LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL,

Wednesday, 14th July, 1886.

Petition (No. 1): Perth Gas Co., for leave to introduce Private Bill—Mandurah Breakwater, When to be commenced—Message (No. 7): David Carley's antecedents—Medical Officer for Busselton District—Surveyor for Vasse District—Return of Cargo passing over Fremantle Jetties—Portuguese sailors arrested at Albany in 1884—Sharks Bay Pearl Shell Fishery Bill: further considered in committee; recommitted—Opium Bill: further considered in committee—Boat Licensing Bill: third reading—New Land Regulations (Message No. 3): Adjourned debate—Adjournment.

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

PRAYERS.

PETITION (No. 1): PERTH GAS CO.'S PRIVATE BILL.

MR. SHENTON (on behalf of Mr. S. H. Parker) presented a petition from the shareholders of the Perth Gas Co., praying for leave to introduce a Bill to extend the powers of the said company; and moved that it be read.

Petition read and received.

MANDURAH BREAKWATER: WHEN TO BE COMMENCED.

CAPTAIN FAWCETT, in accordance with notice, asked the Director of Public Works when the Government proposed to commence the Mandurah Breakwater, for which work the sum of £1,300 had been voted and was still on the Loan Estimates for 1884. The hon. and gallant member said he thought this was the most desirable undertaking that could possibly be brought forward for the Murray district, which he had the honor to represent, and also for the colony at large. He might say that unless the reply he received from the hon. the Director of Public Works was an encouraging one, it was his intention to move an address to His Excellency the Governor on the subject, for, in his opinion, this was a work that ought to be commenced without delay.

THE DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC WORKS (Hon. J. A. Wright) replied that the question of the Mandurah Breakwater was a difficult one to solve. The amount placed on the Loan Estimates, 1884, of £1,300, was totally inadequate for the purpose, and were it commenced with that sum in view, it would, as he had said in his report, more probably lead to permanent harm to the Estuary, than to any good. Sir John Coode was asked for an opinion on this subject, and quite agreed with him in what he had stated. He would, however, made, have a proper survey, soundings, &c., so as to arrive at the total amount required to finish this work, in order that in a future loan the amount they now had may be supplemented by the requisite amount to carry the work to completion.

MESSAGE (No. 7): DAVID CARLEY'S ANTECEDENTS.

THE SPEAKER announced the receipt of the following Message from His Excellency the Governor:—

"In reply to Address No. 8 of the "Honorable the Legislative Council, "dated the 9th instant, stating that it "is desirable that the Government should "make inquiry into the antecedents of "David Carley, and should lay infor- "mation on the subject on the Table of "Your Honorable House, the Governor "has the honor to inform the Council "that he has caused the inquiry in ques- "tion to be made, and that the infor- "mation obtained will be communicated, "as is proper, to Her Majesty's Govern- "ment in connection with the Governor's "report on allegations made by David "Carley. The Governor, however, is of "opinion that no good purpose would be "served by giving official publicity to "the information, and trusts that, on "further consideration of the special "circumstances of the case, the Council "may not be disinclined to agree with "this view.

"Government House, Perth, 14th July, "1886."

MEDICAL OFFICER FOR BUSSELTON DISTRICT.

MR. LAYMAN, in accordance with notice, asked the Acting Colonial Secretary if the Government had in view any means of filling the office of Resident Medical Officer at Busselton, lately rendered vacant by the resignation of Dr. Bompas. The hon. member proceeded to say that, in bringing this matter before the Government, he did so with the view of obtaining for

the district a properly qualified officer. The district, owing to the resignation of Dr. Bompas, had been without a medical officer, and as it was very inconvenient for the inhabitants to—

THE SPEAKER: I wish to point out to the hon. member and to the House that it appears to me a practice is beginning to obtain of hon. members who put questions making speeches upon their questions. That is highly irregular. An hon. member is entitled to state what is necessary to elucidate his question, but not to make a speech. If he wants to make a speech he must conclude with a motion.

MR. LAYMAN said he only wished to point out to the Government that Dr. Bompas's resignation had been sent in about three months ago, and that the district had since been without a medical officer. They occasionally had a visit from Dr. O'Meehan, but the district which that gentleman had to attend to was so large that it was impossible for him to do more than attend to his own patients.

THE ACTING COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. M. S. Smith) replied that His Excellency the Governor had requested the Right Hon. the Secretary of State to secure the services of a medical officer for the Busselton District in this colony, and that doubtless the appointment would be filled up shortly.

SURVEYOR FOR VASSE AND BLACKWOOD DISTRICTS.

MR. LAYMAN, pursuant to notice, asked the Commissioner of Crown Lands if it was the intention of the Government to send a surveyor to the Vasse, Lower Blackwood and surrounding district, at an early date, to effect surveys in that portion of the colony? He did not blame the Government or anybody else for not attending to these surveys before, but he thought it was very desirable that the work should be taken in hand as soon as the Survey Department could manage it.

THE COMMISSIONER OF CROWN LANDS (Hon. J. Forrest) said that the necessity of sending a surveyor to the Vasse was recognised, and one would be sent as soon as it was possible.

GOODS TRAFFIC ON FREMANTLE JETTIES.

MR. SHENTON, in accordance with notice, asked the Acting Colonial Secretary to lay on the table a return showing the number of tons of cargo that had passed over the Fremantle jetties from the 1st January to June 30th, 1886.

THE ACTING COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. M. S. Smith) stated that 27,401 tons had passed over the jetties during the period mentioned.

PORTUGUESE SAILORS AT ALBANY, IN 1884.

SIR T. COCKBURN-CAMPBELL asked the Acting Colonial Secretary whether there was any foundation for the statement reported to have been made, at a public meeting at Guildford, by Mr. S. R. Hamersley, and published on Saturday last, with reference to the action of the Governor in the case of certain Portuguese sailors dealt with by the Government Resident at Albany in 1884. The hon. baronet said that what he particularly wanted to know was whether any communication on the subject had been received from the Secretary of State, or whether anything had resulted, since the question was brought before the House two years ago. One would think from the statement referred to that such was the case.

THE ACTING COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. M. S. Smith) replied: The only foundation within the knowledge of the Government for the statement in question is, that it was considered that these seamen should not have been placed on board ship and taken to sea before His Excellency the Governor had been able to decide upon certain representations made in their favor, with a view to their release from prison. No communication on the subject has ever been received from the Secretary of State.

SHARKS BAY PEARL SHELL FISHERY BILL.

The House went into committee for the further consideration of this bill.

THE ACTING COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. M. S. Smith) said that in compliance with a suggestion made when the bill was in committee before, that it would be desirable for the Governor to have power to frame by-laws and regu-

lations in connection with the pearl shell fishery, under this bill, a new clause had been prepared, which he would now move, to stand as Clause 11:—"It shall be "lawful for the Commissioner of Crown "Lands to make, alter, amend, or repeal "such By-Laws and Regulations as to "him may seem meet:

"1. For the prevention of the collec- "tion and removal of immature shell "and the destruction thereof.

"2. For ensuring and preserving order "among persons engaged in the "Fishery, and

"3. For the general supervision and "regulation of the Fishery.

"Such By-Laws and Regulations shall, "when confirmed by the Governor in "Council and published in the *Govern-* "*ment Gazette*, but not sooner or other- "wise, have the force of law, and shall "state some maximum penalty for any "neglect or breach thereof respectively; "provided that no such penalty shall "exceed the sum of Five pounds:"

The clause was agreed to, without comment.

THE ACTING COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. M. S. Smith) then moved the following additional new clause, to stand as Clause 12:—"All penalties for "breach of any such By-Law or Regu- "lation may be recovered by summary "proceedings before any one or more "Justices of the Peace in Petty Sessions, "according to the provisions of the "general law regulating summary pro- "cedure before Justices."

The clause was agreed to, without discussion.

THE ACTING COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. M. S. Smith) also moved the insertion of the following new clause, to stand as Clause 13:—"The production "of a copy of the *Government Gazette* con- "taining any By-Laws or Regulations "purporting to be made by virtue of this "Act shall be received in all Courts of "Justice and elsewhere as evidence of the "due making, confirmation, and publica- "tion of the same."

Agreed to.

Preamble and title—agreed to.

Bill reported with amendments. On the motion for the adoption of the report,

THE ACTING COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. M. S. Smith) said it was desirable now that the bill should be recommitted in order to introduce an amendment in the 6th clause, dealing with summary procedure before justices, in order to make the clause consistent with Clause 12, which the committee had just agreed to. He moved that the bill be recommitted.

Motion put and passed.

IN COMMITTEE.

THE ACTING COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. M. S. Smith), without comment, moved to strike out, at the end of section 6, the words "may be sum- "marily convicted of such offence before "one or more Justices in Petty Sessions," and to insert in lieu thereof the words following, "shall, on summary conviction "of such offence before two or more "Justices of the Peace in Petty Sessions, "be liable to be imprisoned for any term "not exceeding two years, with or with- "out hard labor."

This was agreed to, without discussion, and the clause as amended ordered to stand part of the bill.

Bill reported, and report adopted.

OPIUM BILL.

The House went into committee for the further consideration of this bill.

Clause 1 (reverted to):

THE ACTING COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. M. S. Smith) said that when this clause was under discussion in committee the other day, several hon. members expressed a desire that the clause (which imposed a duty of 20s. per lb. on all opium introduced into the colony) should not apply to opium imported for medicinal purposes. The Government having considered the question were now prepared to fall in with the views of hon. members. He had therefore to move to insert after the word "Act," in the first line of this clause, the words "except as hereinafter mentioned."

Agreed to.

