The Government had proposed that the rent should be Is. per acre instead of 2s. 6d. as at present. He thought hon. members would agree with this reduction when they considered that the 92nd clause provided that a farther sum of Is. in the pound sterling should be paid on the profits obtained from the occupation and working of the mine, and the sale of all metals and minerals obtained in the land comprised in the lease. This Is. in the pound would only be taken from mines giving a profit to the proprietors, and in this sense was better than the royalty on all the metals raised, though the latter system obtained in England and had been advocated here. The objection to a royalty was that it pressed heavily on struggling mines, whereas the amounts proposed under this Bill would only be taken from mines really yielding a profit to their proprietors. They had not been able to deal out the same amount of liberality to the pastoral interest as to the mineral interest, but those interested in the former had had their turn. He was not going to depreciate the services of the pastoral lessees as the pioneers of our prosperity, and no doubt much of our wheat growing land would not yield to the farmer what it did now if it had not been formerly occupied by the owners of sheep; but still they recognised with gladness that although the interest was not yielding an increased return to the revenue it had increased largely so far as the extent of land occupied. (Mr. Duncan—“No.”) The hon. member for Wallaroo was not aware of the fact that in 1868 the pastoral lessees occupied 53,000 square miles, and at the present time occupied 140,000 square miles. (Mr. Duncan—“They don’t occupy, they hold.”) He thanked the hon. member for the correction, but let anyone attempt to secure any of these lands they would say that they occupied it against all comers. The Government had tried to give some protection to the lessees in a matter in which they had been subjected to a good deal of imposition. He referred to the pretended travelling of stock. No doubt it was of great importance that pastoral lessees should be able to take their stock to market, or from one place to another; but it was intolerable that a man should travel over the whole country with thousands of sheep which he pretended he was travelling when in reality he was doing nothing of the sort. Sometimes it was said that the sheep were being taken to market, and they were brought to Adelaide and then taken back again. The protection to the lessees was contained in a proviso to clause 80, which gave the Commissioner the power of making an extra charge on this pretended travelling stock. They had also introduced a provision to enable the lessees to make some charge under clause 86 on all travelling stock. They had introduced a new condition in clause 87 which had some reference to the question raised by the hon. member for Wallaroo —the difference between holding and occupying. It had not escaped their notice that some of the lessees held a large extent of country without stocking it, and as the payment was to be reduced to comparatively a very small amount, the Government had provided, in order to prevent these lands being held to the disadvantage of the general public, that pastoral lessees should be compelled to stock within two years. (Hear, hear.) The time was not so short as it seemed, because hon members would remember that in the outlying districts a pre-emptive right was given to the pastoral lessee to hold a certain extent of country at a charge of Is. per square mile, and in practice this generally amounted to two years’ holding. If a first renewal was asked for it was generally given, a second never except special reasons could be assigned. Under this Act lessees would be allowed to hold the land two years more at half a crown per square mile, which made a total term of four years, by which time any person who had aspired to be a pastoral lessee should be in a position to stock his run. Then the Government had introduced some amendments with regard to travelling stock reserves. Clause 158 provided for the use of these by persons fairly travelling with stock on payment of a small amount, for which they were registered and protected in the use of the reserves; and clause 125 provided a penalty for the unlawful use of the reserves, by which means they hoped to preserve them for the use for which they were intended by the Legislature. Clause 115 and the following clauses had reference to the leasing of land. Under clause 115 he felt that very great power was given to the Executive to grant leases of original reserves of not exceeding 640 acres without their being submitted to auction; but he thought the watchfulness which was exercised by the public, the Press, and hon. members would prevent any Government from abusing that provision largely. The intention of the clause was that portions of the aboriginal reserves at Poonindie, Point Macleay, and Point Pearce should be leased for the purpose of aboriginal protection and settlement. They also took power under clause 11, which he thought should have been introduced years ago, to demise to aborigines or persons of aboriginal descent a section of 80 acres for any length of time the Government might think proper. With regard to miscellaneous leases, 21 years was taken as the length of time for which leases should be given instead of 14. Clause 33 would enable tne seldom iauu» credit to sell with the approval of the Commissioner for the time being portions of these lands for charitable or religious purposes, it having been found of very great disadvantage in the rapid settlement of the newly-settled agricultural districts that land could not be conveyed for this purpose. If hon. members turned to the 11th schedule, which referred to scrub lands which might be leased for 21 years on very favourable conditions, they would see that it had been very considerably increased by the addition of the unsold lands in certain southern hundreds. He had been to inspect these unsold lands, some of which adjoined the Black Swamp, and he found that they were all of a very inferior description. The districts had been long settled, it was very improbable that the lands would be alienated from the Crown except on particularly favourable conditions, and therefore they had been put in the schedule of scrub lands. They had made one alteration with reference to scrub lands, which was that not more than 3,000 acres could be held by one person. This provision had been also made to apply to lands leased under the condition of 10 years’ settlement. The privilege of purchase of