

Legislative Assembly.

WEDNESDAY, 22ND JULY, 1896.

Message: Assent to Bill—Motion: Reporting and Publishing of Parliamentary Debates—Adoption of Children Bill; second reading—Powers of Attorney Bill; second reading; in committee—Election of Temporary Chairman of Committees—Summary Jurisdiction (Married Women) Bill; second reading; in committee—Agricultural Bank Act Amendment Bill; in committee—Agricultural Lands Purchase Bill; second reading—Adjournment.

The Speaker took the chair at 4.30 o'clock, p.m.

PRAYERS.

MESSAGE—ASSENT TO SUPPLY BILL.

The following message from His Excellency the Governor was delivered to and read by Mr. Speaker:—

“GERARD SMITH,
“ Governor.

“The Governor has the honor to inform the Legislative Assembly that he “has this day assented, in Her Majesty’s “name, to the undermentioned Bill:—

““ An Act to apply out of the Consolidated Revenue Fund the
““ sum of two hundred and fifty
““ thousand pounds to the service of the year ending 30th
““ June, 1897.”

“ Government House, Perth,
“ 22nd July, 1896.”

MOTION—REPORTING AND PUBLISHING OF PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir John Forrest), in accordance with notice, moved—
“That a Select Committee be appointed to inquire into the present arrangements for the “Hansard” reporting in this House, and to report what alterations they would recommend to be made, in order to procure a more efficient system of reporting and publishing the Parliamentary Debates.” He said: I do not wish to say much on this motion, except that I am sure it must be the wish of every hon. member in this House to see that what he says

shall be correctly reported, and that the reports of the proceedings of this House shall be as accurate as it is possible to make them. I am aware that the work and management of the “Hansard” staff have devolved on the Speaker of the House, and I do not think it is quite reasonable that we should thrust upon you, sir, the whole responsibility, not only of appointing the staff, but also seeing that the reporting is well done. I think it will be very much more satisfactory in every way if other arrangements are made, by which you, sir, will no doubt occupy a particular position in regard to the arrangements made for reporting, but will be relieved to a very great extent, if not altogether, of the details regarding the management. Of course the correct reporting of the proceedings in this House largely resolves itself into a question of finance. If you want good reporters, and if you desire that they shall devote considerable time and attention to the matter, you will have to pay them accordingly. It is not to be expected that we can obtain the services of experienced gentlemen, competent to do this work, unless they are fairly paid for the services they render; and I think the present arrangement which you, sir, have made, in the best interests of the Government and the finances of the colony, is not a very satisfactory one. I think that the circumstances of this colony prevent our going on in the same way as larger communities may do—that is by employing reporters merely for the session. I think we will find that it will be necessary to have paid officers—at any rate, that the principal members of the reporting staff will have to be salaried officers, and will have to be paid by the year. If three or four such officers were to be appointed, on the condition that their services should be available during the recess for any Government work, I think we shall be able to procure the services of experienced and competent gentlemen to do the work. Of course if the requirements of the House or the Houses necessitate the employment of more reporters, it may be possible to engage temporary assistance. Some system of this kind is necessary, I think, in dealing with this question; and if the motion which I have the honor to move is carried, and this matter is referred to a

select committee, consisting of the honorable the Speaker—who I am sure would be willing to act—and representatives of both sides of the House, I believe that an arrangement could be made, and be recommended to the Government, which would be not only thoroughly efficient, but would also meet with the approval of members of the House. I beg to move the motion standing in my name.

THE SPEAKER: Before putting this question, I wish to say that this motion has been brought forward with my entire concurrence. The present condition of things is unsatisfactory to the House, and I do not think the sole responsibility for managing the reports of the debates of this House should rest on the Speaker. I think he should be assisted by members of the House. Therefore I have asked the Premier to take action in the matter, and he has very kindly made the proposal for this Select Committee which, as I said before, has my entire concurrence.

Motion put and passed.

A ballot having been taken for the appointment of the Committee, the following members were chosen:—Mr. Harper, Mr. Illingworth, Mr. Randell, the Commissioner of Crown Lands, and the Premier as mover.

