

HOUSE OF KEYS.

DOUGLAS, THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 19, 1891.

THE ALTERATION TO THE KEYS' CHAMBER.

On the House assembling at 11 o'clock,

The **SPEAKER**, who was indistinctly heard, was understood to say: I have endeavoured during the vacation to have the alterations in the Keys Chamber carried out as nearly as possible in compliance with the wishes of the House. The tables and benches, where the Bar and the Press are seated, have been, as you will see, improved. These tables are only of rough material, and are covered up temporarily, so that if any other arrangement is desirable it can be carried out. It is better not to spend much money until it is seen whether the present arrangement is good one or not. (Hear, hear.) The permanent arrangements, both for members and others, will be made after the tenders for the new Tynwald Court and House of Keys ante-rooms are accepted. The seats for the Public can then be raised.

Mr JAS. MYLCHREEST: The only fault I have to find is that the members' table is too small. The old table accommodated 24 members comfortably; this table only takes 22.

Mr MYLREA: As a matter of fact, the old table did not take 24 members.

The SPEAKER: As a matter of fact, this is the old table which was put originally in the House. I do not remember why, but during my absence, some leading spirits made up tables on each side. (Laughter.) There is a greater amount of space at present for members who sit around the table.

Mr J. R. COWELL: I was a member of the committee to consider this question; but, unfortunately, I was not able to attend any sittings. But I must say, that so far as I can judge, the present arrangement is an exceedingly wise one, and a very great improvement on the former arrangement of the House. I refer more particularly to the fact that the various members representing other constituencies can now sit together, which I think is a matter of paramount

The Alteration to the Keys' Chamber.

importance. Here, on my right, I find the members for Douglas, who now form a large and powerful body of representatives. They are all together, and will find it convenient to consult with each other. I hope that this arrangement will be strictly carried out.

BUSINESS BEFORE THE HOUSE.

The SPEAKER said that the business before the House was a Bill for the incorporation, management, and winding-up of Building Societies and a Bill to amend the House of Keys Election Act.

Mr FISHER : There is a subject which I think is of some importance to the House, and which I think is deserving of calling attention to. That is the ignorance of members as to the business which is to come before the House. (Hear,hear.) I must confess, for my part, I have not the slightest knowledge of what will come before us. I do not know whether other members do so, but when the House is summoned by the Governor's precept, I take the trouble of reading over the items of business upon that precept. The last time I was summoned was for to-day, and I saw upon that precept these items :—The Married Woman's Property Act—I know nothing about that; the Hiring of Chattels—I know nothing about that; and the Law of Inheritance—again of that I know nothing. The House of Keys Election Act, and the Act for the Regulation of Building Societies, I have had in my hands only since last Saturday. I think that is too short a time to consider the subjects we have before us. To put myself in order, I beg to move the following resolution :—That the secretary, after every adjournment of the House *sine die*, shall forward an agenda paper to each member, a reasonable time before the House meets.

The SPEAKER : I think the House will not go on with a matter like that, because the business before the House is not in the Secretary's hands at all; practically it is in my hands. The House is not in any better or worse position on account of what is put on the precept. No objection can be taken to the Governor putting on the precept certain Bills which are likely to be considered, but it does not follow at all that the House will take that business up. It rests entirely with the House what they will do with the Bills. As far as the business of the House is concerned, with regard to

Business before the House.

myself personally, I may say a Bill is sent me either by the Governor before the sitting of the House, or by an individual member of the House after a Bill has been read a first time. I then have all the Bills of which I have official cogniance put on the agenda paper. I bring that before the House, and the House take it up or do not take it up as they feel disposed ; it is entirely in their own hands. I never see a summons to the House of Keys myself ; but whenever I have copies of Bills they are sent to members. I have not copies of some of these Bills, and they are, therefore, not before the House. Therefore, I would ask the hon. member not to bring that motion, because the Secretary does not know anything more than I know of it.

Mr FISHER : I am sorry I cannot carry my project out. I still think we ought to have some idea of the business that is coming before the House. These subjects have only been in our hands three days, and I think that is certainly too short a time for anyone to take them up. Even the hon. member who brings them in said he thought three weeks was quite little enough time to have them in our hands before we deal with them.

The SPEAKER : My advice to the hon. member is not to press his motion. Nothing else can be done than is done.

Mr MYLREA : As the question which has been raised by the hon. member for Glanfaba touches me to some small extent, perhaps the House will permit me to explain my position with regard to it. At the last sitting of the House I obtained leave to introduce five Bills, and I informed the House that so far as I was concerned I should not press the House to proceed with the consideration of those Bills for three weeks. That is my position to-day, and I have not the slightest desire to compel the hon. member to proceed with these Bills if he has not had an opportunity of understanding them. I can only assure the hon. member that I tried to perform my part faithfully in trying to get the Bills in the hands of members three weeks before the sitting of the House. But it is not a very easy matter to get five Bills printed and circulated, and it is a task to which, as a rule, hon. members do not apply themselves. I have known this House for ten years, and have never known that attempted. I have seen two Bills introduced and hanging fire for years. I think, therefore, it is no disgrace

Business before the House.

that I have not been able to put all these Bills before the House. (Hear, hear.) I do not press the House to take them up, but at the same time I might suggest to the House that as reasonable men they might do some work. With regard to some of the Bills—for instance, the House of Keys Election Bill—there is a good deal of matter of a non-contentious character, but in no case would I ask the House to deal finally with these bills to-day. I would have asked the House, after working through all the clauses, to hold the Bill over in order that the time of the House may not be wasted.

Mr FISHER: After that I withdraw my motion, but I think I have been of service in calling attention to this question.

The SPEAKER: For some reason or other the Bills were not in the hands of members at the time they ought to have been, and, I believe, everybody who is responsible throws the responsibility on someone else. I thought they would have been in the hands of members twelve days before the 19th. and I chose that day on behalf of the House because the Council were sitting on that day. As far as any principle in these Bills is concerned, any hon. member who reads them over and pays any attention to them, can settle it in two hours—perhaps ten minutes. If members wish, of course, they can go home at once. I do not live very far away. (Laughter.)

Mr JOUGHIN: I think there ought to be some reasonable time given to consider Bills. I confess I have had two Bills, and I have only read the smaller of the two in the railway carriage coming down. (Shame!) It is a shame for men who have nothing else to do, but my time is fully occupied from getting up in the morning to going to bed at night. I have made two or three attempts to read this Bill, but other business has pressed on me. The introducer of these Bills said they should be in the hands of members at least three weeks before they came on for second reading.

Mr MYLREA: I said I would not press the House to proceed with them.

After some further unimportant discussion,

Mr J. R. COWELL agreed that it was desirable that further notice should be given, but urged that the day should not be wasted, and moved that the Building Societies Bill should be proceeded with.

Business before the House.

Mr J. T. COWELL seconded the motion, to which the House agreed.

BUILDING SOCIETIES.

Mr MYLREA : Before we proceed with the Bill which the House has decided to take up, I may say state that there are petitions from the Building Societies, praying to be heard by counsel. There are petitions from the Douglas and Isle of Man Building Company, Limited ; the Douglas Workmen's Building Company, Limited ; and the Manx Building Company, Limited—praying to be heard by counsel. I beg to move that counsel be heard.

Mr MARTIN seconded the motion, and it was agreed to.

Messrs Creer and Coole appeared for the three Societies.

Mr Creer said the Societies were formed under various rules, and the Act contemplated the transfer of the present Companies from the operation of the Companies' Acts. It was thought desirable they should be heard on each clause, or principal clause.

The SPEAKER : The best plan will be to hear counsel on the principle, first of all ; and then, if the House gives special leave, on the clauses.

The House adjourned for a short time to meet the Governor and Council in Tynwald Court, in the Council Chamber. The House then resumed consideration of the Building Societies Bill.

