

Mr. Foley: Thousands die of starvation in London every year.

Mr. HEITMANN: I cannot connect starvation with spitting.

Mr. Allen: They have signs in the streets of Perth.

Mr. S. Stubbs: Yes, and in the railway stations.

Mr. Green: And in the tram cars.

Mr. HEITMANN: And it shows the absolute fallacy, and one might almost say hypocrisy, of them.

Mr. Allen: It would not be if they were followed up.

Mr. HEITMANN: I admit that, but I am afraid that the effect of the notices and the power of the municipal council to make by-laws will be almost the same as the regulations under the Health Act. I trust it will not be so, but personally I am prepared for the time being to cease my action and to observe the effect of the regulations to be brought in. If the Honorary Minister has his say, they will be brought in, because I know he is most anxious to do something in this direction. I will watch developments for twelve months, and if there is then no improvement I will introduce another Bill. Not very long ago following out my desire to educate the people as I have educated myself to whatever standard that might be, I travelled in various parts of the State and endeavoured to get the co-operation of my trades unions to form a society for the study and prevention of tuberculosis, and one of my unions, the Murchison, offered to give me—and the offer is still standing—five per cent. of their total revenue, and their revenue runs into hundreds of pounds a year, to secure equipment to precede the necessary work for the formation of this association. I believe the finest method of education in regard to public health, and particularly in regard to the diseases in which bacteria play the whole part, is through the medium of pictures. Had I been able to secure off my own bat the necessary equipment during the last two or three years, I would not have introduced this Bill to the House, because with the education which the people would have received through an organisation of this descrip-

tion, particularly by means of vivid pictures depicting the vitality of bacteria and the extraordinary danger from infection by these bacteria, there would have been no necessity for a law to prohibit spitting. With these remarks I have no desire to proceed any further, because I recognise that while hon. members are sympathetic, they have not given the matter sufficient thought to lead them to believe that it is possible to bring about a drastic change such as I admit would be brought about if my Bill was carried into law.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

[No further order made.]

#### BILL—ROADS CLOSURE.

Returned from the Legislative Council without amendment.

#### BILL—GAME ACT AMENDMENT.

Received from the Legislative Council and read a first time.

*House adjourned at 10.20 p.m.*

### Legislative Council,

*Thursday, 18th September, 1913.*

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The PRESIDENT took the Chair at 4.30 p.m., and read prayers.

#### PROPORTIONAL REPRESENTATION.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. J. M. Drew): With regard to the question asked yesterday by the Hon. Mr. Gawler, I may say that the Chief Electoral Regis-

trar's report on proportional representation is now before Cabinet. It is the intention of the Government to introduce a Bill making provision for proportional representation, and it is proposed also to print copies of this particular report and distribute them among members some time before the Bill is introduced to Parliament.

Hon. D. G. Gawler: Could you give us any idea when the report is likely to be in the hands of hon. members?

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: No, I could not just now.

## BILL—RIGHTS IN WATER AND IRRIGATION.

### *Second Reading.*

Debate resumed from the previous day.

Hon. F. DAVIS (Metropolitan-Suburban): In the absence of Hon. Mr. Connor, who is not here apparently, I desire to speak to the motion before the House. Owing to the fact that during last session we had exhaustive discussions on this subject, it is not necessary for me to deal with the matter at great length at this stage, as later on we will have an opportunity to discuss it further in Committee. Therefore I do not propose to speak at any great length just now. I would like to refer to the evidence given by some of the witnesses before the select committee last year, and particularly in regard to the evidence of one witness, Mr. A. N. Piesse, who in giving evidence before the committee contended it was unfair to him that the Crown should take possession of river beds, because in his case he contended he would be losing about 10 acres of land which he could turn to profitable use for cultivation, using it principally for growing couch and lucerne for the raising of stock. That probably has caused the contention to be raised that it is not right that the beds of streams should be re-vested in the Crown. That, to my mind, does not seem a logical position to take up. It is obvious that if the Government or the State resume the rights of running water the matter must be carried to its logical conclusion, and they