On the motion of the Premier, it was agreed that the Committee should have power to sit during any adjournment of the House, and should report on the next Tuesday.

ADOPTION OF CHILDREN BILL.

SECOND READING.

MR. MOSS: In rising to move the second reading of this Bill, I may say the measure has been submitted to the Attorney-General, and has his concurrence. The Bill provides for the legal adoption of children, for which there is no provision at the present time; and I think that, when hon. members have read the Bill, they will find it contains sufficient safeguards in regard to the children who may be adopted under its provisions. Before a child can be adopted under this Bill, the person proposing to become a foster parent will have to satisfy a Judge of the Supreme Court that he or she is a fit and proper person to have the custody of it, and

able to bring up the child properly, look after its welfare and interests, and promote its education. It is also provided that, when the child is in the custody of parents, the consent of the parents to its adoption shall be obtained; but, where the child has been absolutely deserted, no such consent will be necessary. There is also protection given to the foster parent to have the legal status of a natural parent. Hon. members will follow me in this, that in many instances it has occurred that, after a child has been deserted, and has been well taken care of by those who have adopted it, the parent seeks to claim the child; but the Bill provides that, when it has been proved that a child has been deserted, the parents shall have no claim upon it. In Clause 8, hon. members will find that any property rights of the child inherited from parents shall hold good, notwithstanding that it has been adopted; so that children born in wedlock are not to be deprived of their property rights, or have them diminished by adoption. I do not think hon. members will have any objections to the Bill, and I beg to move that it be read a second time.

Motion put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

POWERS OF ATTORNEY BILL.

SECOND READING.

MR. MOSS: In rising to move the second reading of this Bill, I must say I have introduced it with the object of remedying a defect in the Transfer of Lands Act, or rather a defect that crept into the measure when it was consolidated. One of the amendments of the Transfer of Land Act provides that when a power of attorney is deposited at the Titles Office, it has to be proved that the person giving it is still living, and has not revoked the power. This provision has been productive of a very great amount of inconvenience to persons during the last twelve months, as it has often been difficult to give the necessary proof in the case of a person who may be at a distance. In some cases persons have been put to the cost of expensive cable messages in order to satisfy the registrar on these points. The measure

provides that powers of attorney shall continue in force until notice of the death of the person giving them, or of their revocation, shall have been received by the attorney named therein. It is also provided that the acts of persons done under the authority of powers of attorney shall be valid, if they are performed before the receipt of notice of revocation or of the death of the principal, so long as the acts of the agent are within the scope of the power of attorney. I think the Attorney-General will bear me out that the Bill is a desirable one, and that the defect in the law which it proposes to cure has been productive of much inconvenience and expense. I think I have said sufficient to show that there is a very pressing necessity for the amendment of the law in the way I have indicated. I beg to move the second reading of the Bill.

THE ATTORNEY-GENERAL (Hon. S. Burt): I think this Bill will prove a very useful measure, and one that is much required at the present moment. The manner in which the question affecting powers of attorney has arisen in the Titles Office, and to which the hon. member for North Fremantle has referred, may be explained. Somewhere about 1883 or 1884, the Government of the day introduced a measure to amend the Land Transfer Act of 1875, and inadvertently some words at the end of a clause were repealed. No doubt that was not intended. When the Acts were consolidated, the old clause, as inadvertently amended, was re-enacted; therefore the object of the Bill before the House is to make the law what it originally was in this respect. I think it is right that we should do so. The Bill, however, goes further than that. It applies to all powers of attorney, and I really think that position is as it should be, because there are many powers of attorney, dealing with mercantile matters outside of land transfers, to which the same principle should be applied. I believe the Bill will commend itself to the common sense of everyone; therefore I welcome the measure, and congratulate the hon. member for having taken the trouble to prepare it.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN OF COMMITTEES.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir John Forrest): As the Chairman of Committees, Mr. Traylen, is not in his place in the House—I hope he will be here in a very short time, within a fortnight—it has been thought necessary to ask some member of the House to occupy the chair, and I am very glad to say that our friend, the member for Perth (Mr. Randell), has consented to temporarily occupy the chair, until the return of Mr. Traylen. I have therefore much pleasure in moving that the hon. member for Perth be asked to take the chair.