Clause 2.—"The said duty shall be "collected and levied in the manner pro- "vided by, and subject and according to, "the provisions of any Ordinance, Act, or "law for the time being in force for the "general regulation of the Customs of "the colony:"

THE ACTING COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. M. S. Smith) moved to insert after the word "duty," in the first line, the words "of 20s. per lb."

Agreed to, and clause as amended put and passed.

Clause 3—Short title:

Agreed to.

THE ACTING COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. M. S. Smith), in order to carry out the wish of the House, moved the following new clause, to stand as Clause 2:—"The said duty of twenty "shillings per pound shall not be chargeable in respect of opium or any goods, "wares, and merchandise as aforesaid "intended to be used as medicine only; "but in such case the duty mentioned in "the Fourth Schedule of 'The Tariff "Act, 1882,' shall be paid, and the collector or any principal officer of Customs "or any person acting for either of them "shall require from any person claiming "to pay such lesser duty such evidence, "by statutory declaration, as the collector, principal officer of Customs, or "person acting as aforesaid (as the case "may be) shall see fit, which declaration "he is hereby empowered and authorised "to administer."

Clause agreed to, *sub silentio*.

Preamble and title agreed to.

Bill reported, with amendments, and report adopted.

BOAT LICENSING BILL.

Read a third time and passed.

(MESSAGE No. 3): LAND REGULATIONS: ADJOURNED DEBATE.

On the order of the day for the resumption of the debate upon His Excellency's message forwarding the draft code of the proposed new land regulations,

MR. HARPER, who had moved the adjournment of the debate, said that in taking up the debate he should not occupy the House very long, but just touch upon a few general principles which he thought they should keep before them in discussing this most important subject. He took it, as a general principle, that in dealing with the alienation of land it should be one of their first duties and first objects to settle as many people on the land as possible, and, at the same time, to put as much proper restriction as we could in the way of the aggregation of large estates, which must in a great measure operate against the increase of the population of the country. To accomplish that object had been in these Australian colonies attempted in various ways, and it had been found to have been a most difficult subject to deal with. It had often been said that the simpler our land regulations were the better; and he thought everyone must agree with that, if by simple regulations we could attain the object we desired. If, for instance, the only class of people who desired to acquire land were that class of yeomanry who made their homes on the land, turning the soil to the very best account, there would be no difficulty whatever; but, when they found many others desirous of acquiring land for speculative purposes only, and with no intention of developing its resources, but merely to reap the benefits which accrued to the land from the action of others, it became very necessary to elaborate the provisions for safeguarding the land from falling into the hands of this class, and the subject then became a complex and difficult one. He might perhaps use a simple simile to explain what he meant. It seemed a very simple thing to cut a bundle of straw and tie it up by manual labor, but to supply machinery to perform the same thing had taxed the ingenuity of some of the ablest men in the world for many years before they could accomplish it. It was the same with the land: it had taxed the ability of the deepest thinkers to frame regulations to meet the diversified requirements of a country in this respect. There was certainly a growing feeling, throughout Australia at any rate, and probably throughout a great part of the world, that there should be some restriction put upon the direct alienation of land from the Crown without any condition of improvement. He went perhaps a little further than many in this direction. He thought it was desirable that, in temperate climates, where men might make their homes upon the land, there should be no alienation of land whatever for any other purpose than agriculture—leaving out town and suburban lands. With these few introductory remarks, he would pass on now to a short review of

the principles which were found to underlie the land regulations then before them, and which he had no doubt would find many opponents, for it was certainly impossible for any land regulations that could possibly be framed to meet the views of everybody. In clause 40, headed "Alienation," it would be observed that the Governor in Council might define and set apart any Crown land in the Kimberley, North-West, Gascoyne, Eastern, and Eucla divisions, as a special area, and might declare any such area as open to selection. He thought there was one point as regards the proposed regulation on this subject which it would be desirable to amend in some degree. There was no indication here given as to what circumstances should induce the Governor to declare special areas. He thought this should only be done upon application, for a stated purpose. For his own part, he should, in the Kimberley, North-West, and Gascoyne districts, instead of alienating the land, set it apart for leasing purposes only, for as long a time as might be considered necessary. The reason he gave for this was that people who would obtain the land for the avowed purpose of cultivating it would do so not so much with the view of making their homesteads upon the land as with the view of turning it to the best use they could, with the ulterior object of reaping a reward from it, and when they claimed that reward they would leave it. He thought it would be much better that the land should remain in the hands of the State, if it was not settled upon. With regard to the regulations dealing with the direct purchase of land, he understood there was considerable opposition to the high price fixed for the direct sale of land in the South-Western division of the colony. It had been within the power of people of this colony to purchase land direct from the Crown, for a long time past, as a matter of course, and they did not now care to give it up; but we should certainly bear in mind that we are behind the rest of Australia in this respect. It had been found an undesirable and unsound policy throughout the other Australian colonies to alienate land from the Crown, without conditions of improvement. It would be impossible he believed for any person now to purchase an acre of land, outside town, or suburban, or mineral areas, in any other portion of Australia, except under such conditions; and he thought the sooner we recognised the wisdom of that policy the better. It would be observed that these regulations did not go to that length, but they placed a higher rate of value on the land than hitherto, evidently with the object of checking unconditional direct purchase. It had been advanced against the proposed regulations that they are too elaborate,—that they do not simplify the regulations at present in force, and that a slight alteration from the existing regulations would be quite sufficient for our present purposes. But it must be borne in mind that it was proposed here, by these new regulations, to liberalise the conditions under which men may acquire land, and it must also be borne in mind that by doing so we afforded special opportunities to those who desired to acquire large areas of land for purposes other than its development. Therefore it was very necessary that we should be very careful in dealing with this part of the question. Under our present regulations there was no limit as to the amount of land which a man may acquire under the system of conditional purchase; and therefore if we liberalised our laws we must at the same time be prepared to prevent their being abused. He might remark here that it was pretty generally known that the reason why more land had not been alienated under the conditional purchase system at present in vogue, was, that the conditions attached had operated against those who simply desired to secure the land for purposes of speculation. The conditions were harder than they found profitable, and consequently the system had only slightly been abused—if he might use the term. There was one principle here which he should like just to refer to. The power of disposing of conditional purchase leases appeared to be a concession which it was considered impossible to grant until the full term of the lease, twenty-one years, had expired. This part of the regulations might be considered objectionable; it might appear a hard thing that a conditional purchaser should not be able, after some years of residence on the land and after the expenditure of perhaps all his available capital in improving it, to dispose of

this land or to transfer it, after he got his license. He was now referring more particularly to Clause 50, subsection (*l*), which provided that "at "any time after the issue of a lease (but "not during the license) the lessee "may transfer all his right, title, and "interest in his lease, provided the "Commissioner's approval is obtained, "and, further, provided that the person "to whom the land is transferred does "not hold, together with the portion to "be transferred, more than 1,000 acres, "under conditional purchase, under these "regulations." Some objection would probably be raised to this, but it would be observed that if such a provision were not made the whole section could be evaded. A man might acquire any number of these conditional leases under subsection (*i*), and it would be found that by paying up the full amount of the purchase money, at any time, within the currency of the lease—provided the required improvments had been made—a man would be able to obtain a Crown grant. It appeared to him difficult to see how the principle of these regulations was to be adhered to, if they departed from these provisions. With regard to pastoral leases, he was in hopes that the principles adopted in these regulations might, with some slight alterations, prove acceptable to all classes of the community. The real point upon which people might be at issue upon this question of leases was as regards fixity of tenure, and whether there should be any provision made by which the Government could re-acquire the control of these lands, after they were let to pastoral tenants. For his own part he thought it was undesirable that the State should give up entire control of the land for a number of years to pastoral lessees; but, at the same time, he thought that that right should be exercised with the very greatest caution indeed; and he hoped that when in committee upon these regulations it might be found possible to frame some slight amendment which would put the lessee in such a position that he may consider himself as safe as it was advisable, in the interests of the State, he should be put. With regard to lands in the Kimberley District, and possibly the North-West District, it might be found in the course of a few years that the cultivation of tropical products may be prosecuted with success in those districts; and it was very desirable in his opinion that such an occupation of the land might be permitted as would enable those industries to flourish. Therefore, he thought it was desirable that the State should be in a position, if sufficient reason was evident, to throw open these lands for the purposes of such cultivation. With regard to land in the Eastern District, he was of opinion that it would be desirable, as it was a very arid district—there was only a small portion of it, in fact, that was not still lying in the same state as it was in when the colony was first settled—there was very little of it under lease at all—with regard to this land he was of opinion that it was desirable that some attractive regulations should be framed, so as to induce people of capital to attempt to improve it, by means of irrigation and other methods of improvement. It would be observed that there was no particular provision made for this in these regulations, but he hoped the question was one that would be considered in committee. The same might be said of some portion of the Eucla District. With regard to poison land, it would be observed that some more liberal provisions had been made for dealing with that class of land; but he thought it was desirable that we should perhaps go a little further than these regulations, in inducing *bonâ fide* improvers to take possession of these poisoned lands, and to eradicate this very serious danger which detracted so much from the value of the land. It was very important to the State that the poison plant should be eradicated, for we were paying very dearly now for its existence. There were many other minor points that he hoped to see amended in committee, but which he would not refer to now, as he was only at present dealing with the main principles involved in the proposed regulations.