must resume the rights of the beds over which the water flows. Water must perforce flow over land, and unless the State has the right to the beds of the streams a rather peculiar position may arise in connection with different streams. If the Bill was carried in the form that only the streams of water were vested in the Crown, in the case of intermittent streams at one period of the year the water would be the property of the Crown when flowing, and the land at another period of the year when the waters were not flowing would be the property of the owner, and a very peculiar position would arise, somewhat savouring of comic opera, as it would be difficult to ascertain the exact period at which the waters ceased to flow, and settle the question of possession. It would not be a logical position to take up in connection with the matter, to my mind. One of the chief objections taken to the Bill last session was that it proposed to apply the principle to the whole of the State at one time, and it was urged that it would be better to apply the theory of irrigation to districts only where it was likely to be required, or that were anxious for irrigation works to be carried out. To my mind sectional legislation of that kind is not good or wise, because it tends to create unnecessary friction. It is quite reasonable to suppose that people living on one side of a road, who may be in a proclaimed irrigation area, may derive considerable benefit from being in that area, while people with land on the other side of the road who may be in a non-irrigation area may feel that they are being deprived of something which they might have had if the conditions had been otherwise.

Hon. Sir E. H. Wittenoom: It would never be so close as that.

Hon. F. DAVIS: One can never tell. In proclaiming districts it might be considered advisable to make a particular road the boundary, and unnecessary friction and heartburning might be caused through there being irrigable districts and non-irrigable districts, and therefore it would be far better to apply the principle to the whole of the

State at one time. It goes without saying that in districts where there are no facilities for irrigation the Act would not be operated, and therefore there would be no hardship in applying the measure to the whole of the State. There is another disadvantage also which needs to be considered in this connection. If the Bill applies only to certain districts it might be found afterwards on examination that other districts are just as well suited for irrigation as those dealt with in the Bill, and consequently we may have the experience of a number of Bills at a subsequent period being brought into the House for the purpose of proclaiming other districts irrigation districts. I fail to see any utility of having six or seven or more Bills when one will meet the case, and proclaim the whole of the State under the jurisdiction of the measure. It seems to me no use to multiply efforts when one effort will do the work equally as well. Some exception has been taken to the Bill on the grounds that it would possibly deter some who own land from forming irrigation works of their own because of the uncertainty under which they will labour. I fail to see how that can be the case, because if at the present time any landowner forms his own irrigation works, for his own benefit, of course it does not follow if the Bill is brought into operation that he will necessarily lose the value of those works. He can obtain a license to carry on those works, and it goes without saying that no sane authority would refrain from granting a license through pure cussedness without any reason whatever. It would only be refused under very exceptional circumstances, such as if on examination it was found that the irrigation works of one particular man were damaging others on land below those irrigation works, and if it were found that one man was doing anything to the detriment of his neighbours or the adjoining landowners, it would be only right that some protection should be afforded by the State refusing to give a license under those conditions. I fail to see that any uncertainty need prevail regarding the formation of irrigation works at the present time on the part of those who contemplate carrying out such works. Dur-

