

of our representative. He understood that another member of the Executive would have gone without putting the colony to any expense at all, so far as representing it went, whereas now we had to pay pretty smartly. He thought it was an unwise thing on the part of the Government to expend so much money in the purchase of Kimberley gold specimens at more than the market price.

MR. MARMION explained the circumstances under which the specimens were bought, and said he thought the Government would have been very much to blame if they had not secured these specimens, even though they paid a little more for them than the current rate. Possibly there was no other exhibit in our whole collection that would attract so much notice, and prove such a good advertisement for the colony.

MR. GRANT thought the Government would have been justified in paying double what they did pay for the gold specimens. It was about the only attractive exhibit which the colony had sent. There was nothing else of its own that was worth looking at, and he was afraid the colony was appearing in borrowed plumes at this show.

MR. SCOTT asked for some explanation as to the item, "G. C. Knight—costs of action while Acting Sheriff, £88 10s."

THE ACTING ATTORNEY GENERAL (Hon. S. Burt) explained that when Mr. Knight was acting as Sheriff during Mr. Roe's leave of absence, some goods were seized, and it appeared informally seized, and the result was that an action was brought against the Acting Sheriff for wrongful seizure. The plaintiff won the action, and this was a moiety of the costs, which the Government proposed to allow the Acting Sheriff, under the circumstances, as it was through no laches on his part that the cause of action arose.

MR. SCOTT thought that under the circumstances the Acting Sheriff ought to have had the whole of his costs refunded by the Government, and not a moiety of the costs.

MR. SHENTON also thought that if the Acting Sheriff was entitled to a refund of half the costs incurred he was entitled on the same principle to the whole of them.

THE ACTING ATTORNEY GENERAL (Hon. S. Burt) said that the officer

in question had no legal claim upon the Government for any refund, but the Government thought that under the circumstances of the case they would be justified in giving him this amount.

MR. SCOTT hoped they would give him all his costs, seeing that he had been mulcted through no fault of his own.

MR. SHENTON moved that progress be reported, and leave given to sit again next day.

Agreed to.

Progress reported.

The House adjourned at half-past four o'clock, p.m.

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL,

Wednesday, 21st July, 1886.

Reserved lands alongside Eastern Railway—List of Barristers admitted and paid Stamp Duty—Rules regulating admission to Civil Service—Rules for admission of Barristers—Rolling Stock, Eastern Railway—Return of Pastoral Leases in various Districts—Message (No. 8): Fare by mail coach, Perth to Pinjarrah—Message (No. 9): Increase of Gratuity to Mrs. Slade—Message (No. 10): Proposing establishment of a Benevolent Institution at Freshwater Bay—Message (No. 11): Suggesting desirability of Jetty extension at Fremantle out of Loan funds—Telegraph, Gingin to Dundragau—Universal Penny Postage—Supplementary Estimates, 1886: final consideration of—Proposed New Land Regulations (Message No. 3): Adjourned debate—Adjournment.

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

PRAYERS.

LANDS RESERVED FROM SALE ALONGSIDE EASTERN RAILWAY.

MR. PARKER asked the Commissioner of Crown Lands whether the Crown lands on either side of the Eastern Railway were open for sale; and, if so, upon what terms and conditions, and at what price. The hon. member said it would be in the recollection of hon. members that when this railway was being constructed between Guildford and York it

was recommended to the Government that they should close the land from sale, on either side of the line. As the line had been completed now for some considerable time, he wished to know whether it was the intention of the Government to throw the land open again.

THE COMMISSIONER OF CROWN LANDS (Hon. J. Forrest) said the lands referred to were classified as suburban land, and were not at present open for sale. The upset price had been fixed at £3 an acre. Some of the land had been surveyed, and would, he hoped, be shortly gazetted as open for sale.

MR. PARKER: What has been the reason of the delay in throwing them open for sale before now?

THE COMMISSIONER OF CROWN LANDS (Hon. J. Forrest): The principal reason has been the want of survey. Some of the land was surveyed, but it was found that there were some discrepancies in the survey, which have since been rectified.

MR. MARMION: Are these lands affected in any way by Mr. Hordern's line—the Albany-Beverley line?

THE COMMISSIONER OF CROWN LANDS (Hon. J. Forrest): I am not prepared to answer that now.

LIST OF BARRISTERS ADMITTED AND PAID STAMP DUTY.

MR. PARKER asked the Acting Colonial Secretary to lay upon the table of the House a list of the gentlemen who have been admitted to act as barristers or general practitioners in the Supreme Court since the 21st September, 1882, showing those who have and those who have not (if any) paid the stamp duty on admission, under "The Stamp Act, 1881."

The return was laid upon the table.

RULES REGULATING ADMISSION INTO CIVIL SERVICE.

MR. PARKER asked the Acting Colonial Secretary if candidates for employment in the Government service are required to pass any, and, if so, what examination? And also, if there are any rules regulating the admission of persons to the public service, and, if there are, to kindly furnish the House with a copy?

THE ACTING COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. M. S. Smith) said that candidates were not required to pass any examination, except a medical one, and that there were no rules here regulating the admission of persons to the public service; but invariably testimonials had to be furnished by candidates, or the recommendation of some responsible authority.

RULES FOR ADMISSION OF BARRISTERS.

MR. PARKER asked the Acting Colonial Secretary if the Government are in possession of the rules made by the board under the Barristers Act (45 Vic. 1), for regulating the admission of practitioners to the Supreme Court; and, if so, to lay a copy of such rules upon the table of the House.

The rules were laid on the table.

ROLLING STOCK, EASTERN RAILWAY

MR. HARPER asked the Engineer-in-Chief whether there was sufficient rolling stock on the Eastern Railway to meet the present requirements of the goods traffic.

THE ENGINEER-IN-CHIEF (Hon. J. A. Wright) said there was sufficient rolling stock at present to meet the requirements of the goods traffic, and that they were continually augmenting it as necessity arose or circumstances required it.

RETURN OF PASTORAL LEASES.

MR. LOTON asked the Commissioner of Crown Lands to lay on the table a return showing:—(a.) The name or names of each person or persons or company holding land under pastoral lease in the Kimberley District, and the total acreage so held by each person or company respectively. (b.) A similar return, in reference to any person or persons or company holding land under pastoral lease in the Northern, South-Eastern, and Central-Eastern Districts.

THE COMMISSIONER OF CROWN LANDS (Hon. J. Forrest) said it would take about a fortnight to prepare the return asked for.

MR. LOTON would undertake to get it done in three or four days at any private office. He was aware it would

cause some little trouble to make it up, but, as they were now legislating in this matter of the land regulations, he thought it would be interesting and also he might say instructive if they had before them the return asked for.

THE COMMISSIONER OF CROWN LANDS (Hon. J. Forrest) said that so far as he was personally concerned he had not the slightest objection to furnish the return, at the same time it would cause a great deal of work, and it would perhaps not be so instructive as the hon. member anticipated, for a great many of these leases were held by mercantile firms and the banks by way of security, so that the return would furnish very little idea to the House as to the individuality of the lessees. He would suggest for the hon. member's consideration whether a list of the principal leaseholders would not answer his purpose.

MR. LOTON: Unless it is as full as I ask for it, I do not think it would be of any use at all.

THE COMMISSIONER OF CROWN LANDS (Hon. J. Forrest) said the return would be made out as soon as possible.

MESSAGE (No. 8): FARE BY MAIL COACH, PERTH TO PINJARRAH.

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

"The Governor has the honor to inform the Honorable the Legislative Council that he will give directions in accordance with their Address No. 10, of the 20th instant, respecting the fare by mail coach from Perth to Pinjarrah.

"Government House, Perth, 21st July, 1886."

MESSAGE (No. 9): INCREASE OF GRATUITY TO MRS. SLADE.

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

"In reply to Address No. 11, of the 20th instant, requesting that the proposed gratuity of £300 to Mrs. Slade may be increased to £500, the Governor informs the Honorable the Legislative Council that he has directed accordingly, and that he much appre-

ciates this liberality of Your Honorable House towards the family of a very deserving public servant.

"2. The Governor proposes to consider whether any general scheme for the benefit of the families of deceased civil servants cannot be settled and applied in this as in other colonies, and hopes to be able to bring the matter before Your Honorable House next session.

"Government House, Perth, 21st July, 1886."

MESSAGE (No. 10): PROPOSING ESTABLISHMENT OF A BENEVOLENT ASYLUM AT FRESHWATER BAY.