MR. WITTENOOM said that in rising to say a few words upon this very important subject he did not propose to detain the House very long, although he felt that he was addressing himself to the most difficult problem that could come before the House. Before proceeding to deal with the land question he

took this opportunity of complimenting the Commissioner of Crown Lands upon the very lucid manner in which he had placed the details of the proposed scheme of Land Regulations before them, and upon the hon. member's interesting review of the past history of land legislation in this colony. The facts and figures which the hon. gentleman had laid before them would be a valuable record of the hon. gentleman's own views on the subject; and, although there were certain inconsistencies in the hon. gentleman's speech—inconsistencies which he would refer to further on—he could not help at this stage complimenting him most heartily upon the very lucid way in which he had marshalled his facts and figures, and in congratulating the House and the country upon having at the head of our Land Department a man in whom they all had such thorough confidence, and one who had shown that he was not only able to deal with the larger part of the question, but also to deal with it in all its details. He could not claim anything like the official experience which the hon. gentleman possessed, but he could claim to be possessed of sixteen years of practical experience in connection with the land in those parts of the colony where the most important sections of these regulations had been in operation. He was very pleased that his own practical experience of the working of the land regulations in the past was so fully borne out by the Commissioner of Crown Lands' official experience, which had led the hon. gentleman to admit that our land regulations in the past had proved a complete failure. That they had been so was self-evident. We had no agriculturists settled on the land in any number, and the value of the land had been very little improved, because, as the Commissioner of Crown Lands pointed out, improvements had not been made compulsory, and, where any improvements had been insisted upon, they were improvements that neither suited the land nor the occupations of the people on the land. They all knew, again, how disastrous the regulations had been to the squatters, who had spent hundreds and hundreds of pounds in order to secure their leases by reclaiming isolated blocks of country which never added a blade of grass to the land; simply because they felt that they had no security that they would be allowed to continue in occupation of their leases. If there had been some real security of tenure guaranteed, it would have been much better for all classes; the agriculturist would have been better off, and the pastoral lessee, instead of squandering his money upon these isolated patches which he had to purchase, in self-protection, would have been able to expend his money in improving his land, when his lease expired or the Government resumed it, and made it a really valuable estate. As member for Geraldton, he must take exception to one portion of the Commissioner of Crown Lands' speech, where the hon. gentleman said: "The few leases occupying the country "between Northampton and the Irwin "have been the stumbling block in the "way of the agricultural progress of the "neighborhood of Geraldton, and the "whole country has had the eyes picked "out of it by the lessees, and to a great "extent spoilt." But, further on, the hon. gentleman said: "Some people, I "know, are opposed to agricultural areas, "but I have the greatest faith in them. "We have only to look at the few agri-"cultural areas that we have—they are "very few I admit; but let us take the "Greenough Flats." That was country between Northampton and the Irwin, which the hon. gentleman said, a few minutes before, had been the stumbling block in the way of the agricultural progress of the Geraldton district. That was rather inconsistent. The hon. gentleman forgot to instance some of their finest agricultural portions of the colony —the country around Dongarra and the Irwin. The hon. gentleman, referring to clauses 92 and 62 in the land regulations of 1873 and 1878, said: "To make things "worse, we find in the regulations of "1873 and 1878 a clause inserted, "namely, 92—all the squatters in this "House know what that clause is—to "encourage pastoral lessees to buy up "these springs and waterholes, for, by "this clause, lessees were enabled to "purchase a percentage of their lease-"holds at half the price that anyone "else would have to pay for the land." That was true, so far as it went. But the hon. gentleman forgot to add one little detail. The clause referred to

was that which provided that for every 1000 acres taken up by a lessee he was allowed to select 100 acres—[Mr. FORREST: 10 acres]. He begged pardon; 10 acres. But the hon. gentleman forgot to add one little detail; he forgot to add that the lessee had to expend so much in improvements. [Mr. FORREST: For himself.] The hon. gentleman was quite right so far as he went; but he did not go far enough: that was all. Coming to the code of regulations now before the House, he found that this draft differed in many essentials from that recommended by the select committee last year. He thought there were two great principles that should underlie any land regulations for this colony—the easy acquirement of land, under improvement conditions, by agriculturists, and security of tenure for pastoralists. They all knew that to settle land thoroughly it was no use hampering agriculturists with conditions which they could not fulfil. The easier the conditions, the more chance there was of having the land settled; and, as to improvements, the occupiers themselves were the best judges of what improvements would pay, and what was best for the soil. If they laid down a hard and fast rule as to improvements, the regulations would prove a dismal failure. They all knew that sheep-farming now was not what it had been. Shepherding was completely done for. Not only was it too expensive, but it also ruined the land; and, to carry on squatting with present price of wool, the squatter must go in for improvements, and expensive improvements. They knew that in these South-Eastern Districts trees were taking the place of grass, over-growth was taking the place of grass, and in framing regulations for pastoral lessees they must take into consideration the absolute necessity for improvements in the shape of fencing, sinking wells, and so on. And how were they to expect the lessees to go in for such improvements unless they had ample security of tenure. Without ample security of tenure he felt confident that such lands as were not fit for agriculture, and were not in the present state fit for pasture, would never be improved; and the result would be that our land regulations in the future would prove as great a failure as they had in the past. In going through the draft regulations now before the House, he first came to clause 40, dealing with alienation. He saw that it was proposed to do away with the clause that was recommended by the select committee, and to substitute the present one. The select committee's draft provided that no alienation of Crown land should take place in the Gascoyne, North-West, Eastern, and Eucla divisions within the area of a pastoral lease, except for public purposes, mines, etc. That clause was carried in committee, and on that clause the proposed increased rents are based, but it was now proposed to sweep it away. No one would wish to see agriculture prosper more than he did. He considered that all land fit for agriculture should be settled and utilised for that purpose as much as possible, and brought into a high state of cultivation; and he thought that in the South-Western district and in the Kimberley district the greatest attention should be paid to agriculture of every kind, and every encouragement offered. With regard to the South-West division he would go further than even these regulations went in that direction. He would provide not only that agricultural areas *may* be declared but *shall* be declared, by District Boards: but that those portions of the country unfitted for agriculture should be set aside for pastoral purposes, with ample security of tenure. In this way he felt confident that, with the rate at which our population was now increasing, we should have ample land available for the next twenty years. By that time these pastoral leases would be about falling in, and the Government would become possessed of a really valuable estate. With regard to Kimberley he thought the same plan might be adopted by declaring special areas for agricultural purposes. These two divisions of the colony were the only portions fitted for agriculture. But, as regards the other divisions: the North-West, Gascoyne, Eastern, and Eucla districts, he really saw no object whatever in reserving them for agricultural purposes, or leaving them open to be declared special areas, thereby destroying that security of tenure under which alone the pastoral industry could be expected to prosper. Not one bushel of corn, he believed, had ever been grown on these lands—he did not think anyone would

ever attempt it. The argument which the Commissioner of Crown Lands put forward in favor of special areas—that the Government would not be likely to take advantage of the regulations to unnecessarily hamper the pastoral lessees —would be all very well, if the hon. gentleman could guarantee that the present Administration will remain in power for the next twenty-one years. But unless the hon. gentleman could do that, there was no security at all against the declaration of these areas, for we might have a Governor whose particular hobby lay in that direction. They knew what hobbies some Governors had. Besides, he did not think that Governors and Executive Councils were the judges of what land regulations might suit a country, and he did not think this power should be left in the hands of any Administration, when, as he had already said, the Commissioner of Crown Lands could not guarantee that he and the present Government would be in office during the term of these pastoral leases. The Commissioner said in one portion of his speech: "The same principle that we wish to see adopted as regards agricultural land, we also wish to see followed as regards pastoral land, the principle, namely, that those who wish to hold the land must improve and utilise it." Now, he would ask the hon. gentleman, how did he expect the pastoral lessee to improve and utilise it, while he had this special area clause hanging over his head? What was to prevent the Governor, after the squatter spending hundreds of pounds in improvements upon his run—what was to prevent the Governor saying to him: "We want your land, now; we will pay you for your improvements, but you must give up your runs." That was a pleasant prospect for a lessee to occupy. Just as he was beginning to reap the benefits of the improvements, just as he was about to reap the reward of years of labor and of expenditure in improving his lease, the Government might come in, and take away from him the very pick of his runs. Not only that, these special area regulations opened the door for levying blackmail, by the occupier of the selection within a man's run. The occupier might make things so uncomfortable for the squatter, and make himself so objectionable, that the squatter might be obliged to pay him almost anything he asked, in order to get rid of him. What was the tone of the whole of the Commissioner of Crown Lands' arguments, from beginning to end throughout the whole of his reports? The hon. gentleman said that security of tenure ought to have been carried out in the past, and that this right of free selection had been the ruin of the lessees, and of the country, or, at all events, that a great many of the evils of the past had resulted from it. In one of his reports the hon. gentleman said that "In the Central District it seems undesirable to do away with free selection, notwithstanding, as I pointed out in my report for last year, that it has in many places resulted in spoiling the country by having dotted over it, quite unimproved, small locations securing waterholes, springs, and small pieces of good land which it would have been better for the colony never to have sold." Further on the hon. gentleman, referring to his report for 1883, said: "The policy that permitted and compelled lessees to protect their interests by purchasing all the springs and water-holes, and a small plot in the centre of every good piece of land with the intention of securing their runs from outside purchasers, having for their object the monopolising of the country to themselves and their heirs for ever, injuring and making of much less value the State property, while at the same time impoverishing themselves, cannot, in the interests of the colony, but be condemned." There was one portion of that extract which he must take exception to. The Commissioner said that leaseholders did this for the purpose of securing their runs from outside purchasers, who wanted to monopolise the country to themselves and their heirs for ever. He was quite certain that if there had been any possible way of securing it without purchasing they would have been only too happy never to have bought any at all. The Commissioner went on to say—and the whole of the hon. gentleman's arguments, right through these reports of his, pointed in the same direction: "Large districts have had the eyes picked out of them by the lessees, in very small blocks. Simply because they were allowed, and almost compelled to purchase, to protect their runs. How much better (the hon.

