**CROWN LANDS AMENDMENT BILL 1893**

**House of Assembly, 8 August 1893, page 786**

Second reading

**The COMMISSIONER of CROWN LANDS** said that he very much regretted that it was necessary to move the second reading of the Crown Lands Amendment Bill at that late hour, particularly after the speeches they had just listened to, which were far more entertaining. He felt that the subject he was about to ask the House to consider would be a very much drier one, and perhaps would not be as eagerly listened to by hon. members. In moving the second reading it was not his intention to go into past legislation to any great extent, that would only weary hon. members, and he was pleased to state that he had decided earlier in the evening not to go into great details. The present Speaker and Mr. Howe in moving three important Land Bills in 1884, 1886, and 1888 seemed to have taken the whole of the available information on past legislation, and to have given the country and the House the benefit of that information. For that reason, it would not be advisable for him to go into the whole details of the past legislation that night. It had been the custom to give the history of past legislation, and this he intended to do briefly in order to enable members to see what improvements had been made. In 1836 the first lands were sold in South Australia, and up to 1869 all lands were sold for cash. In 1869 Strangways Act came into force, allowing land to be sold by auction on credit, and this system with various amendments was the law till 1888. The following was a return of land sold in the colony for cash and on credit to May 31, 1893: —Cash—Sales of town lands, 6,422 acres, £207,871 0s. 6d.; suburban lands, 170,106 acres, £395,924 4s. 10d.; country lands, 4,619,240 acres, £5,638,779 14s. 4d.; total, 4,795,768 acres, £6,242,574 19s. 8d., the average being about £1 6s. 6d. per acre. Sold on credit up to Act 444 of 1888—Selected on credit, 6,316,630 acres, £8,387,349 0s. 8d., of which there had been surrendered for selectors’ lease, absolute cancellation, or had been cancelled, 3,191,966 acres, £4,474,936 14s. 9d.; purchase completed, 2,283,463 acres, £2,832,974 13s. lid.; in course of completion (i.e., still held), 841,201 acres, £1,079,437 12s.; of this amount £566,888 1s. 1d. had been paid ; £77,246 11s. 4d. was overdue, and £435,302 19s. 7d. was becoming due, the average being about £1 6s. 6d. per acre. Amount of money actually received on credit selections was £3,399,862 15s., with cash sales, £6,242,574 19s. 8d., making a total of £9,642,437 14s. 8d. The following was a summary—Alienated in fee simple, 7,079,231 acres; still held under selectors’ agreements, 841,201 acres (the original purchase money on this was £1,079,437, but £567,570 having been paid the amount payable was £511,867); granted to Adelaide University, 50,000 acres; Agricultural College endowment, 50,000 acres ; Renmark irrigation, 30,000 acres; ostrich farm, 5,000 acres ; held under various leases (except pastoral), 16,117,519 acres, and producing a rental of £122,085 6s. 2d.; pastoral leases, 95,653,039 acres, and producing a rental of £72,085 13s. 8d.; total, 119,825,990 acres. Right of Purchase Leases—Scrub leases, 373,213 acres, £3,359 6s. 8d. rent; ordinary leases, 4,390,734 acres, £32,767 5s. 8d. rent; W.M.B. leases, 37,568 acres, £2,666 rent; special leases, 1,591 acres, £39 15s. 5d. rent; totals, 4,803,106 acres, £38,832 7s. 9d. rent. Perpetual leases, 3,847,130 acres, £20,664 6s. 9d. rent; W.M.B. leases, 1,363 acres, £429 14s. 8d. rent; totals, 3,848,493 acres, £21,094 Is. 5d. rent. Miscellaneous leases, 4,469,672 acres, £31,973 19s. 8d. rent; selectors’ leases, 330,030 acres, £3,073 4s. 6d. rent; grazing and cultivation leases, 1,515,510 acres, £7,827 7s. l0d. rent; reserved lands, 341,689 acres, £3,541 17s. l0d. rent; aboriginal leases, 102,861 acres, £90 11s. rent; mineral leases, 35,450 acres, £2,010 14s. rent ; gold leases, 2,574 acres, £1,286 12s. 6d. rent; mineral claims, 39,681 acres, £512 rent; education leases, 399,124 acres, £8,634 rent; forest leases, 229,329 acres, £3,208 9s. 8d. rent ; totals, 7,465,920 acres, £62,158 17s. rent. Grand totals, 16,117,519 acres, £122,085 6s. 2d. rent. Average per acre, l d. Pastoral, 95,653,039 acres. Amount of rent, £72,085 13s. 8d. The chief features of the various Acts were as follow:—Act No. of 1868-9—20 per cent, deposit as interest for four years; purchase-money to be paid at end of fourth year; area 640 acres. Act No. 14 of 1868-9 and No. 4 of 1869-70—20 per cent, deposit as interest for five years; purchase-money to be paid at end of five years, but three years’ extension allowed if required at 5 per cent, per annum payable in advance. Act No. 14 of 1868-9, No. 4 of 1869-70, and No. 27 of 1870-71—10 per cent, deposit as interest for three years, another 10 per cent, at expiration of three years; purchase-money to be paid at end of five years, but three years’ extension allowed if required at 5 per cent, per annum, payable in advance. Act No. 18 of 1872—10 per cent, deposit as interest for three years, another 10 per cent, at expiration of three years; purchase-money to be