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

"The Governor desires to consult the Honorable the Legislative Council as to whether a building to serve the purpose of a Benevolent Institution, for the accommodation of all paupers requiring Government indoor relief, should not be erected on the Government Reserve at Freshwater Bay, at an approximate cost of £5,600, the funds being obtained by the sale, as far as necessary, of lands and buildings at the present 'Knowle' and 'Mount Eliza' invalid depôts.

"2. The plans of the proposed buildings will be laid before the Council by the Honorable the Director of Public Works.

"Government House, Perth, 21st July, 1886."

The consideration of this Message was made an Order of the Day for July 26.

MESSAGE (No. 11): SUGGESTING EXTENSION OF FREMANTLE JETTY OUT OF LOAN FUNDS.

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

"The Governor has the honor to invite the Honorable the Legislative Council to consider whether, in view of the increasing requirements of trade at Fremantle, it would not be advisable at once to undertake a considerable extension and improvement of the new jetty.

"2. Should the Council be of this opinion, the Governor suggests that a

"sum not exceeding £10,000 should be appropriated to the work from the item 'Harbour Works at Fremantle, £105,000,' on the Schedule to the Loan Act of 1884.

"3. Explanation of the details of the proposed works will be given by the Honorable the Director of Public Works.

"Government House, Perth, 21st July, 1886."

The consideration of this Message was made an Order of the Day for July 23.

TELEGRAPH LINE FROM GINGIN TO DUNDARAGAN.

MR. SHENTON, in accordance with notice, moved "That an humble address be presented to His Excellency the Governor, praying that he would be pleased to place on the Estimates for 1887 a sum sufficient to extend the telegraph from Gingin, *via* Dundaragan, to the Victoria Plains; such sum to be made a charge on the next public loan, and then be paid to general revenue." He moved the resolution in order to supply some improved facilities for communication between the districts concerned and Perth. On more than one occasion it had been acknowledged by the House that these were important districts, but at present, so far as Dundaragan was concerned, the residents had no direct means of communicating with Perth except a monthly mail. They were quite isolated. There was a considerable number of residents in the district and they contributed their fair share to the revenue of the colony, and were entitled to some consideration. When extending the proposed line from Gingin to Dundaragan, with a small additional expenditure of money they could have it extended to Victoria Plains; and they would then have a direct line of telegraphic communication between Perth and the Northern parts of the colony. At present messages to the North from Perth, and *vice versa*, came and went by way of Newcastle, where they met the line from the Eastern Districts, which sometimes resulted in a block, owing to the line being used for messages from the Eastern Districts. By extending the line as he now proposed, the delay would be obviated. Seeing that they were now further extending the northern line from

Roebourne to Derby the traffic from the North would be considerably increased, and there would be a still greater block at Newcastle, unless something were done to relieve it. He had looked into the probable cost of the proposed line, and he found it would cost about £1,200 from Gingin to Dundaragan, and about £800 from Dundaragan to Berkshire Valley, where there was already a telegraph station; so that altogether the line would cost (in round numbers) about £2,000, which he proposed to make a charge upon the next public loan, and then recoup the general revenue. The House yesterday struck out an item of £1,200 from the Supplementary Estimates, being the vote for a bridge at Wilberforce, and if that money were to be appropriated for this telegraph it would only require another £800 to be placed upon next year's Estimates. Considering the importance of the work and the desirability of making our telegraph lines serve as many settlers as possible, he hoped the House would go with him in this address.

MR. GRANT thought the work in question a very necessary work. There could be no doubt that the stoppages to the Northern traffic would be very much increased when they got the telegraph to Derby, and he thought that in the interests of the Northern districts this line ought to be constructed at once.

MR. SCOTT said he knew that people at Dundaragan had over and over again had to travel some 28 or 30 miles when they wanted to send urgent messages to Perth for medical relief, there being no medical officer within a distance of 50 or 60 miles; and he thought that on this score alone this line was very much needed.

THE ACTING COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. M. S. Smith) said doubtless the extension of telegraph communication as much as possible all over [the colony was most desirable; but as at present they had to provide means for various public works of perhaps somewhat more importance than that proposed by the hon. member for Toodyay, he did not see how under existing circumstances they were going to provide funds for this work. It was, as he had already said, no doubt a very desirable work and would be a great convenience to a number of

settlers in the locality; but the same arguments might be urged as regards other parts of the colony. They were about to spend £3,000 in repairing the Eucla telegraph line, and they were spending large sums in repairing or renewing the telegraph posts. There would be no objection, of course, to this money coming out of the next loan, but he was afraid it was impossible for the Government to promise that such a sum as £2,000 could be placed on next year's Estimates for the work, in view of the numerous other public works to be undertaken, and, not only that, but also of the large increase in permanent expenditure that was involved by our recent outlay.

Mr. SHENTON was glad to find the Government becoming all at once so economical. It was only yesterday that they proposed to expend £1,200 upon a bridge, which had been condemned by the House without a dissentient voice. Another £800 would suffice to carry out this telegraph line, and it did seem strange that the Government should have so suddenly taken this economical fit.

Mr. LAYMAN was sorry he could not support the motion. He did not think it was a wise plan to commence incurring expenditure on the prospects of another loan. It might be a long time before we had another loan, and it appeared from the Colonial Secretary's statement that the general revenue would not stand this additional strain. There were many other public works in other districts quite as urgently required as this, and, if this motion were passed, they would be flooded with motions of similar character, and very justly so, too. Why should this particular telegraph line come out of general revenue, and be made a first charge upon a future loan?

Mr. LOTON was sorry to find that on this occasion the Government seemed inclined to oppose the proposed work, which they acknowledged to be a work of utility. If there was a district in the colony that carried a population producing a large amount of cultivation it was this district, which contained some 200 or 300 people within an area of twenty miles. Perth was about half supplied with meat from this district, and it also yielded a large quantity of pork, bacon, and fresh butter for the use of the inhab-

itants of the city. All the facilities of communication that the residents had was a mail once a month, at a cost of about £30 a year, which was the only public expenditure connected with the district, except a small vote for roads which was made a few years ago. In addition to the local convenience which this telegraph line would afford, it would also relieve the block caused by the Northern traffic, and, indirectly, the interest upon the money would be saved to the Government. He was sure there were a sufficient number of members who knew what an advantage this line would be to the district and also to the North to pass this address.

Mr. PARKER could not agree with those hon. members who objected to the position taken up by the Government with regard to this proposed expenditure. He thought it was the duty of the Government to look closely at these motions for the expenditure of money, and he was glad to see the Government recognising that it was not their duty to sit still when motions of this character were brought forward, but that when they thought there was necessity for it they should preach, and not only preach but practise, economy. For his own part, he should be very glad to see the Dundaragan people have telegraph communication with Perth, and he only hoped that if the line should be constructed it would pay. But he did not anticipate that the bovine inhabitants of the district would contribute much to the revenue of the line, whatever the settlers themselves might do. He believed that they had a telegraph station now not very far distant, and he should have imagined it would answer every purpose if they were connected with that station. He did not think there was much in the argument of the necessity of this line in connection with the proposed extension of the northern line to Derby, unless we duplicated the whole line; and, personally, he could not help thinking it would be more economical to connect the Dundaragan district with Victoria Plains than Gingin. Before committing himself to any vote on the subject he should like to have some estimate of the cost of the work and also the cost of working the line. They would require a telegraph station and probably quarters for the

operator, and then there would be salaries to provide.

CAPTAIN FAWCETT said that before he could give his vote he should like to have a little geographical information,—where was Dundaragan and where was Gingin? When he went to school he was never taught that such places existed in this or any other part of the world.

THE DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC WORKS (Hon. J. A. Wright) said, as to the desirability of the line the Government perfectly understood that it would be a very good thing to provide the district with a telegraph line, but what was objected to was that the necessary funds for carrying out the work were to come out of current revenue when such a work was manifestly a work that ought to be a capital charge. There was a probability of our soon having to extend our Northern telegraph system to Cambridge Gulf, an undertaking that must necessarily come out of another loan, and when that loan was floated it might be desirable to include some minor telegraph lines in it, including that now advocated by the hon. member for Toodyay. As to the cost of this line, the estimate given by the hon. member was, he believed, about the correct amount, without of course calculating the cost of working the line. The distance was about 52 miles from Gingin to Dundaragan, and about 30 miles to Victoria Plains. What the Government objected to was that the cost of the line should have to be defrayed out of current revenue instead of out of a loan.

