

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL,

Wednesday, 11th August, 1886.

Medical Officer for Northam—Grant-in-Aid to Municipalities—Reserved Lands on either side of Eastern Railway: opening for sale—Mail service between Balbarup and Muir's—Telegraph line between Busselton and Quindalup—Smeiting works, Champion Bay district—Masters and Servants' Bill: third reading—Gold Duty Bill: second reading—Land Regulations: further consideration of, in committee—Adjournment.

THE SPEAKER took the Chair at seven o'clock, p.m.

PRAYERS.

MEDICAL OFFICER FOR NORTHAM.

MR. SHENTON, in accordance with notice, moved "That an humble address be presented to His Excellency the Governor, praying that he would be pleased to place the sum of £100 on the Estimates for 1887, as salary for a Medical Officer at Northam." There were a large number of people now residing in the district, and at present they were without a resident medical officer, and, in case of sickness, they had to send to Newcastle for a doctor, or to York. It might be said that this was not such a great inconvenience now as it was in the days when there was no telegraphic communication; but it was not only the delay occasioned and the consequent danger to life, there was also the expense of getting a medical man to come from a distance. Looking at the rising importance of the district, and the prospect of its being further developed by means of the railway, he thought hon. members would generally agree with him that this was a very reasonable request to be made, on behalf of such an old-established district as Northam.

THE ACTING COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. M. S. Smith): I may inform the hon. member that in consequence of the representations that have been made to the Government by the residents of Northam, and recognising the claims of the district, the Government propose to place £100 on the Estimates as salary for a medical officer.

MR. SHENTON expressed his satisfaction with this assurance, and moved the Chairman out of the chair.

Carried.

GRANT-IN-AID TO MUNICIPALITIES.

MR. SCOTT, in accordance with notice, moved, "That an humble address be presented to His Excellency the Governor, praying that he will be pleased to place on the Estimates for 1887 a sum of money as a grant-in-aid of the funds of the various Municipal Councils of the Colony, equal to fifty per cent. on the revenue raised by such Corporations from their respective assessments, not exceeding one shilling in the pound upon the rateable value of each Municipality; each grant-in-aid to be paid under such conditions, and at such time or times as the Governor in Council may decide." The hon. member said he moved the resolution with some amount of hesitation, although he thought it was the duty of any member sitting for such a constituency as Perth to attempt to get the support of the Government towards the object he had in view. He thought all hon. members would agree with him that the hon. member opposite, Mr. Randell, put this motion forward very forcibly last year, and although the hon. member did not obtain very substantial support, still he thought it would be admitted that the principle involved met with general concurrence. If on the present occasion he could only obtain the approval of the Government so far as the principle of granting aid to Municipalities was concerned, his object to a great extent would be attained. He had said that he felt some hesitation in moving in the matter at the present time, and his hesitation arose not from any doubt as to the correctness of the principle involved and of the claims of the municipalities to assistance from public funds, but in consequence of the fact that several other motions for money brought forward this session had been withdrawn owing to the Government stating that they had no funds available. Whenever any hon. member brought forward any motion for the expenditure of public money, they were told it would be better to wait until the Estimates were placed before them. He thought it would be a very good thing if the Government could bring forward their Estimates at a much earlier period of the session than they were now brought forward. He thought it would save a great deal of time in discussing motions for which it was found

there were no means for carrying them out; and if the House were in possession of the Estimates earlier, and had some idea of the actual state of the finances hon. members would probably hesitate before bringing forward any motions involving additional expenditure. As it was now they were all in the dark, except that they were told by the Government there were no funds available for this and that purpose. Without any further remarks at present, he would wait for the reply of the Colonial Secretary to the motion.

MR. LAYMAN said the motion appeared to be exactly the same motion as that brought forward last session by another hon. member. On that occasion he believed he opposed the motion, and he should certainly do so now. He took the trouble last year to go to the Clerk of the City Council to ascertain from him what the amount of the grant for Perth would be, and he found it would be something very grand. On the other hand, he found that the grants for the country districts would be hardly worth having. He thought Perth already ought to consider herself very well satisfied with her share of public money.

THE ACTING COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. M. S. Smith)—after a pause, no other hon. member rising—said he had hoped, when the hon. the junior member for Perth rose to move this humble address, he should have heard some additional or more cogent reasons urged in support of it than those that were adduced when the hon. member, Mr. Randell, moved an identical resolution on a former occasion; but he had been disappointed. On the last occasion when this proposition was brought forward it was negatived by a very substantial majority, and he might say that, if the Government had ground for opposing the proposition then, the grounds for opposition now were stronger still. Many important works had been initiated since then, involving a very heavy outlay, and not only involving a very heavy outlay, but also involving a heavy increased annual expenditure. The object which the hon. member had in view certainly was a very laudable one, and if the Government were in a position to aid Municipalities in the way indicated, he was sure they would readily do so. But

he thought hon. members would agree with him that, under the circumstances, it was impossible—it was entirely out of the question—for the Government to be able to do what the hon. member asked. Owing to the necessity for making provision for so many public works in different directions, and to other unexpected claims upon the revenue, it was quite out of their power to assist Municipalities in the manner indicated. At some future time, when the present outlay on public works and other undertakings brought in a return, he might say perhaps that the Government would be in a position to support any proposition of this kind that might be brought forward; but, as he had already stated, it would be out of the question their doing so now; and when the hon. member saw the Estimates—which he hoped to lay on the table on Monday—he thought they would agree with him in what he had stated. Under the circumstances, possibly if the hon. member was not prepared to withdraw his motion, he would consent to postpone it. They would be able to consider, when the Estimates were brought forward, whether it would be possible to do anything in the matter; but he could not hold out on behalf of the Government any hope whatever that they would be able to assist the hon. member.

MR. SCOTT said he would be only too pleased to postpone it until the Estimates came on, if he thought there was any probability of the Government assenting to the motion; but it appeared to him, if the Government considered the object in view a good one, the principle might be affirmed, which, as he had already said, would, under the circumstances, be as much as he could expect this session. It was not a question affecting Perth alone, as the hon. member for the Vasse seemed to think: it affected in the same degree every municipality in the colony. He thought that as a rule the towns got comparatively little assistance out of public funds, and that what was asked for now did not amount to a great deal. If, however, it was the wish of hon. members that the motion be postponed, he had no objection.