paid at expiration of six years, or selector may pay one-half purchase-money and have the remaining half extended for any period not exceeding four years at 4 per cent, per annum payable in advance. P.R. selectors allowed to complete purchase at end of fifth year without payment of further interest. Act No. 86 of 1877—10 per cent deposit, another 10 per cent, at end of third year; quarter purchase-money and 10 per cent, interest on three-quarter purchase-money to be paid at end of sixth year. Balance of purchase-money to be paid at end of ninth year; area, 1,000 acres. P.R. selectors at liberty to pay purchase-money at end of fifth year. Act No, 192 of 1880—10 per cent, deposit, 4 per cent, interest on purchase-money at commencement of fourth year and until and including the ninth year; quarter purchase- money and 5 per cent, interest on three-quarter purchase-money to be paid at end of ninth year, and 5 per cent, on three-quarter purchase- money to be paid at commencement of eleventh and each succeeding year until and including the twentieth year. Balance of purchase-money to be paid at end of twentieth year. P.R. selectors entitled to pay purchase-money at end of fifth year or any time thereafter without payment of further interest. Act No 235 of 1881—Payments same as Act 192 of 1880. Act No. 275 of 1882—10 percent, deposit, another 10 per cent. at commencement of third year, and 5 per cent, to be paid at expiration of every year thereafter until the whole of the purchase-money has been paid. All payments credited to purchase-money. P.R. selectors can pay balance of purchase-money at end of tenth year or any time thereafter during currency of agreement. Selectors failing to pay any instalment on account P.M. within 30 days from due date to be charged interest at the rate of 5 per cent., and on non-payment of such instalment and interest for two years the agreement to be cancelled. Act No. 318 of 1884— Payments same as Act 275 of 1882; Act No 363 of 1885, do. do.; Act No. 393 of 1886, do do.; Act No. 420 of 1887, do. do.; Act No 444 of 1888, do. do.; Act No. 472 of 1889, do. Do.; Act No. 500 of 1890, do. do. Selectors allowed to complete purchase at the expiration of six years from time when such land was originally taken up. Under the Act of 1882 selectors were allowed to surrender and to get their land back at reduced price. The number of selectors who availed themselves of this Act was 1,445. representing an area of 628,276 acres, of which the selectors repurchased at reduced prices 577,959 acres. The reduction of purchase money of this area represented £748,574, and under the same Act remissions were granted to the extent of £95,501. Although this Act did not in all cases relieve the most deserving it enabled a large number of selectors to profitably occupy the land, which could not have been done if they had been compelled to adhere to their former agreements. The Act of 1884 granted further remissions to the extent of £194,267. This remission was made by placing all interest that had been paid to the credit of purchase money. In 1888 the land boards were appointed, on the recommendation of the Land Commission, as there was great dissatisfaction with the auction system. As they intended to extend this system, he would here mention the work done by the boards. The first board, except the Pastoral Board, was appointed under Act 393 of 1886 to deal with lands set apart as grazing and cultivation blocks, under sections 49 to 59 of that Act. Their functions were only to allot. They consisted of Government officers and acted whenever there were any applications with which to deal. In 1887 the South-Eastern Board was appointed to allot lands reserved by the Act of 1886 for leasing. These were lands that were thought likely to become valuable owing to drainage and other public works. A board had no power to fix rents unless there were more applicants than one, and then they could divide the blocks and fix the rent. Under the Act of 1888 boards were appointed making four new ones, viz., the Northern, Western, Yorke’s Peninsula, and Central. Power was given to decide on the area, rent, and purchase money, and allotment of the lands. The land boards undoubtedly had very difficult work to do, and on the whole they had done it remarkably well. When there were 90applicants for one block of land it was clear that only one man could get it, and as a consequence the remaining 89 were disappointed. Under such circumstances it was not to wondered at that complaints were made, but when those complaints had been sifted to the bottom it would generally be found that land boards had acted justly. As a whole system had been a great boon to the community. It had been argued that land boards had reduced the values of land, but it must be remembered that land values had decreased, no doubt largely through the deprecation in the value of produce. No land at the present time was as valuable as it was a few years ago for farming purposes. The lands which had been dealt with and passed and were now open to application were—Ordinary lands, forest lands, and educational lands, 764,053 acres; working men's blocks, 