"gentleman said) it would have been if "the lessees had been given ordinary and "reasonable protection, so that their capi- "tal could have been devoted to improving "their runs; and how much better for the "colony to have received back, after a "stated period, the property that had been "leased, in an improved condition, intact." That was the argument put forward by the Commissioner of Crown Lands in 1883. That was the policy the hon. gentleman had been enunciating all along. In another report he said: "Les- "sees in the Central District have not, as "a general rule, prospered to any great "extent, and this may be to some extent "accounted for (firstly) by their holding "more land than they had the means to "occupy; (secondly) owing to uncer- "tainty of tenure there has not been "sufficient protection to encourage them "to spend money on improvements; and "(thirdly) through being hampered and "impoverished by the purchase of land "in small blocks around springs and "waterholes, in order to protect their "leasehold, and monopolise the country. "These purchasers represent capital en- "tirely unproductive (the hon. gentle- "man said), and, as a consequence, the "very money required for improvement "has been absorbed by the purchase of "land, which, of course, has not been in- "creased in productiveness by being con- "verted from leasehold to freehold." He thought he had now quoted all the hon. gentleman's remarks upon this subject. It would be seen that the whole tenor of his arguments was that security of tenure should have been given to lessees in all parts of the country not fitted for agriculture. He therefore trusted the hon. gentleman, after consistently advocating the principle throughout all these years, would see his way to go a little farther than these regulations went, to provide that security of tenure for the pastoral lessee, both in the South-Eastern districts and in the other districts, where the country was not adapted for agriculture. The argument had been advanced that the Home Government would not assent to this security being extended to pastoral lessees. He did not think they would be likely to offer any opposition, but that they would be only too pleased for any excuse not to alienate any more land. He would read one more extract from the speech of the Commissioner of Crown Lands. The hon. gentleman said: "I believe that the general tendency of "land legislation, in Australia, at any "rate, is opposed to the alienation of "Crown lands by sale. I do not give my "opinion on it, but I believe the day is "coming when our countrymen all over "the world will object to the sale of the "public estate." If the spirit of prophecy had descended upon the hon. gentleman, why did he not seek to follow it up? Why did he not endeavor to bring about a realisation of his prophecy, and make for himself a name in the land. They all knew what honor, even this day, was accorded to the memory of the surveyor who laid out the city of Adelaide, and there was no knowing what fame might be in store for the Surveyor General of this colony if he succeeded in bringing about what he had prophesied about the non-alienation of the public estate. If the hon. gentleman would only carry out the principle which he was so fond of advocating, his name would go down to posterity as the friend and benefactor of his country. Many people might think that by getting security of tenure to the occupier of Crown land, the result would be that the country would be monopolised by a few pastoralists; but that argument lost its weight when it was borne in mind—and it was acknowledged to be so by all parties—that agriculture could not be carried on in these four districts, and that therefore the land was useless except for pastoral purposes. That being the case he thought the majority of hon. members would agree with him that the very high rentals that were now proposed to be charged would have the effect of preventing any monopoly. He felt sure that when the first term of seven years had passed over, very few people would be found holding large estates. They would be only too glad to dispose of the greater part of them, so as to enable them to pay their rents, and, at the same time, carry on the necessary improvements. He thought that this very fact of increasing the rents of pastoral leaseholders would be one of the surest safeguards we could have against monopoly, and against the holding of large estates. He did not think that even the Commissioner of Crown Lands would object to the holders of pastoral lands making

a little out of them. These men had undergone great hardships in opening up the country, had expended a large amount of capital on improvements, had experienced no inconsiderable amount of danger from natives, had met with severe losses in their efforts to stock the country, and surely no one—their most inveterate enemies—would begrudge them a little profit and some slight return for their labors. Moreover, by not alienating those lands we always had a regular source of income which we could depend upon for the next 21 years, and, in the end, the Crown would become repossessed of a valuable estate. In the other colonies so much land had been alienated that very little had been left for the State. In twenty years hence the Governments of those colonies would not have a piece of land worth having belonging to them. It was acknowledged that we had large areas of land that were totally unfit for agriculture, or that would grow any cereal at present known. Possibly by the time these leases expired some sort of cereal might be invented that would grow upon even such lands as these; but at present they were utterly useless for the purposes of agriculture. Why, then, not let the pastoral leaseholder have it on such conditions that he could make some good use of it—good use of it not only for himself but also for the Crown, by increasing the value of it? By the time these leases expired, hundreds of thousands of miles of fencing and other improvements would have been made on the land; wells would be sunk, the country cleared, and the land made to carry stock to the full extent of its capabilities. Let the pastoral lessee but feel that there was no chance of his being interfered with and hampered in any way, and land in this colony would soon increase in value through the expenditure and the labor bestowed upon it by these tenants of the Crown. There was only one objection to granting the pastoral lessee security of tenure, and that was purely a sentimental one, namely, that it would have the effect of locking up the people's land,—the people's heritage as it was called. He quite admitted the force of this argument if anything could be done with this land,—if it could be turned to any other use. It had been open to the people, this heritage of theirs, since the colony was founded, but they had made no use of it, and they had made no use of it because it was fit for nothing else but for sheep pasture, and a great deal of it not worth much for that. With regard to conditional purchase, he intended in committee to move an amendment in the 49th clause, which dealt with the setting apart of agricultural areas. The clause as it now stood only provided that the Governor in Council "may" define and set apart any Crown land in the South-West division as an agricultural area. He proposed to move that instead of "may" the word "shall" be substituted. He thought there should be no mistake about this clause, and that the sooner the better these areas were declared and set apart. Within the last few weeks he had conversed with several gentlemen from the other colonies who came here seeking land, but they did not know where to go to, nor could they get any information as to where there was any land available for agricultural purposes. If these agricultural areas were defined and marked on the survey maps there would be no difficulty about it then. People would know where to look for land. He thought there would be many advantages from setting apart agricultural areas. As the Commissioner of Crown Lands had pointed out, roads would be made, churches and schools would be built, post offices would be opened, and other conveniences which might be looked forward to when a number of homesteads were made within an area, and the population became concentrated. As to any difficulty in the selection of such areas, he did not apprehend any difficulty whatever. He thought they might appoint District Boards for the purpose, consisting of three or four men, with a practical knowledge of the country. If they did that, it would not be long before these areas were defined, and, once the work was done, it would be done for ever. The terms upon which it was proposed to dispose of land within these agricultural areas were, he thought, satisfactory, with two exceptions. One was, that there should be no limit whatever as regards the quantity of land that might be taken up within these areas; and the other was that there should be no resi-

dence clause. He would let a man buy as much land as he liked, so long as he carried out all the conditions of the improvements. With regard to the clause which prevented a man from transferring his license until he had held it five years, and made certain improvements,—there seemed to be some doubt raised as to the desirability of this limitation, as it was likely to prevent the lessee from being able to raise money upon his lease, for the purpose of improving it, but, seeing that this had been before the country for the last twelve months, one would suppose that if there was any strong feeling of opposition to it on the part of those whom it most deeply concerned, they would have heard something about it. But, so far as he knew, no interest whatever seemed to have been taken in the matter by the public. Not the slightest indication had been given as to how they wished the question to be settled. In his own constituency not a single word had been said about the subject: they were much more interested, apparently, in the question of Responsible Government. The Land Regulations did not concern them in the least. So it was very difficult to say how far these regulations were likely to meet the approval of the general public, or by those whom the Land Regulations most directly concerned, and the House, in dealing with the question, must be guided by its own judgment in the matter. As he had already said, so far as he was concerned, he agreed with the clauses dealing with agricultural areas, with the two exceptions referred to. With regard to the regulations relating to pastoral lessees, he noticed that they were not only to have security of tenure taken away from them, but that the price of the land was to be raised in some districts—the Gascoyne and Eucla districts particularly. That seemed rather hard, looking at the matter from the point of view it was considered in select committee last session. For his own part he considered these prices a great deal too high, and, when the question came to be dealt with in committee, probably it would be proposed that the prices should be lowered. In many cases it was his intention, when the question of price did come forward, to move an amendment that all lands within or without a hundred miles from the coast should pay accordingly. He thought it was most unfair that land situated close to a port of shipment should only be charged for at the same rate as land situated 200 or 300 miles inland; or, rather, that the latter should be charged for as high as the former. The difference in the cost of carting alone was a heavy item. The Commissioner of Crown Lands dealt with this question in what he (Mr. Wittenoom) called a very high-handed manner, and of course in a manner which went to show that he wished to get rid of it with as little delay as possible. The hon. gentleman said: "It is impos- "sible to make regulations that will "affect everyone alike. For instance, "some people argue that those holding "land near the sea should pay more "than those holding land in the interior, "as the former would not have so much "carting to do. That is true enough; "but how are you possibly going to place "everyone in the same position? It is a "physical impossibility. After all we "must look at this matter in a broad light. "We must look at what comes off the "land, rather than what we receive in "rent; and, if some are more fortunate "than others as regards the position of "their land, all I can say is—so much the "better for them." The hon. gentleman said, "So much the better for them." He would say so, too, if they were close to the coast. If they had to cart 200 or 400 miles, it made a wonderful difference. Take the case of a man holding 100,000 acres, carrying 20,000 sheep that produced 200 bales of wool, which would be about 40 tons weight. If that man's station was, say, thirty miles from a port of shipment, estimating the cost of carting at 1s. a mile per ton (which was the general rate) the cost of conveying his wool would be £60. Another man, who had his station 350 miles away, would have to pay for carting the same quantity of wool, at the rate of £17 per ton, £680. This made a difference of £620 for carting alone upon forty bales. That was rather hard, he thought, upon the man whose land happened to be a long way from the coast; and, as regards those who were fortunate enough to have secured land nearer a market or a shipping port, the Commissioner, in his airy way, said, "So much the better for them."