ing the time the select committee were sitting an invitation was extended to them to visit one of the orchards in the Darling Range and the visit was certainly an interesting one, because of the information obtained first-hand as to the conditions under which a small irrigation plant was working. When the witness was before the committee a question was put to him, "Is it likely the water you have conserved or the irrigation works you have formed would injure others below you?" And the reply was, "No, that is impossible, because there is no one below me." At first it seemed difficult to conceive of such a situation, and it was therefore with a great deal of interest that I visited the spot and saw the statement was absolutely correct, owing to the peculiar character of the country. The orchard of this particular witness was situated on a slope, and directly his ground finished there was a creek running at the bottom, and consequently the water ceased to flow by gravitation, so he was quite correct in his statement. But it came out in the course of conversation, as it came out in the committee, that he had obtained or conserved the water by ringbarking 100 acres or so above his land, and in consequence of that work the water had come very near to the surface of the bed of the old watercourse running through the land. It has been referred to in the case of springs, that springs ought to be the property of those on whose land they rise, and the question of what is a spring also crops up in that connection. It is held, I believe, by those who are experts, that a spring does not necessarily mean water rising readily to the surface, but may be water flowing from higher ground, really what is called seepage, or water which has gradually flowed through the soil to the lowest point and then issued and run along the surface of the land. In that case the witness whose land we visited could not have been injured by the measure. The water was conserved on his own land, came to the surface and formed a sort of spring, and therefore could not have been injured by the proposed legislation, for the Bill does not contemplate interfering with the water

in a case like that. Therefore I fail to see any danger that harm would be done to the small orchardist by the operations of the measure. The only difference would be of course, that he, like all others, would be required to have a license in case of damage being done in some unforeseen way to others whose land adjoined his. In connection with one of the Acts in operation in this State—the Water Boards Act, I think it is called—the practice that obtains is something of this character: the water is supplied only to municipalities or townships on the representation of some local authority. If the request is made by such authority it goes without saying they must feel they are representing a considerable body of people who require that facility or service. Usually, I understand, the plans are prepared and are open for inspection in the office of the Crown or in the water board office, so that those who are concerned may inspect them. If any objection is lodged against them it is inquired into in the usual way by the departmental officers, and if there is any reason in the objection or if it is regarded as a good objection it is taken into consideration. If only one or two object, and their objections are not found to be valid, the scheme is proceeded with and the water supplied in the places required. I understand the same principle, to an extent, would be followed in connection with the Irrigation Bill. If this is the case, it will be following on lines that have already been in operation for a considerable time, and as the House sets a good deal of value on precedent, it seems that no great objection can be taken to the methods of the Irrigation Bill. The Bill is a good one, it has some good features, and although some minor amendments have been made since its introduction last session, still on the whole the Bill is the same and should receive the careful consideration of the House. I certainly trust it will get this, and that a workable measure will be placed on the statute-book this session.

Hon. C. SOMMERS (Metropolitan): I am glad the Legislative Council took the action it did last session in setting

aside this Bill, if only for the purpose of giving those vitally interested in irrigation matters a chance of thoroughly understanding what the proposals are.

Hon. J. F. Cullen: This House did not set the Bill aside.

Hon. C. SOMMERS: Well, I will put it this way: I am glad the Bill was set aside.

Hon. Sir E. H. Wittenoom: It was withdrawn by the Government.

Hon. C. SOMMERS: In any case, I think it would be well if many Bills which are introduced were brought forward by the Government merely for the purpose of ventilating them and allowing the public to get a thorough grasp of the proposals so that public opinion might have a chance of expression and, through public opinion, the House might have a perfect knowledge of what was good for the State. Then we could be sure that when eventually a Bill become an Act, it would be in the full interests of the people generally. Mr. Kirwan in his speech yesterday insinuated that members who opposed the Bill did so for party purposes. I am sure no such attempt was ever made. If irrigation is good for the State we want a thoroughly well digested Bill, and if it is shown to be in the interests of the State this House, I am sure, will be very pleased to carry it through. Certainly I will do my best in this direction, although, of course, I reserve the right to criticise the Bill. In the House of Commons, I understand, instead of turning out Bills as we do, by tens and twenties every session, they are quite content to get two or three Bills through in one session. Bills are brought down there session after session, with the result that they are thoroughly well discussed, and whatever passes may be accepted as being in the best interests of the people. I think, first of all, it is wrong to attempt to make the Bill applicable to the whole of the State. In the South-West portion of the State there are several areas well suited for irrigation, and for that reason I think it would be wise if we made a start by declaring one or more districts down there. If it is found to be a success, and if people are willing to have these