15,895 acres. Total, 779,948 acres. The area gazetted and not yet dealt with, or now being dealt with, by land boards were Ordinary lands, forest lands, and educational lands, 796,772 acres; working men’s blocks, 1,005 acres. Total, 797,777 acres. The total cost of the land boards to July 31, 1893, had been:—Central, £8,676 6s. 9d.; northern, £7,137 11s. 6d.; Yorke’s Peninsula, £6,378 Is. 7d.; south-eastern, £6,240 17s. 4d.; western, £7,047 19s. 2d. Total, £35,480 16s. 4d. The first board was appointed on February 4, 1889. Undoubtedly this system was a vast improvement on the auction system, and the principal cause of complaint had been delay, and there was provision in the Bill to avoid this. The Central Board would sit in Adelaide and would deal with all lands that had been dealt with once by other boards. This would avert considerable delay, for the present boards would not have to travel over the same ground such a number of times as in the past. This would be a great advantage to men who were anxious to get land and generally would be a decided boon. There was no system of dealing with the land like that of personal inspection. The land boards had sometimes been called a very costly experiment, and he believed like other members that it had been too expensive. That was why the Government recommended the appointment of a central land board to consist of Government officers, but no one could deny that a great deal of good work had been done by the boards since they had been appointed. Since 1888 they had allotted 6,298,148 acres and had revalued 4,277.476 acres. The central board would have to do no travelling at all, so that on that account there would be no extra cost. (Mr. Bartlett—“The people who want land will be at the mercy of the Civil servants.”) There were as honest men in the Civil Service as there were outside, and he was sure the people and the Government were willing to trust them. At the present time 779,948 acres could be immediately dealt with by this board in order that applicants could get on to it at once. The present land boards would make an inspection of this land, and travel over it once to allot it. (Mr. Howe—“They will have to go over it twice.”) They will have to go once to inspect it and fix the area, and again to allot it. (Mr. Caldwell—“What has been the cost of land boards?”) The total cost up to July 31, 1893, had been £35,480 16s. 4d. He would not deal further with land boards, as there was another important matter to which he wished to refer, and that was free selection. It was not the first time that this had been introduced into the House, as Mr. Burgoyne when Commissioner of Crown Lands in 1889, proposed it. At that time Mr. Krichauff, who was a member of the House, requested that the Government would extend the system to the blockers. That had been done in the Bill, and he was glad to know that the late Commissioner of Crown Lands, Mr. Howe, had also included it in his measure. They had avoided placing any special area in the Bill, as they wished that the Government should be allowed to proclaim areas, particulars of which would have to be laid before Parliament. They thought that if the system was a good one, and if it proved successful in its first application the Government should have power to extend it without bringing in a fresh Bill. No doubt strong arguments would be brought to bear against the system, but the strongest one in its favor would be that it would give the people every facility for getting on to the land. In the past most of the money that the settlers possessed had been expended in inspecting the land, but if a man was energetic enough to go away some distance and take up land, he should be allowed to have it and make his home on it at once. They had been told that it would be open to all sorts of frauds, but they had provided that for the first six years the lessee must comply with the residence condition of nine months in the year. The man who was willing to do that would not be much of a dummy. (Mr. Ash—“How will you see that he carries out the condition?”) It would be part of the inspector’s duties to see that they carried out this condition, and if it is not carried out the leases would be liable to forfeiture. (Mr. Bartlett—“Will it be liable to be jumped”) No doubt when an area was thrown open there would be a lot of people ready to take up the land, and disputes would occur as on a goldfield. These would have to be settled by a Government officer dispatched to the place, but he did not think that there would be any large number of such disputes. (Mr. Moule—“The inspectors won’t be able to see what is going on.”) The wardens on goldfields settled disputes by taking evidence, and the Government officer would have to do so in this case to find out who first put in the pegs. (Mr. Bartlett—“What is the area?“) They had limited it in the Bill so that no man could take up land that would exceed £5,000 in value. (Mr. Bartlett—“Why don’t you go for area?”) The hon. member would have his opportunity of speaking, when he promised him that he would not interject. (Mr. Bartlett—“Remember what the Attorney- General told you.”)