The following memorandum was prefixed to the Bill, and explains its object :—

Building Societies in the Isle of Man, at present, are incorporated under the Companies' Acts, 1865 to 1884, which, while they contain much that is inapplicable, do not contain many provisions which are necessary for the proper working of Building Societies. The present Bill is framed on the lines of the English Building Societies Act of 1874.

Mr Coole : I represent the Manx and Douglas Workmen's Building Companies. The Boards of directors are satisfied with the present law, subject to one alteration, which, I understand, the hon. and learned member for North Douglas, Mr Mylrea, will suggest.

A discussion arose on clause 3, which was as follows :—

Any society in the nature of a building society or loan company registered under the Companies Acts, 1865 to 1884, may apply to be registered under this act, and, upon complying with the provisions hereof, shall be entitled to be registered hereunder, and shall, upon being so registered, be relieved from

compliance with any of the provisions of the said acts, which are not hereby made binding on societies to be hereafter formed under the provisions hereof, and the memorandum of association and articles of association of such society or company shall, so far as the same are not contrary to any express provisions of this act, be deemed to be the rules thereof, until the same be altered or rescinded; and where any society or company now registered under the Companies Acts, 1865 to 1884, shall be registered under this Act, all rights of action and other rights, and all estates and interests in real and personal property whatsoever, now belonging to or held in trust for any such society or company registered under the said acts, shall, on the incorporation of the society or company under this act, vest in the society or company without any conveyance or assignment whatsoever.

A certificate of incorporation under this act shall not be granted to an existing society except upon application to the registrar made by authority of a resolution passed by at least three-fourths of the members present, and voting at a general meeting of the society specially called for the purpose, and the registrar may require of the person making the application an affidavit that such authority was duly given.

Mr MYLREA: This is a somewhat important clause, as the House will be aware. There are four building societies in the Isle of Man, having altogether funds invested to the extent of about £50,000, and having weekly subscriptions amounting to about £150, and the societies include some 500 members. All those societies at the present time are registered under the Companies Acts, 1866 to 1884. The object of this clause is to exempt them from the provisions of the Companies Acts, and bring them under the operation of this Act, by applying to be registered under this Act, and upon so coming under this Act the memorandum and articles of Association will then form the rules of the Society, so far as they are in accordance with this Act, until they are altered or rescinded.

The clause, with a light verbal amendment, was agreed to.

Mr J. R. COWELL drew attention to clause 7—

The liability of any member of any society registered under the Companies Acts, 1865 to 1884, and subsequently registered under this Act, in respect of any share upon which no advance has been made shall be limited to the amount actually agreed to be paid by him under the original rules and regulations of such society; the liability of any member of any new society registered under this Act in respect of any share upon which no advance has been made shall be limited to the amount actually paid or in arrear on such share; and the liability of any member of any society registered under this Act in respect of any share upon which an advance has been made shall be limited to the amount payable thereon under any mortgage or other security, or under the rules of the society.

Building Societies.

Mr J. R. COWELL: I should like the hon. member to explain the difference between the first part of this clause and the latter part. In the first part, as I read it, members are liable for the amount they actually agree to pay under the original rules, and, in the latter part, applying to new companies, members are liable only for the amount actually paid or in arrear.

Mr MYLREA: The difference of course is this—when a new society is formed members go into that new society knowing exactly the obligations they are under, and, therefore, if the Act prescribes that their liabilities should be limited to the amount of subscriptions actually paid or in arrear, they know what they are doing; but with regard to companies already formed under certain rules and regulations, the members who become parties to that society are cognisant of them, and bound by them. When they became members of such societies not only had they the opportunity of gaining prospective benefits, but they also had to undertake the risk of some possible prospective losses. Therefore, it is right that the members of a company registered previous to this Act should undertake now the liabilities which they then undertook when they formed the societies.

Clause agreed to.

Clause 8 contained powers for borrowing money under certain conditions.

Mr MYLREA explained that none of the Insular societies borrowed money, but the words were borrowed from the English Act in case any of the societies desired to borrow.

Clause agreed to.

Clause 12, sub-section 7, provided that where a person owning property mortgaged to the Company died intestate, and the property was sold, the Society could pay over the balance, after deduction of money due to the Society, to the administrator without applying for the appointment of guardians.

Mr MYLREA, in reply to Mr J. R. Cowell, explained that after selling the property and paying the charges upon it, there might be only a very small margin left. As under the existing law the Society would not be authorised to pay that over to the administrator, it would entail the appointment of guardians, and probably the expenses of doing so would eat up the amount

before the operation was performed. This provision was copied from the English Act.

Mr J. R. COWELL : Supposing there is more than £150 ?

Mr MYLREA : Then they must set up guardians. But it is obvious, if there is only £10, £15, or £20, if they have to go to Court and take proceedings for the appointment of guardians and so forth, it is not worth while doing it. (Hear, hear).

Section agreed to.

Clause 24 provided for the recovery of penalties for offences against the Act.

Mr MARTIN asked whether it would not be better that the application of fines upon persons guilty of offences under the Act should not be defined, as to whether they went to the Crown, or whether the societies had them.

Mr MYLREA : I am afraid the societies won't get the benefit of them.

Mr Creer : I do not apprehend that there will be many of these penalties. We will sail within the Act. Unless the Bill specially placed them somewhere else, I presume they would go to the fine fund, and fall into the general account.

On the motion of Major STEPHEN, seconded by Mr MOORE, the words in the 14th section, referring to the form of bond for officers of the society, were struck out as unnecessary.

Mr MYLREA moved that the Bill do pass.

Mr J. R. COWELL seconded.—Carried.

BILL TO PROVIDE A SHELTER ON THE HARRIS PROMENADE AT DOUGLAS.

Mr J. J. GOLDSMITH introduced a Bill conferring powers on the Douglas Town Commissioners to erect a shelter and other buildings upon the Harris Promenade.

Mr MYLREA : I would ask whether this Bill could not now be read a first time. I believe there is considerable urgency for this shelter upon the Harris Promenade. I move that the Bill be read a first time.

Mr MARTIN seconded the motion, which was agreed to.

The Bill was then read a first time.

At this stage the House adjourned for luncheon.

Bill to provide a Shelter on the Harris Promenade, Douglas.

HOUSE OF KEYS ELECTION BILL.

On resuming after luncheon, the House took up the second reading of the House of Keys Election Bill, introduced by Mr Mylrea. The summary prefixed to the Bill is as follows :—

This Bill proposes to make the following alterations in the existing law :—

1. To continue the Act of 1883 to 31st December, 1902 (see section 4).
2. To define the meaning of annual value (sec. 5).
3. To provide that a person who changes his residence shall not lose his vote if during the twelve months next preceding the twelfth May, he shall have been in continuous occupation of premises of required value, even though such premises may be in different divisions of the same town or sheading (sec. 6).
4. To provide as to mode of registering votes in towns or sheadings divided into divisions (secs. 7 and 8).
5. To require lists of voters to remain open for inspection for fourteen days at office of revising advocates (sec. 9).
6. To abolish the property qualification of members (sec. 10).
7. Not to require the returning officers to enter up poll book (sec. 11).
9. To provide for mode of holding elections for sheadings and towns divided into districts, and to declare who shall be entitled to vote (secs. 12 and 13).
10. To provide a new table of fees to meet the altered circumstances which have come into force since the passing of the Act of 1866 (sec. 14).