MR. RANDELL said, before the hon. member postponed the consideration of his motion, he should like to say one or

two words. The Acting Colonial Secretary said he had expected to have heard some more cogent arguments brought forward in support of the motion than were adduced last session by himself (Mr. Randell); but the hon. gentleman showed some little inconsistency, for he went on to say that the object was a laudable one, and that if the Government had the money they would be pleased to accede to the motion. He took it that was an important statement on the part of the Chancellor of the Exchequer (if he might so call him)—that if the Government had the means they would grant the assistance asked for. They recognised the justice of the claim put forward, and did not accede to the motion simply because they had no money. That was an important admission, and one which went a long way in support of the ultimate triumph of the principle involved. He hoped the hon. member for Perth would bear that in mind, and, if they were not able to carry their point this year, that the hon. member, if he continued to have a seat in the House, would bring it forward, year after year, until the House as well as the Government recognised the justice of making these grants-in-aid to Municipalities. He had been much struck with the broad and statesmanlike views enunciated by the hon. member for the Vasse on this subject. The hon. member seemed to have got just as far this year as he did last year. Because Busselton would not get as much as Perth the hon. member was opposed to any grant at all. On the same principle the hon. member, to be consistent, must also oppose other grants made out of public funds,—the grant for roads, for instance. Because one district, with a larger extent of roads to maintain in order, did not receive as much as another district with a comparatively small extent of roads to keep in order, the hon. member, to be logical, should oppose the granting of any money for roads. It seemed to him to be a very weak argument at the best, because a little town of some fifty houses—he had not the pleasure of knowing much about the town of Vasse—a little town perhaps of about 300 inhabitants should not receive as much as the capital city of the colony with about 7,000 inhabitants, nobody should receive anything at all. He

did not think it was worth his while laboring such an argument. The city of Perth was advancing rapidly, its population was increasing, its area spreading, its traffic increasing, and the necessity for expending large sums upon the streets was becoming more and more apparent. The citizens were already taxed to an extent that yielded a large yearly income for expenditure upon the streets, but it was not to be expected that they could keep pace with the growing requirements of the city, as everyone who travelled about must observe. The ratepayers contributed to the utmost of their ability, and without grudge, towards this necessary work, but as the town expanded, as new streets were formed, as the wear and tear of the thoroughfares increased, so also must the expenditure increase; and he could hardly conceive a more legitimate claim for assistance out of public funds than the claim now put forward. He thought Perth presented a singularly strong claim in this respect. At present it was a city of "magnificent distances," and this very feature involved a larger expenditure than if it was a city where the population was concentrated within a more circumscribed area. It was not his intention to dilate upon the subject: he had spoken at some length last session when he brought forward a similar motion, and he might take this opportunity of correcting an error that appeared in the *Hansard* report of his speech on that occasion. He was made to say that, owing to a misconception as to the nature of the proposal, the municipality of Wandering had held aloof from it. That was a mistake, for Wandering had not yet blossomed into a municipality. The municipality he referred to was that of Bunbury. That municipality held aloof because they were under the impression that as their assessments only amounted to 8d. in the pound they would be debarred from participating in this grant. That of course was a misconception. With this exception and that of Newcastle—a municipality that at that time was in the happy position of having declared no rate—every other municipality in the colony had given its hearty support to the proposal. He hoped the House would very carefully consider the matter, and that it would be possible to arrive at some decision on the subject

which, while affirming the principle, would leave the question of giving practical effect to it a question for further consideration, when the state of the public finances admitted of it. He hoped the House and the Government would recognise the justness of the principle involved, and that sooner or later the claims of Municipalities to assistance out of public funds would form the subject of an annual vote in that House. He considered that Municipalities were quite as much entitled to such assistance as Roads Boards were, and, in some respects, had a higher claim, because they voluntarily taxed themselves to a very considerable amount for the upkeep of their roads.

MR. LAYMAN said that whatever might be said of the Municipalities being all unanimous on this subject, except Bunbury and Newcastle, the fact remained that the motion last year was defeated by a large majority, and many of those who voted against it were members residing in Perth. Therefore the hon. member could not expect the support of these gentlemen, unless they had changed their minds.

MR. SHENTON said he found on reference to the Census that the celebrated town of Busselton only contained 72 male adults, and that there were only 42 houses in the place. Therefore he did not think there was much in the hon. member's argument that because Busselton would not get as much as Perth, no assistance at all should be granted.

MR. RANDELL said, as to what had fallen from the hon. member for the Vasse about hon. members changing their minds, he was afraid the hon. member did not profit much by the teachings of history. There was nothing unusual about public men changing their minds. If the hon. member had been long in that House he would have found more than one instance of hon. members changing their minds. It was not so very long ago when he was one out of the only three members in the House opposed to the immediate introduction of Responsible Government; but those noble three subsequently converted the whole House to adhere to their views, and there was a unanimous feeling in favor of the retention of the present constitution. Later still there had come a change over

the minds of some hon. members on this same question. He thought the hon. member would find that hon. members had changed their minds even this session, and voted altogether opposite to what they did last session. He was afraid the hon. member was not making sufficient allowance for the march of intelligence, and that a man may conscientiously believe to-day in the unsoundness of an idea which a few years hence, under altered circumstances, he may come to regard as sound and acceptable.

MR. MARMION thought the argument as to the paucity of the population at the Vasse was one argument why this principle of State assistance should be extended to that Municipality, so that they might have more money to spend upon their streets. He thought that the principle involved in this motion was a principle which no hon. member need fear to enunciate, and that the hon. member who had brought it forward should keep rapping at the door until he got the Government to admit the principle. He could not but think, however; that the hon. member made a mistake in asking in the first instance that the amount of the grant should be equal to 50 per cent. of the municipal revenue. He (Mr. Marmion) should have been satisfied himself to have started, at any rate, with 10 per cent. He should first have endeavored to get the principle acknowledged, and, that done, next year he might have asked for an increase of the vote to 15 per cent., and so gradually increasing it until it reached the proportion which the hon. member now asked for. He thought it was quite possible if the amount were reduced to 10 per cent. many hon. members would not be opposed to it, or view it with so much disfavor. There was no doubt that the principle was a correct one. It was one that had been adopted in the other colonies, and hon. members were very often quoting the other colonies as exemplars worthy to be followed in many matters. Those who were in favor of a different form of Government, and who were so fond of referring to the progress made by other colonies under another form of Government, and to the advantages which free institutions conferred upon the people—it would be very strange indeed if those hon. members who entertained those views should ex-

press themselves as opposed to this principle of State assistance to Municipalities, to enable them to carry out those progressive works considered necessary to keep pace with the advancement of the country—it would be very strange if these hon. members were to oppose a principle that had found favor in those colonies possessing that form of Government which they wished to see introduced here. It had been often pointed out in that House—he himself had more than once drawn attention to it—that the ratepayers in the towns, and more especially of Perth and Fremantle, had shown their readiness to tax themselves for the upkeep of their streets, and were annually expending considerable sums voluntarily for that purpose.

MR. LAYMAN: They are well able to do it. They can afford it.

MR. MARMION said let those Municipalities that were not in the same position at the present time follow in their footsteps, and show that all events they were willing to tax themselves to some little extent. Let them show the same public spirit as these larger towns had done, and probably, in the not very remote future, their share of this grant would be as large as the hon. member for the Vasse seemed to think it would be now in the case of Perth and Fremantle. The hon. member would not find Perth and Fremantle opposing the grant on that ground. As to there being no funds available for granting this assistance, he thought they ought not to accept that dictum too readily. Very probably if the amount asked for were reduced, within a reasonable limit, merely as an acknowledgment of the principle, the money would be forthcoming in due course. Generally, if there was a will there was a way, and if they got the Government to acknowledge the principle he had no doubt they would find a way to provide the money. He felt sure that when the Estimates came before them there would be items found that were not nearly of so much importance as this, and that a majority of hon. members would be found willing to vote this assistance to the various Municipalities of the colony. It might be said that it was rather a selfish thing to ask this assistance for the towns and not for the country; but they must remember that

for years past they had had on the statute book a Roads Boards Act which gave country districts power to tax themselves for the maintenance of their roads, but they had refrained from exercising that power.