The SPEAKER—Order.

Mr. BARTLETT—I can speak.

The SPEAKER—Will the hon. member take his seat? He is distinctly out of order.

M. BARTLETT—I have the right to interject. I will interject.

The SPEAKER—Will the Minister kindly take his seat? I must ask the hon. member to withdraw that remark. Interjections when they amount to interruptions are distinctly out of order.

Mr. BARTLETT—I don’t wish to put you to defiance.

The SPEAKER—The hon. member must withdraw that remark.

Mr. BARTLETT—I will withdraw it.

The COMMISSIONER of CROWN LANDS said there would be no difficulty when the time came for Mr. Bartlett to give his opinion to the House. Those who intended to oppose free selection should remember that the Government only asked to be allowed to make an experiment on a certain area, and if it did not prove a success the House would have the power of preventing any further action being taken under the Act. He felt certain that land thrown open under this system would prove a success, because there were many people anxiously awaiting for land. Many candidates at the last elections, and many of the successful ones too, advocated this system, and in every instance where it was advocated the people felt that it was the right thing. He was not advocating its adoption in settled districts, but in districts where it was difficult for people to get land by coming before the land boards. With regard to loans to blockers they were allowed advances up to £50 on buildings or stables. A great many of them, however, did not require stables, while others were not anxious to expend their money on houses, but would sooner have assistance in establishing orchards. There were plenty of blockers who were content with very primitive dwellings, because they knew that costly houses were of very little use to them in developing their blocks, and they would prefer to have money to help them in improving their land. The Government felt sure that it would be a much better security to the State if by lending a man money they could induce him to cultivate from 500 to 1,000 fruit trees than it would be to help him to build a house. At present the blockers could not get advances for sinking wells, and many of them had no water on their land. (Mr. Moule—“You will advance money on labour expended.”) For instance, if a man took up a working man’s block in the scrub, and he cleared that scrub, the Government would advance him pound for pound up to £50 on what it cost him. Members would see that they did not interfere with the present limit of £50. The blockers would infinitely prefer to get money either to help them to clear their land, sink for water, or make other improvements than to erect buildings. He knew one of the best blocks in the north which had only the most primitive dwelling-house on it, yet the blocker was doing well by having expended his money in developing the land. That was the sort of people that they wished to encourage. The blockers’ system, in spite of the adverse criticism which had been passed on it, was becoming very prosperous. We had at any rate nearly 3,000 blocks occupied, bringing in an annual rental of £3,017, and with a total area of 38,931 acres. The number of inhabitants was 8,000. The blockers appeared to very readily pay their rent, and they were at a great advantage compared with the men who lived in townships, who could only afford to rent but a very limited area. (Mr. Bartlett—“Will you not make the blocks large enough for a man to keep a cow ?”) In that the hon. member had his sympathy, and he thought no man should have less than 20 acres unless it were near a town, when on account of the high rents he could not afford it. There were 244 blockers who had availed themselves of the opportunity of obtaining assistance from the Government, and the total loans amounted to £5,731 10s., or an average of £23 10s. If half this money had been allowed to be expended on improvements other than buildings or stables the produce from these blocks would have been of very great benefit not only to the blockers but also to the adjoining townships. (Mr. Moule—“Will the Bill be extended to those who have already obtained blocks?’) No man who had had a loan would be allowed to come under this Act. (Mr. Howe—“How if they all claim it?”) They would have to make provision and vote as much as they could afford. There were 2,600 blocks, so that at an average of £23 10s. each it would amount to about £50,000. However, so far only about 10 per cent had wished the Government to assist them, and they were paying up their instalments remarkably well, and he thought there were only a few instances in which they had been obliged to ask for extensions of time. They had easy terms, and most of them were only too anxious to repay the loans. (Mr. Moule—“If they all take the full loan it will amount to £120,000 or £130,000.”) It was not likely that the percentage of those who wanted assistance would be much greater than it had been in the past. It had been said that the cultivation of land in South Australia had been very small. The statement was true, and it was the duty of the Government and the House to encourage settlement on the land and cultivation as much as possible. But still South Australia was not so far behind compared with the other colonies, as there were eight acres under cultivation to every individual in the colony. In Victoria the figures were 2.32, in New South Wales 1.01, in Queensland 0.63, in West Australia 2.48, in Tasmania 3.39, and in New Zealand 2.47, and those figures showed that South Australia had made far more rapid stride than the other colonies. Another