Mr J. R. COWELL: I think before we go any further into this Bill, it will be manifest to every member of the House that the Bill is a very important one, and deals with some grave questions affecting the country, including important constitutional changes; and I rise for the purpose of suggesting to the hon. gentleman who has charge of the Bill, that it would be desirable, now, to explain the more important clauses of this Bill so that the House may know, as it proceeds to deal with the measure, what the object and the purport of the Bill really is. There are many references to portions of previous acts repealed, which it would be desirable should be explained, and the reasons given for repealing them. For instance, in the fourth clause reference is made to the House of Keys Election Act, 1883, as amended by the Act of 1891, that it should be continued in force till the 31st day of December 1902. I venture to think that the most of the members will not know what that means. That has reference, I suppose, to the continuation of the Ballot Act.

Mr Mylrea rose to explain the Bill.

The SPEAKER: There is no objection to the hon. member moving the passing of the first clause, and going into the Bill as a whole, without going into details as far as possible.

Mr MYLREA: I beg to move that the first clause do pass.

Mr FISHER: I think if the hon. member explained the summary on the first page, it would meet with the views of the House.

Mr MYLREA: I have no objection to take that course, if it is agreeable to the House. I am bound to say that I am one of those members in this House who, whenever it is possible to be silent, never open their mouths. On this occasion I had not intended to address the House at any length in introducing the Bill—not from any want of deference or respect to the House; but because the summary of the Bill is an extremely full summary, and sets forth in a few words the effect of every clause in the Bill. If I go beyond that, and proceed to deal with it clause by clause, it is tantamount to my taking each clause in succession and explaining it thoroughly in the most full manner, exactly as one would have to do if the Bill were being read in ordinary course, and each clause fully debated as it arises. However, if that is the wish of the House, I am bound to comply, though I did not expect to do it, and, I may say, I was not prepared to do it, and the House must be prepared to spend a considerable amount of time, which may be the greater by reason of my not being fully prepared. With those reservations, if the House wish, I shall be glad to proceed to explain the provisions of the Bill.

Mr MOORE: I move as an amendment that we proceed clause by clause.

Mr MYLREA: I suppose the best plan would be for me to adopt the suggestion of the House—if the House is of that way of thinking.

The SPEAKER: If this Bill had one principle in it, it would be quite right for the hon. member to take that course; but, I understand, almost every clause in the Bill refers to a different subject. Therefore, unless the Bill is debated clause by clause, the hon. member will first of all have to explain each part of the Bill, and afterwards explain the Bill clause by clause when we come on to debate.

Mr J. R. COWELL: I think what I suggested is the usual course adopted in this House, and also in the House of Commons. This Bill is in the nature of a Reform Bill, and in introducing a Bill of that kind it is always, I think, of vital importance that those leading features of the Bill which are new should be explained to the House, and the reasons given for its introduction. I would not ask the hon. member, nor encourage the House to ask the hon. member, to go into all the Bill in its details; but here is an extension of voting by ballot, the abolition of the property qualification of members, clauses providing in what district persons shall give their votes. All these are important subjects. The hon. member is certainly able to do it, and, I think, he should give us the salient points of the Bill, and the reasons why he has introduced it into the House. It would not be a speech, I would venture to suggest, which would embody the whole measure, but the general principles of the measure.

Mr MYLREA: I have been led to undertake the task of introducing a Bill for the purpose of amending the House of Keys Election Acts, by the fact that, at the recent general election, there were a large number of matters which cropped up, both in the election itself, that is, with regard to matters of registration, right to vote, and so forth; and also matters which formed the subject of questions put before the constituency prior to the election, which it seemed to me required to be dealt with. So far as I am concerned, I was under a pledge to bring in a Bill of this character because, when I was before my constituents, the principal matters dealt with by this Bill were brought before me, and questions were put to me which I was required to answer as to what my views were, and whether I proposed to carry those views into effect by introducing legislation. I replied, giving my views, and stating that I was prepared to give them legal sanction, and this Bill is the outcome. The Bill, as hon. members will see, who look at the summary, may roughly be divided into three parts. The first question is the extension of the Ballot Act referred to in paragraph 1 of the summary affixed to the Bill. Then paragraphs 2, 3, 4, 7, 9, and 10, all deal with difficulties which occurred in the recent election as regards the registration of voters, and the hardship entailed on the electors by reason of omissions

and uncertainties in the various Bills passed previously which affect them, and also they introduce some new clauses and features. Then the third, and perhaps the most important point in the Bill, is the section abolishing the property qualification of members. Now, that was a question which in every instance where I was before my constituents, I was very closely questioned about. I expressed my opinion about the property qualification, stating that it was perfectly absurd and useless, to the knowledge of every member of the House of Keys and the public, and I said I was prepared at the first sitting of the House to bring in a Bill to deal with that subject. Now, I mention this personal matter because, while I have dealt with it in this Bill, it is only due to the public to say that this question was first introduced by the hon. member for Ramsey, who was then, I believe, the hon. member for Ayre. He brought in a Bill on two occasions dealing with the property qualification. On the first occasion it was thrown out by a large majority; on the second occasion by a smaller majority. That was, as far as I remember, six years back. It might be said that the hon. member having borne the burden and heat of the day, by bringing in a Bill at a time when it was a new question, and not likely to meet with a very favourable reception from the House of Keys, should have been left to carry the work to a successful completion. It is very probable that if I had not been very closely questioned by my constituents, and if I had not given them so direct a pledge, I should have adopted that course, and allowed the hon. member to take it up. But, returned as I was, I felt I could not bring in an amended House of Keys Election Act without dealing with that subject, and I have, therefore, introduced that principle of abolishing the property qualification of members. Dealing, then, with the Bill, clause by clause, I take it that nothing arises on the first or second clauses. As regards the third clause, which provides that the Acts mentioned in the first schedule are repealed to the extent in the third column of the schedule mentioned, except so far as may be necessary for giving effect to anything duly done under any enactments hereby repealed—I presume we will adopt the usual course of leaving that clause over to the end, until we see by pro-

ceeding through the Bill what the repeals are. (Hear, hear.) Clause 4 of the Bill deals with the Ballot Act. The House will be aware that, by the fourth section of the House of Keys Election Act, 1883, which for convenience is often called the Ballot Act, it is provided that this Act should continue in force until the 31st December, 1892, and no longer. I venture to presume that at this time of day it is not at all likely that hon. members will be disposed to go back on any controversy with respect to the Ballot Act. (Hear, hear.) I venture to think their intention will be to continue the Ballot Act in operation, and, as that Act is shortly expiring, it occurred to me that this is the time to give it a new lease of life. I have, therefore, put this clause in the Bill extending the Ballot Act to the 31st December, 1902. The next clause is section 5. I may say there is no way of explaining these clauses short of fully explaining them; if I am to give any explanation which will be understood I shall have to go to the root of the matter. I may say briefly with regard to section 5, that its object is to define what is "annual value," and in the second part of the clause commencing with the words "but where the hereditaments," to provide a means whereby a person may vote in respect of property which has been valued as a whole on the valuation list, but after the valuation list has been settled has been separated in occupation or ownership. At present in the case say of a field which has been sold in building plots, and such separate plots have been occupied for the necessary qualifying period of twelve or six months, as the case may be—there are no means when a man comes and claims to be registered as a voter, by which the Revising Advocate can register him, because there does not appear on the valuation list a separation necessary to show whether the annual value is above or below the amount required. I have, therefore, provided a means by which, when a property which has been valued as a whole in the valuation list and become separated in ownership the value can be so settled as to allow the man to vote. Clause six deals with the case of the occupation franchise. As hon. members know, at the present time, if the owner has been in possession of property for six months previous to the