these lands was not allowed to be exercised under the Bill until the completion of the term. Hitherto capitalists had had the advantage of the bona fide farmer. The land was put up to auction, was run up to a high price, and then after the first year the man who had means exercised his right of purchase, whilst the poorer man was compelled to hold his land for a number of years, perhaps ten, at a high rent. This was unfair, and so the Government proposed not to allow the right of purchase to be exercised until the expiration of the term. In that part of the Bill which related to the purchase of land on credit they had endeavoured to make such alterations as would facilitate the working of what was already a good thing. For example, the residence clause would make selection more easy. The residence provision was very useful in itself; but it had been proved not to be so useful as the cultivation clause. Under the first reformed Land Act it was found possible to evade the residence clause by means of dummyism; but the cultivation clause had put an end to a great extent to the unfair occupation of land. Clause 37 provided for the substitution of a mineral lease for a credit holding, and clause 44 that the land of an insolvent should be sold for the benefit of his creditors. He believed this would avoid any great loss to the public, and it would be of very considerable advantage to the selector, because in the case of insolvency he would be able to offer something more valuable to his creditors than he could at present. Clauses 47 to 51 had been spoken of as though they conveyed to the Commissioner some power in case of dummyism which he had not at the present time. This was a mistake. The power was found in the clauses which followed, but the powers given were those of enquiry. He was quite sure that every Commissioner who had had to deal with charges of dummyism had found that if provision had been made for more perfect enquiry in some cases he would have been able to arrive at a more satisfactory conclusion. The conditions of sale were made simple and liberal. Three terms of three years were substituted for the present arrangement, and three payments of 10 per cent, were given in order to acquire possession of the land. In connection with this a change was made by clauses 15 and 17 in the holding of limited auction combined with tender, which had been retained and improved. A right of choice was given in any particular hundred. The present system had a discouraging effect on selectors. A man went and examined certain land, and found a number of selections which would suit him; but he was compelled to say at auction for which one or two selections he would bid and no others, although there might be others which he would be glad to obtain if he had the chance. In the case of limited auction, as at present, he went almost in a state of desperation that he must get a certain selection; but if he had the power of further choice, as was now proposed, he would be able to go on bidding the same day as long as there was any land in the hundred which would suit him. He had great pleasure in moving the second reading of this Bill. The Government approached the matter in no party spirit, and would be glad to avail themselves of the united wisdom of the House, no matter from what quarter the suggestion came. He was going to say he was proud of the Bill; but pride belonged not to man. It represented a principle, a struggle, and a victory. The principle was that the ground belonged to the people, and whether it was leased, held, or sold, it should be disposed of for the benefit of the people. The struggle had been to get the middlemen out of the way, and to prevent the pastoral lessees monopolizing the whole of the land and converting it into a few sheep runs; and the victory was that to a great extent they had accomplished the purpose for which they had struggled for the last ten years. He welcomed the Bill because it was a consolidation of the facts of that great struggle. Look at the lands now held on credit. He found that the lands held on credit on June 1, 1S77, amounted to 2,228,676 acres. The area of land alienated for cash in the year 1868, almost at the commencement of the agitation for land reform, was 199,693 acres; and now the area of land alienated in the 11 months of the financial year was—for cash, 157.244 acres; for credit, 455,075 acres; or a total of 612,319. This was exclusive of a very considerable area held on right of purchase on June 1, 1877, under 10 years’ leases under clause 39 of the Act of 1872. He was glad so much land was going into the market and was being profitably occupied. No one who considered could say that we were wasting our capital in selling land. (Hear.) The land belonged just as much to the public after it was sold as before- (several hon. members —“ Oh”)—and it was worth more to the State. If selling land made us poorer we were far poorer now than when Governor Hindmarsh landed. Our revenue was so largely increased that in his opinion any supposed necessity for further taxation for the purpose of revenue was further off than ever it was. Probably the evil day was drawing nigher, but the mirage seemed no nearer now than it did years ago. He never felt so much honour put upon him as now, when he asked hon. members to engage in the work of consolidation, which he was sure they would do readily and kindly. Their object in this Bill had been to construct and consolidate, and not to destroy. The existing system had on the whole worked exceedingly well since the commencement—ten years ago. We had so improved our mode of selling the waste lauds as to excite the admiration of our neighbours. We had succeeding in settling flourishing townships and large agricultural communities where a few years ago was a mere desert land or a few sheep runs. Our system of railway extension was based on our agricultural progress and prosperity, and churches and schools appeared where but a few years ago there was a comparative wilderness. In fact they were workmen in some pleasant field full of reminders of former industry and success; engaged not in party strife, but in pruning excrescences, correcting irregularities, planting fresh plants for future increase—a task which he hoped would be as grateful and pleasant to hon. members as profitable; like Dr. Schomburgk’s labours, who, when he had filled the Botanic Gardens with flowers and foliage, and made it a wilderness of delight, went into the adjoining grounds to create fresh scenes of verdant beauty; or like the work described in the blind seer’s vision of a lost paradise—