MR. MARMION said although this might be regarded as a work of utility he did not think there was any immediate demand for it, or why it should be undertaken out of current revenue, or why it should not be held over until the colony went in for another loan for general purposes. In addition to the estimated cost of the line they had to consider what the revenue from it was likely to be. Looking at the returns furnished by the Postmaster General in his annual report, he found that the receipts from all stations on the Northern Line, this side of Geraldton, including Newcastle, only amounted to a grand total of £82 Os. 4d., and that the average number of messages did not exceed five a day, so that it was difficult to see

where the block arose. He was referring to the receipts at Berkshire Valley, New Norcia, and Newcastle. He did not suppose that the receipts from the new line would be more than £50 a year at the utmost, and, against this they had to put the cost of construction and then the cost of working the line. They must necessarily have an additional operator and probably a messenger.

MR. LOTON said that the messages from Northam, York, and Beverley also passed through Newcastle, in addition to the Northern messages.

MR. CROWTHER said that to his own knowledge frequent blocks did take place, and we must very soon duplicate the line to Champion Bay. As the syndicate railway would go somewhere near the locality of this proposed line, there would probably be more traffic on it than some hon. members now anticipated.

MR. MARMION said the syndicate had to provide its own telegraph lines.

MR. CROWTHER was very glad to hear it. As to the number of messages, he did not look simply at the number of messages that passed through any particular office but the value of those messages to the inhabitants of the district.

MR. SHENTON said that, including York and the other Eastern District stations, the number of messages last year was 4,684.

The committee then divided on the motion, when the numbers were,—

Ayes	13
Noes	8

Majority for	5
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Ayes.	Noes.
Mr. Brockman	Hon. S. Burt
Mr. Burges	Hon. J. Forrest
Mr. Crowther	Hon. J. A. Wright
Capt. Fawcett	Mr. Layman
Mr. Grant	Mr. Marmion
Mr. Harper	Mr. Parker
Mr. Loton	Mr. Sholl
Mr. McKee	Hon. M. S. Smith (Teller).
Mr. Pearce	
Mr. Randall	
Mr. Scott	
Mr. Venn	
Mr. Shenton (Teller.)	

The motion was therefore adopted, and the action of the committee confirmed.

UNIVERSAL PENNY POSTAGE.

CAPTAIN FAWCETT, in accordance with notice, moved the following resolution: "That in the opinion of this House

the time has arrived for the adoption of a universal Penny Postage system throughout the British Empire, and that it would be desirable to have a Penny Postal rate in this colony, and from here to all parts of Great Britain."

MR. CROWTHER: Does that include Ireland?

CAPTAIN FAWCETT: Certainly. Hon. members were aware that the subject of an international penny postage had recently been mooted in England; and, although he was very much before the time — Western Australian time — in bringing it forward, still he thought it was not altogether beyond the range of practical politics. There was one good argument at any rate in favor of penny postages in this colony, and that was that we were all so awfully poor. Very few of us could afford more than a penny for a letter. He thought it would be a good thing for immigrants who came out here, and who generally were people of a poor class, to be able to communicate cheaply with their friends in the old country; and it would be a good thing for everybody. For his own part, instead of writing one letter, when he had to pay 2d. postage, he would write two or three if the postage was only a penny; so that the revenue would lose nothing by that transaction. 'No doubt there were other people who would do the same. This postal reform might be the precursor of the greater reform they were all looking forward to—Responsible Government; and, though he did not expect to carry hon. members with him entirely, he thought they might go with him a little way. If they did not agree to a universal penny rate, they might perhaps agree to a penny rate within the limits of this colony. That was really all he wanted; but he was afraid if he had put his motion in that light it would not have commanded much attention. But he was sure, although he might be in advance of the times, the principle was a good one. He might be a little too fast for Western Australia, which he was afraid was still in the "dark ages;" but he believed that universal penny postage would yet be an accomplished fact. He thought a penny was quite enough to charge for any letter, whether it be a bill, an advertisement, or a love-letter. A great many letters were

really not worth a penny. The answer of the Postmaster General of course would be that it did not pay. But that was the old cry when penny postage was first introduced in England. Loss and ruin were predicted when Sir Rowland Hill first mooted it, but those prognostications were falsified. He thought there was a great deal to be said in favor of reducing the local rates to a penny, for it did seem absurd that if he wanted to post a letter from Perth to Guildford he had to pay 2d. for it, when he could send a letter to Sydney or Melbourne, thousands of miles away, for the same money. He hoped the matter would commend itself to the House, if not in its entirety, at any rate so far as this colony was concerned.

MR. PARKER, in seconding the motion rather than let it lapse, said that some hon. members in that House only concerned themselves about their own districts, but the hon. and gallant gentleman who had brought forward this motion had extended his sympathy to all the groaning subjects of the Queen in every part of her empire. One hon. gentleman whose seat was now vacant on the Treasury bench opposite often used to flatter himself upon his "broad and comprehensive views;" but he thought the grandest, broadest, and most comprehensive view of all was that now taken by the hon. and gallant member for Pinjarrah. After all, this resolution was merely an expression of opinion; and although the opinion of Western Australia might not count for much in England, still there was the germ of a useful reform in the motion, however much hon. members might feel inclined to laugh at it. He himself honestly believed that the adoption of a local penny postage rate would be a benefit, and a boon that would be appreciated by many people. He believed ours was the only Australian colony that had not adopted a penny rate. We had a uniform rate for telegrams, and why not a uniform rate of postage? Neither the telegraph office nor the post office was expected to pay, directly; though indirectly they did, in the admirable facilities which they afforded for social and commercial intercourse. He would, however, suggest to the hon. and gallant member that he would do wisely to withdraw his motion in its present shape, for he was very much afraid that, so far as

this particular reform went, the hon. and gallant gentleman was certainly in advance of his times. At the same time the question of a local rate of a penny postage was one that should not be lost sight of.

THE ACTING COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. M. S. Smith) was afraid that the hon. member who brought forward this motion was ambitious of having his name associated and handed down to posterity with that of another great reformer, Sir Rowland Hill. The ambition was doubtless a noble one, though perhaps not likely to be realised in the immediate future. Probably the hon. member, having brought the matter before the House, would now consent to press it no further.

The motion not being withdrawn was put to the House and negatived.

SUPPLEMENTARY ESTIMATES, 1886.

The House went into committee for the further consideration of the Supplementary Estimates for 1886.

Miscellaneous, £8,120 0s. 6d. :

THE ACTING COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. M. S. Smith) said that in accordance with the resolution of the House, he had to move that the item "Gratuity to Mrs. Slade, £300," be increased by £200.

This was agreed to, and the vote as amended put and passed.

Refunds, £43 8s. 1d. :

Agreed to, without comment.

Immigration, £1,000 :

Agreed to, without comment.

The House resumed.

NEW LAND REGULATIONS (MESSAGE No. 3).

POINT OF ORDER.

THE ACTING ATTORNEY GENERAL (Hon. S. Burt) called attention to the manner in which the Orders of the Day were arranged on the Notice Paper. The Public Health Bill, which he had charge of, was brought before the House and ordered to be considered in committee before the Land Regulations were, but he noticed that the Land Regulations, by some means or other, had obtained precedence of it upon the Notice Paper. The Public Health Bill was the first Order of the Day on the Notice Paper yesterday, but it was postponed in

order to make room for something else, and it did not come on at all; and now it appeared on the Notice Paper after the Land Regulations. He thought there ought to be some better system of arranging the Orders of the Day.

MR. SPEAKER said the same thing had very often struck him, but he believed that the practice followed was in accordance with Parliamentary practice. Their own standing order on the subject provided that all Notices of Motion and Orders of the Day appearing on the Notice Paper, not disposed of on its proper day, should be placed first on the Order of the Day next succeeding that on which they were originally intended to be considered. If the House would adopt his suggestion that the Government, as was the practice in other Legislative Assemblies, should have certain days set apart for their own business, they could then arrange their Orders of the Day as they liked. He thought this would tend to facilitate the business of the House, and remove any cause of complaint.

ADJOURNED DEBATE.