MR. GRANT: They are too poor.

MR. MARMION was sorry to hear it. They were very poor in the towns too, let him tell the hon. member; but, poor as they were, they were willing to tax themselves, and it came with a very bad grace indeed from those who represented country districts if they were not willing to assist the towns as freely as the towns were willing to assist the country districts to make their roads. He had never yet heard of a town member in that House raising his voice against the vote for roads, nearly the whole of which was for the benefit of country districts, and he thought it did not look at all well to see country members oppose the motion on the ground that it would only benefit the towns. He hoped the hon. member would not withdraw his motion, but postpone it until they had the Estimates before them.

THE COMMISSIONER OF RAILWAYS (Hon. J. A. Wright) said that after the answer which his hon. friend the Acting Colonial Secretary had given to this motion, he thought it was a waste of very valuable time to continue this discussion any further, until at any rate hon. members had the Estimates before them. When hon. members saw the sums that were asked for, to carry out urgent public works, he was afraid there was very little hope of their expectations being realised as to there being much funds available for objects of this kind. At all events, the present discussion could have no practical result until they had the Estimates before them.

MR. SCOTT said all he wanted now was to have the principle recognised, and he quite agreed with the hon. member for Fremantle that if he had only asked for an amount equal to ten per cent. of the revenue of a Municipality he should have been more likely to have received the support of hon. members generally. He would be satisfied even with that, if he only got the principle admitted. He only mentioned 50 per cent. because that was the amount mentioned by the hon. member Mr. Randell in his resolution

last year; and, seeing that in the other colonies the Government gave as much as 100 or 200 per cent., he thought he was rather modest than otherwise when he asked for 50 per cent.

THE CHAIRMAN OF COMMITTEES: I would point out to the hon. member that he might frame a resolution merely affirming the principle, if that is all he desires.

Progress was then reported, and the debate adjourned until a future day.

REOPENING OF LANDS RESERVED FROM SALE, ON THE EASTERN RAILWAY.

MR. PARKER, in accordance with notice, moved, "That an humble address be presented to His Excellency the Governor, praying that he will be pleased to direct that all Crown lands abutting on the Eastern Railway, between Guildford and Clackline, be offered for sale, at a price not exceeding 20s. an acre." The hon. member said it might be in the recollection of the House that so long ago as the 27th August, 1884, he asked the Commissioner of Crown Lands whether the Government proposed to throw the lands on either side of the Eastern Railway open for sale, and, if so, when? The reply he received from the Commissioner was that "by *Gazette* notice, dated 13th March, 1883, all the Crown lands within two miles of the Eastern Railway were classified as sub-urban land under clause 38 of the Land Regulations. It was further notified at the same time that when these lands were surveyed they would be sold by auction at an upset price, to be fixed by the Governor-in-Council. Up to the present time he had not had a surveyor available for the work, but he hoped soon to be in a position to undertake it, and to have marked out sufficient allotments to meet any demand." That was the reply he received from the Commissioner of Crown Lands two years ago. These lands, it might be in the recollection of hon. members, were closed from sale, on the recommendation of that House, when the railway from Guildford to Chidlow's Well was about to be constructed. That was some three or four years ago, if not longer. But when the House recommended the Government to reserve these lands from sale pending the

construction of the railway, the House did not intend that they should be reserved from sale for ever; but that when the line was completed the land on either side of it should be sold in small blocks for vineyards, orchards, and other purposes of cultivation, which would have helped to settle people on the line and also increase the traffic. It appeared, however, that the Government had forgotten all about these lands, and they had been shut up ever since, thus preventing people from making any use of the land and depriving the line of a considerable amount of traffic. The major portion of the land was not first class land, but a great deal of it was land upon which an industrious population might be settled, engaged in the cultivation of the vine and other industries, for which the land seemed admirably adapted. This had been shown them by Dr. Waylen, at Darlington, and what the country wanted was to see a great many more Darlingtons springing up alongside this line. He did not want to see the land thrown open for sale in large blocks, for speculative purposes, but upon conditions similar to those which the Land Regulations now before the House contemplated as regards land taken up for vineyards, orchards, or gardens,—with a residential clause, perhaps, if considered desirable. At any rate, he would have the land sold in small blocks only, and for purposes of planting or cultivation, and, in time, they might have a considerable number of persons settling on the land, benefiting themselves, and also benefiting the railway, and benefiting the colony. Before the land was shut up by the Government, there were two or three blocks taken up, one by Dr. Waylen, who must have spent a considerable amount of money in converting it into what promised to be a fine vineyard; and another by Mr. Guger, who had also expended a considerable amount in improving the land, and making a flourishing vineyard of it. These two gentlemen happened to take up the land before it was closed; but since then not a single person had been able to take up an acre of it. With regard to the price that ought to be charged for this land, he thought the price ought to be such as would induce people to take it up and cultivate it. If

the Government were going to charge £3 an acre for it, and insist upon fencing and other improvements, the price would simply be prohibitory. Although there might be some places where the soil was very good, a great portion of it, as he had already said, was not what would be called first-class land, and it had appeared to him that 20s. an acre would be ample to charge for it. The motion only referred to land between Guildford and Clackline; but, if there was any Crown land along the line as far as York, or Northam, or Newcastle, adapted for the same purpose, he thought it ought to come under the same regulation.

MR. SHENTON asked the Commissioner of Crown Lands whether the whole of this land was not included in the concession made to the Waddington Syndicate, in connection with the Midland Railway?

THE COMMISSIONER OF CROWN LANDS (Hon. J. Forrest): Not the whole of it.

MR. PARKER said of course he did not wish to interfere with any concessions made under the contract with the Midland Railway, which he understood only encroached on one side of the line. He understood that the major portion of the land was not included in the railway reserve.

MR. SHENTON said he had much pleasure in seconding the resolution, for he thought all the land not included in the railway syndicate's reserve should be thrown open at once for sale. He thought it had been a mistake to have closed it so long; and now that the railway was open they ought to do all they could to get the land alongside of it settled and converted to some useful purpose, instead of remaining idle and locked up. He thought the price suggested, 20s. an acre, was a fair price. It would enable small holders to purchase the land and to improve it, as was intended. He also thought it ought to be cut up into small blocks, and cultivation insisted upon, so that the land should not be taken up simply for speculative purposes.