No doubt of it. And so much the worse for the other unfortunates. As to the rate for carting (£17 a ton) for the distance mentioned, he had paid it with his own hand, and he had known that wool to realise only 4½d. a lb. There was not much gain there. Yet, according to the Commissioner, the man whose land was 300 miles away should have no more consideration than the man whose land was only 30 miles away. Moreover, it was well known that, as a rule, the rainfall was pretty regular along the coast, whereas the seasons in the interior were very irregular, and subject to severe drought,—sometimes two years without rain. As to the question of rents, they must always remember that, as a rule, people who owned estates expected, as the years went by, that the value of those estates should increase; whereas it should be borne in mind that everything that came off these Crown lands was now reduced in value. Therefore, he thought it was hardly fair to expect that lessees should pay the same price, and certainly not a higher price, for them in the future than they had in the past, more especially if they did not get security of tenure. In fact, without security he did not see how they were going to pay the rents which these regulations proposed. Coming to the regulations dealing with poisoned land, he felt bound to say that these regulations in the past were little better than absurdity. The real gist of the matter was that any person who had poison lands within his lease could not in the old regulations take them up; and, as in the South-West division the poison plant grew in the most profuse manner, it was almost impossible, or very difficult, to get a rectangular block without poison. As a matter of fact, very little had been done towards its eradication, except by a few speculators in the South. The regulations otherwise remained a dead letter. But what was proposed to be done now would, he thought, meet the case, with one exception, and that was the condition as regards fencing, which would be very difficult to carry out. In many cases large paddocks had been made, inside of which small patches of poison had existed, that at present were fenced off to keep out stock from going upon these poison lands, and it would be absurd to have to fence every little block of land within these large paddocks. In most cases where the poison plant grew it was rocky ground, destitute of water; and what would be the use of fencing all these patches? None at all that he could see. He thought this was a condition that would serve no good whatever. If he thought it would have the effect of improving the land in any way, he should be the last to ask that it should be left out; but, as the regulations now stood, he did not see that it would be of any advantage. Moreover, as a rule, when people took up a lease within large poison areas, they must necessarily fence out such portions as were not cleared of poison. But in cases where small paddocks existed within larger ones, it would be simply a waste of money to insist upon this condition being carried out. He also thought the 81st clause was open to a little objection. It provided that "on "the expiration by effluxion of time of "any pastoral lease, not open to renewal "on the same or any other conditions to "the same lessee, or upon any pastoral "lessee within an agricultural area being "deprived by the Commissioner, acting "under these regulations, of the use of "any land held under a pastoral lease "and comprised within such agricultural "area, the pastoral lessee shall, subject "to the provisions of these regulations, "receive from the Commissioner the fair "value of all improvements then on the "land of which the lessee had been "deprived." He thought there was some word left out there. The clause said "the fair value of improvements then on "the land." He thought the select committee in their report went further than that, and included all improvements "appertaining" to the land. Clause 82, also, was open to some little objection. This clause provided "that the fair value "of any improvements existing upon any "block applied for within an agricultural "area shall be determined by the Com-"missioner, and the amount shall be added "to the purchase money of the block." That was making the Commissioner buyer and seller at once. [Mr. FORREST: That is between the Commissioner and the special occupier.] The clause distinctly said that the value of the improvements was to be settled by the Commissioner. Everything was left in the Commissioner's

hands. [Mr. Forrest: No, no.] With regard to mineral lands, the Commissioner in his speech made reference to them as follows: "In the regulations re-"lating to mineral lands no important "alterations are contemplated. I am "afraid the select committee did not take "that interest in the regulations affecting "mineral lands which we would have "done if the industry had been in a more "prosperous condition, but I think we "have introduced, on the suggestion of "the hon. member for the Greenough, "one improvement that will have the "effect of giving some security to the "prospector." He should not like it to go forth, so far as he was concerned, that he did not take any interest in the mineral land regulations. He took a great interest in them, and did so when the question was before the select committee. The only improvement suggested was that recommended by the hon. member for the Greenough on that occasion, and he believed it was all that those interested in the mineral lands wished for. He had since last session spoken to several of the people, and, from what he could gather, that was all they wanted. If they got that, they would be perfectly satisfied, so far as he knew. He had now gone through the regulations, and, in conclusion, just to sum up the difference which existed between his own views and the views embodied in these regulations, his position was this: he objected to doing away with security of tenure, to the limitation of land in agricultural areas under improvement conditions, and to the residence clause. The Commissioner told them in one breath that the past regulations had proved an entire failure, and with the same breath he recommended the adoption of regulations almost on exactly the same lines as regards pastoralists. Surely—as he said when he opened these remarks—that was somewhat inconsistent. He desired to see agriculture prosper as much as anyone; but what on earth was the use of setting apart special areas for agriculture when the country was not fit for it. Where the country was fit for it, let the conditions affecting agricultural settlement be as liberal and favorable as possible; but where the country was altogether unfitted for agriculture, let the land be made use of by those who would improve it, and, improving it, enhance the value as a portion of the public estate. What was the good of shutting up the land? It was all very fine to talk about the land being the "heritage of the people." There was a fine sentimental flavor about that expression. But the people cared nothing for the "heritage" of theirs. It had been open to them to claim it and make use of it in the past, but they had not done so; and he failed to see why it should be shut up any longer from those who would make some use of it, and improve the value of this heritage. Before he sat down, he must again say that he was extremely sorry to see the Commissioner of Crown Lands supporting the alienation clause in these regulations, in direct opposition to his expressed opinion on the subject in the past, and in direct opposition to the hon. gentleman's past experience. He had always understood—he had been taught it from a boy—that "experience teaches." It appeared to him it did not teach some people. The Commissioner told them that alienation of land in the past had been the ruin of the country, and yet the hon. gentleman, in the same breath, proposed to continue the same system, to ruin the country still further. He was sorry to see that hon. gentleman showing so much inconsistency. He could only recommend him to think the matter over again most carefully, for he felt sure that if the hon. gentleman did so he would see the position in which his inconsistency had placed him, and would endeavor in the future to make his avowed policy accord a little more with his arguments.

Mr. BURGES hoped he should not weary the House with any remarks he might have to make upon the subject under consideration. The subject was one of such importance to the whole country that, he thought, any little time they might occupy in discussing these proposed land laws might be very well passed over. He must, in the first place, congratulate the Surveyor General on the very able and eloquent speech that he made the other evening when introducing these regulations; but he regretted very much that he was not altogether in accord with the hon. gentleman. There were several points, many of which the hon. member for Geraldton had taken

exception to, and which he (Mr. Burges) must also take exception to as regards some of these regulations. The hon. member had pointed out the necessity of forming land regulations that should be suitable for the colony generally, and which would encourage population to settle upon the land. Our regulations in the past, the regulations at present in force, had not in his opinion been altogether a failure—certainly not a failure in the pastoral districts. They might possibly have been some little failure so far as the agriculturists were concerned, but on the whole he thought the land regulations of this colony had been very fair and liberal. To the agriculturist particularly, with one exception, they had been liberal. The only point he had ever heard the agriculturist complain about was that they compelled him to cultivate his land, when frequently that land was not suitable for cultivation. Many small holders had taken up blocks of land merely to form for themselves a homestead; and by fencing in that land and using it to feed their cattle and horses, it would pay them much better than growing corn. He had heard many complaints—it was a general complaint among our small farmers—that under the existing land laws they were compelled, under the special occupation clause, to sow and cultivate a portion of their land before they could get a title, although the land was not fit for cultivation. But the leasehold regulations in the past had, he thought, proved a very great success. They had caused large areas of country to be opened up, which certainly would not have been opened up if the land regulations had not been altered, as they had been, some ten or fifteen years ago. When the Gascoyne country was first discovered, he thought, the charge for land was £1 per 1000 acres, and very few people would look at it. Eventually, however, when regulations were framed giving leaseholders an opportunity of occupying the land at a reduced rate, those regulations had a very good effect. He thought that the number of leaseholders now to be found in that part of the colony—the Gascoyne, Upper Murchison, and all about that portion of our territory—spoke for itself that the leasehold regulations now in force had proved a very great success indeed; and he only trusted that whatever regulations they might now pass would in the future prove as great a success. He had every sympathy with the farmer, and he was desirous that in considering these new regulations they should deal as fairly and as liberally with the agriculturist as they possibly could do. He hoped that agricultural areas would be opened up, and that every encouragement should be offered to people to settle within those areas; and he trusted that the proposals contained in the draft regulations now before them having that object in view would meet with the approval of the House; and that survey before selection would be agreed to. People when they came to the colony looking for land should have some idea where they might get their 100, or 500, or 1000 acres; and our Survey Department ought to be in a position to say to these people, "Here is our map, you may pick out the land where you like." Having said so much as to general principles, he now came to the regulations now before the House. The clauses dealing with alienation were of very great importance; and he went thoroughly with the hon. member for York and the hon. member for Geraldton that no alienation of land should take place in districts that were suited only for pastoral purposes. He thought that in the Central Districts we had some land left yet fit for agriculture, but he was afraid that after these railway Syndicates had selected their portion, we should have very little land indeed to deal with. But whatever land we might have left, he thought it should be within the power of the Land Department to set it apart for agricultural areas—he was now talking of the Central District—and then to lease the remainder to the pastoralists, with security of tenure. In that district, to his own knowledge, there were thousands of acres that could not possibly and never would be occupied for agricultural purposes; and the only way we could encourage people to take up that land on lease was to give them security of tenure, in order that they might clear it, or ringbark it, or fence it in, and, in the future, make it a valuable property for the State. He quite went with the Commissioner of Crown Lands when he said that the