Agreed to.

POWERS OF ATTORNEY BILL.

IN COMMITTEE.

The House proceeded to consider this Bill in Committee, Mr. Randell occupying the chair.

Clauses 1 to 3, inclusive—Agreed to.

Clause 4—Declaration made by attorney of non-receipt of notice to be proof of non-revocation:

MR. WOOD said there was no provision for the compulsory registration of powers of attorney in this colony. The Attorney-General had promised to give attention to this matter, and he (Mr. Wood) thought the provision should be inserted in this Bill. It would be a great boon to the public. Very large transactions were going on in various directions, and it was almost absolutely necessary that the omission should be remedied. He hoped that the Attorney-General would draft a clause to deal with this point.

THE ATTORNEY-GENERAL (Hon. S. Burt) said he could not recall what the hon. member for West Perth referred to in connection with the compulsory registration of the powers of attorney, or that he (the Attorney-General) had promised to deal with the subject. He had not considered the matter lately, and there was a good deal to be considered in a matter of this kind. The registration of all powers of attorney would entail a very great deal of labor upon some departments, in which there would be a great accumulation of perhaps unnecessary records, because many powers of attorney were given for the purpose of

dealing with merely private matters. He did not know that a similar provision existed elsewhere. With regard to foreign companies, they were compelled to register their powers of attorney, under a penalty of five pounds per day for failing to do so; but he was not prepared to say that private people residing in England or in the other colonies should be compelled to have their powers of attorney registered. At the same time, if the hon. member would submit a clause, he would be happy to consider it.

MR. WOOD said that, as far as he was concerned, he was not prepared to move in the direction indicated; and if the Attorney-General would not do so he would withdraw the suggestion.

MR. GEORGE agreed with the hon. member for West Perth in desiring the compulsory registration of powers of attorney. Now that the colony was prosperous, a great many people came here representing that they had such powers; but it was very embarrassing for a business man to have to ask to see the document before proceeding to have any dealings with the alleged possessor of it. If powers of attorney had to be registered it would be a very easy matter for those interested to inspect them, and to find out whether the representations made were correct. There was no fear of any of the Government departments being overloaded with papers, for they were especially constructed to hold them. He hoped the Attorney-General would frame a clause to provide for compulsory registration.

Clause put and passed.

Preamble and title—Agreed to.

Bill reported, without amendment.

Report adopted.

SUMMARY JURISDICTION (MARRIED WOMEN) BILL.

SECOND READING.

MR. MOSS: This Bill is a transcript of an Act of the Imperial Parliament passed last session, and is an extension of the present Act in this colony dealing with destitute persons. The Bill enables magistrates in the colony to make orders for the maintenance of deserted wives; or, in a case where the husband has been convicted, under the Imperial Act 24 and

25 Vic., cap. 100, Sec. 43, of an aggravated assault upon his wife. This measure proposes to entitle magistrates to make an order for judicial separation, which power has hitherto been limited to a Judge of the Supreme Court; but the power is to be exercised by the Justices, only in cases where it can be proved that the husband has been guilty of cruelty, or has persistently refused to support his wife, or if he has been convicted of an aggravated assault within the meaning of the section I have just referred to. The order may also be made by the Justices, when it is proved that the husband has been guilty of persistent cruelty, or when he has wilfully refused to provide maintenance for his wife, and by such cruelty or neglect has caused her to live apart from him. In such case, a wife may, under the Bill, apply to two Justices; and, upon proof of these various matters being given, the court may make an order, under Clause 3 of the Bill, amounting to judicial separation. The law at the present time, as the Attorney-General will bear me out, is insufficient to enable an order of this kind to be made without resort to the Supreme Court, which, in many instances, is beyond the means of the people to whom this measure will apply. It has been thought wise in England to extend the power of the magistrates to make the orders referred to, and this Bill is intended to bring us abreast of British legislation on the subject. There is, however, in the Bill, this safeguard, that if the magistrates think the case is of sufficient importance to be dealt with by a higher court, they can remit it to the jurisdiction of the Supreme Court. In a word, the object of the Bill is to give a simple form of relief to wives who may be ill-used or deprived of maintenance by their husbands, and it has been thought well in England to extend the power to the jurisdiction of magistrates. I think, therefore, that we may very well extend the same power to the magistrates of this colony. There is the same right of appeal given under the provisions of this Bill as in the case of any conviction made by Justices in the police courts; so that anyone feeling aggrieved by any order, or the refusal of any order by Justices, may have the matter reviewed

by the Supreme Court. I have much pleasure in moving the second reading of the Bill.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

IN COMMITTEE.