THE COMMISSIONER OF CROWN LANDS (Hon. J. Forrest) said the principal reason why this land had not been thrown open earlier was because of the pressure of work in the Survey Department, which had prevented

him from sending any surveyors to survey the land, which, of course, would have to be done before it was thrown open for sale as suburban land. Although there had been applications made for this land now and again, there had been no great pressure brought to bear upon the Land Office to let it be thrown open for sale. He did manage, some time ago, to have some few blocks surveyed, but there was some difficulty about the survey afterwards to prevent the land being thrown open; but now he hoped to be able to have the land surveyed. The price fixed by the Governor-in-Council, under the regulations, was £3 an acre; but he might say that he did not think the Government would have any objection, if the House wished, to reduce the upset price; for, as the land would be put up by auction, the minimum upset price was not very important, for, with the competition that took place at public auction, the land would bring what its value was in the market. The hon. member for Perth, and also the hon. member for Newcastle spoke of selling the land upon conditions of improvement; but he was afraid that was not easily to be compassed, for, if the land was sold at all it must be sold under the regulations in force at the time. The Land Regulations at present in force contained no provisions whatever as to improvements; and he himself did not at all share the regret expressed by some hon. members that this land had not been thrown open very much earlier. He did not believe himself that if it had been thrown open eighteen months ago we should have it covered with smiling homesteads, and the whole country under cultivation. He was very much of opinion that, considering the desire there was a short time ago to acquire land, if this land had been open for sale it would have got into the hands of persons who would have bought it simply for speculative purposes, and that the colony would have benefited little or nothing by it. And he believed now, if it were put in the market, if bought at all it would not be bought by those who wished to utilise it in the manner contemplated by the hon. member but by those who would take it up as a mere investment. As he had already said, it could not be sold under the existing regulations with conditions of improve-

ment attached. Under the new regulations, of course, it could be sold under conditions of improvement; but, so far as the regulations then in force were concerned, there was no clause under which improvements could be enforced as regards this class of land. The concessions already made to the Midland Railway would take up some of this land; but, he believed, the first few miles from Guildford, when they got beyond Sir James Stirling's land, was still in the hands of the Government.

MR. MARMION did not think that so long as the land was sold at public auction the minimum upset price did not matter very much; otherwise he thought the higher the upset price the better, so as to prevent the land getting into the hands of mere speculators. He thought, as the State went to the expense of constructing railways and providing facilities which greatly enhanced the value of the land, there was no reason why the State should not derive some benefit from that enhanced value. He was rather inclined to agree with the Commissioner of Crown Lands that not much harm had been done by reason of this land having been closed up to the present time. Every mile of railway contributed to increase the value of the land. The further they extended this line the more they enhanced the value of the surrounding country; and he believed himself that when this land came to be submitted for competition at public auction—although not of the most fertile character—it would realise a good price, because of its proximity to the railway and the consequent facilities for conveying the products of the soil to a market. But what he wished particularly to address himself to was the concession which it appeared had been granted to the Midland Railway Company. He understood that beyond a few miles on one side of the line, for a short distance, the whole of this land was included in the company's reserve, and he should like to ask the Commissioner of Crown Lands whether this land was not reserved from sale prior to the agreement entered into with this syndicate?

THE COMMISSIONER OF CROWN LANDS (Hon. J. Forrest): It was classified as suburban land prior to the contract being entered into with the Midland Railway Company.

MR. MARMION: But was it not also reserved from sale?

THE COMMISSIONER OF CROWN LANDS (Hon. J. Forrest): Classified as suburban land; that is what it was.

MR. MARMION: That is not the point. Was it not reserved from sale? If it had only been classified as suburban land I myself would have applied for some of it.

THE COMMISSIONER OF CROWN LANDS (Hon. J. Forrest): Not only that; it was not surveyed.

MR. MARMION: Well, sir, I am under the impression that it was reserved from sale before the contract with the Midland Railway Syndicate was entered into; and, if so, it seems to me that it does not form part and parcel of that company's reserve. I do not think it ever was the intention that it should form part and parcel of that company's reserve, and I see no reason why it should ever have been included in their reserve, especially if the land had previously been shut up from sale.

THE COMMISSIONER OF CROWN LANDS (Hon. J. Forrest): I can only say that I have some doubt on the subject myself. I have referred the point to my hon. friend on the left (the Acting Attorney General), and he informs me that in his opinion we would not be able to sell the land.

MR. BURGESS said he quite agreed, to some extent, with the hon. member for Perth, as to what he said with reference to this land. He thought it was very desirable we should do something to bring it under cultivation and occupation; but he considered the price put upon it by the Government (£3 an acre) was absurd, if it was intended that the land should be taken up and cultivated by small holders. He thought the terms ought to be as liberal as possible, so long as care was taken that the land was not taken up for speculative purposes. He hoped the Government would keep that point in view, and that the object which the Legislature had in view was to have this land settled upon and cultivated by small holders, and that each block should have a frontage on the line.

THE COMMISSIONER OF CROWN LANDS (Hon. J. Forrest): I think I have already pointed out that if the land is sold under the regulations at present

in force affecting suburban lands we cannot insist upon any improvements. On the other hand, if we let it stand over until the new regulations come into force we could dispose of it under conditions which would necessitate improvements being carried out.

MR. VENN thought everybody was anxious to see this land sold, and settled upon as far as possible, but he was rather inclined to think that the object in view would be entirely defeated if it were put up by auction, without any conditions of improvement whatever, — although he would not limit the amount of land which any person might take up, so long as those conditions were fulfilled.

MR. PARKER said if they had to wait until the new Land Regulations came into force they might have to wait two or three years. He did not suppose anyone knew whether these regulations would be approved by the Home Government as they passed that House. They might come back, and they might have to discuss them all over again. The House should not forget that, after all, they were merely recommendations to the Secretary of State upon which he might frame his regulations. They were not our regulations. Let hon. members bear in mind the long time it took to settle the stocking clause of the Kimberley regulations—some two or three years altogether; and he could quite conceive the possibility of these new regulations being referred back to them. Was it worth while locking up this land until these regulations were finally settled? As to people buying up the land for speculative purposes, he did not think anybody was likely to be foolish enough to enter into competition with the Midland Railway Company, who could afford to undersell him considerably.

MR. LOTON said it appeared to him that the motion had come before them twelve months too late. If there was any large quantity of land available for sale alongside the railway, action should have been taken in the matter long ago. They were told that evening that nearly the whole of this land was included within the Midland Railway's reserve; if so, it appeared to him that the little that was left for the Government to deal with now was hardly worth talking about, and he thought the Government

might be left to deal with it as they thought best, in the interests of the colony. It was possible—if, as they were told, there was only a small strip of about three miles along the line, running back about two miles not included in the company's reserve—it was possible that it would be better if the Government itself were to retain possession of this small strip, rather than sell it by public auction. At all events he thought the matter might be left in the hands of the Government, seeing that there was only a very small portion of this land outside the syndicate's reserve.

The motion being put was negatived.

MR. PARKER moved the adjournment of the House in order to explain that if the motion came too late the blame did not rest with that House but with the Government. He had brought the matter under the attention of the Commissioner of Crown Lands in the House two years ago, and the answer he then received was that when these lands were surveyed they would be thrown open again and sold by auction, and that the Commissioner hoped soon to be in a position to do so. Therefore he was not prepared to admit that any blame attached to that House if these lands had subsequently been included in the Midland Railway Company's reserve. It appeared that after all their caution, the land was now locked up for the benefit of Mr. Waddington and his syndicate. Had he known as much before, he should not have brought forward his motion at all. He thought it betrayed some neglect on the part of the Government, that, after all the caution exercised by that House, and after the land had been locked up so long, the only persons who would be benefited by it would not be the people of the colony but the Midland Railway Company. He thought it was a case of very gross neglect indeed on the part of the Government.

The motion for adjournment was negatived.

MAIL SERVICE BETWEEN BALBARRUP AND MUIR'S.