MR. RANDELL said he was very unwilling to interpose between the Commissioner of Crown Lands and the House in the hon. gentleman's reply to the criticisms of hon. members; but as he also intended to criticise rather unfavorably the regulations sent down to the House it would be improper, he thought, that he should defer his remarks until after the Commissioner had made his reply. He would premise by saying that he claimed to have no special knowledge of this land question, inasmuch as he had not been engaged in any occupation that would give him any practical knowledge of the subject; and he only brought to the consideration of the question a little common sense, perhaps, and a little of that ordinary intelligence which he was generally credited with. He had not carefully compared the new regulations with the old ones under which they were now working, but he had compared them with the select committee's regulations, and he was unable to see much difference between them, except that the committee's regulations provided for fixity of tenure as regards our Northern lands, whereas the regulations now under

consideration did not go so far. With regard to alienation, he thought the difference between the two drafts was that the Government proposed to set apart special areas within which persons might be allowed to purchase land, whereas the select committee wished to prevent them altogether from purchasing. He thought the proposal of the Government was the one that would be most acceptable to the country and beneficial to the colony generally. He agreed with previous speakers that it would be impolitic to shut up the land from purchase for the next twenty-one years, and he thought sufficient protection was here given to leaseholders in these Northern portions of the colony, as it was not proposed that indiscriminate selection should be permitted, but selection within special areas, to be declared after full and careful consideration of all the surrounding circumstances. There was also the fencing clause, which he thought was another source of protection to the leaseholder, inasmuch as he thought it was very unlikely that anybody would take up these lands simply for speculative purposes when they had to incur this expense before they could do anything with the land. He disagreed, however, with the forfeiture clause. When they were arranging the draft agreement with Mr. Hordern with reference to the land grant railway concessions, very strong objection was raised by Mr. Hordern against the forfeiture clause in the proposed agreement, and, ultimately, the House came round to his view of the question, and the clause was withdrawn, another provision being made to ensure the execution of the work. He thought the same principle might apply here. He thought that those who had expended money in improving their leases should have a vested interest in them. With regard to clause 42, dealing with free selection in the South-West division, it seemed to him, if it was intended to carry out this principle in the future as in the past, they would only be perpetuating evils which everybody in the colony regarded as having done much injury to the land in the past; and he believed that if free selection was to be carried out in the future on the same lines it would be universally condemned. He had heard many settlers speaking

disparagingly of the system, which, as other speakers had already pointed out, had compelled leasees to purchase the choicest portions of their runs, in self-defence, and thus spoil the country for future occupation. Passing on to clause 47, dealing with direct purchase, he was not in favor of limiting the size of the land sold, and he thought the price might be reduced to 10s., especially if coupled with fencing. He was opposed here again to the forfeiture clause, and, in the event of any person being unable to complete his fencing within the prescribed time, he thought some greater latitude might with advantage be allowed than that the land should be absolutely forfeited. He thought some other improvements besides fencing might be substituted in certain cases. With regard to clause 48, dealing with the sale of land for vineyard purposes, orchards, or gardens, he was opposed to the proposed regulation, both as regards the size of the blocks and the price of the land. He would be willing under certain circumstances, and under certain restrictions as to fencing, clearing, and planting, to give the land away, looking at the importance of fostering such industries and to the fact that whoever entered upon them must be prepared to incur a large expenditure before they could hope for any return. He thought the colony could well afford to dispense with payment for the land upon such conditions as he had mentioned, as the prosecution of the industry of vine-culture and other kindred occupations would necessarily lead to the employment of a considerable amount of labor and at the same time prove beneficial to the colony. Coming to the 49th clause, dealing with conditional purchase within agricultural areas, the proposed conditions seemed to him to be altogether too exacting, and he could not think that many persons would be inclined to take up land under such conditions. To compel a man to build a house and to reside in it within six months was a too hard and fast line altogether to draw, involving as it did a very considerable expenditure in addition to the purchase money, and within a very short space of time. To compel a man to have one-tenth of his land fenced within a certain time (two years) might or might not be a wise condition, but he thought the

regulations as regards these improvements should be rather more elastic than it was proposed they should be. For instance, land might be so situated that two or more blocks might, by mutual agreement between the respective owners, be enclosed by one and the same fence. Many unforeseen circumstances also might arise to prevent a man complying with the conditions imposed upon him. Sickness or even the death of the bread-winner might intervene, or some other untoward circumstance, and he thought that in such cases the man's heirs, or the man himself if alive, should have a vested interest in the land, upon which he had expended both toil and money. This forfeiture condition seemed a very hard condition indeed, and he did not think there was any necessity for such stringency. He believed that some other provision might be substituted, and at the same time protect the interests of the Crown and ensure the improvement of the public estate. He thought that the objections he had raised were intensified with regard to land outside agricultural areas, which could only be land of second or third rate value. He agreed with the proposed limitation as regards the quantity of the land within agricultural areas, but he could not agree with the limitation outside those areas. As to poisoned land, he thought that every facility should be given to persons willing to take up such land, and he should be prepared to say that such persons should have the land free, upon the stipulations here mentioned as to fencing and the eradication of the poison, and also the cost of survey, and other incidental expenses. He thought these conditions were particularly onerous without charging anything for the land itself, and he thought it would pay the colony to do so. The man who eradicated the poison from this land and made the land capable of carrying sheep or stock upon it would be as great a public benefactor as the man who made two blades of grass grow where only one grew before. In all cases he was in favor of residence counting as an improvement, but he thought possibly that unless it was guarded by some conditions it might lead to abuse. Some men, in order to avoid having to make other improvements, might build a very costly residence, altogether too elaborate to meet the man's

personal requirements; and it would be necessary to provide against such abuses, and also against a man going to the other extreme. As to the regulations affecting pastoral leases, after careful consideration he was inclined on the whole to think the proposed rents were fair, and that the differing conditions of the various districts had been fairly taken into consideration in fixing the rentals. On the whole, he thought that a long enough tenure was given, with as many advantages and as much security as was consistent with the settlement and cultivation of the soil. To give such a fixity of tenure as was proposed by some hon. members would be virtually to give lessees the freehold of the land. With regard to general principles he thought the all-important object to be kept in view in dealing with the public estate was to ensure its continuous improvement, whether for pastoral, agricultural, or special purposes. He thought that the question of settlement and of increasing the productiveness of the land was a paramount consideration compared with the amount of present revenue derived from the land. For this reason, cash payment for Crown lands should be low, and in some cases—so long as real improvement is secured—*nil*. The owner of a conditional purchase lease should have a vested interest in the improvements which he made, otherwise the strongest stimulus to the carrying out of any permanent improvements would be wanting. He thought all proper inducements should be offered to pastoral lessees and to syndicates or monetary institutions to improve the public estate, not only in their own interests but also in the interests of the colony at large. Generally speaking he should like to see much the same principles governing the management of the public estate as were adopted in the successful management of private estates. With regard to classification he thought there was a great deal to be said in favor of classifying the lands of the colony, according to the nearness or remoteness of the land from a shipping port, or a market, or a railway, or even good roads; and the quality of the soil, climatic conditions, and the carrying capabilities of the land should be regarded as factors in the computation of the value of the land, for classification purposes. It might be that there were serious

difficulties in the way of accomplishing all this, and perhaps the difficulties were almost insuperable; but it did seem an unjust principle to adopt that the same price per acre should be paid for land, no matter where it was situated, or whether it would carry a sheep to an acre or take ten acres to do so. He found that in New South Wales the practice prevailed of valuing land according to its carrying capacity, and he thought the principle was one that commended itself to their judgment, if it could be carried out. One hon. member—the hon. member for Geraldton—had given notice of his intention to move in committee—if these regulations reached that stage—an amendment in favor of the appointment of District Boards to classify and value the land. He found from what had taken place in New South Wales that these boards did not work so satisfactorily there as the hon. member seemed to anticipate they would work here. He thought it was a principle which our Government should recognise that it was the State and not private individuals or boards who were responsible for the public estate being properly and fairly administered, and that the Commissioner of Crown Lands, who in this colony, under the present form of Government, stood in the same relation to the public estate as the Minister of Lands did in the other Colonies, should be responsible for the entire control of the territorial revenue. He found that in the district of Balranald, New South Wales, where the price of land previous to the appointment of District Boards was a half-penny an acre, was raised under the new dispensation to fourpence an acre; and a deputation waited upon the Minister asking him to reduce the price placed upon the land by the District Board from fourpence to a penny. They were willing to pay an increase of 100 per cent., which they thought would be a fair rental for the land. He found that in the district referred to the rainfall for the year was only eleven inches. He was not aware what the rainfall was in our Northern districts, but he presumed it was as much as that. At any rate, they found that cattle and sheep did very well there. He also noticed that the land in this Balranald district, in New South Wales, was only estimated on an

average to carry one sheep to eight acres, and, although he did not know what the carrying capacities of the runs in our own Northern territory averaged, he should say that they were equal to one sheep per eight acres. So that looking at the price which the District Boards in New South Wales placed upon the land, he was afraid that such boards were not likely to give our leaseholders much satisfaction. He had now briefly touched upon the various points in these land regulations with regard to which he differed from the proposals of the Government, and it would be gathered pretty clearly, from what he had said, upon what side his vote would be given. He was sorry to have trespassed upon the time of the House in endeavoring to expound his somewhat crude ideas upon this important question; but he was sure he had the sympathy of the House in his imperfect but at any rate honest efforts to throw some little light upon a subject with which he was not technically acquainted. He would not detain the House any longer, knowing as he did that the House and the country were anxious to hear from the Commissioner of Crown Lands what the hon. gentleman would have to say in reply to the criticisms which had been passed in the course of the debate upon these regulations.