12th May, or an occupier twelve months previously, he is entitled to vote, but not otherwise. I propose in this clause to reduce the qualifying term of occupiers to six months, so as to assimilate it to that of the owner. I do not see myself the justice of the principle that an owner possessing property should be in a better position as regards voting than the occupier. (Hear, hear.) It is also necessary, according to the House of Keys Election Act, 1886, as amended by the Act of 1881, that the occupancy should be continuous. A man may not in the twelve months prior to the 12th May occupy one premises and shift into another. It seems to me absurd that, during the qualifying period of six or twelve months, if he occupies the first three months one premises, and for the next three months in direct succession occupies other premises, he should not be qualified to vote just as much as if he occupied the identical premises for the whole term. Therefore, I make provision, if he changes directly from one house to another, provided the premises are of the qualifying value, that he may give a vote. This, however, does not deal with the case of a man who, having been in occupation, say, for six months previous to the 12th May, on the 12th May changes his dwelling; he is not entitled to be put on the register on account of the provision in the House of Keys Election Act, 1866, sec. 41, which deals with this case. I am bringing in a new clause by which a man who on the 12th May changes his premises may obtain the benefit of his previous qualification, so that a man who changes his premises on the 12th May should not lose his vote. At this point I propose another new clause, which deals with the female occupier, and places her in the same position as the female owner. (Hear, hear.) The next clause is section 7, which repeals section 7, sub-section 1, of the House of Keys Election Act, and provides that when any sheading or town is divided into divisions in pursuance of any Act of Tynwald, a person should not be registered as entitled to vote and should not vote in more than one division. This section is introduced to amend a mistake in the verbiage of the Act of 1891 passed by our lamented friend Mr Farrant. In that Act the section read as follows: "A person should not be registered to vote and *shall vote* in more than one division." I do not say whether there will be any

serious doubt as to the true construction, but in order to place the matter beyond dispute, I have put in the word "not." The next clause deals with the sheadings or towns divided into divisions, and provides that persons who are entitled to vote in two divisions may select which division they should be put on the register to vote in respect of. They may appear and select before the revising advocate, and if they do not appear they are put down in the division in which they have been placed by the collector. By this clause a man, possessing property or occupying property in two divisions, may select that division where he may have most interest or can exercise most influence. The next clause, No. 9, deals with the lists of voters. It has been found, not only in Douglas but in the country, that the lists as published by the collector are very frequently put in places where they cannot be seen, or in exposed places where the first shower of rain washes them out, and the electors have no means of seeing whether their names are on the list or not, or of objecting to people who they think ought not to be on the list. I provide that the list shall be open for inspection at the Revising Advocate's Office 14 days prior to the Court, of which Court due notice will have to be given, and in future persons can see the list without any payment whatever, and in case the Revising Advocate's office shall not be situated in a place adjacent to the majority of persons in the division, he has power to fix some place which will be convenient. Of course in the towns the Revising Advocate's office will be the most convenient position, but in the sheadings it may be very inconvenient indeed for the electors to go into the town for the purpose of seeing if their names are on the list. Then comes the question of the qualification of members, as to which I do not think it is necessary for me to say more than that the clause is there for the House to deal with. I might, however, add that when amending this clause of the Act of 1881, I embodied with it the whole of the House of Keys Election Act, 1886, and thus got rid of that Act altogether. The law with respect to elections is contained in six or seven various Acts, and as soon as we have exhausted our reforming energy—those alterations which I have ventured to suggest myself, and those which my hon. friends may introduce—I think we should

then proceed to consolidate. But I think, in this matter, it is well to proceed by degrees, and we should endeavour to get so much as is practicable in this Bill, and then go on a step further to the consolidation of the Acts, which will be a great convenience to the electors, to members, and to all persons who have to do with the working of the Act. (Hear, hear). Section 11 gets rid of the poll book. The poll book, from my point of view, and I believe from the point of view of many of the returning-officers, is of no practical use whatever. It provides no extra check, and it entails a large amount of clerical labour that has to be provided for in the election. When the Ballot Act was introduced in England, the poll book was done away with; but in our Act, it was retained. I see no object in retaining it because it provides no extra check, and every necessary check is provided in the Ballot Act. The next section—12—is simply to extend the question which may be put to the voter—“Have you already voted here or elsewhere at this election, for the sheading (or for the town of) ———, either in this or any other division.” Section 13 provides that members for a division are to be elected by the voters on the register for that division. I propose to ask the House to strike out section 14, and when the time comes, I will explain the reasons. Section 15 is the table of fees for Revising Advocates and others. I propose to ask the House to hold it over. My reason is this—that when this Bill was read a first time, it contained this suggested new table of fees; but the House will remember that, in the Tynwald Court, a Committee was appointed to go into and prepare a revised scale of charges under this Act, the reason being that it would be much more competent for a small committee, including amongst its members the Clerk of the Rolls, who has more experience than any other man in the Island, on this subject, to frame a scale of fees and charges, than if the matter came before the House of Keys. In any case I would ask the House to hold that clause over until the committee have presented their report. At present they have not been able to do so. Those are all the clauses of the Bill. The first schedule deals with the enactments repealed, and there is no necessity to deal with them now. That will come on in due course. If there is any other

point about which I have not made myself clear, before I sit down I shall be glad to refer to it.

The House proceeded with the reading of the Bill clause by clause. Section 3 was held over. On section 4, which continued the Ballot Act till 1902,

Mr MAILLAND asked why they should not re-enact the Ballot Act in perpetuity.

Mr MYLREA said in the course of a short time they might see reasons to amend the Ballot Act. He thought very probably before long an amended Ballot Act would be passed.

Mr JOUGHIN thought the reason the previous Ballot Act was limited to 10 years was to try if it was found to work well. If so, it was thought a Bill might be brought in at any time to make it in perpetuity.

Mr J. R. COWELL: In order to test the matter I beg to move to strike out the words which here limit the period to 10 years, and substitute such words as will continue the Act in perpetuity. I think it will be clear to every man who knows anything at all about the operation of this Act, that the country is abundantly satisfied that voting by ballot is the proper thing. He would be a bold man who attempted now either to alter or cancel the right of the people of this Island to vote by ballot. But it seems to me, at the same time, that it is really almost a foolish proposal, after having had experience of the Ballot Act here and in England, and never having heard the merest breath of suspicion that it is a wrong principle to adopt, and never having heard anyone in the country suggest that it should be amended, that we should go on tinkering with a principle which is universally acknowledged to be the best. There was a tinge of a reason possibly in such a conservative place as the Isle of Man, why at first the principle should have been temporarily adopted. Hon. gentlemen then conceived it was such a queer, novel, and foreign principle that they were afraid of giving themselves away, and wanted a trial, but does any member want now to tell me that he wants a trial of the Ballot Act? I feel satisfied that we should only give expression to the feelings of the people of the Isle of Man by perpetuating the Ballot Act. (Hear, hear.)

Mr FISHER: Perhaps this would meet your view—if these words “31st December,” 1902, were struck out, and the words inserted, “until altered or repealed.”

Mr MYLREA: “Until the said Act is amended or repealed.” It is hardly necessary for me to say, that in limiting the Act to 10 years, I had no sinister intention at the end of 10 years that it should be done away with. I entirely agree with the amendment.

Mr JOUGHIN: At the time the Act was passed a very large proportion of the members were entirely opposed to voting by ballot, and that is why the “ten years” was put in.

The SPEAKER: There is no principle involved in this. The House have their hands free, and can do anything they like. If we say the Act is continued until repealed do we not tie our hands to continuing the whole Act? There is no doubt the Ballot Act is very deficient, and may require amendment.

Mr J. R. COWELL: I am really ashamed of our Legislature limiting the operation of the Ballot Act for any term of years.

The amendment proposed by Mr Fisher was agreed to.

The House discussed the next clause.