MR. LAYMAN, in accordance with notice, moved, "That an humble address be presented to His Excellency the Governor, praying that he will be pleased

"to cause to be placed on the Estimates "for 1887 the sum of £40 to provide for "the conveyance of a weekly mail between "Balbarrup and Mr. T. Muir's, a distance of from 20 to 25 miles." The hon. member said he had received a letter from some of the settlers of the district requesting him to endeavor to get this mail service for them. A memorial had been sent to the Government on the subject, but the reply which the memorialists received was that there were no funds. In support of their request, and as a precedent, the settlers referred to a mail service that had been established to Jayes, and another service of 36 miles which it was stated had been established for the benefit of one person only. If that was the case it certainly was a radical shame if the settlers could not have a mail. No doubt the cry of the Government would be "There is no money;" but it appeared they could find money to give the Perth people a mail service three or four times daily. If they wanted to economise, they might commence nearer home.

THE ACTING COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. M. S. Smith) said the Government had already been applied to by the few settlers which this line would serve, but, as the hon. member had said, the reply had been that the Government had no funds available for increasing the present postal services in every direction; and he was afraid he could only give the same reply to the hon. member's motion.

MR. VENN said the matter came before the House two or three years ago, but the House did not see its way to entertain it. He knew nothing about the place himself, but he was told that the farthest distance which any of these settlers had to go for their letters was about 15 miles.

MR. LAYMAN thereupon moved the Chairman out of the chair.

Agreed to.

The House resumed.

TELEGRAPH LINE, BUSSELTON TO QUINDALUP.

MR. LAYMAN—who had a motion on the notice paper asking the Government to erect a line of telegraph between Busselton and Quindalup—moved that the Speaker leave the chair, so that the

House might go into committee to consider the question.

The motion, however, was negatived, the House declining to go into committee for the consideration of the hon. member's proposal.

ERECTION OF SMELTING WORKS, IN THE CHAMPION BAY DISTRICT.

THE ACTING COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. M. S. Smith) brought under the notice of the House an offer made by Mr. Trevenack to erect smelting works in the Champion Bay District. The hon. gentleman said that for years past efforts had been made in various ways to induce capitalists or others to erect smelting works in the Victoria District, in the neighborhood of Northampton. It was evident that without such works it would be impossible to develop the mining industry in the manner in which it ought to be developed. These efforts, however, had not heretofore succeeded, and the consequence was, this important industry had languished, and not only had those immediately interested in the industry suffered, but the district and he might say the colony also had suffered. Many years ago, he believed, some concessions were made to certain parties for the erection of smelting works, and the works were erected, but, from various reasons, after being erected they were abandoned. It was found that it was impossible to carry on smelting operations at a remunerative rate, and there the matter ended; and he believed that to this day there were certain buildings at Narra Tarra pointed at as a melancholy monument of mis-spent money and disappointed hopes. Subsequently, in 1881, this question was brought before the House again, and a resolution was agreed to. It was then recommended that efforts should be again made to induce a company or companies to erect smelting works on certain conditions, and certain concessions or a bonus; and negotiations were opened with different parties, but the negotiations were never brought to any successful issue. Some months ago another gentleman, representing a smelting company in one of the other colonies, had entered into communication with the Government on the subject; and the other day papers

were laid on the table containing the proposals which this gentleman had made to the Government. The Government, after considering these proposals, were unable to agree with them in their entirety; still, they felt convinced that it was most essential that some steps should be taken to establish, successfully if possible, smelting works in the Victoria District, in order to open up the mineral wealth of the district; and the Government were now prepared to recommend that certain concessions should again be made, or offered, with the view of inducing either this gentleman, who represented a particular company, or anybody else to come forward and erect the necessary works. Hon. members, he had no doubt, would agree with him when he said that it was very essential that the Government, in such transactions as these, should be very careful indeed in entering into any agreement; for what they wanted was not that a certain individual or a certain company should come here and erect works and smelt a certain quantity of ore, and so obtain the bonus or concession offered by the Government and then go away. What they wanted was smelting works of a permanent nature erected here, so that they might be assured that smelting operations will be continued in a proper manner; and the Government being anxious to get somebody to erect such works were prepared to offer certain concessions, which were contained in the resolution, which he now begged to move: "That an humble address be presented to His Excellency the Governor, stating that this House having considered the proposal of Mr. Trevenack contained in the papers laid on the Table of the House, on the subject of erecting Smelting Works in the Victoria District, agrees to the Government entering into a contract with Mr. Trevenack, or failing him with any other suitable person, on the following terms:—

"(a.) A bonus to be granted by the Government of Two thousand pounds for the first two hundred tons of pig lead smelted from ore raised in the District, and a further bonus of Three thousand pounds to be payable on a further quantity of eight hundred tons of pig lead so smelted.

"(b.) The necessary Smelting Works

"to be begun within six months, to be completed within two years, and to be capable of smelting four thousand tons of lead ore in twelve months.

"(c.) The bonus only to be payable upon pig lead smelted from ore raised in the District within four years from "this date."

MR. PARKER moved, That the debate be adjourned until Monday, 16th August.

Question—put and passed.

MASTERS AND SERVANTS BILL.

Read a third time and passed.

GOLD DUTY BILL.

THE ACTING COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. M. S. Smith), in moving the second reading of a bill to impose an export duty on gold, said the bill was the outcome of the recent discovery of a goldfield in the Kimberley District, and was almost a transcript of the Queensland Act. In most of the other colonies—in fact, he believed, in all of them—immediately a goldfield was proclaimed a duty was invariably levied on all gold exported. Although in most of the colonies they had now ceased to levy this duty, still he thought we should endeavor to recoup ourselves from this source to a certain extent the large sums of money that we had been obliged to expend and which we should be obliged to continue to expend in opening up and administering these goldfields. The bill was a very short one. Clause 2 provided that a duty of 2s. 6d. shall be imposed upon every ounce of gold exported from the colony; and clause 3 provided a penalty not exceeding £100 for the exportation of gold without this duty having been paid upon it. These were the main provisions of the bill, the second reading of which he now moved.

The motion was agreed to *sub silentio*.
Bill read a second time.

LAND REGULATIONS.

The House went into committee for the further consideration of the Land Regulations.

Clause 67.—"Pastoral leases in the form in Schedule No. will be granted in the South-West Division, in blocks of not less than three thousand acres at the rent of one pound per annum for each

"thousand acres or part of a thousand acres. If the land is so shut in with other holdings as not to contain three thousand acres, a lease may be granted for such lesser quantity; but in no case will a lease be issued for a less sum than "one pound per annum."

MR. SHENTON said as the best land in this South-West division would be included within the agricultural areas, the balance left would not be first class land for grazing purposes, he thought that 10s. per thousand acres would be quite high enough rent to charge for it. He therefore moved that the words "one pound," in the fifth line, be struck out, and "ten shillings" inserted in lieu thereof.

THE COMMISSIONER OF CROWN LANDS (Hon. J. Forrest) hoped the committee would not agree to that without some discussion and consideration. They must remember that there was such a thing as revenue required, and it seemed to him a strange proceeding for that House now to say, fifty years after the settlement of the colony, that we were now going to charge less for our lands in the Central Districts of the colony than we had been charging for it up to the present time. It appeared to him this would be an admission on their part that the colony was going backward instead of forward. He should have thought that as the colony became more populated, and as increased facilities of communication were provided, the land would increase in value rather than deteriorate in value. He thought himself that £1 was a reasonable rental, under the circumstances. It might be said that many people had to pay rent for a great deal of land compared with the small number of sheep they kept, and that it was as much as they could do to make both ends meet. All he could say, was they must endeavor to improve their land and so increase its carrying capabilities; they would then not be under the necessity of taking up so much land. He thought it would be very bad policy indeed at this period of the colony's history to reduce the price of land.