“Well may we labour still to dress

This garden; still to tend plant, herb, and flower, Our pleasant task enjoined.”

(Hear, hear.) He had in compliance with the wishes of hon. members got some half dozen copies of the Acts proposed to be repealed bound in a portable form, so that they could compared the alterations which were sought to be made. (Cheers.)

Mr. KRICHAUFF rejoiced that a consolidated Land Bill had been brought in, as he believed— although the law would perhaps have to be again altered— that it was well we should know what was the law of the land upon that subject. People at present were working in the dark in consequence of the number of Acts that were in force. To a certain extent he agreed with the Commissioner of Crown Lands that in parting with the land the State was enriching itself, but that would not be the case if the land was sold in large blocks to persons who simply wished to hold it for future sale, as for instance in Western Australia. (Commissioner of Crown Lands – “Hear, hear”}. He observed besides the consolidation a good number of amendment proposed. With some only he agreed. The clause altering the procedure in signing agreements would be a great improvement, and that in regard to the payment of further sums, interest on the purchase-money, he believed to be not much of an alteration after all but it would have the effect of making the keeping of the accounts much more easy to the officers. There were now four different descriptions of selectors, and it was hard to say under what Act a particular selection had been made. There was an alteration in the 28th clause that the Commissioner of Crown Lands had not touched upon—allowing selectors to pay up a part of the purchase-money before the term of credit expired—(Hear, hear)—and that was a very good provision, as it enabled the farmer to pay part of the purchase-money in a good season, and thus provide against bad seasons. The question of residence was a difficult matter, and it was not clear what could be considered "immediately adjoining” a selection under the 36th clause. He had felt in some instances how awkward it was for a man because he was settled on one side of the road on purchased land, and wanted to select a piece of land on the other side, to have to move across to do so. Therefore the interpretation of this matter was properly placed at the discretion of the Commissioner of Crown Lands. (Hear, hear.) In regard to the 40th clause he thought that transfers should be made easy in cases where it was seen that the person receiving the land really meant to reside on it; but they should not be made easy where that was not the intention. (Hear, hear.) He was glad that provision was made for giving persons time within which to pay overdue purchase-money or interest, but he did not see why there should be a limit of two months for this. Why should not a selector six months behind in his payment be allowed to pay ? This was also a matter that should be placed in the discretion of the Commissioner or Crown Lands. In a dry season like the last a great proportion of the farmers could not pay, as they had no harvest. He hoped the proposal for preventing persons paying the purchase-money on lands leased with the right of purchase before the expiry of the lease would be carried out, as many persons by doing so had saved the payment of rent that they would otherwise have had to pay. The 63rd clause, allowing any other Crown land after being thrown open for selection and not sold for one month to be leased as scrub lands, he hoped would become the law of the land, though he did not altogether agree with the alteration of 10s. per block to £1. He agreed with putting up the land for sale in hundreds, but at the same time thought some further improvement was possible. (Commissioner of Crown Lands—“ Hear, hear.”) Much as many of the hon. members of the House might object to the lot system, the farmers had all along had nothing else. As long as farmers were compelled to apply for one block in particular there would be at times but few applicants, perhaps only one applicant for the best pieces, and therefore the best land was frequently purchased for £1 an acre, while for inferior land *£2* and more was paid. With regard to travelling stock reserves, he thought they should not be leased for grazing purposes to neighbouring landholders, but should be reserved altogether for travelling stock. (Hear, hear.) He had not pointed out all his objections in detail, but he would support the Bill, which he thought a good one, and he hoped that the passing of a consolidated Land Bill would be the result of the present session of Parliament.

