Motion put and passed, and the debate adjourned.

PERMANENT RESERVES AMENDMENT BILL.

Received from the Legislative Council, and, on motion by the PREMIER, read a first time.

ADJOURNMENT.

The House adjourned at four minutes past 12 midnight, until Thursday afternoon.

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# Legislative Council,

*Thursday, 3rd October, 1901.*

Insect Pests Act Amendment Bill, first reading—Noxious Weeds Act Amendment Bill, first reading—Motion: Midland Railway, Inquiry to be joint—Question: Agricultural Areas, Northampton—Question: Telegraph Communication, Mertondale—Question: Electric Transmission of Power, to Inquire—Motion: Dogs (wild), to Increase Bonus (withdrawn)—Land Act Amendment Bill, in Committee, Clause 24 to new clause, progress—Adjournment.

THE PRESIDENT took the Chair at 4·30 o'clock, p.m.

PRAYERS.

INSECT PESTS ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

Introduced by the MINISTER FOR LANDS, and read a first time.

NOXIOUS WEEDS ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

Introduced by the MINISTER FOR LANDS, and read a first time.

MOTION—MIDLAND RAILWAY, INQUIRY TO BE JOINT.

HON. R. S. HAYNES moved (by leave):

That the resolution of this House, appointing a select committee to inquire into the agreements between the Midland Railway Company and the Government, be discharged.

A motion for the appointment of a select committee had been also moved in the Legislative Assembly; and it was now desired that there should be a joint select committee of both Houses to inquire into the matter. Such a committee would be more effective than a committee appointed by one House.

Question put and passed.

HON. R. S. HAYNES farther moved:

That a joint select committee of both Houses of Parliament be appointed to inquire into and report upon — 1, The nature of existing agreements between the Midland Railway Company and the Government. 2, The present position of the Company. 3, The manner in which the traffic over the line is conducted. 4, The method of inspection and upkeep of the permanent way. 5, Generally. Also, that five members be elected by this House.

Question put and passed.

Ballot taken, and the following members elected:—Hon. T. F. O. Brimage, Hon. J. M. Drew, Hon. A. Jameson, Hon. J. M. Speed, with Hon. R. S. Haynes as mover; the committee to have power to send for persons, papers, and records; to report on 17th October.

Message transmitted to the Legislative Assembly, with request for concurrence.

QUESTION—AGRICULTURAL AREAS, NORTHAMPTON.

HON. J. M. DREW asked the Minister for Lands: 1, If the Government recognises that it would be unwise, at the present stage, to grant the former lessees, or any other person, under Section 109 of the Land Act, a license to depasture stock upon the whole or any portion of the newly declared agricultural areas at Northampton. 2, If the Government will refuse to issue such licenses until every effort has been exhausted to settle the land.

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS replied:—No; the former lessees having paid rent up to the end of the year and applied for licenses under Section 109 of the Act, it is proposed to grant the same in accordance with usual practice. Should any trouble arise out of this, the licenses will not be renewed for next year.

QUESTION—TELEGRAPH COMMUNICATION, MERTONDALE.

HON. T. F. O. BRIMAGE asked the Minister for Lands: 1, If the Govern-

ment is aware that there is great necessity for telegraphic communication at Mertondale. 2, If the Government is aware that there is a population in that district of about 300 people. 3, If the Government is aware also that the nearest telegraph station is 20 miles away at Mount Malcolm. 4, If the Government will, under the circumstances, recommend to the Federal Government the immediate erection of a telegraph line.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS replied:—1, Applications have been previously made by the residents for telegraphic communication, but the expenditure was not considered warranted. 2, Yes. 3, Yes. 4, The Warden will be asked to report as to the nature of recent developments, with a view to judging as to their permanency.

## QUESTION—ELECTRIC TRANSMISSION OF POWER, TO INQUIRE.

Hon. J. M. SPEED (Metropolitan-Suburban) moved:

That, in the opinion of this House, it is advisable that the Government should, without delay, make inquiries as to the practicability of transmitting electrical power to the goldfields from the Collie, by means of wire.

He said: A few weeks ago I asked a question in regard to this matter, and was answered in the Sphinx-like and evasive manner which is usual with Governments. Most members will doubtless agree with me that if we wish to do anything practical it is necessary to go farther than to ask questions of the Government; consequently I have brought forward this motion. We know that in former days men's usual habit was to make slaves of each other; and we also know that men now utilise, so far as they can, the forces of nature. I should like to see all obtainable information sent out from Home to the Government concerning new inventions and matters affecting the progress of civilisation; and for this purpose I believe it would be possible to use the Agent General's office in London. That is an office where some thousands of pounds are spent every year with very little profit to this State; and if that department is to continue in existence, I should like to see it made use of for obtaining information as to what is going on in other parts of the world. We are here in a comparatively isolated position; we have not an opportunity of gaining information readily obtainable in places nearer the world's large centres; and I do not see why the Agent-General's Department should not furnish data that would be of great use to the State. I am informed that in America electrical energy is being transmitted without appreciable loss of power for a distance of 80 miles. Now if it can be transmitted for that distance, then surely, if a bonus of £50,000 were given, means would be found of increasing the distance. It would be dirt cheap to give that sum, or even £100,000, if we could obtain a practicable scheme for the transmission of electrical energy by wire from Collie to the goldfields. At Collie there are burnt every year thousands of tons of what is called slack coal. I believe that material could be used and sufficient power generated to work all the mines on the fields. We should then hear no more of the goldfields firewood difficulty.

Hon. D. M. McKay: Would electricity take the place of firewood?

Hon. J. M. SPEED: Of course it would. We could utilise it for driving the engines, and for all other power required. I do not see why some effort should not be made by the Government in the direction indicated.

Question put and passed.

## MOTION—DOGS (WILD), TO INCREASE BONUS.

Hon. C. E. DEMPSTER moved:

That, in the opinion of this House, it is necessary to increase the price now paid for the destruction of wild dogs from 10s. to £1 per head, as the invasion of the country by rabbits will tend to considerably increase these pests.

From settlers in the Eastern and Eucla Divisions, he had received letters pointing out the great danger of the increase of native dogs in consequence of the rabbit invasion. The dogs were more dangerous than rabbits, for the latter did not kill sheep.