MR. LAYMAN was opposed to the amendment. The Government were continually telling them they had no money, and this therefore could not be a good time to reduce the price of land and to

reduce the revenue. He believed himself that the pastoral lands of the colony did not now bring to the Government more than they were worth.

MR. PARKER said the Commissioner of Crown Lands said it would hardly be wise to reduce the price of land at the present time; but he would ask the hon. gentleman why he valued pastoral land in this South-West division at £1 per thousand acres, by way of rent, when he valued pastoral land in the Northern districts at only 10s. per thousand acres for the first seven years; 15s. for the second seven years; and £1 for the third term of seven years? He had always been under the impression himself that these Northern districts were good pastoral districts, and that sheep there flourished ten times better than in this part of the colony, and that if squatting paid anywhere in Western Australia it would be in these Northern districts, which, he understood, was the only part of the colony where squatters were able to make a fortune. Certainly no squatter had ever made a fortune yet in this South-West division of the colony, and it did seem strange that they should have to pay twice as much for their land as the squatters had to pay for the next seven years for these rich Northern lands, where there was to be no free selection, and where the squatters were virtually to have the freehold of the land. It might be said this was done in order to encourage pioneering; but he would point out that those pastoral lessees who were already in possession of runs in these Northern districts would be able to have their leases renewed under these easy terms. If the Commissioner was prepared to make the rent of the Northern land the same as the rent of the land in this South-West division, he should be prepared to go with him; otherwise he should support the amendment.

MR. HARPER said if the hon. and learned member who had just sat down had only studied these regulations before attempting to criticise them he would have seen very good reason for this difference in the price charged for land in the Northern parts of the colony and the price proposed to be charged in the South-West division. The hon. member would have found that while the minimum area of land to be taken up for

pastoral purposes in the South-West division was only 3,000 acres, the minimum area in the Northern districts was 20,000 acres.

MR. PARKER: What difference does that make?

MR. HARPER: It makes this difference: a man taking up 20,000 acres at the North may not take up 3,000 acres of any value; but a man taking up 3,000 acres in the South-West division of the colony may spoil a very large block.

MR. WITTENOOM said he would support the hon. member for Newcastle, who no doubt represented the views of the settlers of the Eastern Districts in this matter—men who thoroughly understood the question, and who had a practical knowledge of the value of the land. Up to the present we had been charging £1 for this land, and the best of the land had been taken up years ago; yet, now, when it was proposed to take the best land out of it and set it apart for agricultural areas, leaving only the refuse to the pastoralist, and giving him no security of tenure whatever, it was proposed to charge the same price for this refuse as for the pick of the land. It was absurd to say that the land increased in value as time went by. Let them look at the experience of older countries. What was the case in England? Was not land in England now almost an encumbrance upon the owners of it. The hon. member for Perth talked about comparing the lands at the North with the lands in this South-West division. They could not compare them, looking at the difference in the climate, the rainfall, and other considerations which were totally at variance. At the North the rainfall was so irregular, and the droughts so severe, that it required immense areas of land to be taken up by the sheep-farmer in order to enable him to pull through at all. It was not so in this Southern part of the colony, where the rainfall was comparatively regular, and where there was no necessity for taking up such large areas of land. No doubt the land at the North was well adapted for sheep and for pastoral pursuits, if they could only depend upon the climate. But that was the great drawback. The rainfall was so irregular that there was no dependence to be placed upon it, and it was impossible for a lessee

to know how much land he might want. This was one of the reasons why there were so many large holders of land up there. All this land had to be paid for, drought or no drought. As to people going to the North and making their fortunes there out of sheep farming, it was very clear that the hon. member's calling in life was not that of a banker.

MR. SHENTON said not only would the best of the land be set apart for agricultural areas, there was also the fact that immense tracts of land in this part of the colony had been made over to the railway syndicates, so that the balance remaining for pastoral purposes would be very small, and inferior land. The greater portion of it would only be third class land. He thought anyone who knew anything about sheep-farming in this colony must come to the conclusion that the industry could not be carried on with the same success in this part of the colony as it could at the North. Yet it was proposed to charge double the rent for the land, and yet give the lessees no security of tenure.

MR. BURGESS said they were now beginning to see the error of their ways in passing Clause 47. If the Commissioner of Crown Lands had seen his way to give the pastoral lessees, in this South-West division, some adequate security of tenure, the lessees, he was sure, would be quite willing to pay 20s. for all the land he could have given them security of tenure for the next twenty-one years, or even an extra rent of 25 per cent. But when they had no security of tenure at all, and were entirely at the mercy of the free-selectors, that was a state of affairs which it must be admitted detracted very much indeed from the value of their leases. He was inclined to support the amendment, in the interests of all the small holders in this South-West division.

MR. GRANT said he also intended to support the amendment. He thought they could not expect the lessees to pay what they had been paying in the past, considering the present low price of wool, and that the best of the land had already been alienated. He thought it was hardly fair to charge the same price for an inferior article as they charged for a good article.

MR. SCOTT thought it would be far better to raise the rents in the Northern

districts than to lower them in the South-West division. We must get our revenue from some source, and, seeing that the towns of Perth and Fremantle annually contributed about £40,000 to the revenue of the colony, he thought it was very little to ask our pastoralists to pay £1 a year rent for 1,000 acres of land. He thought when they came to the next clause—dealing with the land in the North-West, Gascoyne, and Eucla divisions—they might very well raise the rents in those districts to £1 per 1,000 acres.

MR. LOTON said that when he first heard the amendment put forward by the hon. member for Toodyay he thought the hon. member was joking; but it appeared, whether the hon. member was joking or not, he was enlisting a certain amount of sympathy. But after listening to all that had been said on the subject it was rather amusing to see the change of front shown by some hon. members. They were not dealing now with the poor small man, whom they wanted to tie down with conditions of fencing and improvements; they were now dealing with another and a somewhat bigger man, who required his land by the thousand acres, and who was asked to pay the handsome sum of £1 a year for it—not per acre, but per thousand acres. He was aware that although this did look a small sum to pay, yet, by reason of the large extent of land held by many persons, it became a large sum. What he should like to impress upon our pastoral tenants was this—if they held less land, and made more use of it, it would be better for them than to take up a large quantity of land at a lower rent, and let the greater portion of it remain idle. Let them utilise their land.

MR. BURGESS: Give them security of tenure and they will do it.

MR. LOTON (continuing) said, security of tenure or no security of tenure, it would be better for them to hold less land and have to pay less rent, and make good use of the land, rather than to hold a whole lot of land, paying rent for it, and letting it lie idle. He had been opposed to the Commissioner of Crown Lands in almost every step he had taken as regards these regulations, but in this case he should be with him. He was with him on this broad ground: if a

thousand acres of land in this settled part of the colony was not worth £1 a year it was not worth holding at all. He would go farther—it was not worth a man looking at it, and stocking it, if he could not afford to pay that much for it.