works carried out by the Government, then the system could be beneficially extended. It would do no harm to make a beginning with the Harvey district by declaring a certain area down there, and subsequently extending the system. Before any works are carried out I think the majority of the owners of land in the proposed area should be entitled to a vote, should have a voice in the election of the board. Of course it will be necessary for the Government to be represented on that board by a nominee of the Minister, and, say, two experts connected with the department, so that the board may have the advantage of their expert knowledge. I think that land should be taken away from the owners only for the purpose of carrying out works. I am opposed to the taking of land compulsorily for the purpose of closer settlement, because in all the areas that may be affected there are no very large land owners. In the case of any land taken for the purpose of carrying out works, compensation should be paid for the land so taken. Also, I think it would be well, in fact imperative, that a maximum rate be fixed in the Bill. We do not know what these works are to cost, or what it will cost per acre to the land-owners. If I were an owner affected I certainly would expect my representatives in the Legislative Council to insist that a maximum be included in the Bill. I am informed credibly that in Victoria, which has been so frequently quoted to us, in some of the irrigation districts the rate has gone up as high as 4s. 8d. in the pound. That seems to be an excessive rate to pay. It is not surprising that we hear in many cases that land is not being used to the fullest extent.

Hon. W. Patrick : And that is after writing off three millions.

Hon. C. SOMMERS: I did not know that, but 4s. 8d. is sufficiently startling to me, and no doubt, if it were known, it would be sufficiently startling to the land owners concerned. We know well that we have here gentlemen who are full of enthusiasm for irrigation, and we can see the results of this enthusiasm even on the Brunswick State farm.

But we have never seen a balance sheet showing what is the cost of these works. We know that lucerne and clover grow to perfection there, but we do not know at what cost, and, after all, it is no use producing, say, butter at 2s. 6d. per pound, when you can buy it elsewhere at 1s. 3d. We want to know that the scheme will enable us to produce and at the same time compete with other parts of Australia. We know that experts make mistakes. We have only to look at the sewerage system, in which undoubtedly some big mistakes have been made. They, in their enthusiasm, insist upon all sorts of alterations being effected. I know one institution in the City which has been sewered for some years. It has its own septic tank, and this has been working perfectly. I know also that the main sewer passes within a few feet of this particular septic tank. Notwithstanding that, this institution has been put to the expense of £600 for connecting up with this sewer. The fittings, which have been working satisfactorily for years, have been to a great extent discarded, and the owners put to this unnecessary expense. The department say, "We want a uniform system." Of course £600 is nothing to these gentlemen, but it is a great deal to the owner, and I hold that nobody should be liable to be put to this excessive cost. Coming down to the free area which is to be irrigated, we find it has been extended from three acres to five acres. But a man can only have the use of that five acres provided the garden is to be used in connection with the dwelling. If a five-acre plot is irrigated and used to its fullest extent there is no ordinary dwelling, or ordinary occupier of an ordinary dwelling, who could use the produce from that area. What is to become of the surplus? Some might say, "If you have an excess, feed it to the pigs." But one would not be able to sell the pigs, because that would immediately be a commercial proposition. If one had more peas than were required, and they dried and were fed to the pigs, he could not sell the pigs without making a commercial proposition of

the garden. To my mind, the more a man can grow the better for the community and for himself, and I for one, when in Committee will endeavour as far as possible to see that the restriction is removed altogether. It is very interesting to read some of the declarations made in this pamphlet by Mr. Oldham and Mr. Moody. I find that on page 11 reference is made to the success of irrigation in a number of orchards and notably in one that I know myself very well, namely, Mr. Fawcett's at Pinjarra. The reference is as follows :—

At Pinjarra 19 orange trees at Mr. Fawcett's, nearly 30 feet high, and 53 years of age, have returned as much as £300 in one season.