Mr MYLREA: There is a principle involved in this which I ought to explain to the House. Section 21 of the principal Act of 1866, reads as follows:—

The valuation of lands and other real estate made and to be made from time to time under “The Lunatic Asylum Act, 1866,” and under any law for the time being in force for ascertaining the value of property for the purpose of being rated for the support of the Lunatic Asylum, shall be that by which the value of lands and other real estate for all purposes under this Act shall be ascertained. Provided always, that in case at the time for registering any voter’s name the premises held by him have not been valued under the said Act, or under any law in force as aforesaid, or in case the separate value of such premises do not appear in any valuation made as aforesaid, a valuation upon oath made by the Setting Quest of the Parish in which the premises in question are situate shall, for the purposes of this Act, be sufficient evidence of the value of such premises. Provided also, that in no such case shall the net annual value of buildings be estimated at more than four-fifths of their gross annual value.

Now, as I pointed out, this clause of the Act of 1866, constitutes the Lunatic Asylum valuation list for the purpose of that Act. But by the Valuation Act, section 3, the provision as to the valuation of real estate contained in the

Lunatic Asylum Act of 1860, are repealed. But this clause 21 of the Act of 1866, although thus rendered nugatory, was not itself repealed. So far as it is repealed, it is by implication only. It, therefore, seems necessary to repeal that clause. It is perhaps unnecessary in one sense, for it is enacted by the Valuation Act, 1884, that the annual value, wherever that term is used in the House of Keys Election Acts, shall be the rateable value appearing in the valuation lists. That is already provided for by the Valuation Act, and I only confirm it at this point, in order to draw a distinction between the first and second parts of the clause. The second part of the clause deals with property which has been valued as a whole at the time of making the valuation. Subsequent to that time, if it has been divided in ownership or occupation, even if of the requisite annual value, it gives no right to vote. At present, when the revising barrister comes to deal with the list, and the voter has been possessed for the proper qualifying term, he is unable to give him a vote, because he has no basis by which to decide whether the value is over or under £4. This provides the manner in which such persons shall obtain a vote. I provide that the annual value shall not be the rateable value, after having made the various deductions, but the gross value, because when it comes before the revising advocate, it will be impossible for him to ascertain what are the proper deductions that ought to be made. There are certain deductions to be made, that is to say, with regard to land exclusive of buildings there is no reduction; but for dwellings there may be a reduction of 20 per cent., or one-fifth, thus bringing the gross value to the rateable value. It would be perfectly impossible for the revising advocate to decide what should be the deductions to bring it to the rateable value. Therefore, I venture to draw the distinction, and give the voter who has been separated the benefit of the gross value, instead of the net annual value.

The SPEAKER: Supposing the revising advocate allows one man to come in with a greater share, he might reduce the other man so that he would not have a vote at all.

Mr J. T. COWELL: We are going to alter that just now.

Mr MYLREA: I desire to strike out the words "net valuation," in the seventh line, and substitute "rateable valuation."

This was agreed to.

The following is a copy of the clause as amended.

Section 21 of the principal Act is hereby repealed, and where in the Election Acts the words "annual value" are used, the same shall, where the valuation of any hereditaments appears in the valuation lists issued under the provisions of the Valuation Acts, 1886 and 1890, be the rateable valuation appearing in the said valuation lists: but where the hereditaments in respect of which a person claims to be registered as a voter shall not in such list be valued separately, then the term "annual value" shall be the rent actually obtained or paid for the same, or, in case the same may be unlet, the rent which in the opinion of the revising advocate (after hearing such evidence as may be tendered) might reasonably be obtained therefor.

The following clause was next discussed :

6. Different premises occupied in immediate succession by any person as owner or occupier during the six calendar months next preceding the twelfth May in each year shall have the same effect in qualifying such person to be registered as a voter in any sheading or town as a continued occupation of the same premises in manner provided by the House of Keys Election Act, 1881, sec. 7, and the length of occupation required by such section shall be reduced from twelve to six months, and the occupation of such different premises shall for the purpose of qualifying a person to be registered as a voter in any division of such sheading or town in respect of occupation (otherwise than as a lodger) have the same effect as if all such premises were situated in that division of the sheading or town in which the premises occupied by such person at the end of such period of qualification are situate.

Mr MYLREA : I know many cases where this has operated very harshly. It is quite reasonable that where a man has occupied different premises in direct succession up to the 12th May, he should have a right to vote. He could not vote before by reason of section 43 of the Act of 1866, which provides that:—

At every election for a member or members to serve in the House of Keys for any sheading or town, the register of voters so to be made as aforesaid shall be deemed and taken to be conclusive evidence that the persons therein named, continue to have the qualifications which are annexed to their names respectively in the register in force at such elections. Provided always, that it shall not be lawful for any person to vote at any election for a member or members to serve in the House of Keys, where the qualification annexed to the name of such person shall have appeared annexed to his name in the preceding register, and such person on the twelfth day of May in the year in which such register so in force was formed, shall have ceased to have such qualification, or shall not have retained so much thereof as would have entitled him to have had his name inserted in such register.

Mr MYLREA : I now beg leave to propose this new clause:—

"That section 43 of the House of Keys Election Act, 1866, is hereby repealed, and it is hereby

enacted that, notwithstanding sections 5 and 7 of the House of Keys Election Act, 1881, at any election of members to serve in the House of Keys, any person shall not be entitled to vote unless his name is on the register of voters for the time being in force, and any person whose name is on the said list of voters shall be entitled on demand to receive a voting paper and vote, and it shall not be lawful for the revising officer to put any further question numbered 3 in the 14th section of the House of Keys Election Act, 1881 provided that nothing in this section shall entitle any person to vote who is prohibited from voting by statute by common law, or relieve any person from any penalties to which he may be liable for voting."

This will enable persons, who have been qualified on the previous register and have changed their tenancy on the 12th May, to vote on an election.

Mr J. T. COWELL seconded the motion for the adoption of the clause.

Mr JOUGHIN: Supposing an occupier of property on the 12th May gave up that property, and did not occupy any property, but he is on the list, what do you do with him?

Mr MYLREA: I make the register absolute and conclusive, and if a man has a vote on the register he is entitled to demand a ballot paper and vote, and the question cannot be put to him, "Have you got any qualification on this year's list?" He has voted in respect of the qualification he has had; and in doing this we are following the precedent of English law. (Hear, hear.) The register is made absolutely conclusive, and, although a man ceases to have the qualification, so long as his name is on the list he is entitled to vote. (Hear, hear.)

Mr FISHER: Are you subject to no pains or penalties?

Mr J. R. COWELL: Certainly not. I think it is a most important principle the hon. member has introduced in the Bill. The rule in England is clear that when a revising barrister has made his list it is absolutely conclusive. The whole question is settled at the time of revision. It does not matter at the election who the man is or what he is.

Mr MAITLAND: What means are taken to get a man's name off the list? Whose business is it?

Mr MYLREA: It is the collector's in the first instance.

Mr MAITLAND: You will have to get a different class of men to what we have as collectors. (Hear, hear.)

Mr FISHER asked whether the hon. member contemplated in his bill any extension of the franchise.

Mr MYLREA : I do by the next clause.

The clause was agreed to.

Mr MYLREA : I desire here to introduce a new clause, which falls into its proper order here. By the House of Keys Election Act, 1881, section 5, it is provided that every person who, being a male or spinster, or widow, is the owner of real estate within the district of the annual value of not less than £4, or, being a male, is the occupier of real estate valued not less than £4, shall be entitled to be registered as a voter, and, if registered, shall vote. I venture to suggest to the House that I am unable myself to see any distinction between a male and a—(hear, hear, and laughter.) It seems to me that if a spinster or widow who is an owner of real estate is allowed to vote, there is no sufficient reason why an occupier, being a widow or spinster, might not also vote. (Hear, hear.) I, therefore, propose this new clause.