The PRESIDENT: The hon. member could speak on the abstract question; but this House had nothing to do with placing any amount on the Estimates. That was a question of public expenditure, with which this House had no power to deal except in a special way.

HON. C. E. DEMPSTER: The motion was sufficiently clear in itself, and he hoped members would support it.

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS (Hon. C. Sommers): There was no desire to oppose the motion, but he had not sufficient information to say whether the offering of an extra 10s. per head would inflict a large expenditure on the Government. He did not know what was the practice in other States, nor did he know to what extent the increase of dogs had been caused by the incursion of the rabbits. If the hon. member would consent to an adjournment of the debate until Wednesday he (the Minister) would be able to inquire how this motion would affect the Government.

HON. G. RANDELL (Metropolitan): The hon. member could hardly move the motion in its present form, as it would impose an additional tax on the country. The hon. member could withdraw his motion and give notice of one in more general terms, to the effect that, in the opinion of the House, it was desirable that the amount for the destruction of wild dogs be increased: then the motion would be in order.

HON. C. E. DEMPSTER asked leave to withdraw the motion.

Motion by leave withdrawn.

## LAND ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

### IN COMMITTEE.

Consideration resumed from 11th September.

Clause 24—Amendment of principal Act:

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS moved that in Sub-clause (*f.*), lines 3 and 4, the words "within 20 miles of" be struck out, and "adjoining" inserted in lieu. If the amendment were carried a selector could then please himself whether he resided on his free homestead farm or on his conditional purchase adjoining. Even if the land was farther away it was thought the selector might have that power, but on recommendation it was decided not to extend the provision to land 20 miles away, especially on pastoral lands, as the land might be obtained with no idea of living upon it, and all the improvements might be put on the one block, which was not desirable.

Amendment put and passed.

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS moved as a farther amendment that after the word "farm," in line 7, the words "with the exception of external fencing of the said homestead farm and conditional purchase." If the improvements were allowed in one block, the second block would be left unfenced, and under the Land Act all lands must be fenced. No other improvements would be insisted upon on the second block, provided that the additional improvements were carried out on the adjoining block, and that the external fences were erected.

Amendment put and passed.

HON. C. A. PIESSE moved that the following new sub-clause be added: "In Section 55, Sub-section (5), the following proviso is added: 'Provided also that where the lessee under this Act erects a rabbit-proof exterior fence, the Minister may allow the value of such exterior fence to be deemed part of the prescribed improvements.'" This sub-clause would apply to conditional purchase land of the first class. The principle had already been extended to second and third class grazing lands. We should do well if, by encouraging the erection of rabbit-proof fencing, we could prevent these lands being spoilt.

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS: Though this amendment had at first appeared practicable, it would really mean that on first-class lands the amount allowed in respect of fencing would be equivalent to the full value of the necessary improvements. That would not tend to settle the land in the way contemplated by law. In a 320-acre block three miles of external fencing would be required. A rabbit-proof fence would cost £60 per mile, and the fencing would thus be worth £180. But the value of the necessary improvements required by the Act was 10s. an acre, or £160; so that the result of the amendment would be that every occupant would have a surplus of £20 over the value of prescribed improvements by simply erecting a rabbit-proof fence. Moreover, a "rabbit-proof exterior" fence might mean a fence capable of keeping out rabbits only, and not of preventing the trespass of great or small stock.

HON. W. MALEY: Nonsense!

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: Evidently a rabbit-proof fence was a fence that would keep out rabbits. As the Government would supply fencing wire at the lowest possible price to settlers, we had better go on as now, allowing half the cost of the fence as against improvements.

Hon. C. A. PIESSE: The Under-Secretary for Lands had been consulted in this matter, and the Minister also had stated he would not object to the clause. Regarding the Minister's illustration of 320 acres, better take 1,000 acres of land. That would require five miles of external fencing. Five miles at £50 a mile would be £250. The amount of improvements required by the Act on 1,000 acres was £500; therefore £250 worth of improvements must still be effected. This showed the narrow view taken by the Lands Department. The few well-informed officers employed were outside the department, and were constantly baulked by those inside. What could be wiser than to encourage the erection of fences? Would any sane selector enclose his land with a rabbit-proof fence simply for the sake of fulfilling the conditions, and not for the purpose of using the land?

The Minister for Lands: What was a rabbit-proof fence?

Hon. C. A. PIESSE: According to the hon. member, one that would cost £50 a mile.

The Minister for Lands: No. That was Mr. Piesse's definition.

Hon. C. A. PIESSE: No man of common sense would think of fencing a 320-acre block for the mere sake of calling that fence an improvement. Why did the Lands Department always throw obstacles in the way of erecting new fences? It was only by great efforts that he, with the intercession of Sir John Forrest, had induced the department to consent to one-half the value of fencing being allowed as an improvement; yet now the Minister stated that the allowance for fencing would absorb all the improvements.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: It was true that he had at first believed the amendment desirable. The hon. member should not have jumped to the conclusion that it had been opposed by officers of the department. No officer had supplied the figures quoted, nor was the area of 320 acres too small to instance; for in future the efforts made to induce closer settlement would secure smaller areas of first-class land. The hon. member would not state what was a rabbit-proof fence. If it would keep out large and small stock as well as rabbits, then there would not be any objection to allowing more than half or even two-thirds of the value as against improvements. He would not oppose a slight increase in the value so that a fence could be erected to resist large and small stock.

Hon. W. MALEY: The Government had nothing to pay in connection with this matter, but they had the waste lands of the Crown for sale. With the rabbits here, if we were to have any settlement we must make provision by fencing. The idea of the Minister for Lands to have the fence 2ft. 6in. high was quite original. No man who had any experience of rabbits and farming could support the proposal. Was it reasonable to assume that any person would go into the country and put up a 2ft. 6in. fence to keep out rabbits. When he (Mr. Maley) was a boy, a fence to keep out large stock was 7ft. high, now a fence to keep out large and small stock was 3ft. 10in. high, but an animal that would jump a fence 3ft. 10in. high would try to jump a 7ft. fence and knock it down or injure itself. The old ideas had been exploded, but it was a very original idea to put up a 2ft. 6in. fence to keep out rabbits. Any man who had to erect a 2ft. 6in. fence would make it a few inches higher, by putting a wire on the top so that the fence would keep out large stock.