I believe that is perfectly true, but I do not think these trees are irrigated. When I was there some time ago they were not. These trees are situated on an alluvial bank close to the Murray River, and no doubt the great age of these trees has enabled them to get down to the moisture and produce the wonderful results quoted. There are numbers of examples of trees grown in that way. They are watered, perhaps, for one or two seasons until thoroughly established, and then by good cultivation of these choice spots we are able to get these excellent results. Again, in this pamphlet reference is made to Mr. Butcher's 53 trees at Kelmscott, trees which are 23 years old and are carrying from 30 to 50 cases per tree. That is another instance of trees grown on an alluvial flat. But that is not a scheme such as is suggested by the Bill. It is a case of good soil and a picked spot, and has nothing to do with irrigation as contemplated in the Bill. Just a little higher on the page reference is made to an orchard owned by Mr. Watts, of Northam. These references are misleading. Surely it is not intended to have us believe that that orchard is the result of irrigation. The trees are a great credit to the owner, but these citrus fruits have been watered from the Coolgardie scheme, perhaps once or twice during the summer, for the first one or two years of their existence until they became established, and after-

wards they are able to get on without irrigation at all. Really all these instances are somewhat misleading to the reader because one would think that all these achievements had been brought about by creating large reservoirs and laying on water which was used in considerable quantities at frequent intervals, whereas in point of fact that is not so at all. No one is more anxious than I am to see good, well-considered legislation enacted by this House and I shall assist the Government in every way possible to secure a measure which I hope will be of benefit to the producers and fair to the owners in every respect.

Hon. V. HAMERSLEY (East): I do not desire to detain the House at any very great length on this important Bill. I realise, as I said last session, that to make any attempt to conserve the vast quantities of water which we frequently see going to waste would be of the utmost benefit to this State, but on that occasion I certainly asked that we should be given figures and estimates so that we would know something of the probable cost that the Government will be likely to enter upon in connection with any schemes of irrigation which they undertake. The Bill laid before us last year and the explanations which were given did not provide that information, and there was a danger that the State might embark upon some undertakings which would be greater than our small population would be able to shoulder. The burden would be altogether too great, and the more I have looked into the matter during the intervening period the more convinced I am that there is under this Bill still a very great danger of that occurring unless further safeguards than are contained in this measure are provided. Attention has been directed from time to time to the lavish expenditure on various public works and to there being an unlimited expenditure over which the people seem to have very little control, and when we bear in mind that we passed through this House a measure to enable certain taxation to be imposed upon the people in our dry areas in connection with their water scheme, and that we gave the benefit of the doubt on each occasion, and having since seen that

these people are taxed almost out of existence, it seems to me unreasonable to expect us to take any of these measures on chance in connection with the working out of schemes which we know will be beneficial to the country if they are only carried out on economical lines. I certainly feel that we must allow the people in a locality where irrigation is likely to be put in hand a deciding voice, after having all the facts and figures relating to the cost placed before them, as to whether they are prepared to accept the scheme, knowing before operations are commenced what their charges and rates are likely to be. It is unreasonable to foist a scheme upon any district or community at the whim and pleasure of a Minister and his officials, without the people concerned having any choice as to whether it shall be carried out, or any say in the matter at all. After huge expenditure has been incurred these are the people who will be taxed to make the scheme a payable proposition. I am reminded of the settlers on our outback areas and their water schemes. Unless safeguards are provided the people in these irrigation areas will find the rates so heavy that it will be impossible for them to carry on. When the previous measure was before this House, I, in the absence of any facts of this description, looked around for something which would give me a clue to the probable cost of irrigation in some of these localities, and I believe I have been quoted as having given some erratic figures when I said it seemed that many of these people would be charged £5 or £5 10s. an acre for the irrigation of their lands. Yet I understand that the people in some of the other States are being rated on the value of their lands, as has been stated by the Hon. Mr. Sommers, at 4s. 8d. in the pound. It is frequently announced that these irrigable lands are worth £20 and £30 an acre. These would, no doubt, be the values which would be put on a great deal of the land irrigated, and I think the figures I quoted last session therefore ran out somewhere near the mark. As regards one instance I quoted in the event of Mundaring Weir or a similar system being used, my calculations were based on the