Major STEPHEN : In seconding the motion, I may say that I think my hon. and learned colleague would find that on the debating of the English Act a great deal of discussion arose on that question, as to whether female occupiers should be entitled to vote the same as female owners, but in the south of England there were many female occupiers whose occupation and character were not such as to make it desirable they should be entrusted with the franchise. In fact in some of the garrison towns in the south of England it would have led to members of Parliament representing a large class who I say ought never to be entrusted with the franchise. (Laughter.) But in this Island no such reason for excluding female occupiers existed. The female occupiers in the Isle of Man are for the most part decent, hard-working lodging-house keepers—(hear, hear)—who I believe carry on their business with skill and success, and in a way which entitles them to have some say in the election of members of the House of Keys. I believe if they are entrusted with that privilege and duty they will exercise it well.

Mr J. T. COWELL : I am very glad, indeed, to see that the late election has had such a good educational effect upon a great number of gentlemen not only in this House, but outside the House, and while I look with pleasure at many of the proposals made to-day, I think the measure could be so far amended as to even improve it by the franchise being extended in the way in which I think it ought to be

extended. I do not admit for a moment that any injustice would be done to the Island by admitting female occupiers to a vote. In fact I know the way it works in Douglas in connection with municipal matters. It has a good effect now, and I could wish that all the male electors voted as ably as the lady electors. I am not going to labour this question, because I believe it is one that will be accepted by the House, but I think Mr Mylrea's resolution can be so far amended as to kill two birds with one stone. I know at the time of the reform agitation in England in 1867, it was said we ought not to follow English legislation too quickly, but it cannot be said that this House would be going beyond its powers if we followed England at a distance of 24 years. In 1867, in England, a Reform Bill was passed which gave to male householders rated for the relief of the poor, and all lodgers paying not less than £10 a year, a vote. Now I think the time has come when household suffrage ought to be granted here. I am glad to find that out of the five representatives of Douglas three are pledged to their constituents to vote in favour of household suffrage, and we are bound to do justice to our election pledges, whatever the result may be. It has been pointed out that if the House accepts this proposal it will lead to a general election in the Isle of Man within three months time. I care not for that. I think if the measure is a right one, members should vote for it without any hesitation. (A laugh.) I contend it would be unfair to a large body of the electors, men and women, who are just as able to come to a judgment on matters affecting their good as the people of England are to deprive them of the franchise which the householders in England have had for twenty-four years. Therefore, I move as an amendment to Mr Mylrea's proposal that we strike out the words, "of the annual value of not less than £4," and insert "being a male or spinster or widow in the occupation of real estate within the district."

Mr MARTIN: I have much pleasure in seconding the motion which has just been made by the hon. member for North Douglas, and I endorse his opinion that the time has thoroughly come in the Isle of Man for this reform. I think it is one which this House will accept favourably.

Mr QUINE: I have great pleasure in supporting the amendment moved by the hon. member for

North Douglas. I am sure there is in the sheading of Rushen, scores of people that live in houses not rated at £4, and they have not a vote. I have great pleasure in supporting the amendment that the qualification of voters be entirely swept away.

Mr FISHER: Can the hon. member for North Douglas tell what effect it will have on the electoral roll in the Isle of Man?

Mr J. T. COWELL: You mean throughout the Island?

Mr FISHER: Yes.

Mr COWELL: I am not prepared to give any reliable facts.

A Voice: Can you give any unreliable facts? (Laughter.)

Mr COWELL: That might do; but they would not be facts if they were not reliable. I know in Douglas that it did work hardly at the last election. There were a great number of householders prohibited from voting on account of these disqualifications.

Mr J. R. COWELL: I thoroughly endorse the proposal of my hon. friend and namesake, the member for North Douglas; but I think I shall have something to say with respect to the occasion on which he has thought fit to introduce this question, as I shall have something to say in the form of criticism on the Bill which we are considering. I am very much afraid that the Bill goes too far, and does not go far enough; that the Bill is too weak and too strong. It is a reform Bill and it is not a reform Bill. It attempts to deal with several matters one or more of which are grave constitutional questions, and leaves others equally constitutional and grave, and of equal, if not greater importance, entirely untouched. Now, any Bill of that kind must be in the main unsatisfactory. I am very sorry the hon. member who introduced this Bill did not go in thoroughly for what he has attempted to do in a very partial sense--namely, for a Manx Reform Bill. The hon. member must know, and he reminded us himself of his election pledges to-day--in fact, I may say, speaking of the whole of the members of this House--I may say these gentlemen are so full of the recollections of the late election that they would have taken the very earliest opportunity to figure as reformers in these various directions; but I am afraid there is no method in

the manner in which they seek to accomplish the things they have in view, and I am not at all satisfied that they are doing the right thing in his attempt which they are making to-day to introduce some reforms and leave out others. My hon. friend the member for North Douglas is now proposing, on a mere amendment, to introduce such grave questions as that of introducing household suffrage in the Isle of Man. The House may ask what do I propose. I might say had it not been for my absence from this House in consequence of indisposition, it was my intention to introduce a Bill to deal with the whole question of Manx Reforms, not in a partial way, but in a thorough way; at all events to deal with the whole question in all its length and breadth. If such a Bill was introduced the House might have the fullest opportunity of going as far as this House is prepared to go. It is my intention, subject to what is done to-day, to introduce a Bill into this House at an early period.

Mr MYLREA: I rise to a point of order, and ask whether this is relevant to the amendment?

The SPEAKER: I do not think it is.

Mr J. R. COWELL: I have not drawn my conclusion.

Mr MYLREA: You are bound to obey the chair.

Mr J. R. COWELL: I am only starting an argument.

Mr MYLREA: I said your argument is out of order. The Speaker has decided it.

Mr J. R. COWELL: He has not. ("Order, order.")

The Speaker: I do not say your argument is irrelevant till I hear it.

Mr J. R. COWELL: What I was going to call attention to is this—that it would be unwise to accept the amendment of my hon. friend the member for Douglas (Mr Cowell), because his proposal means a serious constitutional change in the Isle of Man, which I think ought to be dealt with in a Bill separately devoted to that principle. Surely that is a perfectly sound argument.

The SPEAKER: I understood Mr Cowell was going to say what he was going to do at some future time.

Mr J. R. COWELL: Surely, that is allowed. ("Order, order.") Well, I have tried for the

last decade to keep order, and I hope I may be permitted to do so still. I am sure no man in this House has more respect for the chair than I have, and I have very frequently supported the chair; but at the same time I have had for some time a little experience of parliamentary practice, and I venture to think I am quite in order in explaining an argument which will show it is unwise for a gentleman to propose amendments when they can be dealt with in a better way if they are introduced in a Bill to be dealt with in a more complete manner. That would be a much better plan than accepting these amendments, which are merely tinkering with questions of reform, to deal with them in a separate Bill, and have them settled once for all. That is what I rose to say, and I am glad I have been enabled to say it. I would point out that, in the first place, no hon. member of this House, when he came here to-day, imagined for a moment that he would be asked to vote on such a grave question as that of the extension of the franchise. In the second place, by the question which was put by my hon. friend on the other side of the house, it seems that even the proposer of the amendment is totally unacquainted with the facts. The hon member was asked what was to be the effect of this proposal on the list of voters in the Isle of Man, but he could not tell. Now, any gentleman who comes here with a sweeping proposal in the Isle of Man must be prepared with his facts. At present the matter is sprung upon the House when the members of the House are not in possession of the facts, and have no opportunity of consulting their constituents or of eliciting opinion. Therefore, I ask the House not to proceed in this hurried manner to deal with such grave questions, but to postpone the consideration of this matter now in the hope that it will be taken up in a more complete manner very speedily.

Mr MAITLAND: It seems to me that the House has to decide the nice point between two gentlemen of the name of Cowell as to who is to have the honour of proposing this to the House. (Hear, hear, and laughter.) To my mind it does not matter who proposes it, and I think this is as good a time as any other to introduce the extension of the franchise. I beg to support the amendment of the hon. member for North Douglas. (Hear, hear.)