regulations in the past had done a great deal of harm on leasehold lands, the occupants of which had been compelled, simply in self-defence, to purchase certain portions of their leases, and in this way spoil the country. He agreed with the Commissioner there. But what were the lessees *to do?* They could not help themselves. They were bound to purchase these little blocks to secure the waterholes, and to prevent outsiders taking them up; if they had not done so, their runs would not have been worth 5s. to them. He thought that, in future, in dealing with the Central Districts, survey before selection, for purposes of agriculture, was one of the great principles that ought to be kept in sight and acted upon. Having done that, we could then lease the remainder of the land, under long leases, for pastoral purposes, and let it be strictly understood that there was to be no alienation whatever within these pastoral areas. The system of direct purchase proposed in these regulations, he was not at all in accord with. He noticed, first of all, that the price proposed to be charged for the land was 20s. per acre, and that no less than 500 acres nor more than 5000 acres, to be in one block, could be applied for by one person. He knew the Commissioner of Crown Lands had carefully avoided in his speech the other evening any reference to the reason why it was considered necessary to increase the price of land. He (Mr. Burges) saw no reason, no sound reason, for it whatever. On the contrary, it appeared to him that with a large portion of some of the best lands of the colony thrown into the hands of the two railway Syndicates, who would put their land in the market as soon as they could,—it appeared to him that it was anything but sound policy to go and raise the price of Crown land one hundred per cent. He could not agree with that at all. He thought that the present price of 10s. an acre was quite high enough, seeing that these Syndicates would be able to place their land in the market at something like that rate, and that it was not at all a wise thing to increase the price of Government land to 20s. It was only offering a premium to these Syndicates, who would come in and pick up their land, under their contracts with the Government, and put 5s. or 7s. 6d. an acre into their pockets. The result of raising the price of Crown land would simply be that those who wanted to purchase land would purchase it from the Syndicates rather than from the Crown, and the public revenue would suffer accordingly. He, therefore, certainly objected to this part of these regulations. With regard to conditional purchase, he thought the proposed regulations were, on the whole, very reasonable. He could not see that people could expect more than twenty years to pay for their holdings at the rate of sixpence an acre. If that was not liberal enough he did not know what was. And that brought him back to the question of the proposed increase in price, if a man wanted to make a direct purchase. If a man wanted to purchase 5,000 acres of land right off, he had to pay his money down, and pay 20s. an acre for it; yet at the same time it was proposed, under the conditional purchase system, to give him twenty years to pay for his land, and to charge him only 6d. an acre for it. He failed to see the force or the consistency of that argument. He disagreed altogether with the hon. member for Geraldton when he said that he thought there should be no limit placed as to the quantity of land which might be taken up under conditional purchase; and he also disagreed with the hon. member when he advocated that the residential clause should be done away with. He thought if we were to do away with these two regulations we should do away with the most important principles underlying these land laws. Some of the conditions attached were, however, in his opinion rather hard, and especially that which provided that unless all the required improvements were carried out by the end of the lease the land would revert to the Crown. He thought that was a condition that ought to be modified in committee. A man may have endeavored honestly and faithfully to carry out the conditions of his purchase, and yet towards the end of his lease, through some accident or unavoidable cause, be unable to complete his improvements; and it would be very hard indeed if that man should lose his property. He also observed that the Commissioner of Crown Lands in his speech the other evening said nothing whatever about the position

of present leaseholders,—whether under these new regulations they are to expect a renewal of their leases. There was nothing in these regulations to show that they were, and he thought that some little anxiety might arise on that head, and that it would be well, while these regulations were going through the House, that some provision should be made to that effect.

THE COMMISSIONER OF CROWN LANDS (Hon. J. Forrest): We have done it already.

MR. BURGES: Not in these regulations.

THE COMMISSIONER OF CROWN LANDS (Hon. J. Forrest): It is provided for in the existing regulations.

MR. BURGES: But when these are published, the old ones will be repealed.

THE COMMISSIONER OF CROWN LANDS (Hon. J. Forrest): Oh, no.

MR. BURGES, continuing, said he considered the proposed prices of leases in the Central District very reasonable, under all the circumstances. He presumed the price had been fixed at the proposed rate because it was proposed to have the country open to free selection; and, if complete security of tenure could be given as regards every other portion of the land, he thought we might even increase the price a little, in order to secure that protection. With regard to the proposed increase of rents in other parts of the colony, he was not at all in accord with it. He thought that the present rate on the Murchison, Gascoyne, and in the Northern Districts generally—10s. per 1,000 acres—was quite sufficient, and quite as much as people who held the land could afford to pay. If the rents in those districts were increased as proposed—10s. for each year of the first seven years; 15s. for the second term; and 20s. during the third term of seven years,—he thought they would find that a large quantity of land would be given up. As the land was at present let at a moderate price, people were able to take up much larger areas than they could otherwise afford—and they had to do it, so as to enable them to travel their stock, and to take advantage of the rainfall, which in that part of the colony was very partial, and the settler had to move his stock to follow the seasons. But if the price of land were increased, very few people could afford to take up these large areas, and the result would be they would have to abandon pastoral pursuits in those districts altogether. Therefore, he maintained it would be a very great mistake to increase the rental charges in these Northern districts beyond that at present paid; and he should certainly move in committee that the regulation dealing with this question should be amended and the rents reduced. He would go this far, however: if security of tenure be guaranteed and alienation forbidden, he should not object to a slight advance being made—say 10s. for the first term; 12s. 6d. for the second term; and 15s. for the third term. But it was only on condition of security of tenure being granted and alienation forbidden that he would support any increase of rent. He thought the provision made in these regulations as regards improvements was a very valuable clause indeed. There had been a great many disputes as to the value of improvements under the existing regulations, and it was quite right, he considered, for the Crown to frame some law under which a fair settlement of claims for improvements might be arrived at. With regard to mineral lands, he found that very little alteration was proposed, and he thought there were a few matters that would have to be attended to in committee, affecting these mineral lands. For instance, in the mining districts in the Champion Bay district, people were in the habit of sinking shafts to look for minerals, and, when they found none, they went away leaving the shaft open, which was very dangerous to stock, and not only to stock but also to individuals. He thought that people ought to be compelled to fill in these holes or shafts, or, failing that, they ought to be made to fence them in. With regard to the regulations dealing with poison lands, he found that a very desirable improvement was contemplated. A large quantity of poisoned land had been allowed to remain idle, which, if the regulations in the past had been better framed, might now be utilised; and he thought the new regulations now proposed would remove that difficulty, and place these lands in a better position for being utilised. With respect to the timber regulations, he thought that some provision ought to be

made to compel timber cutters to clear away all brushwood. At present a great many licensed persons left a large quantity of brushwood and small timber on the ground, which interfered with the pasture very much. He believed there was a clause in the present regulations which said that any person cutting timber for firewood should heap up the discarded branches and burn them, instead of leaving them to encumber the ground; and he thought such a clause should be introduced here. He understood that although this was provided for in the old regulations, the clause was not often observed, and it was a very difficult matter to compel people to carry it out. He knew it had given rise to many disputes and to a great deal of ill-feeling. He thought he had now touched upon the most important points in the draft regulations before them. In conclusion, he would only ask the House, when these regulations came before them in committee, to bear in mind the three or four great principles which had failed to work successfully in our past land regulations: firstly, that there ought to be absolute security of tenure for the pastoral lessee; secondly, that the regulations as regards conditional purchase should be made as liberal as possible, so as to encourage the settlement of population; and, thirdly, that we should reduce the rents, at any rate to some extent, from what was here proposed. As he said before, he considered the rents at present paid were quite sufficient for the kind of country which was being held; and if these increased rents were forced upon people, they would not be at all acceptable. The squatting interest was not in a very flourishing condition—it never had been in such a flourishing condition as to warrant any very high rental charges for Crown lands in this colony, for the simple reason that the squatter here had to take up and pay for a large quantity of land which he could make very little use of. Even the country that was being held in the Central District was so infested with poison that at present, in some places, people were in reality paying as much as 30s. a thousand acres for land for their stock. A very large proportion of every leasehold in the Central District was unsuited even for pastoral purposes, but rent had been paid for it: and the same applied to the North, the Gascoyne, and the Murchison country. A large proportion of the land held there, and for which rent was paid, could not be made use of; and if the rents were increased he felt perfectly sure that a good deal of this land would be given up; so that, instead of the proposed increase being of any benefit to the State, the State would lose by it. He thought they were most essential points for consideration—rentals and security of tenure; and he hoped that when these draft regulations came before them in committee they would receive that calm and impartial consideration which the great importance of the subject deserved, in the interests of the colony at large. He said in the interests of the colony at large, because this land question was a question that concerned the whole country from one end to the other; and he considered that the question was now left entirely for that House to decide. The country had had an opportunity of expressing its opinions upon the regulations put forward by the select committee last session, and he must say that he had been very much disappointed indeed at finding so little interest taken by country people generally in a matter which concerned them so very much. He only hoped, now that the whole question had been left for the consideration of that House, that the result of their deliberations would be satisfactory to the country generally.