cost of the scheme, and in that way I arrived at the probable cost per acre to the individuals who would be affected. If the cost is likely to be anywhere near those figures I am afraid it will be many years before we will be able to put irrigation on a satisfactory basis in this State. In Victoria, I believe, there has been an enormous waste of public money in connection with irrigation works, and the same applies to New South Wales, and Western Australia has no funds available to waste in a similar direction. Therefore it is most necessary that any irrigation of this kind should undoubtedly be put to the vote of the people directly concerned in the various centres or irrigation districts. The question should first be referred to them on a vote, as was suggested by the select committee which inquired into the matter last session. If the Minister is prepared to accept an alteration in this direction I shall be only too pleased to support some measure of this nature, because I firmly believe in the good which will accrue from irrigation, but I do not wish to support anything which is likely to injure and further irritate the people who have settled on these areas. With regard to irrigation from artesian bores, I think we would be wise to leave artesian bores alone. I fail to see that any good can come from the Government taking control of artesian bores throughout the North and North-Western areas of the State. I believe that the water from most of the bores, in fact from nearly the whole of them, is unsuitable for irrigation, and I certainly cannot see that the settlement of these vast areas under pastoral conditions is likely to be benefited in any way by a further influx of officialdom. The less irritating the manner in which we allow the settlers to carry out the development of that country, the more speedy will be its development. In the other States which are frequently quoted and where it has been said the Governments have control of artesian bores, I understand that the squatters are very anxious to have several of the Acts on the statute-book repealed. They find that there is an unreasonable delay when they put in an application for new artesian bores, and

there have been several prosecutions. In one instance where the people had put down an artesian bore on a site which was not suitable to the official who was sent along, a prosecution ensued, and a nominal fine was imposed, but the law charges were something considerable, and the people concerned had the satisfaction of being allowed to pay to the tune of £5 per day until they closed down or removed the bore. People who are subject to such irritations of officialdom are not likely to encourage others to go into their areas and spend their money to water those areas and develop them in the way we hope to see our north-western country developed. We know that various views are held on the question of the likelihood of our artesian bores diminishing in their flow on account of there being too many bores, but until we have very much more certain proof that the flow from one bore interferes with the flow from another, I do not see why we should restrict them from being put down in any locality. So far as I can understand there is no evidence as yet which goes to prove that there are too many bores in Australia, and I am quite satisfied that Western Australia can do with a great many more, and that private enterprise, if left alone, will be the means of opening up many more bores and the settlement of a great deal more country than if we hand this matter over to the control of the Government. I hope that this question of the control of the bores will be struck out of the Bill altogether. I can assure the Minister that I know a great deal of good will come from irrigation. I am not hostile to the measure, but it does appear that we are always ready to get away from what we have looked upon as democracy or a democratic form of control, and place ourselves under a Czar. It seems to me that is the tendency which exists at the present time. We have a Minister for Works who says "I am quite prepared to consult the people and would be very glad to listen to their views. They can take a vote on various questions, but I will not alter my mind; I will still go on and do what I wish in connection with these irrigation problems." That is the