Hon. J. W. HACKETT: There were many aspects of the question to be considered, and it would be well if the Hon. C. A. Piesse would confer with the Minister for Lands on this matter. It was a mistake for members to bring the names of officers of a department into a debate. Officers were always willing to give information to private members, but if their names were to be dragged into the debate that would tend to close their lips. A very pregnant question was put by the Hon. C. E. Dempster to the Minister for Lands yesterday, and it was a question which the legal members of the Government might still ponder over. The member asked if any amendment of the Land Act would apply to existing leases

or selections, as the case might be, where there was not a prescriptive right under legislation to save the lessee from being interfered with. Whatever amendment was made now might be claimed by all existing lessees and holders of Crown lands. As to the exterior fence, would it not be possible to fall in with the suggestion of the Minister for Lands and allow an increased value for improvements. If we piled up the expenses of the exterior fencing the grazing leaseholder would become loaded. According to the present law it was doubtful whether the cost of the exterior fence could be placed on the grazing lessee. There was a wave of rabbits coming from the East and entering this very country which he was anxious to see used for closer grazing purposes. If we consented to the Hon. C. A. Piesse's proposal we should create another prescriptive right which would operate against intense grazing leaseholds.

HON. E. M. CLARKE: The Government contemplated erecting a rabbit-proof fence, and it went without saying that whatever that boundary fence might be, every person knew perfectly well it was farther away to the west than was contemplated in the first instance. Therefore it went without saying that the rabbits were advancing rapidly. The Government contemplated spending money in erecting a rabbit-proof fence; and as far as the utility of the fence was concerned, it would not be worth one-quarter the amount it would cost to erect it. There were scores of people who would welcome the rabbits. There were numbers of malicious individuals who would knock down the rabbit fences and put the rabbits over; it was to their interest to do so. Any person owning valuable property, if the rabbits came—and they would come—for his own protection would have to erect a rabit-proof fence around his property. It was a very small thing to say that the Government would have to pay for the cost of the ring fence to keep out the rabbits. The question had been asked, what was a rabbit-proof fence? It was such a fence that the Government of the present day contemplated putting across the continent. The Hon. J. W. Hackett has sounded a note of warning, and he foresaw a certain amount of danger. We must look the matter square in the face and see how it would affect the settlement of the people and the Government, and we should see what other legal questions were involved. We must look at the matter from every standpoint and see if we could arrive at something to settle the question. The time was near at hand when the rich man, if he were the owner of land, would have to put his hands in his pocket and erect a rabbit-proof fence around his holding. We should be careful not to rush into any trouble, for subsequently we might be surrounded by legal difficulties. The Government might see if they could do anything in the direction mentioned by the Hon. C. A. Piesse.

HON. C. A. PIESSE: On the 11th September a motion had been carried of exactly the same purport, but applying to grazing leases, reading, "the value of such exterior fencing to be deemed part of the prescribed improvements."

HON. J. W. HACKETT: Yes; but the question was, what proportion would be allowed as "part"?

HON. C. A. PIESSE: The value of such exterior fence.

HON. J. W. HACKETT: As a part; certainly not as a whole.

HON. C. A. PIESSE: Even were a man to fence for the mere sake of fencing, he could not do much damage to the State, for he could not take up more than a certain area; therefore it was against common sense to think he would put up a rabbit-proof fence for the sake of fulfilling the conditions of improvement. That was not the principal object of selectors, for such expenditure would not be sufficient to enable a man to earn his living. On first-class land £3 or £4 an acre had to be spent in order that the selector might live on the proceeds of soil.

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS: The principal Act as it stood left room for improvement in this matter. He recognised the great assistance the hon. member was rendering in making the Land Act more liberal; but it was not desirable that, by fencing, a man should fulfil the whole of the prescribed conditions. We had to take the experience of other States, where men of money took up large tracts of land, erected external fences, and made the blocks sheepwalks

for ever. To meet the hon. member, he moved as a farther amendment that in Section 55, Sub-section 5, the following proviso be added: "Provided also that where the lessee under this Act erects a rabbit-proof exterior fence, capable of resisting large and small stock, the Minister may allow two-thirds of the value of such exterior fence to be deemed as part of the prescribed improvements."

Hon. C. A. Piesse withdrew his amendment.

Hon. C. E. Dempster: This was evidently intended to apply to all existing leases.

Hon. C. A. Piesse: Not to fences erected round pastoral leases, but on grazing leases only.

Hon. D. M. McKay supported the amendment.

Amendment put and passed.

Hon. C. A. PIESSE moved that the following sub-clause be added:—"In Section 59, strike out the words '5,000 acres,' instead of 'one,' in lines 10 and 11, and insert the word 'two' in lieu thereof." Section 59 enabled the capitalist to purchase 5,000 acres of land. It was astonishing this provision had ever been allowed to become law. The object of legislation was surely to limit these areas as much as possible. A selector living on his land could take up 1,000 acres under the residence and 1,000 under the non-residence clause: his limit was 2,000 acres. The capitalists under Section 59 could take 5,000 acres at one swoop. He desired in the first instance to make the limit 1,000 acres, but the Lands Department desired that it should be 2,000 acres. A man could also take advantage of the conditional clauses. Anyone in one hour, in the Lands Department, could take up an area of country 10,000 acres in extent. The lessee had the prior right to purchase 5,000 acres and had 12 months to pay for it in. Take the country between the Collie and the goldfields, just fancy the power that existed to the capitalist of taking the land along that route. A man could go along that country and select large areas.

Hon. D. M. McKay: This chance had never been availed of.

Hon. C. A. PIESSE: Because the opportunity never existed. Independent of what he had said, a man had the right to take up land under the conditional clauses.