Mr. HAWKER was sorry that they had not had more time to consider the Bill; for, although told that they would have that allowed them, they had only become aware a week ago that the measure was much the same as that prepared last session. The Bill, which was a long one, had been only a short time in his hands, but he had gone through it and seen what was to be introduced newly and what were the alterations. Altogether he looked upon it as a very fair Bill—(Hear, hear)—but there were some alterations that he would suggest in Committee. As to those portions relating to the sale of lands on credit and applying to the pastoral districts, he thought that the provisions were fair and equitable. The hon. member referred to persons taking up lands and holding them merely to sell again when dearer, and not complying with the cultivation clause; and while such persons should be guarded against, the 87th clause should be carefully considered before being passed, ass there was much land in the North and the North-West one had to hold for years before being able to put stock upon it, from the dry character of the country and the uncertainty of finding water by sinking. This had been the case at one of his own stations—Carriewerloo—and if that clause was carried out strictly there was much of that country that it would be useless for the squatter to attempt to take up. Home alteration should therefore be made, allowing him time to take measures for occupying. There were one or two things in the cultivation clause that he was sorry to see struck out, such as allowing planting to be taken as cultivation instead of ploughing. For he knew that in some parts of the country it would be utterly impossible to plough; find although Mr. Playford had seen in the South-East that planting was not genuine, still he knew of cases where the spirit of the Act was being thoroughly carried out, new trees being substituted for those dead. In parts of the country where it was likely that this should be retained it would be advisable to allow the provision for planting being considered part of the cultivation to remain in the Bill, subject to the approval of the Commissioner of Crown Lands. He thought that to the list of what should be considered cultivation should be added the sowing of lucerne—(Hear, hear)—as it was a most valuable crop. If it had not been for the lucerne put in in the neighbourhood of the Finniss and at the Reedbeds and other places of that kind, we would not have had a fat beast in the market during this season. He had pointed it out to farmers who were his neighbours as a very valuable thing to sow after having taken two or three crops of wheat off the land, and he was so convinced of its importance that he was importing the seed and putting in a large quantity of it. The distance that cattle had now to be driven—400, 800, and 1,000 miles—to market took away their fat, and it was important that they should be put for a few days into a paddock to recover themselves before being sold. For what they lost was a loss to the community. (Hear, hear.) There were many other little things that he would point out as the Bill went through Committee, but taking it as a whole he was perfectly satisfied with what the Government had introduced, and it would have his support. (Hear, hear.)