THE COMMISSIONER OF CROWN LANDS (Hon. J. Forrest) said: I feel, sir, some difficulty in addressing myself to the task of reviewing the many criticisms that hon. members have made on the draft regulations submitted by His Excellency for the consideration of the House. But I will begin by thanking hon. members for the courtesy which they have shown me personally, as having the conduct of this measure, and for their kindly appreciation of the way in which I placed the subject before the House. The object of the present regulations must be apparent to everyone: it is the improvement of the land in the South-Western division of the colony and the settlement of population upon it, and the granting of security of tenure in districts other than the South-West division, reserving however to the Government the right of resumption, when the interests of the colony demand it. I may not in these remarks reply to several minor points which hon. members have criticised in

the course of the debate, because there will be ample opportunity for me to do that and to explain any doubts that hon. members may have, when the subject comes before us in committee. It appears to me, sir, that we are all agreed that the agricultural interests of this South-West division must be paramount. The objections, so far as I can gather, to the regulations before the House are that they tend to what the hon. member for Wellington calls "snuffing out capital." I am not of that opinion, because I believe that it is population that we mainly require, and that when we have population, capital will certainly follow in its wake. Hon. members, also, some of them, have objected to the proposed limitation of area to be granted to one person under these regulations—I am now referring to the South-West division. But it occurs to me that these agricultural areas will be selected with care; we would not select the worst land, but would try and select the very best land in this portion of the colony, for these areas. Having done so, we would then go to the trouble and expense of surveying that land, dividing it into convenient sections, and having done all this would then offer it to the public under terms of conditional purchase. It is very probable that we shall not be able to get very large areas in one locality—5,000, 10,000, or 20,000 acres may be the extent in many cases of these areas—and that being so, any speculator or man of capital, if there were no limit to the area to be held by one person, could apply for and secure the whole of one of these areas, and pay for it, at the rate of 6d. an acre for 20 years, and make the necessary improvements upon it. That, sir, is not the object we have in view. We want settlement, we want a population settled upon the land, we want homesteads scattered all over these areas. Again, sir, objection has been made to the condition as to residence. I am prepared to admit it is a troublesome thing, especially if you do not want to reside upon a selection, to be compelled to do so; but what has been the rule in every other part of Australia? I believe that in every colony of this continent, residence is insisted upon, in the case of all land leased on conditional purchase; and it is the best way—no doubt the other colonies have

found it so, and I believe we shall find it so—it is the best way to settle people on the soil. I do not think you will find that rich men are the men who till the soil. Rich men may take up land as investments, but I think it will be found in all these Australian colonies that the men who cultivate the land for agricultural purposes are men in the humbler spheres of life. There has also been objection taken to the proposed increase in the price of land under these regulations—I am alluding now to direct purchase, with certain small conditions as to improvements. The select committee of last year recommended that the price should be 20s. an acre, and the Government in these draft regulations have adopted the select committee's view. I do not look upon this question of the price of land as a very salient point, but as a mere question of detail, as to whether 10s., 20s., or 40s. shall be charged for the land. I do not look upon that as a principle, but simply a detail. The object which the committee had in view in fixing the price at 20s.—and the object which the Government have in view in adopting it—is to induce people to take up land under conditional purchase, and not altogether (as the hon. member for Wellington calls it) "to snuff out capital." If the capitalist chooses to come in, and, by free selection, take up the very richest portions of the country for himself, we say to him he must pay 20s. We don't want him—so far as I am concerned, I do not want to see him come here, and take up the pick of the country and do nothing in the way of utilising it. [Mr. VENN: No one wants him.] Some hon. members have stated that no free selection should be allowed outside these agricultural areas. I have myself been very much in favor of that view in the past; but it is no use our trying to carry out a regulation that would not be acceptable to the people; and I am now of opinion that it will not be possible to do away with free selection altogether, at the present time. If we had begun earlier, if we had adopted the system of agricultural areas from the beginning, I believe we could have managed it here, as they have done in South Australia; but I think it is somewhat late now. However, if these regulations pass, the system of agricultural areas will, I feel certain, be

given a fair trial, and if the system of areas succeeds, there is no reason why we may not go a step further and try to do away with free selection except within defined areas. Another point that has been objected to is that the transfer of land, by way of security, is prohibited under the conditional purchase system. Well, sir, there may be objections to that; but I think we may take some lesson from the experience and the teachings of the other Australian colonies in this matter. I have taken the trouble to look through the regulations of South Australia, Queensland, New South Wales, and New Zealand, and I find that in all those colonies transfers are prohibited. In Queensland there is a system of mortgaging, but it is not allowed in the other colonies. I think, sir, that in this matter, too, we may be guided to a great extent by the practical knowledge of the hon. member for Greenough, who told us the other evening in very forcible language of the great evils which he himself had been a witness of, under the present system of allowing transfers. The hon. member Mr. Randell, also, this evening, referred to the forfeiture clauses, and their hardships; and the regulations as to forfeiture appear very severe, but they must be severe necessarily. Probably, however, the hon. member may have omitted to notice one clause in the regulations, the 30th clause, which gives the Governor in Council power to waive any penalty for forfeiture, in exceptionally hard cases. I have now gone through the objections, most of them, raised in connection with the regulations applying to the South-West division; but the principal objections put forward have been from hon. members interested in the Northern districts, and especially the hon. member for Geraldton, who, I am sorry, owing to indisposition, is not able to be in his place this evening. The hon. member's main objection appears to be as regards alienation in the Kimberley, North-West, Gascoyne, Eastern, and Eucla divisions, and it is stated by the hon. member, and also by several other hon. members, that these regulations do away entirely with security of pastoral tenure in those divisions of the colony. I have looked into this matter, sir, and it has been under the consideration of the Government, and

I will this evening be prepared to place on the table of the House a modification of clause 40 and clause 41 of these regulations (dealing with alienation), which I hope will remove some of the objections which hon. members have. I am very pleased to be able to make this announcement, and I shall be very happy to place the amended clauses upon the notice paper, because I think the regulations now will be consistent throughout. It seemed to me—it has always been my opinion—that the clauses in the present draft, permitting the alienation of land within those divisions, was a blot upon the regulations. I say that now, because I am in a position to place these new clauses before hon. members—clauses which I think entirely remove that objection, so far as I am concerned. The intention of the Government now is to propose that the minimum quantity of land in any declared special areas shall be 5,000 acres; that surveys shall precede selection; that no person shall hold more than 5,000 acres, within any of these divisions, and that the minimum shall be 100 acres; that the price—which shall not be less than 10s. an acre—shall be fixed by the Governor in Council, and be paid in ten yearly instalments of 1s. per acre; the lessee within two years to fence in the land, and within ten years to expend in improvements upon the land, in addition to the cost of fencing, a sum equal to the purchase money. At the end of ten years—or before, if these conditions be complied with—he shall be entitled to claim a Crown grant. That, sir, will be carrying out in these Northern divisions exactly the same principles as to cultivation or improvement that we insist upon in the South-West division; and to my mind, it will make these regulations consistent throughout. So far as I am concerned, I must here state that I am altogether opposed to the taking away from the Crown the right to declare these special areas in any part of the colony. We must retain that power in the hands of the Government, but, in order that every security may be given to the pastoral occupiers of the land, it is proposed that before re-possession shall be taken of any lands for special areas, a plan and description of such lands shall lie upon the table of this House for thirty days.