Mr JOUGHIN : I must oppose the amendment, not that I have any objection to extending the franchise of this country. I think, as far as the proposer of the motion went, he extended the suffrage to tenant females as well as female proprietors. But the amendment is a very sweeping measure. Of course I did not know anything about this until the amendment was moved in this House, and I think the measure is too grave and too sweeping altogether to come in this hurried sort of way before us without some consideration and some thought. (Hear, hear.) It is proposed there should be not only manhood suffrage but women suffrage, and it is not only that it should be held by owners, but a man or a woman who may occupy a pig sty, would be entitled to vote. (Laughter.) I think the measure is too sweeping to deal with in this quick and off-hand manner. I have always been in favour of the extension of the suffrage, but I want time to consider, and for that reason I shall vote against the amendment.

Mr CORMODE : I shall move for an amendment, because I know there are many people in Ayre Sheading who will have a vote, and who have more right to a vote than many of those who do vote at present. I am sorry to hear the hon. member for Peel arguing for a young woman living in a pig sty. (Laughter.) I think I have travelled over the Island as much as he has, and I do not know where I can find one young woman living in a pig sty or a stable. (Laughter.)

Mr JOUGHIN : I did not say that any person occupied a pig sty or a stable, but they might keep a cow or a pig and get votes as occupiers.

Mr MYLCHREEST : I am very well disposed to the amendment, and I have no doubt if put to the House at a proper time it would be carried unanimously. If you give us a little time so that we might consult our constituents and get their opinion, I think it will come with more force and we would certainly carry out the wishes of our constituents. But if we were to do this to-day I do not think the proposal would be appreciated by the members of the House and when we would go home to our constituents I am afraid we should find that the very men who said "let us have household suffrage" would be the very men to turn on us for dealing with the motion in this haphazard slipshod way. (Hear, hear.) Let us see our constituents and ask them in meetings in our neighbourhoods what they will have. If that is done I should be glad to support the proposal in every way in my power.

Mr J. R. COWELL: We will vote against the amendment. I think it had better be withdrawn.

Mr J. T. COWELL: I cannot withdraw it.

Mr MOORE: I think a most important and serious proposal has been sprung upon the House, and I deprecate most strongly its being carried in this manner. In the old House it may have been said that we went a little too slowly, but in this new House we are going a little to fast. We have 11 colts, and these colts seem to be inclined to take the bit between their teeth and gallop off. I do not myself say that I oppose the principle by any means, but I do think it is a matter in regard to which we should have an opportunity for examination and calm deliberation. Amendments are usually brought before us without an opportunity of considering them beforehand. That is a necessity of the case, but we have actually added clauses in the Bill itself which we have not had an opportunity of seeing in print. When we see a Radical reformer, like the hon. member for Ramsey, proposing delay, I think we should be very safe in his hands.

Major STEPHEN: I am in favour of household suffrage, but I am seconder of the motion of my hon colleague, Mr Mylrea. Therefore, I could not vote for the amendment I presume.

Mr MYLREA: The hon. member for Ramsey falls foul of my Bill on the ground that it goes too far and does not go far enough--that it is too weak and too strong--that it is not such a Bill as he would bring in if he had the opportunity. All I have to say in reply is that it was my business to bring in the Bill which I thought was expedient and which I thought I could get passed. My experience has been that it is sometimes wise to do that which is practicable, instead of trying to do too much. It is best to aim at something that is possible, and not to aim at what is altogether impossible. My own idea was that here are several matters about which there is a consensus of opinion, here are abuses which exist, and which are in the mouth of everybody, and which I presume everybody will be anxious to improve, provided the means in the Bill are proper means. Let us, therefore, get rid of these difficulties one by one, and make these plain matters the law of the land. Then let any other member who has reforms or improvements to suggest bring them forward, then, when we have exhausted

our reforms and our energy, let us consolidate and make it one Bill. (Hear, hear). I am not surprised that my hon. friend and colleague, the member for North Douglas, should think it is a very timid plan; but there are many occasions when, for many reasons, discretion is the better part of valour. I venture to think—in fact, I may say so without hesitation, that his amendment is utterly impracticable to begin with. I do not mean to say, of course, that household suffrage is an impossibility; but his amendment is so framed that it would only have the effect of dislocating my Bill, and it would not carry his own view into practical effect. He must consider many points besides that which he has raised, and he would have to go through many sections of half a dozen Bills all relating and co-relating with one another. As to the question of principle, household suffrage is a matter on which my mind is perfectly open. If I request the House not to deal with it in this Bill, it is not because I have any objection to household suffrage, but because I am anxious to secure something practical, and have something done which will carry through the Legislature, rather than undertake matters which will be likely to have the effect of wrecking this Bill, and so losing many advantages. Without expressing any opinion on household suffrage, I ask the House to vote against the amendment.

The House then divided on the amendment. For: Messrs Cormode, Williamson, T. Corlett, Maitland, Martin, Quine, J. T. Cowell, and Goldsmith; 8. Against: Messrs Joughin, Fisher, J. Quayle, Kelly, Crellin, Allen, R. Corlett, Penketh, Moore, Stevenson, Jos. Mylchreest, J. R. Cowell, Mylrea, Stephen, Jas. Mylchreest, and the Speaker; 16. Amendment lost. The motion adopting the new clause was agreed to.

MR J. T. COWELL: I have another clause which, I believe, will fall in naturally just where we are at the present time. By the Election Act of 1881, section 5, sub-section 3, the lodger qualification was granted, but it made it "of the clear yearly value, if let unfurnished, of £10, and upwards." That practically prevents great numbers of the lodgers in the different towns of the Island, who occupied furnished apartments, from registering a vote. I have to ask the House now to strike out of the 1881 Act the word "unfurnished," leaving it so that any lodger in

the occupation of premises rented at £10 shall have a vote. That is exactly as the Act is in England. I should just like, before I sit down, to say that I fail to see how an amendment can be introduced into this House if notice has to be given before we come to our meeting. I have been accused of bringing forward amendments of which members have had no notice, but I have had no opportunity of giving members of this House notice that I was bringing forward these amendments. It has been said that at the last election there were a great many colts, but I think there were to be found all over the country a lot of old horses running as well, and a great many of the members of the late House came forward with expressions of feeling quite as radical as any of the "colts"—(laughter)—and these expressions fell from gentlemen whom up to that moment no one would have accused of liberal tendencies. (Hear, hear, and laughter.) So I think the "colts" are no worse than the old horses. But what I wish to draw the attention of the House to is that they will be doing justice to a large number of persons by passing this amendment. If I am asked how many persons will have a vote by this I should be unable to state. But the question ought not to be judged on that point at all. The question is whether it is a right and proper resolution to make. If it is wrong, throw it out; but if it is a good principle—and it has been in operation 24 years in England—I think the House ought to grant the concession, and give to a large number of persons the privilege of enjoying the franchise. I, therefore, move that the 1881 Act, clause 5, sub-section 3, be amended by striking out the word "unfurnished."

Mr QUINE seconded the amendment.

Mr J. R. COWELL: I hope the House will not agree with this amendment. I think the House ought to deal with it in the same manner as it dealt with the previous one. All things are lawful, but all things are not expedient, and I do not think this is a time to go into a question of that sort. I would suggest to my hon. friend that as no doubt he is under strong feelings in favour of reform at the present time, had he not better devote himself to a Bill which will deal completely with questions of that sort. I submit the House will not tinker with great reforms in this manner.