Hon. J. W. HACKETT: It was obvious that a man ought to have a larger area for lands for grazing purposes than for agricultural purposes. It was an unfortunate collocation that the South-Western division and the Eastern and Eucla divisions should be placed together. The South-Western division was as generically distinct from the Eastern and Eucla divisions as it was from the Murchison. There would be this trouble: a man would have two rights, one to take up 1,000 acres in the South-Western division where the agricultural areas existed, and another to take up 2,000 acres under Section 59. Now that the Land Act had been amended some notice should be taken of the fact that the three land divisions — the South-Western, the Eastern, and the Eucla—had nothing in common. He had been taken to task by some constituents for moving in regard to the Eucla and Eastern divisions, and at the time he had no idea of the South-Western district. Perhaps the Minister would look into the matter and see if he could not introduce a measure to put these divisions in their proper position. Two thousand acres in the Eastern and Eucla divisions would be equal to one thousand acres in the South-Western division. This was the fifth amending Act since the Land Act was consolidated, for all time, in 1898.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: The section in its original form was preferable. He would see if some definite regulations could be adopted in regard to the Eucla and Eastern divisions. He moved that in the amendment the words "five thousand acres instead of" be struck out.

Amendment put and passed.

Hon. C. A. PIESSE moved that a new sub-clause be added, to read:

That in Section 59 of the principal Act the words "five thousand acres instead of" in lines 10 and 11, and the words "as prescribed for selections under the said section within an agricultural area," in lines 11 and 12, are repealed.

Amendment put and passed, and the sub-clause added to the Bill.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS moved that the following new sub-clause be added:

In Section 68, Sub-section 5, of the principal Act the following words were repealed:—

"Provided that possession may be taken, and the residence condition may be performed by an agent or servant of the lessee."

Residence by an agent or the servant of the lessee was calculated to increase dummying.

HON. J. W. HACKETT: It was the old Act; it was meant to promote dummying.

HON. C. A. PIESSE: Members should not agree to this proposal, or the only people who would be enabled to take up a grazing lease would be those who could reside on the land. So long as there was a limit to the area, and the improvements were effected, it did not matter whose money paid for the improvements or the land. The man who would select a grazing lease and have the residence conditions carried out by an agent was doing more good than the man who resided on the land, as in the one case two men would have to do what in the other case one man did singlehanded. By the amendment, no man could take up a grazing lease unless he could reside on it for six months in each year.

HON. G. RANDELL: Had the existing law been abused?

HON. C. A. PIESSE: No. He defied anyone to produce an instance.

HON. J. W. HACKETT: Could the hon. member prove his statement? There was a contrary impression abroad.

HON. C. A. PIESSE: That was incomprehensible. The proportion of grazing leases taken up as compared with the good land was very small; and such leases were selected because there was no first-class land left. To compel a man to live for six months on second or third-class grazing land would be practically to expunge grazing leases from the Act. Surely a man with a business in Perth should not be debarred from becoming a landholder so long as he effected the prescribed improvements?

HON. C. E. DEMPSTER supported the last speaker. The object of the section was to enable selectors to take up grazing leases of second or third-class land, which it would never pay to cultivate. To compel residence on such land would be absurd. When passing the original Act, all these points had been considered.

HON. J. M. DREW supported the amendment. The present section was a direct incentive to and cause of dummying. In the Victoria district large numbers of such grazing leases were owned by Perth capitalists. Of what benefit was that to the district? On such a lease there might be one white man and two or three blacks. The country required *bonâ fide* selectors.

HON. C. A. PIESSE: Those were pastoral leases, not grazing leases of limited area.

HON. J. M. DREW: It was precisely the grazing leases which were taken up by absentees.

HON. C. A. PIESSE: The hon. member, in trying to hit the capitalist once, would hit the selector three times. Such selectors were not capitalists, but small investors desirous of becoming landed proprietors. Was it reasonable such a man should have to desert his farm for six months every year, to comply with the grazing-lease conditions? Safety lay in the limited area, which would offer no temptation to the man of wealth.

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS moved that the farther consideration of the clause be postponed.

HON. J. W. HACKETT: Trouble arose because Section 59 applied to the South-West division as well as to the Eucla and the Eastern divisions. To some extent he was with Mr. Piesse; but the ideal grazing lease would be far different from those contemplated in the amendment. Such leases had been taken up almost entirely by pastoralists in whose holdings the land lay; and surely Sir John Forrest had never intended that.

HON. C. A. PIESSE: That had been stopped.

HON. J. W. HACKETT: But opportunity for it was still given by retaining the provisions of the old Act. Experience showed that it was the pastoral lessee who took up the grazing lease, whereas the idea of the grazing lease was to add to the rural population, by creating practically small pastoral freeholders. Some 230,000 acres had, he believed, been taken up as grazing leases, and probably nine-tenths had passed into the hands of pastoralists, with the exception of certain leases round Northampton, which were now in dispute, in which dispute the pastoralist would be victorious. With those exceptions, the pastoral lessees had nearly the whole of the land. The

heavy price demanded for existing grazing leases cramped the means of the holder, who should be charged a low rental, with heavy conditions of improvement. In New South Wales, an almost similar section had been in force; and one might see a house built at the junction of four grazing leases, the occupant of which claimed to be residing on each lease.

Hon. C. A. Piesse: And that could be done under the Minister's amendment.

Hon. J. W. HACKETT: Then amend the amendment. On these leases it was not managers or servants who were wanted, but a farmer and his family. Population was required, as well as sheep, cattle, and improvements.

Hon. C. E. Dempster: Why not give the farmer a small grazing lease without compelling him to live on it?

Hon. J. W. HACKETT: Because all such leases would then be taken up by people who were not farmers.

Hon. C. E. Dempster: A pastoralist would not take up an agricultural area.

Hon. J. W. HACKETT: These were outside agricultural areas. If the South-West Division were shut out of the operation of the section, and it were to apply to the Eucla and the Eastern Divisions only, there would then be plain sailing.

At 6·30, the Chairman left the Chair.

At 7·30, Chair resumed.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: At the request of the Hon. C. A. Piesse he moved that the farther consideration of the proposed sub-clause be postponed until Wednesday, 9th October.

Motion put and passed, and consideration postponed.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS moved that the following new sub-clause be added:—

> In the thirty-fourth Schedule of the principal Act strike out the figure "five," in the second line, and insert the figures "2s. 6d." (two shillings and sixpence) in lieu thereof.

The schedule provided that the license fee for cutting firewood should be 5s. per month, or £3 per year. On the Eastern goldfields especially there was an outcry against the charge for cutting firewood which was unsuitable for milling purposes. This also applied to districts around the metropolis, where there was a great deal of waste timber. It was proposed to reduce the license fee to 30s. per annum. There was a farther difficulty on the goldfields. Men had to come in a considerable distance to obtain licenses, notwithstanding that the Department had authorised certain persons to issue licenses; often a day or so was lost in getting the licenses. Rather than come in to obtain their licenses, the timber cutters would run the risk of being fined, and the fine was usually 1s., without costs. The object which the Government had in view was thereby defeated.