Mr. BOSWORTH was sorry that so little time had been allowed hon. members to prepare themselves to speak on this Bill, but at the same time he thought the Government were to be congratulated on the measure which they had placed before Parliament. He would have liked to see the subjects divided into three Bills —one relating to the agricultural lands, another to the pastoral, and a third to the mining lands-but would be glad to see the land in each case consolidated. He agreed upon the whole with the agricultural portion of the Bill, and the increased acreage would be a matter of satisfaction to those who desired to combine pasture with agriculture; but at the same time he thought it would be as well if the Northern country could be in some way settled by encouraging farmers to take up land there by allowing them to purchase improvements made on the runs. If the Bill did that it would enable agriculturists to hold their farms and still have country in the Far North on which to run store stock. He had done that himself and had found it practicable, and he would place it before the House as a suggestion for their consideration. The land within 200 or 300 miles of Adelaide was too valuable to use for the breeding of stock. The fattening of stock might be materially assisted by the growth of lucerne in the neighbourhood of the city, but in his own opinion it would be far better to encourage the occupation of the far-out districts, by allowing the selector to hold from 100 to 200 square miles, and enable him to purchase his improvements. He partly agreed with the mode of selecting agricultural lands proposed in the Bill, but improvements might be made which he would suggest in Committee. There was a clause in the Bill providing that the first choice of lands in certain hundreds should be by auction. He was afraid, however, that this provision would induce selectors to pay more than they ought for the land. An intending selector might feel, for instance, that unless he bid high against another he would not get the land he wanted. It might so happen that the person against whom the selector was bidding did not intend to select the land for which he was bidding, and he would therefore in some cases be bidding against a myth. Indeed, the system simply drew money out of a man’s pocket which would be better employed in the development of the land. In Committee he would make a suggestion on this head. His proposal was that intending selectors should be provided with certain forms addressed to the Commissioner of Crown Lands in which he might insert particulars as to the land he intended to select, and which he might post at the post-office nearest his residence. The postmaster would register the document and the date and hour of receipt of the application, the documents would be sent on to the Land Office, and priority of choice would be regulated by the date and hour at which they were received by the postmaster. If a selector wasn’t successful he might be enabled to make another selection from the land left. He was glad to be in a position to commend the Government for the mode in which it proposed to deal with the mineral lands. He believed both in the royalty system and in the reduction of rent. The rent was certainly not much, but if it would encourage the development of the mining he would even go so far as to take it off altogether. He was not surprised to see so much pastoral land in the North occupied when it could be resumed on such short notice. It was not reasonable to suppose that men would embark in the enormous expense necessary for development at the risk of having their property taken away from them at six months’ notice. He hoped on looking further into the Bill to be able to state his views in reference to the various matters it comprised less crudely. (Hear, hear.)

Mr. HANNAFORD would also support the second reading, but was sorry that the Government had seen fit to strike out the clause relating to the planting of trees constituting cultivation, as he thought it would discourage the growth of the walnut and olive. (Hear, hear.) He was not a squatter himself, but he liked to see the squatters fairly dealt with, seeing that they benefited the country to a certain extent, and for this reason he considered they should have more than six months’ notice of resumption. He was pleased to see provision made for the holding of an increased area of land, as he had long been of opinion that the combination of agricultural with pastoral pursuits would conduce to the prosperity of the country. He also agreed with the proposals made by the Government relative to the mineral interest, and when the Bill was in Committee he could promise the Government his assistance in making any alterations which might be desirable. (Hear, hear.)

Mr. KING, in supporting the motion, would congratulate the Government upon having at length done justice to the mineral interests of the colony. (Hear hear.) There were many cases in which the heavy fines imposed by the Government had had the effect of swamping mines just as the shareholders were expecting to get a return for their money. While he considered that the extension of the period of lease would operate beneficially, he also thought the 5 per cent, royalty rather too high, and would suggest 2 1/2 per cent, as being more equitable. They must remember, for instance, that if the Moonta Mines had been a source of profit to the shareholders, they had also been of immense benefit to the colony at large. No rent, he thought, should be charged for mineral lands until they had been proved. At the same time every care should be taken to prevent shepherding and the holding of lands for purposes other than searching in a strictly bona fide manner. He would be glad to see the limited auction system modified. At present it led to a man paying in some instances too much money for the land, and having paid a large sum he was tempted to get as much out of it as he could and then go elsewhere. Something should be done to prevent a selector disposing of his land on the plea of sickness and after absenting himself from the colony for a short time returning and taking up land elsewhere. (Hear, hear.) Even if dummyism could be proved ten years after the issue of the title, he thought such proof should render the title void. (Hear, hear.)