This, I think, will give almost perfect security to the pastoral tenant, and at the same time give the Government power to proclaim these areas, when the public interests demand it. After all, sir, we must be prepared to trust some one. We must trust the Government. Looking to the perhaps not very remote future when hon. members will have gentlemen sitting on this bench who shall be entirely responsible to the country for their actions, I do not think that hon. members who are in favor of that change should now say that they will not repose confidence in the members of the Government, however much they may be disinclined to trust the present occupants of this bench. It has been said that under the proposed regulations lessees will not be able to borrow, upon the security of their leaseholds. Even, as regards these draft regulations, I should be inclined to combat that view; but in the regulations as it is now proposed to amend them, with the new clauses I have mentioned, I think there will be very little to be said on that score. I know myself that large amounts have already been borrowed upon leasehold property, under the existing regulations; and I am sure that, even without the proposed amendments, the security offered under these draft regulations was far superior to the security which lessees are able to offer now. Looking at the security which is given in the other colonies—in all the other colonies, so far as I can find out—the Government reserve this power of resumption. It was asked the other evening by the hon. member Mr. Loton, what would be the position of present lessees, who might not choose to come under these new regulations? The only reply I can give to that is that they must trust to future legislation. If they do not come under these regulations when their present leases expire, I expect that the Legislature of the day will make provisions to meet their case. Sir, I now come to the amendments of which hon. members have given notice on the notice paper. The hon. member for Fremantle (Mr. Pearse) proposes an alteration to the following effect: "Any holder of special occupation lands under previous Land Regulations, applied for before the 14th day of July, 1886, shall be entitled to a

"Crown grant of the land comprised in his license, provided that he has paid the full purchase money, and that the land has been properly fenced and that the fence is in good order, and that an amount equal to the full purchase money has been expended on the land in prescribed improvements, in addition to the cost of such fencing." The Government, sir, have no objection to this proposal, which has for its object the substitution of an expenditure of 10s. per acre in improvements instead of cropping a quarter of the area of the land. Whether this proposed expenditure of 10s. an acre is sufficient is a mere question of detail, which the Council can deal with in committee. The principle in this new clause will, if adopted, have the effect of bringing the old special occupation leases almost into accord with the present regulations. The hon. member for Wellington and the hon. member for Murray and Williams have also tabled notices, in which they express themselves very much in favor of the continuance of the existing regulations, on the ground that they are almost entirely in accord with the wishes of the people. I think, sir, that is somewhat of a parrot cry. I do not think there is much in it. If you come to analyse the existing regulations and compare them with the proposed regulations, it will be found that the difference is not so great as some people imagine. I pointed out in my remarks when I submitted these draft regulations to the House the evils of the existing regulations, and, if my remarks upon the occasion did not result in convincing hon. members that some change is necessary, I do not think it is any use my laboring the question on the present occasion. I now come to the proposals of the hon. member for Geraldton and his party—if he has a party—and I regret to say that I do not agree with one single portion of the hon. member's proposals. His proposals, sir, are that the land of the colony, except in the South-West and Kimberley divisions, shall be completely locked up for the next twenty-one years. As regards the South-West division the hon. member proposes to appoint local boards, consisting of a farmer, a squatter, and a surveyor, to examine the lands in that division with the view of recommending to the Government all lands which should be declared

agricultural areas, and also to place an average value on such areas—in other words to classify the land. Now, sir, I very much question—if such a happy family could be found, if such a board could be found, to work together—that it would work so agreeably and so harmoniously as the hon. member seems to imagine. As hon. members are aware, I did not in my remarks the other day recommend a general system of classification, but I may inform hon. members—perhaps it has escaped some hon. members' observation—that, under these proposals of the Government, classification is not altogether out of the question, in agricultural areas especially, and I think in all parts of the colony. Hon. members will observe that it is only the minimum price of land that is named in these regulations. There is nothing in them to prevent the Government from classifying the land within these agricultural areas, and charging any price for them they may think desirable in the interests of the colony, provided the minimum price is not less than that fixed by these regulations. In the system of classification suggested by the hon. member for Geraldton, with his board consisting of a farmer, a squatter, and a surveyor, the hon. member, I notice, does not even mention any price to be fixed as a minimum or maximum. This board, composed of persons with such antagonistic interests, is to be the absolute and the sole judge of what the value of all land is. But probably the most difficult thing of all this board would have to do—in fact I think it is almost superhuman—is to at once decide the extent of land which shall be included within these agricultural areas to meet the requirements of the colony during the next twenty-one years. There is no power given to the board nor to the Government to add hereafter to the area which the board may now set apart for purposes of alienation, except in the Kimberley district. The hon. member would give absolute security in all parts of the colony except the Kimberley district. I should like to know why the hon. member excepts that district. I think it is because the hon. member has never been there, and because he imagines it is a much finer place than it really is. Very often, as we know,—

“Distance lends enchantment to the view,”

and I think it is so in this case. In the South-West division the hon. member would give absolute security of tenure to the pastoral tenant, no free selection, no residence, and no limit to the area to be declared. The hon. member, however, would find that he would have a limit, because when lands were once set apart by the board there would be no power under this proposal to enable any more land to be set apart for the next 21 years. If that regulation were to prevail, how are we to settle the population on the land? How are we to foresee what land may be required for agricultural and other purposes during the next 21 years? Sir, if such a regulation as this were to become law it would ruin the colony, and the hon. member and his party, if he has one, would be a by-word, and would, in the early future, be burnt in effigy. We next come to the hon. member's proposal as to rentals, in respect of pastoral lands on the coast and pastoral lands lying beyond a distance of one hundred miles from the coast. The hon. member proposes that lands within a hundred miles of the coast shall be rented at 7s. 6d., 12s. 6d., and 15s. for each period of seven years, with certain conditions as to improvements. But in dealing with this question we must bear in mind that land in the interior will have greater security under these regulations than land adjacent to the coast; it will not be so likely to be interfered with by being declared a special area. Supposing a goldfield or some rich mines were discovered inland—they have inland towns and thriving settlements in the interior, in the other colonies, and possibly we may have them here within the next twenty-one years—and what would be the position of the Government if these proposals were adopted? They would not be able to alienate or set apart any land for such purposes; and I would ask the House whether that would be wise, in the present circumstances of the colony. The rental which the hon. member proposes for land outside the hundred-mile belt is a mere bagatelle. A lessee with 100,000 acres, for instance, would only save at these reduced rates £350 during the 21 years, a sum equal to about £17 a-year, and I really do not think such a reduction is worth serious consideration. Sir, having

now gone through these proposals of the hon. member for Geraldton—with none of which I regret to say can I agree—I desire just to glance at the terms upon which pastoral leases are dealt with elsewhere, in the other Australian colonies; and I do so in order to meet the objections which have been raised to the terms embodied in the draft regulations before the House. When I have done so I think hon. members may at any rate arrive at some conclusion as to whether the proposed rents are so very excessive after all. In South Australia, the term of the leases in the Northern portion of the colony is for twenty-one years, the minimum rent being 4s. per thousand acres, or 2d. per head on the average number of sheep and 1s. per head for large stock. The average is ascertained by a statement, in the form provided by the Act, of the number of all sheep and cattle depastured on the land, whether belonging to the lessee or not. This statement is made by the lessee or his overseer, or person in charge, and must be forwarded to the Commissioner at stated times during the year. The Governor has power to resume the land by giving three years notice in some instances, and twelve months notice in other cases, according to the situation of the land. In Queensland, the land is divided into two parts, one of which is called the resumed part and the other the leased part. The lease only applies to one half of the run, and the term of the lease in some cases is ten years, and in other cases, fifteen years. The rent varies from 15s. (the minimum) to 140s. (the maximum) and is fixed by a Board, every five years. The Board in fixing the rent must be guided in their determination by the quality and fitness of the land for grazing purposes, the amount of stock it may be reasonably expected to carry, as well as any rise in the value of the land which may have taken place during each succeeding period of five years. In New South Wales, also, the leases are divided in half, over one moiety of which the lessee has absolute security, the other moiety being open to resumption. The colony is divided into three divisions, the rent varying in each, and ranging from 83s. 4d. to 156s. 3d., and the duration of the lease varying from ten to fifteen years. In New Zealand the term of the lease is