Clause 1—Agreed to.

Clause 2—By and to whom orders may be applied for:

THE ATTORNEY-GENERAL (Hon. S. Burt) asked if the clause referred to common assault, the penalty for which was limited to a fine of £5, or two months' imprisonment.

MR. MOSS said he would move, as an amendment, that the word "summarily," in line 2, be struck out. He moved accordingly.

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

Clauses 3 to 10, inclusive—Agreed to.

Schedule—Agreed to.

Preamble and title—Agreed to.

Bill reported, with an amendment.

AGRICULTURAL BANK ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

IN COMMITTEE.

Clause 1—Agreed to.

Clause 2—Manager may take additional security for an advance; maximum of advance enlarged to £800.

MR. ILLINGWORTH moved, as an amendment, that the word "eight" in the third line of Sub-section 2, of Section 2, be struck out, and that the word "five" be inserted in lieu thereof. He said it was distinctly understood that this Bill was to assist the small holder.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest) said the Bill should be made as liberal as possible, in view of the provision for additional security on real or leasehold property other than the lands to be improved. There had been a good many instances of applications for £800, and, so long as the security was good, there was no risk. Many hon. members, in discussing this measure, had argued that the areas were too small, and ought to be increased. In fact, a great many members, in discussing the Homesteads Bill, considered the area too small; but he thought that 160 acres was a reasonable quantity of land for the State to give away. At the same time, there was no objection to anyone

increasing his area. The amount of the increase had not been determined haphazard; the advice of the Manager of the Agricultural Bank had been taken upon it.

MR. SOLOMON supported the clause as it stood, and said the Government were protected in every way.

THE COMMISSIONER OF CROWN LANDS (Hon. A. R. Richardson) said he wished to point out to the hon. member for Nannine that one of the objects of the Bill was to increase the area of land under cultivation, and with the increased advance this could be done more effectually. The money would be spent in clearing and cultivating new land, and it did not so much matter whether one man cultivated a large quantity of land or whether the same area was worked by a number of small holders. He would say, with all respect to the small holders, that perhaps the amendment would secure a better class of agriculturists, and the risk to the Bank would be minimised. Members of the Opposition had twitted the Government concerning the relative proportions of the Bank's operations to the expenses of management, and this amendment would meet that complaint.

MR. GEORGE said that, when the Bill was originally introduced, great stress was laid on the ability of the Manager to safeguard the interests of the State in regard to security; and, as they had a good Manager, he was not likely to abuse his power.

MR. LEFROY said that the gentlemen who complained of the high cost of living should welcome the amendment as a means of increasing production from the soil for the needs of the colony.

Amendment put and negatived, and the clause agreed to.

Clause 3—Certain improvements to be deemed included in the principal Act:

MR. GEORGE said a wish had been expressed for compulsory insurance, and he asked if that was the proper time to insert a clause to that effect, provided the Attorney-General agreed.

THE ATTORNEY-GENERAL (Hon. S. Burt) said he was not in favor of it.

MR. WOOD said it was a very serious omission, and if the hon. member for the Murray moved to report progress, he would support him.

MR. GEORGE moved that progress be reported.

Motion put and negatived.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest) said there was nothing to prevent the Manager from making regulations for insurance, but compulsory insurance would be troublesome, and there was danger that the Manager might be compelled to insure a trumpery building of the value of about £20 or £30. Therefore, he did not think that buildings or fences should be insured. Another reason was that some parts of the colony were more liable to fires than others, and this provision could be better left to the discretion of the Manager.

MR. COOKWORTHY agreed that it would be better to leave the question of insurance to the Manager.