Mr. JOHNSON was sorry provision had not been made in the Bill for the draining of mineral leases. In the event of seven or eight claims being taken up in a block, there was at the present time nothing to prevent six out of the seven from draining on to the lowest of the leaseholds, leaving the holder to get rid of the water aa best he could.

He also considered that the 30 days allowed for making up returns was too short a period, and that Is. an acre was too much for rent. With these remarks, he would support the second reading. (Hear, hear.)

Mr. BRIGHT was glad that the Bill had been introduced early in the session. He believed that it was an honest attempt on the part of the Government to improve the land laws, and that the consolidation of the laws would be found of great benefit. He agreed with many of the alterations which the Government proposed, and there were also many with which he could not agree. He was glad they had struck out the clause dealing with the planting of trees, as land so cultivated was foreign to the object contemplated. One part of the Bill which should be viewed, if not with suspicion, at all events with a great deal of caution, was the clause enabling the land of an insolvent selector to revert to his creditors. The clause in his opinion would afford great facilities for dummyism. A person, for instance, might take a selector’s bills to enable him to get the land, and he might then subsequently sue the selector on the bills and make him insolvent. The land would thus become to a great extent the property of the person who had advanced the money. (Hear, hear.) He did not see provision, either, for the sale of the land under the authority of the Commissioner of Crown Lands; and on the whole, unless the provisions were very carefully framed, it must give rise to a great deal of collusion. He thought clause 24 of the Act, relating to the forfeiture of selections, placed a large amount of power in the hands of the Commissioner of Crown Lands for the time being without the possibility of any appeal by or on behalf of the injured person. According to the clause he had named, the Commissioner had to determine what was sufficient proof of fraud, and he would remind them that Commissioners of Crown Lands were not infallible, although they might possess good administrative abilities. (Hear, hear.) There were other clauses that required explanation. He had no objection to the pastoral lessees being paid for their improvements, but he thought there should be some limit to the cost at which fencing, for instance, should be estimated. There was an omission as far as mineral licences were concerned. It was suggested last session that no one person should be allowed to hold more than 640 acres. There was no doubt that was a proper provision, but there was nothing in this Bill to meet it. A person might hold thousands of acres without working them, and so keep away other persons who would. Monopolies had not done any good for the colony, and they should endeavour to guard against them. The Bill was no doubt to some extent composed of materials which the Government found ready to their hands when they took office, but he presumed there was some part of it for which they were indebted to the present Ministers. He thought sufficient care had not been taken in respect to travelling stock reserves. He knew it was a difficult thing to deal with. For years past these reserves had not been devoted to the purpose for which they were intended, and the persons really requiring them had been debarred from the benefit simply because there was nothing on them for their cattle to eat. Stock reserves were not intended for the benefit of the persons who adjoined them, but for the pastoral lessees in the Far North to enable them to get their stock to market. The 125th clause, referring to that subject, was one that he approved of, and had marked as good. He believed such a clause if enacted would be the means of doing a great deal of good. He should vote for the second reading of the Bill although there were some clauses that he should desire to see very considerable alteration in. Perhaps if he had been introducing the Bill he should not have said so much as the Commissioner of Crown Lands did to the effect—“You may alter the Bill as much as you like, and we shall be happy to carry it.” (A laugh.) He (Mr. Bright), if in the Commissioner’s place, should have endeavoured to introduce a Bill in which there should be very few improvements needed. (Loud laughter.) The Commissioner of Crown Lands did not speak very hopefully of his bantling, which he assumed to be capable of so much improvement, and trusted the House to make it perfect. He hoped the Bill would be passed—(“ Hear, hear,”) from Mr. Carr)—certainly with alterations, and he hoped improvements as suggested by Mr. Carr. Hear, hear.)

On the motion of Mr. BLYTH the debate was adjourned, and made an Order of the Day for Thursday.