MR. PARKER said the hon. member for York had pointed out, and properly pointed out, that in the South-Western division the minimum size of a lease was 3,000 acres, whereas in the Northern divisions the minimum size of a lease was 20,000. But the reason for that, he thought, was because the land in the South-West division had been so cut up by free selection that in many cases you could not obtain larger blocks than 3,000 acres, whereas in the Northern parts of the colony blocks of land might be had of unlimited area. As to the irregular rainfall and climatic disadvantages, the fact remained that sheep thrived and multiplied at the North in a way they did not thrive and multiply in the South. As to the minimum size of the blocks, he should be quite prepared to make the minimum in both divisions the same, provided the rent also were made the same.

THE COMMISSIONER OF CROWN LANDS (Hon. J. Forrest) said he had no doubt his hon. friend on the left (the Colonial Secretary) would be very glad if he could get a larger return in the shape of revenue from these Northern lands, but he would point out to the hon. member for Perth that these regulations had not been placed before the House in any haphazard sort of way, without due consideration as to the relative value of land in different parts of the colony. They had been very carefully considered last year by the select committee; they had since been before the country; and the Government, after due consideration, had adopted the majority of the recommendations of the select committee. Of course it was still quite competent for hon. members who were not satisfied with them to move any amendments they liked; but this amendment of the hon. member for Newcastle came upon him as a surprise altogether. They had heard sometimes of mines being sprung upon the House, but, if ever a mine was sprung upon the House, this was one, for neither in select committee last

year nor in that House before had any hon. member, directly or indirectly, stated his intention of moving to lower the price of land in this South-Western division until that evening. The hon. member had given no notice whatever of it before, and if he had this intention seriously in his mind, he certainly had kept it very closely to himself. The effect of the proposed reduction, so far as the revenue was concerned, would be between £7,000 and £8,000 a year. The hon. member for Perth had referred to the rents of our Northern lands. At the present time the rent was 10s., but there was no obligation on the part of the lessees to come under these new regulations unless they liked. The object in view was to induce them to come under them, by making it to their interest and to the interest of the country generally that they should come under them, and it was thought if we increased the rent for the first seven years a great many would not come under them, but go on as they were paying now, and trust to the future. In the course of a few years their leases would run out, and these would be the only regulations then in force. With regard to the price of land in this South-West division, the minimum size of a pastoral lease now was 10,000 acres, but it was proposed under these new regulations to reduce the minimum to 3,000 acres, and the security of tenure would be quite as good, and he thought better than in the past. Considering the increase of population, considering the additional facilities of railway communication, and the splendid climate of this part of the country, he thought there was no comparison to be made between these lands and the lands at the North.

Mr. BURGESS said he had been somewhat surprised himself to hear the hon. member for Toodyay propose this amendment, without any previous notice, and he was only sorry that the hon. member had not come forward earlier in the interests of the districts eastward, and supported increased security of tenure for these pastoral lessees. The advantages which the pastoralist in this part of the colony had over the Northern lessee was this: for £3 he could pick up several of these 3,000-acre blocks all over the district, and select his land as he required it, and so make more use of

it than the Northern lessee could out of his 20,000 acres for which he had to pay £10. He should vote with the Government in this case, for that very reason, although against his own interest.

MR. VENN said it appeared to him that whatever action they took with regard to rentals now would be some guide as regards their action with reference to rentals in other divisions of the colony: therefore he thought it would be well that hon. members should give expression to their views on this subject, and that with no uncertain voice. On two or three occasions he had been endeavoring to introduce the same principle throughout these land regulations, but he had met with what he might call complete defeat, as regards free selection. But he was not quite cowed yet, nor did he intend to give a vote on this subject without saying a word. If he had carried his point as regards free selection it had been his intention—and he might do so still—to have assimilated the rentals. Considering that there was no security provided for lessees in this South-West division, and that the land that was left was of the poorest description, it seemed to him that £1 was excessive as compared—and he was arguing now by comparison—with the rentals proposed in other divisions of the colony. At the same time, he thought with the other hon. member Mr. Loton, that if land was not worth £1 per thousand acres it was not worth taking up at all; and he thought that applied to the North in an exaggerated degree, for, however the Commissioner of Crown Lands might plead for the Northern lessees, they could not get over the fact that these Northern areas, in an eminent degree, were far better fitted for pastoral purposes than the land in this South-West division. He thought it would be bad policy to lower the rentals in any divisions of the colony. He would prefer the levelling up process to any levelling down process. If we intended continuing our public works policy we must have revenue, and we must increase it by every legitimate means in our power, and he thought it would only be fair that as the value of land was enhanced by these public works, the land ought to contribute a fair share towards the increased revenue required to pay

for these works. He therefore intended to oppose the amendment.

MR. MARMION said that a reduction in the minimum quantity of land allowed to be taken up was virtually a reduction in the amount of rent which a lessee would have to pay. As to the policy of assimilating the rentals at the North with the rentals in this part of the colony, he could only regard that—to use a homely expression—as an attempt to bite off your nose to spite your face. The price in this part of the colony for years past had been £1 per thousand acres, whereas in other divisions the rental in some parts was only 5s., and in others 10s.; and it was strange that hon. members should now suddenly discover that there was no difference in the land, and that the price ought to be the same all over the colony, namely, £1, whether the land was situated close to the centres of population and traversed by good roads and railways, or whether it was situated in the Kimberley District, thousands of miles from a market. Was it not a fact that in that district millions and millions of acres had lately been thrown up, even at the present moderate rental, by men of capital too, eager to invest it anywhere to a good advantage? Did that show that it would be a wise policy to assimilate the rentals all over the colony, and make it £1 per thousand acres all round? To be consistent, we should have started at the North with a rental of £1 for the first seven years, 30s. for the next seven years, and £2 for the third seven years,—looking forward to land increasing in value by the introduction of population and increased facilities for transport. But the converse of the proposition was suggested as regards the South. Land which they had been paying £1 for, when there was but little population and no railways, they were now asked to reduce to 10s., when settlement was increasing, railways extending, and trade expanding. That certainly appeared to him a curious sort of argument. Although he thought the pastoral lessee, whether at the South or at the North, was, in view of the low price that had of late been ruling for wool, entitled to every consideration, he could not, in view of the large reduction in the revenue which the amendment would entail, support that amendment.

MR. SHENTON said that in view of a prospective loss to the revenue of between £7,000 and £8,000 a year, he would withdraw his amendment; but considering that the rent in the South-West division was to be £1, he hoped the Northern members would not oppose some slight increase in the rents in their part of the colony, especially as regards land near the coast.

MR. WITTENOOM was surprised at the hon. member withdrawing his amendment. It seemed to him to have been an utter waste of time to have it put forward if he had no intention to press it—a most objectless course to adopt. As to the hon. member Mr. Loton's advice to lessees to hold less land and make more use of it, that advice might be a good one in some parts of the colony, but, as for the North, the lessees there unfortunately were compelled to take up more land than they would require if they could only depend upon the rainfall. Even as regards land in this South-West division, as the country deteriorated and its carrying capabilities became lessened by reason of the inferior quality of the land still left to be taken up, lessees would necessarily require to take up more of it.

The amendment having been withdrawn the clause was put and passed.