Question put and passed, and the sub-clause added to the Bill.

Hon. J. M. DREW moved that the following sub-clause be added:—

> In Section 148, Sub-section (6), add the following proviso:—"Provided that in the event of any claim by a lessee exceeding seventy-five per centum of the amount awarded in such arbitration, the arbitrators shall award the costs to the selector."

It was advisable there should be some restriction on the extortionate claims made by pastoralists, from time to time, on selectors taking up land on pastoral runs. These claims were powerful weapons in the hands of pastoralists to block settlement. A man might apply for 200 acres, and the pastoralists would claim £250 for the improvements, although there was not a pennyworth of improvements on the land. Still the pastoralists made these extortionate claims, and settlers were frightened off. If the amendment were carried it would prove a very valuable restriction, and show the pastoralist that if he desired to block settlement, he did so at his own risk, and ran the chance of having to pay the whole of the arbitration expenses.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: A slight addition was needed to the amendment which provided for the selector having the costs awarded to him; this provision ought also to apply to the Crown. Claims amounting to thousands of pounds had been made, and the Government in such cases had valued the improvements at so many hundred pounds. These claims had therefore exceeded ten times the amounts the Crown considered reasonable.

HON. C. E. DEMPSTER: It was unfair to pass such an important amendment in a thin House.

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS: Due notice had been given. Regarding his proposed amendment he did not feel keenly. But when the award did not amount to 75 per cent. of the claim, that showed unmistakeably that the lessee's claim was exorbitant, vexatious, and calculated to frighten away the selector.

HON. C. E. DEMPSTER: This would interfere with rights created by the leases of 1900. It was truly retrospective legislation, and progress should be reported.

HON. G. RANDELL moved that the farther consideration of the proposal be postponed till Wednesday next.

Motion put, and a division taken with the following result:—

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Ayes | ... | ... | 6 |
| Noes | ... | ... | 10 |
| Majority against ... | | ... | 4 |

| AYES. | NOES. |
|---|---|
| Hon. C. E. Dempster | Hon. E. M. Clarke |
| Hon. M. L. Moss | Hon. J. M. Drew |
| Hon. G. Randell | Hon. R. S. Haynes |
| Hon. J. E. Richardson | Hon. S. J. Haynes |
| Hon. H. J. Saunders | Hon. A. Jameson |
| Hon. D. McKay *(Teller)*. | Hon A. G. Jenkins |
| | Hon. W. Maley |
| | Hon. C. Sommers |
| | Hon. J. M. Speed |
| | Hon. B. C O'Brien *(Teller)*. |

Motion thus negatived.

HON. R. S. HAYNES: The meaning of the proposed sub-clause was that if the lessee claimed £100 for improvements and the arbitrator awarded £24, it was clear the lessee had claimed too much, and unnecessarily put the selector to expense; therefore the lessee would have to pay the cost of the arbitration. If, however, the award were £26, each party would pay his own costs.

HON. G. RANDELL: The wording of the amendment was not at all clear.

HON. C. E. DEMPSTER: Why should the difference go to the selector?

HON. R. S. HAYNES: If the award did not amount to more than one-fourth of the sum claimed, the lessee should certainly be penalised.

HON. W. MALEY: At first he had been in favour of the amendment. As a selector, he had been grievously imposed upon. Some years ago he had put in a claim for land on a run at Geraldton, which claim the lessee resisted, and made a decidedly bogus demand. He (Mr. Maley) had to tender to the Government the rent, about £9. He was residing in Perth, and it was a fitting opportunity for the lessee to block him by virtue of the distance, because he (Mr. Maley) would have to appear at Geraldton to press his claim, and the lessee was on the spot. The lessee put in a claim for £200 for a well and certain fencing. The claim was forwarded on, and a reply sent to the Commissioner of Lands to the effect that the sum would be paid provided the improvements were found to be on the land, on survey. The Commissioner accepted the suggestion. The survey was carried out six years afterwards, but in the meantime the well that was on the property had shifted half a mile away. After he (Mr. Maley) had completed his improvements and had fenced the land, he was asked to pay £6 for improvements, which amount he refused to pay, informing the lessee that he deserved to be prosecuted. On such flagrant cases as that he was inclined to support the amendment; but any honest lessee might be injured in reputation and in pocket if the clause was passed as it stood. A lessee employed men to dig out a dam which cost him so much and the amount was put down in the lessee's books. A well was sunk, and the lessee might have to send away to a blacksmith to have his tools sharpened and so forth, and the value of the well was put down at so much. The lessee had put in an honest claim, what the well had cost him, and what the dam had cost him, and what the fencing had cost him; and all were in good order. Yet the award might not be anything like 75 per cent. of the claim. It might not be more than 25 per cent. But because the award did not come to 75 per cent. the lessee had to pay the costs of the arbitration. The lessee might not know the actual value of the improvements, but he would put in a claim for what the improvements had cost him. The amendment might be altered to provide that the estimated cost of the improvements should be put in by the lessee.

HON. R. S. HAYNES: In reading the proposed new clause, he had been mistaken. It should be 25 per cent., which

was reasonable. Extravagant claims were sent in against selectors and the Government, and an attempt should be made to stop these claims. If the selector could not beat down the claim by 25 per cent. then each party should pay his own costs, but if the selector beat down the claim below 25 per cent., then the lessee paid the costs. It was not what the improvements had cost the squatter, but what was their value. The Committee was opening up a way for the squatter to make unreasonable claims on the selector. Supposing land was taken from a person by the Government under the Railway Act. If the person whose land was taken claimed a £1,000, and the Government offered £200, the amount in dispute was £800; but, in order to get costs, the owner must get the land valued at £600 or three times the amount offered by the Government. If that was not done each party had to pay his own costs. The objection to the liberalising of the land laws was no credit to the Chamber.