THE COMMISSIONER OF CROWN LANDS (Hon. A. R. Richardson) said the owner should be responsible for fire, and not the Manager of the Bank.

MR. CLARKSON said fire insurance rates were high, and it would be better to leave this matter to the Manager.

MR. LEFROY said it would be better if the suggested regulations were drawn up by the Governor and the Manager, and that no advance be made until insurance had been effected.

MR. WOOD expressed surprise at the indifference manifested concerning the necessity for insurance. It was generally regarded as an essential element of security. If a promise was given that regulations should be framed, he would withdraw his objection. It should not be overlooked that fresh additions to the security involved extra risk.

Clause put and passed.

Preamble and title—Agreed to.

Bill reported without amendment.

Report adopted.

AGRICULTURAL LANDS PURCHASE BILL.

SECOND READING.

THE COMMISSIONER OF CROWN LANDS (Hon. A. R. Richardson): Sir, in rising to move the second reading of this Bill, which hon. members will recognise as a somewhat important measure, and also perhaps as a new departure in our legislation, I have very great pleasure in doing so, because I believe the result will be a very considerable increase to our

agricultural settlement, and it will give a great number of opportunities to those persons who are desirous of so doing, in the way of obtaining access, to land close to railways and large centres of population, which they are now unable to obtain. Owing to the peculiar circumstances of this colony, we have, somewhat to our sorrow, considerable areas of valuable land, containing a fair proportion of agricultural land, placed in choice and eligible situations as regards transit and access to markets, which it is now impossible for anybody to get hold of; not because owners are unwilling to sell, but they decline to part with small portions. They will either sell the whole or none at all; and not many people are in a position to treat with owners for large areas of 7,000 or 8,000 acres. The Government have had brought under their attention a suggestion that it would be perhaps wise to undertake, under certain conditions, the re-purchase of these lands, to cut up in lots to be offered for sale, subject to special conditions as to improvements. If hon. members look at this Bill, they will see that safeguards are put in it to prevent political influence spoiling the measure, and to stop this or any future Government from perpetrating a job. Had this proviso not been included, I do not think the Government would have adopted the measure. The land so purchased must be recommended first by a Board, which has to report on all land considered desirable to acquire, or as to which the Government may have received offers to sell, and to report upon them. Certain pertinent questions have to be asked by the Board, as stipulated by Clause 6, as to "the fair value of the land to the owner, the demand for land in the neighborhood for agricultural settlement, the suitability of the land offered for agricultural settlement, the distance from a railway, which shall not exceed twenty miles, the probability of the immediate selection of the land, and the absence of a sufficient quantity of Crown lands in the neighborhood available for agricultural settlement." I also desire to inform hon. members that the Bill is very nearly a transcript of the Act in operation in Queensland, which has been in operation sufficiently long to enable us to judge; and it appears to have been working there very well,

although there is not the protection required by this Bill of a Land Purchase Board, so that we may claim better safeguards than are provided in the Queensland Act. Hon. members will see that, under Clause 3, the amount of money to be expended by the Government is limited to £200,000, as it was not considered wise to exceed that amount. The funds for paying for this land may be obtained in various ways, including borrowing from the Post-office Savings Bank at a rate not exceeding 4 per cent; and the vendor may take payment for the land in Government debentures, which is a very desirable provision indeed. There is also a very necessary precaution in providing that the land shall be situated in accessible places—for instance, near a railway—so that the Government are not likely to obtain much land that is placed at an inconvenient distance.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: But in that case you could make a railway there.