MR. SHENTON said he did not propose to make any lengthy remarks, but there were a few points upon which he should like to say a few words. He thought it was acknowledged by all parties that the question of a country's land regulations was one of the most difficult problems that any Legislature could have entrusted to it for solution; and, in this colony, situated as we were with our scanty population scattered over an immense territory, the problem was even more difficult of satisfactory solution than it was in the neighboring colonies. Speaking in the first instance of the land in this portion of the colony, as being more fitted for agricultural purposes than land in the Northern parts, he might state at once that he was in favor of having regulations that would induce a settlement of the country by what was

known as the peasant farmer, feeling certain in his own mind that this class of people were more likely to benefit the colony generally, in the country districts, than any other class we could have. In order to frame regulations to meet the requirements of these peasant farmers, he considered that where good agricultural land exists they should have the right of taking up the land under special occupation conditions, and, to a certain extent, in the manner provided by these regulations. Knowing, as we did, that as a rule, in certain portions of this part of the colony, the good land was to be found in valleys, while the sides of the hills were scarcely fit for agriculture—though with a little improvement they might be converted into fairly good agricultural land—he should be in favor of granting or leasing 100 acres of good agricultural land to the tenant farmer, and allow him to take up another 500 acres of what might be called second class land on the deferred payment system, binding him down, as regards this second class land, to fence and ring-bark the land, so as to make it more suitable for agricultural purposes. In order to carry out this, there would of course have to be some system of classification. The residue of the land he would grant on long leases, as proposed, to the pastoral tenants, giving them as much security of tenure as possible, conditionally upon their carrying out certain improvements in the way of fencing or ringbarking, for which they should be recompensed at the end of their leases. Those who were acquainted with the Eastern Districts knew that a certain portion of the land, instead of carrying as much stock as it did a few years ago, carried much less, owing to the great growth of underwood; and he thought that every inducement should be offered by the Government to have this underwood removed, so as to improve the carrying capacity of the land. There would still be one very inferior class of land, consisting of sandplain, which, if possible, should be given on far easier terms than other land. In the Eastern Districts, and away out to the eastward, it was known that good land was only to be found in small patches—patches, he believed he was right in stating, of not more than 5000 acres at the outside, and very often not more than 1000 acres. Under the present regulations the pastoral lessee was compelled to take up immense areas in order to make sure of some of this good land, and he thought some concession should be made to them in this respect. If this could be done, and at the same time we could offer every encouragement to the farmer, and give such security to pastoralists as would induce them to improve their runs, he thought we should do all that could fairly be expected as regards these lands. With regard to the proposed increase in the price of land, he thought the Government must have lost sight of the fact that for the next seven years they would have formidable rivals in the field, as regards the disposal of land between Albany and Champion Bay, of which a large proportion was in the hands of the railway syndicates. If we raised the price of Crown lands to 20s. he was very much afraid we should not have much sale for it, seeing that these syndicates would be in a position to undersell the Government, and at the same time make a good thing out of it. This was a matter that required very serious consideration. With regard to the question of alienation, he was glad to see that it was proposed to provide for the resumption of land by the Crown in other parts of the colony. Certain new industries might spring up in the future, and we might require this land. In other respects he thought that when they went into these regulations in committee they would be able to frame such laws as would in the first place promote and encourage the settlement of the colony, and, in the second place, give confidence to the pastoral tenants of the Crown, so that these two interests might flourish and prosper, side by side, and tend to the material welfare and advancement of the colony. He begged to move, as an amendment upon the resolution submitted by the Commissioner of Crown Lands: "That an humble address be "presented to His Excellency the Gover- "nor, informing His Excellency that "this House, having considered the Gov- "ernor's Message upon the subject, is "prepared to devote its most careful "attention to the Draft Land Regula- "tions which His Excellency has sub- "mitted for its opinion."

MR. PEARSE, without comment, seconded the amendment.

MR. LOTON said, notwithstanding the magnitude of the subject, he felt that, humble individual as he was, he must endeavor to say a few words upon it. He should endeavor to confine his observations within reasonable limits, and chiefly address himself to the various principles that were embodied in the draft regulations before them. In the first place, with regard to the proposed division of the colony into six sections for the purposes of these regulations, he had no remark of importance to make, but he thought that possibly the hon. member for Geraldton had struck a note which he should be inclined to follow, when he suggested that if another division is not declared there should at all events be some difference made as regards the rents to be paid, based upon the distance of land from the coast. He was with the hon. member in his suggestion that land situated in the remote interior of the colony should not be subject to as high a rental as land situated within easy distance of a port of shipment. With regard to the question of alienation, it was perhaps hard that there should be no alienation in five out of the six divisions into which it was proposed to divide the colony, unless a special area should be declared. With regard to security of tenure, those who had argued in favor of it—that was to say, who had argued that the pastoral tenants should have the exclusive right to their land for a certain number of years, without any interference whatever—used as their main argument in favor of that concession that the land which they required was only fit for pastoral purposes. Yet, they wanted it absolutely secured for themselves, without chance or prospect of interference, for 21 years. It appeared to him that the very fact—if it was a fact—that the land in these divisions was not fit for anything else but for pastoral purposes, was of itself as good a security of tenure as they could desire. [Several hon. members: No, no.] Very nearly so, at any rate. He was in favor of moderate rents and as much security of tenure as we could afford, in the interests of all parties; but he did not see that the State would be fairly justified in parting with its lands for nearly a quarter of a century,—upon what conditions? On the sole condition of low rents and what he should term a very low stocking clause. [Mr. SCOTT: Hear, hear.] The Commissioner of Crown Lands, in his able speech—able on the whole,—speaking of the pastoral laws outside the South-West division, said: "With the pastoral regulations in the "past I have no fault to find. I believe "they have given every encouragement to "the tenant,—the pastoral regulations, I "mean, outside the South-West division "(and in that district, too, except as "regards protection); but I am alluding "more especially to the pastoral regu-"lations outside that district. I have "known, in many parts of the colony"—and these were the words which he (Mr. Loton) wished to draw attention to—"large pastoral areas held by persons "without doing a single improvement "upon them, or without utilising them in "any way—there has not been a sheep "within a hundred miles of them. What "has been the result? Many persons "who have come here, and would have "settled here, have departed from our "shores because they could not get any "land within a reasonable distance of the "sea coast. That, sir, is a state of things "that ought to be put a stop to. I "think that these lessees ought to be "compelled to utlise the land which they "lease from the Crown." After the expression of these views by the Commissioner of Crown Lands, arguing (as he thought the hon. gentleman did) in favor of a reasonable rate of rental and long tenancy, what did they find the hon. gentleman proposing in these regulations? He referred hon. members to Clause 73, which would show them how it was proposed to compel lessees, when they got a long tenancy, to utilise their lands, and the dreadful penalties to be imposed upon them if they did not do so. The clause he referred to was the penal clause for non-stocking. Under that clause the pastoral lessee, except in the South-West division, was required within seven years —seven long years—to have ten head of sheep or one head of large stock for every thousand acres leased by him, or he must show that he had spent £5—the large sum of £5—in improvements. If he did not do that, what then? His rent would be doubled. That was all. These

were the very stringent conditions which were applied with a view to remedy the state of affairs which the Commissioner complained of in the past. In twenty-one years the lessee would have to put ten head of large stock—ten head actually—on every thousand acres, within about a quarter of a century, or, in the alternative, one hundred sheep. No improvement conditions to be enforced at all, so as to enhance the value of the land. He could hold his land for twenty-one years by putting ten head of large stock upon every ten thousand acres. If the land was not suited to carry a much larger percentage of stock than laid down here, it was of very little value at all. They very frequently heard from hon. members that this land was of very great value, but, judging from these stocking conditions, it was of very little value indeed. Yet this was all the conditions which the Commissioner stipulated for, in order to compel lessees to utilise their land instead of letting it lie idle, as they had in the past. For his own part, while on the one hand he was in favor of low rentals and long leases, and such security as could be given to encourage lessees in every way, still, on the other hand, he thought they should insist upon some improvements so as to make the land capable of carrying a larger number of stock, and to see that the land should not be held, as he was afraid it otherwise would be held, in many instances, purely for speculative purposes. With regard to the alienation clause, his views were these: in order to protect the pastoral tenant, he would provide that the land which was to be set apart for cultivation purposes should be surveyed before selection, and, further, that in the areas so set apart (say in the Kimberley district) he should be inclined, he thought, to limit the amount to be selected to something less than 20,000 acres—unless they went further than these regulations went as regards compulsory improvements. He did not know, if improvements were insisted upon—such improvements as would really enhance the value of the land—that he would limit the area at all. He did not see why an individual or company should be debarred from investing as much capital as they liked, so long as they carried out the stipulated improvements upon the land. A man possessed of a large amount of capital might in this way do as much as twenty men of smaller means could accomplish, or afford to do, in the shape of improvements. He was not at all inclined to limit the energies and the enterprise of any man who had the means and the desire to develop the best interests of the colony. He would induce such people in every way to invest their capital in improving our public estate, and they would not find him voting in favor of compulsory residence, in every part of the land they held, so long as they carried out the improvements which the regulations prescribed. It appeared to him it did not matter where they resided, so long as they improved the land. He did not know that at this stage he need say anything further in connection with the pastoral interests in these particular divisions. He thought he had said enough to enable the House to form a pretty fair idea on which side his vote would be given. Passing on to the question of so-called "direct purchase," it appeared to him it was not direct purchase at all. It was hampered with too many conditions, altogether, to his mind. In the first place there was the condition limiting the quantity of land that could be taken up to 500 acres: that was a condition which it would have been much easier to have adopted years ago. One great drawback to the agricultural prosperity of this colony was the quantity of timber on the land, and the large amount of money required to be expended upon it before much return could be expected; and he submitted that the land to be alienated to purchasers should be alienated on reasonable terms. For at least forty or fifty years past land had been open for sale in the most favored localities at 10s. an acre, with the whole colony to pick from; but now when good land was becoming scarce, and a large proportion of the land had been handed over to Syndicates, it was proposed to increase the price to 20s. To his mind this was an absurd proposal. In addition to doubling the price of the land, the fencing of it was made compulsory. With regard to the alienation of land for vineyards, or orchards, he failed to see why the quantity that could be taken up for that purpose should be limited to ten or twenty acres, or why such a high price as