Major STEPHEN: Much as I admire the hon. member's zeal in trying to make these reforms, I think we shall go much more surely if we go more slowly. The hon. member has just said that an amendment he proposed was to make male and female exactly alike. (Laughter). I always understood that parliaments could do anything but make a man a woman or a woman a man. Therefore, it has been left the hon. member to attempt these impossibilities. If we were to wait a little longer it would not much matter who has the honour of introducing all these reforms, but after what Mr Cowell has said I fear we must give up some of these things. I suppose the abolition of the property qualification will have to disappear, and there is a little amendment of mine I am going to introduce for the redistribution of seats, which will share the same. (Laughter.) I put it to the hon. member, whether I withdraw mine, or he is, and so we should substitute his. But, I think the property qualification is a matter which should be treated as a separate measure altogether. This is really an Act to amend the law of registration, to take away some abuses and difficulties which were found at the last election, with reference to property on the register.

Mr STEVENSON: I rise to express my very strong dissent from the amendment of the hon. member for North Douglas. Strongly as I dissented from the previous amendment which he moved, I still more strongly dissent from the one he has moved at present. It will be introducing an entirely new principle into the legislation of this country. Hitherto we have always had real property as the basis of the voting qualification. The hon. member, by his motion, seeks not only to deprive practically real property of its voting power, but he gives us instead personal property, and that personal property not even belonging to the voter whom he seeks to enfranchise. I strongly object to such a principle being sprung upon us, and I shall vote against the amendment.

Mr JOUGHIN: I oppose this amendment. I am rather in favour of the proposal, but taking into consideration the way these things have been sprung upon us, and that they are very important questions, I think we should do no harm in deferring them. I think we should deal with them more surely and better at another time.

Mr JAMES MYLCHREEST: It appears to me the mover of this amendment could hardly have supposed that it would have passed, and I can hardly understand what he has proposed it for. Surely if the hon. member for Ramsey says that he will bring in a Bill dealing with these reforms, that is the manner to deal with them, and we have time to read, mark, learn, and inwardly digest them. Then we can go forward. This is a very unbusiness-like proceeding. (Hear, hear.)

Mr FISHER: I regret very much the form the proceedings have taken to-day. I believe that the House is on the eve of losing a very good and useful measure, simply from its having tacked on to it a number of amendments. In fact, I believe the Bill will be entirely overweighted, and like an overladen ship it will go down. I should be very sorry, because I believe a great many of the sections are really of consequence at the present time. I mean to vote against the amendment—not because I object to the principle, but I think it has come on at an inopportune time.

Mr J. T. COWELL: I do not wish to take up very much time, but it is pleasant to know that the questions I have brought before the House, though they have not received the votes of the members of the House, have received their approbation to a very large extent. I take it that this question which Mr Mylrea has introduced, is not a question which it is wise to have before the country continuously, and I think, now that we are sitting, we should settle it once for all. The only way to do so, in my opinion, is to bring in the clauses in operation in England for 24 years. I fail yet to understand why I should be accused of being hasty. The arguments used by the hon. member for Rushen I did think were the arguments of very long ago. They belong to the ages of the past. I do not think I ought to take up the time of the House unnecessarily with statements such as have been made by the hon. member. These questions I felt bound to bring forward on account of the promises and statements I made at the time of the election. I do not think I would be doing my duty if I failed to bring these questions before the House at the earliest possible moment. My hon. friend the member for Ramsey says he has the intention of bringing forward a measure of reform. I do not know how long the intention of the hon. member will continue an intention.

Therefore, I am loth to withdraw my amendment unless we have a pledge that in a given time he intends to introduce a measure of reform. All the members for the town I represent are, I know, anxious that the intelligence of the town constituencies should be represented at the poll. I think there is a large number of persons who occupy furnished apartments, who would be likely to come to a sound view on all questions affecting the good of the Isle of Man. At present I am asking you to do simply what has been done in England, and I think it is not too much.

Mr JOUGHIN: I do not think such a clause exists in England—not female lodgers at all events.

Mr J. T. COWELL: Not female—that word was inserted at the suggestion of my friend, Mr Fisher.

The SPEAKER: The effect of the motion will be to extend the lodger franchise to females as well as males, and striking out the word “unfurnished” it would be £10 value whether furnished or unfurnished.

The House divided on the motion. For: Messrs Maitland, Martin, Quine, and J. T. Cowell—4. Against: Messrs Joughin, Fisher, J. Quayle, J. Kelly, Crellin, Allen, Cormode, R. Corlett, Williamson, T. Corlett, Penketh, A. W. Moore, Stevenson, Jos. Mylchreest, J. R. Cowell, Jas. Mylchreest, J. A. Mylrea, J. J. Goldsmith, Stephen, and the Speaker—20. Motion lost.

The clause was agreed to.

Mr MARTIN: Before we leave this branch of the subject, I now move a resolution which will have the effect of testing the feeling of the House, which may serve as a guidance for the future. I propose that a clause be inserted reducing the rateable value from £4 to £3.

Mr QUINE seconded the amendment.

Mr J. R. COWELL: I really think that these hon. friends of mine on the left have very short memories. The House has within the last quarter of an hour decided this question. On principle I think most of the members who spoke were favourable to the consideration of a reduction in the franchise, but it was considered that the time was inopportune. Some thought it was an attempt to spring a measure

upon them and surprise them ; and I do think that when the House has settled a question of principle fifteen minutes ago, it is more than a waste of time to discuss it fifteen minutes afterwards. While I am on my feet, in reply to the challenge of my name-sake, I shall, at the close of the House, ask leave to introduce a Bill which will be quite as radical as anything the hon. member has proposed to-day. There is only this difference, that it will go very considerably further.

Mr MARTIN : After the explanation of the hon. member for Ramsey, I beg, with the consent of my seconder, to withdraw my proposal. I am glad it has elicited the expression of opinion he has given utterance to.

Motion withdrawn by consent.

Clause 9 having been passed.

Mr FISHER moved the adjournment of the House, and Mr MYLCHREEST seconded.

Mr STEPHEN : Perhaps this would be the proper time for me to move a clause for the Redistribution of seats. (Laughter.) If I make the motion now, the House will know it is coming on at the next sitting. If the property qualification of members is to be considered then, I do not see why redistribution should not be considered also.

Mr J. R. COWELL : I thought there was a motion before the House that the House do now adjourn.

The SPEAKER : I suppose the House does not object to the hon. member giving notice.

Mr J. R. COWELL : I thought he was going to make a speech.

The SPEAKER : Perhaps the hon. member will hand his notice in. I may say that it is very questionable how far hon. members may go in moving amendments upon a Bill. (Hear, hear.) It is exceedingly inconvenient, to say the least of it, and proposals like Household Suffrage and Redistribution ought never, in my opinion, to be started on amendments. (Hear, hear.) In the case of Bills, the House always has ample notice by having the Bills printed a fortnight or three weeks at least before it is discussed. Besides I think it is rather unfair to the mover of the Bill to take the House by surprise, and tack on all kinds of measures to his Bill. I should strongly advise hon members who wish to carry these questions in the House to get leave to introduce

House of Keys Election Bill.

their own Bills. It would be unfair to the promoter of a Bill to spoil his chance of having it passed. (Hear, hear.)

Major STEPHEN : After what you have said, I have no hesitation in withdrawing my notice for the redistribution of seats. I would be the last to jeopardise a Bill brought in by a colleague of my own, which is a very valuable Bill. At an early date I shall ask leave to introduce a Bill for the redistribution of seats.

Mr J. R. COWELL : I beg leave to give notice that I shall ask leave to introduce a Bill, which may be briefly described as a Reform Bill, and which will include several questions introduced to-day and others.

Mr MYLREA : I do not rise to object, but I put it as a point of procedure, whether when a Bill is before the House dealing with the House of Keys Election Acts, it is competent for another member to introduce a Bill dealing with the same subject.

The SPEAKER : I am merely taking the hon. member's notice. It will be my duty to take it now, and we shall see when the Bill appears whether we can go on with it in the same session.

Mr J. R. COWELL : There will be nothing in my Bill which will cross the matter contained in that of the hon. member. I will steer clear of that.

At this point the SPEAKER gave the order to clear the House.