HON. C. E. DEMPSTER: Under Section 148 the selector was well protected. He had not to pay what the lessee demanded, but what the arbitrator decided was the fair value of the improvements. Nothing could be fairer than that. These points were carefully considered when the Land Regulations were framed, and the Committee were now endeavouring to lend itself to a species of legislation which was unfair and unjust. There were instances in which lessees would claim more than what the improvements had cost, because the lessee had to take into consideration the value of the lease and the loss sustained by severance, but these matters would be considered by the arbitrator appointed.

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS: It was necessary to see where the shoe pinched. A selector desired to obtain certain lands; the pastoralist was notified and put in a claim, say for £200. If the lessee had claimed £100, probably the selector, rather than go to arbitration and be put to expense, would pay the amount. The intention of the clause was to prevent the pastoralist from making an exorbitant claim. If the pastoralist knew that unless he substantiated his claim he might have to pay the cost, that would have the effect of reducing his claim. By these exorbitant claims selectors were frightened off. If the clause would have the effect of limiting the exorbitant claims, then the Committee should pass the legislation to protect the selector.

HON. J. M. SPEED: The man who made extortionate claims should, to some extent, be penalised. Lessees sometimes claimed thousands of pounds, well knowing that they would not get hundreds, thus driving the small selector off the land. The proviso should read "that in the event of any claim by a lessee exceeding, by twenty-five per centum. or more, the amount of the award in such arbitration, the arbitrators shall award the costs to the selector." If a man could not claim within three-fourths of the correct amount, a good deal of the alleged damage was hypothetical, and it was for actual losses only that awards should be made.

HON. S. J. HAYNES: The amendment seemed somewhat drastic. It would be clearer if the proviso were altered to read: "Provided that if the amount awarded by the arbitrator shall be, say, fifty per centum less than the amount claimed, the lessee shall pay the costs." He was in sympathy with the discouragement of extortion.

HON. R. S. HAYNES moved that the proviso in the amendment be altered to read: "Provided that, unless the award of the arbitrator or the resident magistrate is at least seventy-five per centum of the amount claimed, costs shall be awarded to the selector."

HON. J. M. DREW withdrew his amendment in favour of Mr. Haynes's proposal.

HON. C. E. DEMPSTER: This was a matter for a full House. Only three members present represented the pastoral industry.

HON. J. M. SPEED: That was not the fault of members present.

HON. C. E. DEMPSTER: By the principal Act the value of the improvements was ascertained by two valuers, one appointed by the selector and the other by the lessee, with the resident magistrate as umpire. What could be fairer? If the lessee's valuer demanded too much, the other would not agree. Thus the interests of both parties were safeguarded, and no amendment was necessary. There

was too much tinkering with the Land Act, which was being altogether spoilt.

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS: The section in the principal Act was not unfair, for none could object to the method of arbitration. But a lessee's claim might be so large to start with as to drive the selector out of the field; and there must be a penal clause, so that the lessee, if unable to substantiate his claim to a given extent, should be obliged to pay the selector the expenses to which the latter had been put by being compelled to go to arbitration.

HON. J. M. DREW: Especially in the interests of the Victoria District was the amendment required, where, for the last 30 years, the squatters had been continuously blocking settlement by making extortionate claims of £250 and in some cases £500. The selector was thus frightened away, and never went to arbitration. Only the dishonest pastoralist who put in extortionate claims need fear the new sub-clause.

HON. G. RANDELL: Without calling the pastoralist dishonest for merely trying to get the highest price for his improvements, he thought the amendment very fair. It would tend to abolish the temptation of the pastoralist to assess his claim too high, and would thus assist the main object of the Act, which was to encourage settlement. Pastoralists in some portions of the State had leases for 999 years, but in other portions there must be settlement, and to block it would be wrong.

Question put and passed, and the sub-clause added to the Bill.

HON. R. S. HAYNES moved that the following sub-clause be added:—

> In Section 148 the following Sub-section is added:—(8.) Should the lessee not make his claim within the time mentioned in sub-section (two), it shall be lawful for the Minister to extend the time for sending in such claim to any time not exceeding six months.

The lessee had sixty days within which to make his claim. In an arbitration in which he was recently engaged, the resident magistrate decided that inasmuch as the lessee failed to make his claim within sixty days, the claim was gone. Although one thought that was bad law, and the matter could be threshed out in Court, he wished to settle this question. The time ought to be fixed in which a lessee had to make his claim, but instead of it being two months, if approved by the Minister, the time should be extended to six months if the lessee was debarred from sending in his claim within the two months. Say that land was taken up 200 miles from Kimberley. Sixty days from the date of the taking up of the land the lessee had to send in his claim. A steamer might not be coming down. If the Resident Magistrate was right, the lessee was barred from making his claim. Two months was no doubt the proper time to send in a claim, but he wished to give the Minister the power to extend that time to six months for any good reason shown.

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS: What the selector desired in every case, when he took up land, was finality. The selector had sixty days in which to dispute the pastoralist's claim. In nine cases out of ten the pastoralist did not desire the selector to come on to his lease, and it was only natural that the pastoralist should delay the matter so that something might turn up in the meantime to draw the selector's attention from the land. Seeing that the selector desired finality, and that sixty days were allowed in which the claim should be made, he thought it desirable to allow that time to stand.

HON. R. S. HAYNES: Take a pastoralist on the Oakover.

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS: The claim might be made by telegraph, but selectors did not take up land in the districts which the hon. member referred to. If the amendment were carried it would retard settlement.

HON. J. M. DREW opposed the amendment on the grounds stated by the Minister.

HON. C. E. DEMPSTER: It was quite evident that the Minister would not assist the pastoralists in any direction. The Government were making a rod for their own backs, because selectors had taken up land and no notice whatever had been given to the pastoralists. In what position was the Government in those cases?

HON. J. W. HACKETT: The Government could pass a special Act.

HON. C. E. DEMPSTER: The Committee were fairly butchering what was a good Act. It had been thoroughly considered by those who knew what they

were dealing with, which could not be said of those who were considering the Bill now.

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS: There was no desire on his part to see the Act altered in this direction; he desired to accept it as it stood.

HON. C. E. DEMPSTER: It would be in the interests of the pastoralists that the time for sending in the claim should be extended.