clause provided for a deposit being paid in connection with land purchased for working men’s blocks The Government thought it was absolutely necessary to carry out the proposal contained in the clause that memorials for the purchase of land should be accompanied by a deposit of 5 per cent (“Very illiberal.”) It was not illiberal. Very often it happened that landholders interested themselves in getting up memorials in favor of the Government purchasing land, but it was not always in the interest of blockers that certain land should be secured by the Government, and it was only fair that memorials to the Government should be accompanied by a deposit of 5 per cent, from each individual signing them. (Mr. Moule—“When people petition for squatters’ land being resumed you don’t ask for a deposit.”) No, because the Government would be resuming something which belonged to the State, whereas in the other case they would be acquiring new property. In the past more land had been purchased for working men’s blocks than was absolutely necessary. For example, the Government purchased 952 acres in the hundred of Yongala, and only 570 acres had been leased. In the hundred of Melville 444 acres were purchased and only 266 were leased. In the hundred of Munno Para 582 acres were purchased and only 305 acres had been leased, in the hundred of Blanche 80 acres were secured and only 24 acres had been leased, while in the hundred of Gilbert 212 acres, which had been purchased, had not yet been allotted. Up to the present the Government had purchased 2,271 acres at a cost of £10,879, and only 1,278 acres had been leased at a total annual rental of £315 8s. 9d. If the clause were passed, in future men would not sign memorials unless they wanted it, and the deposit would show the Government exactly how much land was required and what customers there would be for it. The Government officers were very careful about purchasing land, and very often they could not advise the Government to pay the amount asked by the owners, and several purchases had been stuck up for a considerable time because it was not thought the land was worth what was asked for it. The Government officer was very careful, and he had every confidence in him. The man who got enough out of him to pay the deposit would not make much out of the land. Section 3 simply repealed section 31, and schedule D of the principal Act, which related to disputes with arbitrators. In the past the Government had allowed them to be settled by the land boards, and many disputes had cost the Government large sums of money. In one small case not long ago, a man got £22 10s. as fees for a few days’ work. The alteration of the schedule meant the extension of the right to reduce rent inside of hundreds instead of in specified areas only. The boards had been reducing rents in the hundreds, although they had no right to do so, and their action had never been validated. It was only right that the boards should had power to do so, because there were many very deserving cases, and the Government felt justified in asking the House to amend the law in the direction indicated, so as to ratify the action of the board. The leases dealt with under that were leases for grazing and cultivation, miscellaneous leases, and scrub leases. The next important point referred to free selection before survey, and he would attention to clause 24, in which the Government tried to protect the system from abuse by providing that the applicant have to reside on the land for nine months out of every year during the first six years of the term. If that clause were passed it was not likely that land would be taken up by other than bona fide settlers. Clause 33 gave power to resume land for mining purposes without having to give notice of resumption, and he thought that would prove a valuable section. In the next clause the House was asked to give power for the payment of compensation to be settled by the land boards. Under previous Acts the question had to be referred to arbitrators, and the cost was excessive at times. The Government thought the land boards could very well do the work, and that if that policy were followed the cost would be greatly reduced. Part 5 referred to homestead blocks, and power was given to alter the name from working men’s blocks to homestead blocks. The next clause referred to the deposit of which he had spoken, and the next to the loans to blockholders. Members would see by clause 40 that the labour of the blockholder might be taken account in computing the cost of improvements. A blocker might not have the means but he might have the strength, and if he did work which the inspector considered worth £20 the Government should be empowered to pay him £10. (Mr. Bartlett—“Can we afford it’) He thought so, because the Government would simply be lending the money, which would be repaid in ten annual instalments. If it was a good thing to assist settlement in other ways it was surely wise to encourage the blockers in that way, because he was the settler who really needed assistance. The block settlement was increasing every day and it was the duty of the Government to encourage it. The next clause protected the improvements so that the block-holder could not remove or injure them until the loan was repaid. The following clause was rather debatable as it referred to the limitations of holdings with the right of purchase. At the present time there was a clause which limited the powers of the boards in giving transfers to men who held more than £5,000 worth of land. It was not in the interest of the colony to encourage the building up of large estates