20s. an acre should be charged for such land. If the land were his, he should be glad to let it go at 5s. an acre, seeing the large amount of expenditure that would have to be incurred before any return could be expected. Here again he failed to see the good of restricting the energy and the enterprise of people, who wanted to do good for themselves and for the colony. It appeared to him that the Executive, in this matter of the land regulations, had framed them upon certain broad principles in the first instance, but, directly they entered into details they became faint-hearted, and lost the courage of their opinions. If these details were going to be enforced, the principle advocated would be useless. If these land regulations were to be made at all workable and to give general satisfaction, the details would so alter the principles that the latter would be defeated altogether. With regard to alienation under conditional purchase, within agricultural areas, he would simply say that he was entirely in favor of agricultural areas being declared and surveyed before selection, in suitable size blocks, wherever it was practicable to select such areas. It would not be a very easy matter. They should have to go South; they knew that large areas of country would be shut up for the next seven years, and that it was only in the Southern districts that these areas could be declared, with the exception perhaps of a little north of Champion Bay. The conditions that were intended to be imposed upon selectors were to his mind ruinous. The price was low enough, and when they said that, they said all that could be said in favor of these regulations as regards selection within special areas. It was proposed to hamper the selector with such absurd conditions to his mind that it would be impossible for the class of people they expected to take up land under the conditional purchase system to carry them out. A man had to fence the land, in the first place, and when he had done so and expended what little capital perhaps he had, he was debarred from raising any more upon the security of his land. His hands would be tied from giving any security—any marketable security—to enable him to borrow money to complete his improvements; and he might as well not take up the land at all. If people without large means, but possessed of thews and sinews and prepared to fight the battle of life with energy, were expected to take up these selections, such men must have the means given them of obtaining financial assistance somewhere—he did not care where. But here they provided that these people should on no consideration be allowed to transfer their holdings—and without that they could give no security, so that it would be impossible for them to obtain the necessary funds to enable them to carry on the improvements which the State said they must carry out. His views at present as to purchase were these: that upon application being made to purchase, the applicant should pay down 2s. 6d. an acre, and, at the end of two or three years, when the fencing improvements were done, another 2s. 6d., on approval; and, if they tied the applicant down to complete the required improvements before the Crown grant issued, he thought they might very fairly say to the purchaser that he must then pay the balance of the purchase money. By this means, instead of asking for payment at once, they would enable the man to complete his improvements, and pay the balance afterwards, and the Government would be perfectly secure, as they would have a sufficient amount in hand. He was very glad to see that in the South-West division of the colony the Government had taken steps to enable the present lessees to take some advantage—if it was possible for them to do so—of clauses 54 and 55 of these regulations. There would be some difficulty no doubt in connection with this. It was well known that although the land had been open for purchase for the last thirty years, a great number of these people had not taken advantage of it, and the consequence was that, at the present moment, even pastoralists who held large areas of land held a very small proportion of freehold land, and it was of very little use to them unless they had much larger quantities. He thought they should be allowed an opportunity of purchasing or selecting a certain quantity, in a block, around their homesteads. When he said that, he went a little further than was proposed here: he should say they should do this within a very short time—say six months; and, if they did not choose to

take advantage of it, they would have no cause to complain. He had many more rough notes upon the regulations now under discussion, but, at that late hour, he would not trespass further upon the time of the House. He should like some explanation, however, as to whether under this 55th clause—which empowered any existing pastoral lessee in the South-West division to apply for a block adjoining his homestead, subject to certain restrictions—he should like to know what would be the position of a leseee who did not choose to avail himself of this regulation,—what would be his position at the end of his present lease?

SIR T. COCKBURN-CAMPBELL wished to bring under the notice of the House a series of resolutions on the land question adopted at a meeting of his constituents at Albany. What they said at Albany was that the proposed new regulations were not applicable to the colony, and would militate against the settlement of the land by *bonâ fide* agriculturists. They thought that the existing regulations only required slight amendment, in the direction of giving pastoral tenants additional security; that in case of improvements on land purchased within leases or licenses the Commissioner of Crown Lands should notify to the lessee that the land had been purchased, and that before the Crown grant was issued the purchaser should pay the lessee the value of the improvements, whether such improvements had been registered or not, and that all buildings should count as improvements; that, when land was purchased within a fenced lease, the purchaser should pay the lessee part of the value of the fence, in proportion to the area bought. As regards agricultural lands, the meeting expressed an opinion that increased facilities should be offered to *bonâ fide* agriculturists to acquire land and cultivate it; and that some such provisions should be made for the free selection of land as were in force in some parts of New Zealand under what was there termed the Homestead Act. The hon. baronet said that personally he approved of the principles enunciated by the Surveyor General, but doubted whether the details of the scheme before the Council were best fitted to meet the objects desired. In his opinion the existing regulations required no very extensive amendment, and he could not agree with the Surveyor General in the condemnation passed upon them by that hon. gentleman, for if the area under cultivation was apparently small, we must recollect the small numbers of our population; and, when he stated that, with only two exceptions, we surpassed the other colonies of the group in the amount of land under cultivation per head of our inhabitants, he thought it could not be said that our land regulations had been unsuccessful in promoting settlement. So far as the South-West division was concerned, he thought they required very little amendment. He would not, however, inflict his opinions upon the House; they might not be worth very much, but he wished to say a word about their procedure in dealing with this important measure. He feared they were too much in the habit of neglecting to give close attention to bills until they were actually in committee upon them, when amendments were hastily moved, resulting in slip-shod legislation. He trusted that in this case hon. members would adopt the practice of the House of Commons and of other Legislative Assemblies, would carefully consider their action beforehand and give notice of the amendment they intended to move, so that the House might be in possession of their amendment and that nothing might be done in haste and without due deliberation.

MR. SCOTT said that after what had fallen from the hon. baronet, and the number of speeches they had had that evening, it would be well at this stage to adjourn the debate. He would therefore move that the debate be adjourned until July 16th.

Agreed to.

MR. SCOTT then moved that the House do now adjourn.

MR. BURGES objected. There was plenty of other business to go on with, and he thought, in justice to country members, that no more time should be wasted than could be avoided.

The motion for adjournment was put, and the House divided, as follows:

Ayes	...	...	...	14
Noes	...	...	...	7
Majority for		...	...	7

Ayes.	Noes.
Hon. M. S. Smith	Mr. Brockman
Hon. S. Burt	Mr. Burges
Hon. J. Forrest	Mr. Crowther
Hon. J. A. Wright	Capt. Fawcett
Mr. Harper	Mr. Grant
Mr. Loton	Mr. McRae
Mr. Marmion	Sir T. C. Campbell, Bart. (*Teller.*)
Mr. Pearse	
Mr. Randell	
Mr. Shenton	
Mr. Sholl	
Mr. Venn	
Mr. Wittenoom	
Mr. Scott (*Teller.*)	

The House adjourned at a quarter to eleven o'clock, p.m.

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL,

Thursday, 15th July, 1886.

Goods Shed at Cossack—Perth Gas Co. Bill introduced—Chinese Immigration Bill: further considered in committee—Public Health Bill: in committee—Adjournment.

THE SPEAKER took the Chair at noon.

PRAYERS.

GOODS SHED AT COSSACK.

MR. McRAE asked the Director of Public Works if it was the intention of the Government to construct a Goods Shed in connection with the Cossack Jetty and Tramway; and, if so, when such work is likely to be commenced?

THE DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC WORKS (Hon. J. A. Wright) replied that it was the intention of the Government to construct a Goods Shed at Cossack at the terminus of the Tramway, and that so soon as they were enabled to see what balance there would be remaining after the completion of the Tramway itself, and the Lighthouse and buildings on Jarman Island, then in hand, the work would be undertaken.

PERTH GAS COMPANY BILL.

MR. PARKER, in accordance with notice, moved for leave to introduce a private bill to extend the powers and privileges of the Perth Gas Co., Limited, and to give to the said company other powers and privileges.

The motion was agreed to.

MR. PARKER said the bill was not yet printed, and he did not know whether the House would agree to its being read a first time now. The last private bill that was brought in was the Church of England Collegiate School Bill, last session, and he did not remember now whether that bill was printed before it was read a first time, or not. He wished to follow the usual practice as regards the first reading of private bills.

THE ACTING ATTORNEY GENERAL (Hon. S. Burt) said it was he who introduced the Collegiate School Bill, and that bill certainly was printed before its first reading—not by the Government Printer, but outside. It was in print before it was ever brought in.

MR. PARKER said he would have the present bill printed, and have some future day fixed for its first reading.

CHINESE IMMIGRATION BILL.

On the order of the day for going into committee for the further consideration of this bill,

THE ACTING ATTORNEY GENERAL (Hon. S. Burt), in moving the Speaker out of the chair, said it would be in the recollection of the House that there was a clause in the bill relating to certificates of exemption to be granted to certain Chinese officials who might come to the colony as ambassadors, or upon some mission; and he believed that some hon. members regarded such a clause as exhibiting a considerable degree of foresight on the part of the Government, and it had been laughed at, he believed, in a public print known as the *Daily News*. But he might inform the House that since that clause was in print a despatch had been received by the Governor, notifying that the Government of China were at the present moment sending to this colony and to the other Australian colonies the very officials contemplated by this clause. They were coming here he believed on a special mission for the purpose of inquiring into the trade and commerce of the colony so far as they affected their own subjects, and to inquire