HON. R. S. HAYNES: The Minister for Lands had not had any experience on this question. Supposing a pastoral lessee lived in York, that pastoral lessee might have a run on the coast, which he used as a summer run. The lessee might never go near the run, and some of the land might be taken up, of which the lessee received notice, and within 60 days he had to find out where the land was. It might take him months to do that, and the squatter had to give up his work and chase the selector.

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS: That was the fault of having too much land.

HON. R. S. HAYNES: If the Minister was of opinion that the squatter had been lax and had tried to harass the selector, then the Minister could say that the time should not be extended. The amendment only gave power to extend the time in case of hardship.

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS: The hon. member did not ask for the same facilities for the selector in case of dispute.

HON. R. S. HAYNES: No; the selector was living on the land.

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS: No; the selector dare not go on the land until he knew what it would cost him.

HON. S. J. HAYNES opposed the amendment. In such circumstances, it would be a farce to select. Surely 60 days was ample time for sending in notices. To give the Minister power to extend that time to six months was simply monstrous, and would be a great deterrent to, if not an absolute prohibition of, selection.

Amendment put, and a division taken with the following result:—

| | |
|---|---|
| Ayes ... ... ... | 4 |
| Noes ... ... ... | 13 |
| Majority against ... | 9 |

| Ayes. | Noes. |
|---|---|
| Hon. R. S. Haynes | Hon. E. M. Clarke |
| Hon. D. McKay | Hon. J. M. Drew |
| Hon. J. E. Richardson | Hon. J. W. Hackett |
| Hon. C. E. Dempster (*Teller*). | Hon. S. J. Haynes |
| | Hon. A. Jameson |
| | Hon. W. Maley |
| | Hon. M. L. Moss |
| | Hon. B. C. O'Brien |
| | Hon. C. A. Piesse |
| | Hon. G. Randell |
| | Hon. C. Sommers |
| | Hon. J. M. Speed |
| | Hon. H. J. Saunders (*Teller*). |

Amendment thus negatived.

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS moved that the farther consideration of the clause be postponed until Wednesday next, for the purpose of considering the amendment of which he had given notice.

Motion put and passed, and the clause postponed.

Clause 3—Amendment of Section 152 of the principal Act:

HON. G. RANDELL: Mr. Burges had given notice of an amendment to strike out the whole clause.

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS: That amendment Mr. Burges had consented to withdraw, on condition that he (the Minister) moved to add to Sub-clause (1.) the words, "for use within this State." The sub-clause would then provide that licenses could be issued for obtaining and removing guano or other manure for use within the State. This would meet the objection that all available guano might be exported and none left for local use. He moved that those words be added.

HON. J. W. HACKETT: This important amendment opened up a wide question. By reason of the provisions of the Commonwealth Act, we could not prevent the exportation of guano from this to the other States, nor from the other States to the rest of the world. Better postpone the consideration of the clause.

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS: If the Committee were satisfied that the last speaker was correct, the amendment would be of no avail, and the clause must stand. The Government had secured the power sought to grant special leases for areas exceeding 25 acres for gathering manure, and it was patent to all that special areas were required. A resolution passed by the House within the last 12 months stated that no farther lease should be granted which would permit of the export of guano; and the present leases

had about three or four years to run. The Government desired an expression of opinion from members as to whether the present lessees should have an extension of lease. The Hon. R. G. Burges desired to add the words "for use in the State," but if the manure could not be retained for use in the State, and we could not stop its importation to other States of the Commonwealth, then the amendment would be of no use.

HON. J. W. HACKETT: The Commonwealth Act was clear on the point. On the imposition of uniform duties of customs, which it was understood would take place next Tuesday, trade, commerce, and intercourse amongst the States, whether by means of internal carriage or ocean navigation, shall be absolutely free.

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS asked leave to withdraw the amendment.

Amendment by leave withdrawn.

HON. G. RANDELL: Why should the word "inns" be inserted in Subclause (3.)?

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS: There were certain lands on the goldfields and elsewhere that could not be alienated, and cases had arisen where wayside inn licenses had been applied for and leases had been granted for an inn. This provision was in order to enable the department to make special provision in such case.

HON. R. S. HAYNES: A great many complaints had been made by people going to the Lands Office to take up land, being told, upon expressing their desire to take up a certain portion, that 40 acres of the block had been taken up; but that it was believed the person who held the 40 acres could be bought out cheaply. That frightened people from taking up the land. This was known to be the case outside the Lands Office, and it would tend to ruin the Land Act.

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS: Such a case had not been heard of by him, but if such instances did occur he would like to hear of them, and no one would be harder on the delinquents than he would be.

HON. R. S. HAYNES: Instances had come under his knowledge in which a person desiring to take up a certain portion of land had been informed that his claim would not be allowed, and applications had been suppressed for three months.

HON. G. RANDELL: It seemed strange that the Government should associate themselves with the liquor traffic. There must be some special circumstances on the goldfields by which the Government had allowed hotels to be built on leased land.

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS: Subclause (3.) was inserted to enable the Government to extend their powers for special purposes. An "inn" was a place where refreshment could be sold for man and beast. It was not necessary that intoxicating liquor should be sold.

HON. G. RANDELL: The Government should do what they could to limit the trade in intoxicating liquor and not assist it.

HON. J. W. HACKETT: Was it not the case that in many pastoral districts no land could be given for wayside inns except under a clause such as this.

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS: Those were the special cases to which he had referred, and the Government would not abuse their power.

HON. C. A. PIESSE: The need for amending the Land Act was very apparent. According to the original Act the Government could not let land for special purposes for less than 5s. an acre.

HON. D. M. McKAY moved that in line 1, sub-clause (3.) the word "inns" be struck out, and "boardinghouses" inserted in lieu.

Amendment put and negatived, and the clause passed.

Clause 4—Amendment of Section 146 of principal Act:

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS moved that in lines 1 and 2, the words "the Resident Magistrate of the district shall not act as umpire" be struck out. As a consequential amendment, the word "but" in line 4 would be struck out. It was not proposed to interfere with the rights of the selector or the pastoralist; but where the Government were resuming large areas, it was not fitting that a civil servant should in all cases act as arbitrator. At present, the medical officer in a scattered district was sometimes appointed resident magistrate. In large resumptions, probably the resident magistrate would not have sufficient pastoral and agricultural experience to give satis-

faction to both sides. It was felt it would be better to allow the arbitrators to choose their own umpire, or that the Governor should appoint an umpire in case of disagreement.