and £5,000 worth of land anywhere ought to be sufficient to make a living on. At any rate that was his opinion, and the Government proposed not to give the right to acquire the right of purchase of over £5,000 worth. (Mr. Bartlett—“Why no fix the area.") Because the value of land differs very much, and 20,000 acres night be worth £5,000 in one place, whereas in another the area might not be anywhere near so great. Clause 45 said:—“All perpetual leases which shall be granted after lands held under perpetual lease shall have been made subject to the land tax shall be exempt from the provisions of all Crown Lands Acts relating to the revaluation of rent; and the rent originally reserved shall be payable during the whole of the term.” That clause provided that all future perpetual leases be subject to the land tax, and the Government hoped that the House would agree to it. If the clause was passed no perpetual lease would be leased with the provision for revaluation. The increased value would be obtained by the land tax. At the present time the land board put up a block of land at say 10s. purchase money, or 1d. on perpetual lease, and someone took it up on a right of purchase instead of perpetual lease, but there was no power to compel him to purchase the land unless he wished to. If the land fell in value the chances were he would not complete his purchase, but if it increased in value the chances were that he would make a thousand or so and pay the Government. What was the difference between giving a man a perpetual lease for ever and ever and a right-of-purchase lease for ever and ever. In one case the Government had the right to tax the land up to its increased value, and their proposal was to put both leaseholders on the same footing. There was a difference between the perpetual and the right-of-purchase, and many people preferred the former, but they objected to the system of revaluation every 14 years. It was certainly a ridiculous thing that a man should take up land on a perpetual lease, make what he considered a permanent home, and then that the Government valuator should come along at the end of 14 years and say “Owing to your improved circumstances and conditions you will have to pay 3s. or 4s. more,” while the other man who paid the same rental could let his land at an increased rental and put the balance in his pocket. That was not fair, and the Government wished to put the two on one footing. In the past the Government had received the purchase money for millions of acres of land, and now the money was gone as well as the land. If they let the land on perpetual lease, they would be getting an annual rental, which would be most acceptable. Members generally admitted that the great evil of the past had been the disposing of the best land, and it was their duty to do away with the system as much as they possibly could. They were not giving it away, as the land belonged to the Crown. Clauses 46, 47, and 48 gave the land boards powers to do legally what they had done in the past without that sanction. Under clause 49 they made all the leases binding. The necessity of the clause was that disputes were likely to arise about different lands let on different forms of lease when there was no authority for letting them on such conditions. The point had been raised that perhaps these leases were not legal, although people had purchased them properly, and it was thought that they should be informed of what their true position was. There were miscellaneous leases issued for which there was no power existing to issue under the conditions that they were issued. Under the present land laws any man with a mineral claim could only take a certain quantity of ore away for analysis, but the Bill proposed to give the lessee the right to do what he liked with the ore he obtained from his claim. Clause 51 did away with arbitration by settling disputes by means of the land boards. It was thought that it would be the cheapest way of settling disputes, as the cost would be considerably reduced. The next clause was simply an amendment giving a right of purchase to blockers under the Acts of 1885 and 1886. As they were not allowed previously to obtain the fee-simple of their lands the privilege was extended them of going in under the present system. There were many other points, and he was sorry he had had to rush through the Bill so hurriedly, but the House sitting so late he thought it would not be right to ask hon. members to listen to a lot of the past history of land legislation. As he was leaving the city on the following day nothing would give him greater pleasure than to hear on his return that the Crown Lands Bill had passed through that House, and had been successfully carried through the Upper House.

On the motion of Mr. CALDWELL the debate was adjourned.

Mr. ASH, on the motion fixing the continuation of the debate for Thursday, said he thought it would be better to adjourn the debate until some day on which the Com­missioner of Crown Lands would be present. It would be most undesirable to carry the second reading in the absence of the Minister who had charge of the Bill, and also in the absence of several country members who would be away. Under the circumstances he thought it would be well to adjourn the debate for more than a week.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL said the Government did not propose to take the Bill out of the stage in which it was, but if they asked hon. members to continue the debate it would be in the presence of a member of the Government, who would see that their wishes had due consideration.

The motion was carried.