danger which, under this Bill, seems to me to be threatening those people living in the areas where irrigation is likely to take place. I think if people are allowed a voice on this question of irrigation some good will result. We passed a Rabbit Fencing Act, whereby any number of settlers who wished to fence against rabbits could combine and arrange with the Government a scheme entirely of their own. They could link up together and tax themselves and appoint their own boards. It seems to me that we can arrive at something of that kind in connection with the measure for irrigation. If we can evolve something of that nature, I shall be only too pleased to support the other members of the House in that direction. I am certainly against the Bill in its present form, and I think that on the lines recommended by the Select Committee which sat last session we can frame a very good measure. I hope that the Minister will accept the proposals and the alterations which we may suggest, not in any hostile spirit, and I can assure the House that, so far as I am concerned, those alterations will not be suggested with the object of killing the Bill as suggested by Mr. Kirwan yesterday. I have no intention of voting on the various clauses of this Bill with the idea of destroying the measure. I would regret if the measure was not passed this session. At the same time, I am not going to vote for a Bill like this, which will absolutely interfere with rights which have been purchased at a high price by many individuals, and I am not going to be a party to passing clauses which will allow so much to be taken on trust, especially as we have found that a distinct advantage has been taken of such legislation in the past, and a great deal of irritation and trouble caused in the back areas. The people in those areas do not want to take chances or have surprises sprung upon them, especially when we realise the number who are denied access to markets and who should have been provided with facilities, but we know that there is a shortage of money with which to carry out the many works in the interior, and it seems to me unnecessary to rush on this matter of irrigation when we realise that there is



grave danger of money being squandered, money which we most certainly require for many works which are denied to the settlers to-day. I have pleasure in supporting the second reading of the Bill with the reservations to which I have referred in regard to the various clauses.

Hon. A. SANDERSON (Metropolitan-Suburban): Delighted as I am to be back in my seat in the House, and anxious as I am to take part in the work we are sent here to do, I should not have presumed to intervene, stepping straight off the ship, if my name had not been mentioned in the course of the debate yesterday. It was certainly a very pleasant welcome to receive at Fremantle. I regret that my friend, Mr. Kirwan, is not here this afternoon. Certainly to step off the ship after a free and lazy life of four or five weeks and to be plunged into this highly technical and contentious matter, is not what I would have wished. I think I can make myself clear this afternoon, and I promise to be very brief. Of course I cannot contend to have picked up in the few hours I have been here, all the details surrounding the measure which is before members, but I understand this is the second reading debate on the Irrigation Bill. I support it. It is always difficult to clearly follow criticisms that are made unless one is present, but apparently, from the reports, I have been accused of having blocked the Bill last session. I have looked at one or two passages from my remarks of last year and this is what I have found: "Surely it was not reasonable to rush the measure through." I would ask hon. members to note that that remark was made on the 11th December. I went on to say—

I have had letters of inquiry from dozens of settlers in the hills who were thoroughly frightened. Members have not had an opportunity to read the evidence and I will vote every time to block the Bill, because it is an intensely important measure. If the Bill is delayed for 12 months no injury will be done.

I think I am prepared to stand to that now. I am glad that the Bill was blocked. I certainly have had the opportunity,

which I did not have previously, of looking through the evidence taken by the select committee and it is the most valuable information we have got. I do not propose to go into any of the details, because we can deal with them in Committee. I do not believe there is any hon. member in this House who has done more in a small way, or who is more keenly appreciative of what can be done, and has been done in the district in which he lives, than myself. To say that I am opposed to irrigation in this country is quite grotesque. I am a strong supporter of irrigation and I have been trying for many years past to devise an irrigation scheme on my own place on a small scale, so that if a charge is made that I am opposed to irrigation, well, it is almost unnecessary for me to answer it. If, on the other hand, I am asked to commit myself to a Bill without looking through it, or considering its details, of course I shall oppose it. I was strongly opposed to it last session on account of the period it was introduced. I understand that the Government have taken into consideration, and have adopted in part, the suggestion of the select committee. I certainly congratulate them on that. I promised not to detain members and I thank them for their indulgence. I am a strong supporter of irrigation all the time, but I reserve to myself of course, the right in Committee, as I suppose every hon. member has the privilege of doing, to consider it clause by clause.

On motion by Hon. T. H. Wilding debate adjourned.

#### BILLS (2) FIRST READING.

1. Traffic.
2. Legal Practitioners Act Amendment (Mr. Moss in charge).

Received from the Legislative Assembly.

*House adjourned at 5.57 p.m.*