Hon. C. A. Piesse: Would this apply to the Act generally?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: No. Only in cases where the Crown resumed land. Between the selector and the pastoralist, the clause would not interfere.

Amendment put and passed, and the clause as amended agreed to.

Clause 5—Minister may dispose of inferior lands at less than 10s. an acre:

Hon. J. W. HACKETT: This was liable to abuse if it were left to the Minister to fix the classification of the land immediately prior to the reduction of the price. On the application of a friend, the Minister might fix such price at 5s. an acre, re-classifying the land for the purpose of so doing.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: The hon. member's remarks were not quite clear. In any area resumed for agricultural purposes, the land would vary. There would be first-class, second-class, and third-class land. By the Act, land within an agricultural area could be sold as first-class land only; consequently, as soon as such area was thrown open, the best land was selected and the inferior land left on the hands of the Government. That was not desirable, for the adjoining holders of first-class land would be willing to extend their holdings if they could get some of these unoccupied and inferior lands at a price lower than 10s. per acre. Outside agricultural areas the Government now had power to classify land on application; and the clause sought to extend the same power to lands within such areas.

Hon. J. W. HACKETT: The classification should be made on some fixed date, and due notice thereof given to allow outsiders to come in. It was quite conceivable that a Minister might give away land at 4s. per acre, re-classifying the land for that purpose. That might be done "in the dark."

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: Let the clause be postponed on the understanding that on its reconsideration this point only be discussed.

Hon. C. A. PIESSE: The idea evidently was to throw open second-class and third-class lands inside the agricultural area on second-class and third-class conditions. He moved that the word "whether" in line 2 be struck out and "if" inserted, and the words "or not" in the same line struck out, making the clause apply solely to lands inside agricultural areas.

Hon. J. W. HACKETT: Most of the agricultural areas had been so cut up that all the land remaining on the hands of the Government was half good and half bad—cut up, so to speak, in slices.

The Minister for Lands: There was some very poor land within such areas.

Hon. J. W. HACKETT: But there was always a patch of first-class land which prevented the whole being treated as third-class.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: None would touch the third-class portion; and to deal with that the amendment was introduced. He would ask the House to pass the clause as printed, and would withdraw the amendments he had mentioned.

Hon. J. W. HACKETT: No, no. The land outside the agricultural area could not be dealt with in blocks of less than 1,000 acres.

Hon. C. A. Piesse: That area had been reduced to 300.

Hon. E. M. CLARKE: Government land was usually sold at so many shillings per acre, but it would be more correct to sell some of the land at so many acres per shilling. A mistake had been made in the Government not classifying land. Classification had been carried out in regard to estates which had been purchased by the Government from private individuals. The land had been surveyed into blocks and some of the blocks had been valued at £5 an acre, and others at £1 per acre. The Government should have the power of disposing of inferior lands at a low price. There might be blocks of land which contained a little good land, and much inferior land, but that land in the eyes of the purchaser was valued at so much per block.

Hon. C. A. PIESSE: There was second and third class land outside agricultural areas, and this land should be brought under Part 6 of the Land Act. The clause might be made to read that

the land might be disposed of subject to the conditions of Part 6 of the Land Act.

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS asked leave to withdraw his amendment.

Amendment by leave withdrawn, and the clause passed.

Clause 6—The Governor may close any road.

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS: A promise had been made to the Hon. R. G. Burges to agree to the amendment standing in that member's name, so that the sanction of the roads board should be obtained before a road was closed.

HON. G. RANDELL: All that was necessary in this clause was that the Government should obtain the opinion of the roads board before taking any step.

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS: The proviso did give away too much power considering the roads were what were called "paper" roads.

HON. J. W. HACKETT: The words which it was proposed to insert would be better introduced after the word "*Gazette*."

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS moved that in line 1 after "*Gazette*" the words "after the opinion of the roads board has been requested" be inserted.

HON. C. A. PIESSE: No provision was made in case the roads board's opinion was unfavourable. If an adverse opinion was given, would the road still be closed?

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS: There was also the question to be considered if the roads board did not express any opinion at all.

Amendment put and passed, and the clause as amended agreed to.

New Clause:

HON. C. A. PIESSE moved that the following be added as a new clause:—

> Land may be applied for under Clauses 59 and 68, in one holding, the annual payments to be calculated on the acreage of each class in area.

Representations were made some time ago by the agricultural conference for a clause to be inserted in the Land Act enabling persons to take up, in one section, second and third class land, but the Government of the day declined to take any action.

On motion by the MINISTER FOR LANDS progress reported and leave given to si again.

ADJOURNMENT.

The House adjourned at 9·45 o'clock until the next Tuesday.

# Legislative Assembly,

*Thursday, 3rd October, 1901.*

Petitions (2): Coupon Trading, to Prohibit—Paper presented—Question: Firewood Supply, Kalgoorli —Question: Railway Wagons on Timber Lines Charges—Question: Railway Sleeping Compart ments, Afghans and Japanese—Question: Coolgardi Goldfields Water Scheme, Progress—Question School Children at James street (Perth), wh refused—Question: Fremantle Asylum, Staff o Attendants—Question: Stirling Estate, Purchase- Question: Judgments not Delivered, ex-Justic Pennefather—Papers ordered: Police-Detectiv McCartney—Conciliation and Arbitration Amend ment Bill, second reading, debate resumed, con cluded—Midland Railway: Inquiry, Purchase- Fourth Judge Appointment Bill, second readin (moved)—Criminal Code Bill, in Committee t Clause 100 (progress)—Adjournment.

THE SPEAKER took the Chair a 4·30 o'clock, p.m.

PRAYERS.

PETITIONS (2)—COUPON TRADING, TO PROHIBIT.

MR. F. WILSON (Perth) presented a petition from residents of the State bearing 766 signatures, also the signatur under seal of the West Australian Cham ber of Manufactures (representing 13 members), praying for the introductio of a measure for the suppression of th coupon system of trading.

MR. J. J. HIGHAM (Fremantle) pre sented a similar petition, bearing abou 350 signatures.

Petitions received and read.

PAPERS PRESENTED.

By the PREMIER: 1, Survey of drains South-West District, particulars; 2, Graz ing leases held in South-West Land