THE COMMISSIONER OF CROWN LANDS (Hon. A. R. Richardson): We will construct a railway if there is any reason for so doing. The stipulation that payments for the land to the Government shall be made in 20 yearly instalments will be of great assistance to the settler. I also desire to point out that we have made provision in Clause 9 for the Government to "clear, drain, fence, or otherwise improve any of the land acquired under this Act." I think we know of several places in this colony where the Government might undertake this work with very great advantage. If these improvements were left to the small holders, they might not be able to agree amongst themselves as to the proportion of payment. It might certainly be done by a combination amongst the settlers, but perhaps they could not agree as to the basis of payment. Under this clause the Government can do the work, and indirectly allot the relative proportion of the cost to the settlers by adding it to the price paid for the land. Then as regards the selling price, it is provided under Clause 11 that "The selling price of the land shall be ascertained by adding a sum equal to one-tenth part of the price actually paid in cash or debentures for the land, and for any improvements made upon it, and the total so arrived at shall be the least aggre-

gate price to be paid by the selectors of the land." The basis of payment in twenty yearly instalments, at the rate of £7 12s. 10d. for each £100 of the selling price, is taken from the Queensland measure, and I believe it has been worked out carefully on a 5 per cent. basis. Another important point introduced is that no one can purchase more than 1,000 acres, the provision being similar to conditional purchase and improvements, and these being incorporated in the Bill make it intact in itself, and simplify it very much. In Clause 17 the purchaser must comply with certain conditions, as follow:—"Improvements under this Act shall include clearing, grubbing, draining, ring-barking, cultivation, subdivision fences, farm buildings, wells of fresh water, dams, tanks, reservoirs, and any other improvement made *bona fide* for the purpose of improving the land or increasing the carrying capacity thereof." These include all improvements worthy of the name. Another important safeguard is provided by Clause 20, which provides that within 30 days after the meeting of Parliament a report shall be presented to both Houses, dealing with the operations of the Act. I think that proves the Government intend to establish this Act on a *bona fide* basis, and that the Government is prevented from acting in any improper manner. Repurchase cannot be made without report, and if the land so purchased is suitable, it is likely to sell again readily in fairly sized blocks, which will always be subject to improvements. The conditions as to improvements are somewhat strict, as provided by Sub-section 5 of Clause 11—"The lessee shall, within two years from the commencement of his lease, fence in at least one-fourth of the quantity contained in his lease, and within five years from the said date shall fence in the whole of the land on the surveyed boundaries, and shall clear and crop at least one-tenth of the land, and within ten years from the said date shall expend upon the land, in improvements prescribed by this Act, an amount equal to the full purchase money, which shall include the cost of the exterior fencing, which shall be of the description prescribed by the Regulations." The stipulation that at least one-tenth shall be cleared and cropped is inserted be-

cause a large portion of the land may not be suitable for agriculture, and I believe one-tenth is not too high a proportion. I think the Bill is *bona fide*, and that it will give to the colony an increased area of land under cultivation; in fact, during the last few years, I have had an idea of this sort in my mind, but then the Government were not in a financial position; but now I think it is a wise step to re-purchase good land and cut it up for sale and improvement. I commend the Bill to the attention of hon. members, who I hope will give it fair treatment, and any amendment suggested will be carefully considered.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: It strikes me that this Bill would do a vast amount of good if properly amended. It also strikes me as being a Bill under which a vast amount of corruption could take place unless safe-guarded against. It is a good thing to break up the large estates, but it does strike me as inconsistent that the Government, having been endeavoring to settle people on the land by giving them 160 acres, should now try to get settlement by buying large tracts of country for which they propose to take the public funds to pay these owners back again. [THE PREMIER: We gave the land away.] I think it should not be possible for large tracts of land to be held by anyone. No man has an inherent right to the soil unless he improves it. I do not dispute his certificate of title: no doubt he has a firm legal basis of contract, but no man, whether he holds squatting or agricultural land, has a right to it unless he makes improvements. [AN HON. MEMBER: To what extent?] The Government have proposed to buy back certain lands which long ago were bought for perhaps 1s. 6d. per acre, and on which no improvements have been effected. It is questionable whether the State should become the owner, because the land may not sell again. It may be very desirable to purchase large tracts for improvement, but the Government should not make the same mistake as in 1874; and if the Government desire to obtain the land which has already passed out of their hands, it is quite possible that after the end of twenty years they may again

wish to re-purchase it, and it would be as well for the Crown to retain it. I really think it would be a very dangerous thing, although I quite recognise that we must make new departures in life. The State might give help to agriculturists perhaps by clearing the land for them. A provision is inserted that before lands are purchased they must be recommended by the Board; but the Government appoint the Board, and supposing at any future date in the history of this colony that the Government should wish to buy certain land that belonged to themselves or their relatives, it would be easy to appoint a Board that would give the very necessary recommendation. I say that, suppose that at a future time we had a corrupt Government—we have not one now, and I hope we shall not—they would be in a position under this Bill to very easily purchase land to benefit themselves.