twenty-one years, the rent being fixed by appraisement, and the land then sold by auction at an upset price. Bearing these terms in mind, and comparing them with the regulations before the House, I think hon. members may congratulate themselves that they are living in Western Australia, and not “on the other side.” [Mr. MAEMION: No comparison between the country, population, nor anything else.] The present draft regulations, I submit, offer almost absolute security to the pastoral tenant, and a good tenure, at what I call a reasonable rental; and I hope hon. members will accept them. If they do not accept them, I hope they may not share the fate of the fabled dog, who dropped the substantial bone he was carrying to grasp at its shadow. I hope, as I said the other evening, hon. members interested in these Northern lands will be content to take what is willingly offered to them, rather than be striving for something in the attainment of which they will probably be defeated in the end. I think, sir, I have now gone through all the objections raised, or at all events the most important points raised, by hon. members when dealing with this subject. My own opinion, speaking personally, and for myself, is that these regulations are liberal, and especially so to the pastoral tenant. If the rent may be regarded by some as a burden—I do not admit that it is—all I can say is, I would advise those lessees who find it a burden to hold less land, and to devote their attention to the use and improvement of its quality. To the agriculturist, sir, these regulations will afford encouragement, and will enable a poor man to settle upon and improve the soil, and they will be found in his case more liberal than any land regulations in Australia. There may be details which it may be necessary to alter somewhat in committee, but I do not think you will be able to get away from the principles underlying these regulations. I think I may be permitted to say, speaking on behalf of the Government, that we have no desire—I certainly have no desire myself—to force anything upon hon. members that they do not like. My duty, sir, is simply to place the matter before the House to the best of my ability, leaving it to hon. members, after mature

consideration, to accept the proposals or not. In conclusion, sir, I again say what I said the other evening, that personally I am generally in accord with the principles of these regulations. I believe they are based on principles that find much favor in the present day. The present draft will no doubt be amended as it passes through committee, and I hope it will be improved. At any rate I shall use my best endeavors and devote all my attention to the subject, and I hope, sir, we shall in the end frame a measure which will be found to be not only in accord with the principles of land legislation obtaining elsewhere, but will also, in its results, prove a great and lasting benefit to the future progress of this colony.

THE ACTING COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. M. S. Smith) said: Before the debate terminates I should like to make just a few remarks. It is not my intention to offer any opinion as to the regulations before the House; I rise principally to congratulate my hon. colleague the Surveyor General for the exhaustive and comprehensive speeches with which he has inaugurated and closed this interesting debate, and to say that the able and calm manner in which this important and complex subject has been dealt with augurs well. It indicates this fact, that this House is determined to grapple with this great question with a will, and it furnishes sufficient evidence, sir, that the House is capable of conducting its deliberations with a due regard for the various interests at stake. I trust, sir, that our deliberations may be brought to a satisfactory conclusion, and that the result of our combined efforts in this direction will be this,—that we may succeed in formulating a code of regulations which, by safeguarding the various conflicting interests concerned, will tend, with as great a degree of finality as it is possible, to prove of permanent benefit to Western Australia.

The amendment submitted by Mr. SHENTON—"That an humble address be presented to His Excellency the Governor, informing His Excellency that this House, having considered the Governor's Message upon the subject, is prepared to devote its most careful attention to the draft Land Regulations which His Ex-

cency has submitted for its opinion"—was then put; whereupon,

CAPTAIN FAWCETT moved the following amendment:—"That an humble address be presented to His Excellency the Governor, informing His Excellency that this House, having considered the Governor's Message upon the subject, is of opinion that no comprehensive change in the system of dealing with Crown Lands, such as is contained in the Draft Regulations forwarded by Your Excellency, is required; but that the present Land Regulations, with such alterations as would give greater security of tenure to lessees, and compensation for all legitimate improvements, together with some modification of the present system of Special Occupation Licenses, are such as would meet the requirements of the colony; and the Council, after due consideration, will be prepared to recommend, for Your Excellency's approval, Regulations framed on that basis." The hon. and gallant member expressed his belief that all that was required was to so liberalise the existing regulations as to give the poor man a chance of making an honest livelihood out of the land. He thought the Government should be allowed to deal with the land like any other commodity, and dispose of it to the highest purchaser, upon conditions of improvement. He thought it was absurd to fix the price of all lands in the colony at £1 per acre, when, as he told His Excellency the Governor the other day, there was land here that it would take two thousand acres of it to carry a goose. We had already squandered away an enormous quantity of land for railways, and now when we had only very little land in this portion of the colony left, and that of second or third class quality, it was proposed to double the price of it, and in this way enhance the value of the railway syndicates' land. He thought that such a proposal would, in the result, prove very detrimental to the public treasury, and seriously affect our territorial revenue. He had been asked by the hon. member for Wellington to move this amendment, as the hon. member himself, having already spoken, was precluded by the rules of debate from moving it himself; and he had much pleasure in moving it for him.

MR. VENN said he believed he would now be in order in speaking to the amendment. He had asked the hon. member for Pinjarrah to move it for him, because having already spoken on the previous question before the House he was unable to move it himself. He would promise the House that in speaking to it he would not say much, as he had already expressed his views on the subject pretty fully. He brought this amendment forward in deference to what he considered to be the wish of the majority of the people of the colony, though probably he would not find himself in a majority in that House. Last year he was a member of the select committee that drafted the regulations upon which the draft now before the House had been framed; and to the report of that select committee he attached a rider. In that rider he said: "I am at general issue with the whole principle of the above draft regulations, feeling that whatever material progress the colony has made during the last few years has been under the existing regulations; I am therefore not in favor of a complete revolution of their principles. I am in favor of an extension of tenure to present pastoral leaseholders, say for 21 years; a slight modification and alteration in the Special Occupation Licenses; a classification of lands throughout the South-West District, and the price of land being fixed according to its value and utility on a sliding scale. With these alterations, I think the existing regulations would serve the best interests of the colony, and tend more effectually to general settlement. Being in a minority on the committee, my desire has been to agree in forwarding a report, and to assist in framing such regulations as to the majority seemed most desirable. I am, however, entirely opposed to the lands, other than in the South-West Division of the colony, not being open for free selection, as that practically excludes everything but pastoral settlement in those areas representing seven-eighths of the whole colony. It means that nearly seven-eighths of Western Australia shall for a period of 28 years be but thinly populated, and exclusively in the hands of comparatively few squatters. Under the heading 'Direct Purchase,' I entirely dis-

"approve the principle of limiting the quantity of freehold land to be held by one individual, as it excludes the energy and enterprise of men of capital from acquiring and improving large estates, and says in emphatic terms 'Western Australia shall for ever remain a poor colony and be entirely destitute of wealthy land-owners. Under 'Conditional Purchase,' I am opposed to excluding dwelling houses as an improvement." He believed that rider had met with favorable consideration in most districts of the colony, and he therefore felt it incumbent upon himself, in deference to the wishes of those districts that had spoken out at all on the subject, to place the question before the House in the light of the present amendment. He felt he should have been wanting in his duty had he not done so; so that those hon. members who regarded this land question from the same point of view as himself should have an opportunity, if they desired it, of expressing their opinions on the subject. He had, during the last day or two, carefully looked over the existing land regulations, and, although he was quite willing to admit what the Surveyor General had stated—that the draft regulations now before the House were based upon the existing regulations, still, he did not think it was possible to follow out many clauses that were in any way the same. Nor did he agree with the hon. gentleman that the principle of the existing regulations and of the draft regulations was in any way similar. On the contrary it struck him that they were in every way antagonistic. At any rate he did not feel able to follow the hon. gentleman when he said that the existing land regulations had been a failure; and he was inclined to think, with all deference to the hon. gentleman, that had the hon. gentleman himself been the author of the existing regulations he would have been able to have found many more arguments in their favor than the fact that the public at large were on the whole satisfied with them. Gentlemen, however, who occupied the position which the hon. gentleman occupied, that of Surveyor General, were always anxious to hand down their names to posterity in connection with some land reform or the other; and for his own part he must say that these new regulations were made in

spite of the wishes of the country at large. He said so last year and he said so again—it was a mistake, an entire mistake to have submitted to a select committee of that House the question of framing a new set of land regulations, because,—without any intention or desire to impute motives at all—in doing so, they were submitting the question to a body of self-interested gentlemen, and they asked those gentlemen to legislate upon a subject with regard to which they were necessarily bound to be prejudiced one way or the other to a very large extent; and if the return which had been asked for by the hon. member Mr. Loton a day or two ago, with reference to the names of Kimberley lessees, were laid on the table, it would be seen who it was who held so much land in this northern portion of the colony, and whether it was possible for members of that House to legislate dispassionately and disinterestedly upon this land question. He thought it would be better in the interests of the colony at large that the House should take the regulations now in force as the basis of any new code of regulations. However objectionable these remarks of his might be—though he failed to see why they should be objectionable—he only felt that he was doing his duty as an independent member of that House, as a representative of the people of the colony at large, in opposing any material departure from the existing regulations. He had only one object in view, and that was to have regulations passed that would be a benefit to the whole colony, without in any way appropriating and alienating the people's land without their having a voice in the subject, or without that voice being heard. The Surveyor General said that this talk about the "people's land" was a "parrot cry." If so, they simply stigmatised the cry of the people generally as a parrot cry. Wherever the public had given expression to this cry, wherever any opinion at all had been expressed on the subject by the people of this colony,—

MR. MARMION: Who are the people of the colony? The people of the Wellington district,—does the hon. member regard them as the people of the colony?