Clause 68.—“Pastoral leases in the form in Schedule No. will be granted in the North-West, Gascoyne, and Eucla Divisions, in blocks of not less than twenty thousand acres, at a rent according to the term for which the lease may be granted, as follows:—For each thousand or part of a thousand acres, ten shillings each year for the first seven years of the lease, fifteen shillings for each of the second seven years, and twenty shillings for each of the third seven years of the lease. If the land is so shut in by other holdings as not to contain twenty thousand acres, a lease may be granted for such lesser quantity, but in no case will a lease be issued for less than five pounds per annum”:

MR. BURGESS moved that the words “fifteen shillings” in the tenth line be struck out, and the words “twelve shillings and sixpence” inserted in lieu thereof. The proposed rents, to his mind, were quite unreasonable, quite beyond anything ever proposed in that House up

to the present time. Up to within a year or two ago the rent was only 5s. per thousand acres, it was afterwards increased 100 per cent., and it was now proposed to increase it again. He thought that 10s., taking the class of country all round, would be a very fair rent.

THE COMMISSIONER OF CROWN LANDS (Hon. J. Forrest) hoped the committee would not agree to the amendment. He had already said that these prices had not been fixed at random. They had received the careful consideration of the select committee and also of the Government, who, in dealing with a very difficult question, had endeavored to arrive at what they conceived to be a fair and reasonable conclusion; and although he did not mean to say that all parts of this territory were equal in richness, he thought it would be unwise to attempt any further classification, as regards rentals. He believed the majority of the lessees would be well able to pay these rents.

MR. SHOLL said he intended to support the amendment. Although the lessee might be able to pay 10s.—which he considered excessive—he was certain they could not afford an increase of 50 per cent. during the second term, and another increase of 50 per cent. during the third term—especially in the Gascoyne district, where, it was acknowledged that a large portion of the country was valueless. With runs hundreds of miles inland the cost of transport alone would be a very serious matter, and these heavy rents would be the last straw that would break the back of the lessees. If the amendment should not be passed, he should move as an amendment that the word “Gascoyne” be struck out.

THE CHAIRMAN OF COMMITTEES: The hon. member cannot do that now, an amendment having been already proposed in a subsequent part of the clause. The hon. member will have an opportunity of moving his amendment when the regulations are recommitted.

The question was then put—that the words proposed to be struck out be struck out; and, a division being called for, the numbers were—

| | | | |
|------------------|-----|-----|----|
| Ayes | ... | ... | 6 |
| Noes | ... | ... | 17 |
| — | | | |
| Majority against | ... | ... | 11 |

AYES.
Mr. Crowther
Mr. Grant
Mr. McRae
Mr. Sholl
Mr. Wittenoom
Mr. Burgess (Teller).

NOES.
Hon. M. S. Smith
Hon. S. Burt
Hon. J. A. Wright
Mr. Brockman
Capt. Fawcett
Mr. Harper
Mr. Layman
Mr. Loton
Mr. Marnion
Mr. Parker
Mr. Pearce
Mr. Randell
Mr. Scott
Mr. Shenton
Hon. J. G. Lee-Stears
Mr. Veun
Hon. J. Forrest (Teller).

The amendment submitted by Mr. BURGESS was therefore negatived.

MR. WITTENOOM moved to insert, after the word “lease,” in the 13th line, the words “for all lands within 100 miles of the coast, and 7s. 6d., 12s. 6d., and 15s. for each period for all lands beyond a distance of 100 miles from the coast.” The hon. member said he need not dilate any further upon this question. The object he had in view was one that must commend itself to hon. members, as one of justice and fair play. As he pointed out the other night, it was most unfair to charge the same rent for land hundreds of miles from the coast as for land situated close to a port of shipment. The difference in the cost of carting alone on some stations amounted to hundreds of pounds, and he thought it was only fair that there should be some difference in the rent charged for this land. It was only a slight reduction after all.

MR. McRAE supported the amendment. He thought it was only reasonable that lessees whose runs were over a hundred miles from the coast should have some concession made to them. He did not think there was more than one third of the country now occupied more than a hundred miles inland, so that it would not affect the present revenue much. On the contrary it might increase it, for a reduction in the rent charged for the land might tempt people to go and take up runs in the interior.

THE COMMISSIONER OF CROWN LANDS (Hon. J. Forrest) said that personally it would be a great deal of pleasure to him to be able to support the amendment, but, as he stated the other day, it appeared to him there was something to be said on both sides. It was not worth while going over the same ground again. They had already drawn

a line between the Eastern Division and the Gascoyne and North-West Division, and endeavored so to arrange it as to take in the best of the land. As he pointed out the other day, these inland settlers had almost absolute security of tenure; there was very little probability of any special areas being declared, unless goldfields were discovered or something that would attract a large population. Of course the expense of carting was very great, but on the other hand there were counter-balancing advantages, as he pointed out the other day; and he thought it would be unwise to have more divisions than were absolutely necessary. The Government intended to adhere to the draft regulations, which were in accord with the recommendations of the select committee.

MR. SHOLL said it appeared to him that when it suited the Government they always fell back upon this select committee; but, when it did not suit them, they cared very little for the select committee or their recommendations. He would point out that they had already departed very considerably from the original proposals as regards some points; but, when it did not tally with the views of the Government, and any amendment was opposed to their policy, they immediately fell back upon this select committee. He did not suppose this select committee was infallible, any more than the rest of them. He thought it was preposterous that the same rent should be charged for land hundreds of miles inland as for land within a day's carting of the coast.

MR. GRANT thought the amendment a reasonable one, and of this he was very certain—unless times mended very much a great deal of this land would be thrown up altogether unless some reduction was made in the price of it. The cost of bringing wool to the market from these distant stations was actually more than it realised.

MR. MARMION said no doubt there was much to be urged in favor of the amendment. He knew himself that owing to the low price of wool during the last two years the cost of carting wool to Geraldton from parts of the Murchison district had almost absorbed what the wool realised in the market. Perhaps upon further consideration the Govern-

ment might be disposed to consider the amendment more favorably, and he hoped the Commissioner would not put his veto upon it at once.

MR. LAYMAN opposed the amendment on the ground that the same principle of classification, if adopted in these divisions of the colony, should also be adopted in other divisions.

MR. PARKER said it appeared to him that a very strong case indeed had been made out in support of the amendment. It was self-evident that land situated a long way inland was of less value than land near a shipping port.

MR. VENN expressed himself in favor of reducing the rents and making the terms as easy as possible to these back-block settlers; but he could see that there would be some difficulty in drawing a hard and fast line from an irregular coast.

Progress was then reported, and leave given to sit again another day.

The House adjourned at twenty minutes to twelve o'clock, midnight.

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL,

Thursday, 12th August, 1886.

School fees: Right of Teachers to recover—Tenders for erection Courthouse and Telegraph Offices, Roebourne—Closure of Drummond Street Bill: first reading—Public Health Bill: third reading—Gold Duty Bill: in committee—Land Regulations: further consideration of—Adjournment.

THE SPEAKER took the Chair at noon.

PRAYERS.

RIGHT OF TEACHERS TO RECOVER SCHOOL FEES.

MR. WITTENOOM asked the Acting Attorney General whether teachers can recover the school fees under the present Education Act? The hon. member said there seemed to be some considerable doubt about the question, and he should like to know, on the authority of the