THE PREMIER: Not very easily.

THE COMMISSIONER OF CROWN LANDS (Hon. A. R. Richardson): It would have to come before Parliament afterwards.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: Does the hon. member think that anything the Government like to propose would not be passed this evening?

THE COMMISSIONER OF CROWN LANDS (Hon. A. R. Richardson): Parliament would have to be corrupt too.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: The hon. member says that Clause 20 is the safeguard in providing that the name of the vendor shall be inserted in the report; but it would be very easy to arrange for a middleman who would sell to the Crown. The question is identical with the usefulness of the Agricultural Bank, if we can be assured of the continuance of the present Manager—although I am afraid some of the banks will steal him from us. I say if the persons who act under this Bill act conscientiously and righteously, a great deal of good can be done, but under the circumstances it is calculated to do a great amount of evil. £200,000 may be spent by the Government Committee under the direction of their Government. Where does this money come from? Under Clause 3 we propose to spend the savings of the people for the purchase of certain lands: there is danger here. The question will be considered in

committee, when perhaps safeguards sufficiently strong can be set up. There is a vast amount of land in this country which I don't think can be settled unless purchased by the State; but except the operations are properly and honestly administered, as they will be no doubt by the present Government, I can see very great harm indeed. I have felt it my duty to point these things out, but I will go so far as to say that I am prepared to vote for the second reading.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

ADJOURNMENT.

The House adjourned at 6.36 o'clock, p.m., until next day.

Legislative Assembly.

THURSDAY, 23RD JULY, 1896.

Powers of Attorney Bill; third reading—Agricultural Bank Act Amendment Bill; third reading—Streets and Roads Closure Bill; second reading—Agricultural Lands Purchase Bill; in committee—Adjournment.

The Speaker took the chair at 4.30 o'clock, p.m.

PRAYERS.

POWERS OF ATTORNEY BILL.

THIRD READING.

Read a third time and transmitted to the Legislative Council.

AGRICULTURAL BANK ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

THIRD READING.

Read a third time, and transmitted to Legislative Council.

STREETS AND ROADS CLOSURE (EASTERN RAILWAY) BILL.

SECOND READING.

THE COMMISSIONER OF RAILWAYS (Hon. F. H. Piesse): In moving the second reading of the Bill, it is only just for me to say that most of the provisions in the Bill, which are included in the schedule, are merely formal; for the reason that these roads, especially those named in schedules 1, 2, and 3, have been, for a number of years, closed against traffic. A communication in reference to them has been made with the municipality of North Fremantle, and no objection has been raised by that body to the closure proposed in the Bill. I may say that where a closure will, in any degree, interfere with traffic, it is proposed to deal with the traffic by making provision for it. For instance, in Section 3 of the schedule, where it is proposed to close a portion of Pensioner-road, at North Fremantle, by diverting the traffic, another road to meet the requirements of that traffic will be made. With regard to Section 4 of the schedule, referring to the closing of part of Kensington-lane, in the city of Perth, no objection seems to have been taken to it by the municipality of Perth; but with regard to Section 5 of the schedule, a communication has been received from the City Council, asking that an overhead bridge be placed at the junction of this road with the railway, leading into Roe-street; but, owing to the very steep embankment which occurs there, and which prevents the carrying out of the City Council's request, an overhead bridge cannot be made. It is a lane that is not much used, and has, for a number of years, been blocked against traffic. What little traffic there is consists of people crossing from this lane and passing through the railway reserve, then getting through the fences which cut off the communication between Roe-street and other streets in West Perth. Therefore, it has not been found necessary to make an overhead bridge at that place. As I do not intend to ask the House to consider this Bill in Committee immediately, and as, no doubt, there are some hon. members here to watch the interests of the city, if there are any objections there will be ample time to consider them. With regard to Section 6 of the