MR. VENN said that wherever there had been any public expression of opinion upon the subject since last session, that

opinion was recorded in support of the views which he had always expressed himself and which he now repeated, that, with a slight modification in the direction he had indicated, the existing land regulations would best answer the purpose of the colony and would best serve the interests of the colony. He was very pleased to hear the remarks of the Surveyor General that evening, as to the amendments proposed to be introduced in the draft now before the House; and, if there was anything that could induce him to withdraw the amendment now before the House, it would have been this announcement of the Surveyor General, which went a good way to remove some of the objections which he had to the proposed regulations as now drafted. But he still felt that he was only doing right in bringing forward this amendment as a test question before the House. It was one that affected the fundamental principles of the question. He was glad, however, to hear the Surveyor General speak as he did, and when the hon. gentleman illustrated the force of his remarks by a reference to the regulations in operation in the other colonies, it must have been gratifying, awfully gratifying, to hon. members as it also would be to our Northern lessees to find upon what easy terms, compared with the lessees in the other colonies, they now held their lands. He felt sure that having heard what had fallen from the Surveyor General they would be inclined to desist from any further objection to the proposed regulations, and be prepared to adhere as near as possible to those now in force. He thought they would feel a little ashamed to ask for so much when they found how little was conceded to pastoral lessees elsewhere. The other evening one hon. member—who spoke in a very mild sort of way, but whose utterances were calculated to have a considerable effect—told the House that they must be careful in what they did, otherwise these Northern lessees would take advantage of their pre-emptive rights. What pre-emptive rights? He did not think there was anything very dangerous in that threat.

THE COMMISSIONER OF CROWN LANDS (Hon. J. Forrest): If the hon. member will look at the 68th clause of the regulations now in force he will see

what those pre-emptive rights are. He will see that lessees in the Northern district may at any time during the first seven years of their lease select from their runs any land which they may desire to hold under an unconditional pre-emptive right to purchase.

MR. VENN said that right only existed during the first seven years of their leases. At any rate, when the hon. member talked of the probability of these lessees buying up their land in freehold, surely they could not be so very hard pressed. Surely they could afford to pay these very moderate rentals now proposed. He was not himself quite prepared to follow up this discussion that evening, as he had understood that in consequence of the absence of one hon. member who represented a party in the House as regards this land question (Mr. Wittenoom), the discussion would not have been resumed that evening. He could only assure hon. members that in his opposition he was actuated by no silly or factious opposition to the proposed regulations. He sincerely believed and sincerely felt that the present land regulations, subject to certain alterations and modifications, were good and sound in principle,—as good and sound as any that they could possibly adopt in place of them. Whatever progress the colony had made of late years—and no one would venture to say that it had not made very material progress—had been made under these regulations; and if there had been any abuses practised under them, let those abuses be corrected, and let them guard against such abuses in the future. They knew now where their defects lay; they knew their weak points. Let them remove those defects, let them strengthen those weak points, which was all there was any need for. They knew not how these new regulations would work; they knew not from experience what their defects were, and what their weak points were. They had not been tried. The old ones had been tried, and very little would make them all that we required. With regard to special occupation licenses, he was a strong advocate of the present regulations in every way. He was at present in a position to look at the whole question dispassionately, and he felt that if they expected Western Australia to prosper

they must foster agriculture in every possible legitimate way. They must encourage the agriculturalist in every way they could, and, in doing so, bring about what they all desired—or said they desired—the settlement of the land, which, so far as he was concerned, was the sole object which he had in view in dealing with this question. His idea was that if we confined our Northern areas to pastoral purposes alone we should be making a mistake. The day might come—and probably before these regulations expired—the time might come before another quarter of a century, when we may have railways running through these Northern districts; and what would our position be then, with these lands alienated and no right of resumption. He thought it was only right that the Government should retain some hold upon these lands, so that they might make good use of them when the opportunity offered. He agreed that it was well that lessees should have a large degree of security, so that they might be in a position to obtain what assistance they required from the banks; but he did not think it was a good principle to open the door too widely for obtaining such assistance. What he wanted was that the Government should not let these lands go out of their own hands, without the power of resuming them.

MR. GRANT: The Government always have power to resume land for railways, if they want to.

MR. VENN said that was for purposes of construction. What he looked forward to was to see these Northern lands converted into something besides sheep runs, and railways traversing that part of our territory. If we ever expected to make these railways pay, the lands alongside of them ought to be open to free selection. He should say no more, beyond that he felt in his own mind that in speaking as he had done and in acting as he had done he was only doing his duty. He had but one desire, and that was the advancement of Western Australia, and whether he was in a majority or whether he found himself in a minority he should still do his best to assist in framing regulations that would in his opinion tend to promote the welfare and prosperity of the colony.

MR. MARMION hoped that hon. members would not devote any considerable time to the discussion of this amendment, for he thought it was quite unnecessary, and that as soon as possible they should proceed to consider the regulations in detail. After all, what were they doing but endeavoring to improve the old regulations by trying to put them into better shape and liberalising them? That was his opinion, and he thought it was the opinion of the majority; and it seemed to him simply waste of time to discuss this side issue. Let them join together and see if they could not turn out regulations that would be a credit to the House and find an echo in the hearts of the people of the colony generally, and find acceptance at the hands of the public at large, and not of the Wellington district alone. Possibly, when the hon. member who had just sat down obtained Responsible Government for Western Australia and held a seat on the Treasury bench opposite, the hon. member might be actuated by the same conscientious motives as he was now, and that the country might feel as safe as it did now in the hands of those who occupied seats on that bench at present.

SIR T. COCKBURN-CAMPBELL said that when he spoke on the subject on a late occasion he only said two or three words, and in those few words he said that it was his opinion that the existing land regulations, with certain slight amendments, would answer the purpose we required for the present; but, having said that, he felt bound to say that he could not vote with the hon. member upon this amendment. The hon. member might possibly have calculated upon his vote in consequence of what he said when he spoke on a late occasion; but he did not think that the hon. member's amendment was in the nature of what he might call practical politics. He looked upon the draft regulations before the House as a sort of bill introduced by His Excellency the Governor, and that it was their duty to consider it as such; and he thought they could not shape the bill to suit their own particular views.

The amendment submitted by Capt. FAWCETT was then put and negatived,

and Mr. SHENTON's motion agreed to, without a division.

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

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL,

Friday, 23rd July, 1886.

Destructive Insects and Substances Act: Order of the Governor in Council—Beverley-Albany Railway: Contract for construction—Eucla Jetty: Construction of—Regulations affecting Pastoral Leases, North District—Wines, Beer, and Spirits Sale Act: as to bond fide travellers—Masters and Servants Act Amendment Bill: first reading—Colonial Hospital: appointment of Select Committee—Despatches respecting Responsible Government—Inquiry into Arrest of Mr. A. J. Edwards, at Roebourne—Perth Gas Company Bill: first reading—Extension of Fremantle Jetty (Message No. 11)—Supplementary Estimates, 1886: report of committee—Appropriation Bill (Supplementary), 1886—Public Health Bill: further considered in committee—Adjournment.

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

PRAYERS.

DESTRUCTIVE INSECTS AND SUBSTANCES ACT: VINE CUTTINGS.

THE ACTING COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. M. S. Smith), in laying on the table of the House an Order of the Governor in Council made under the Destructive Insects and Substances Act, 1880, said he did so for the purpose of drawing attention to the fact that such an Order had been issued, prohibiting the importation of vines, as it might possibly be the wish of some hon. member that an additional Order should be issued dealing with some other matter. The present Order was confined to the prohibition of the importation of grape vines from the other colonies.

BEVERLEY-ALBANY RAILWAY: CONTRACT FOR CONSTRUCTION OF LINE.

MR. VENN, in asking the following questions, said he did so in deference to