

MR. BROWN said he could not see how, if we gave this assistance to the present company, we could consistently refuse similar assistance to any other lessees in the same district. If the search for water were to be made in various parts of the district, the proposal would not be open to the same objections, and, if once water was found, the colony should not be pledged to any further expenditure. The hon. member said, if progress were reported, he would be prepared to move a resolution to that effect.

MR. MARMION said, as to other companies making similar applications hereafter, the answer to such applications would be a simple one. If the search now contemplated proved successful the Government would simply say, "We have done all we intend doing in the matter; we have proved the existence of water, and we are now satisfied." On the other hand, if after an expenditure of £6,000 the search for water should prove unsuccessful, he ventured to say we were not likely to receive many more proposals of this nature.

MR. STEERE said he approved of the terms of the resolution sketched out by the hon. member for the Gascoyne, so far as it went, but he would go further, and provide that the locality where the water was discovered should be declared a public reserve.

MR. BROWN thought the company would object to that, if they bore half the expense of the search for water.

MR. STEERE said that so long as they could use it themselves, he did not see why they should object. He did not think they ought to have a monopoly of the water, after the Government sharing the expense of finding it.

THE COMMISSIONER OF CROWN LANDS (Hon. J. Forrest) said he was glad to find that hon. members were more inclined to favor the present proposal than they were the proposal submitted two years ago. He thought, now, that they were within reasonable distance at any rate of a practical solution of the difficulty. Reference had been made to the liberal terms and the special advantages offered to the lessees of land in the Eucla district. So far as he was aware there were very few advantages. They paid exactly the same rents as the holders

of second-class land in other parts of the colony. It was true they had pre-emptive rights, but, on the other hand, they had no water, which was a great drawback. As to any other companies coming in with similar applications for assistance, every application must be considered on its merits. These people applied two years ago, and they now applied again. He had heard of no other applicants.

MR. BROWN then moved that progress be reported and leave given to sit again.

Agreed to.

Progress reported.

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

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL,

Friday, 7th August, 1885.

Petition (No. 3): Governors of Collegiate School—Establishment of Geological Department—Duplication of Telegraph line to Albany—Inspection of Murray River by Sir John Coode—Charges against Medical Officer, Guildford—Correspondence re Appointment Second Mistress, Perth Girls' School—Steam communication with Eucla—Weir on the River Swan—Correspondence re Constitution of Federal Council—The Stamp Act and Bills of Exchange—Land Regulations (Message No. 3): referred to select committee—Explosives Bill: further considered in committee—Northern District Special Revenue Bill: second reading—Adjournment.

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

PRAYERS.

PETITION FROM GOVERNORS OF COLLEGIATE SCHOOL.

MR. BURT presented a petition from the Governors of the Church of England Collegiate School, praying for a dissolution of that corporation and for vesting the buildings in the Standing Committee of the Church of England.

The petition was received and read.

ESTABLISHMENT OF GEOLOGICAL DEPARTMENT.

SIR T. COCKBURN-CAMPBELL, in accordance with notice, asked the Colonial Secretary whether the Government had had under consideration the desirability of establishing a permanent Geological Department for the colony, and whether any communication would be made to the House upon the subject during the current session?

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. M. Fraser) said the Government, while fully admitting the value of geological research, did not feel able to make any proposal to the House this session for the organisation of a Geological Department.

SIR T. COCKBURN-CAMPBELL: Is it in consequence of the Government considering that the expenditure would be too great?

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. M. Fraser): On that ground alone.

DUPLICATION OF TELEGRAPH LINE TO ALBANY.

MR. BURT asked the Colonial Secretary when the Government intended to proceed with the duplication of the telegraph line to Albany? The inhabitants were very seriously inconvenienced at present owing to the great press of foreign messages, which monopolised the present line.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. M. Fraser) said the Government intended to proceed with the work as soon as the expenditure had been provided for on the Loan Estimates. The general subject of expenditure under the new loan would be before the Council in a few days.

INSPECTION OF RIVER MURRAY BY SIR JOHN COODE.

MR. BURT asked the Colonial Secretary whether the Government intended to make arrangements with Sir John Coode to visit the mouth of the Murray River, near Mandurah, and report upon the question of the opening of the river, and the works he would suggest for such purpose?

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. M. Fraser) said the Government were in consultation with Sir John Coode on this matter, and the papers relative to the works in question were now in his hands.

CHARGES AGAINST MEDICAL OFFICER, GUILDFORD.

MR. BROCKMAN asked the Colonial Secretary if he would lay upon the table all reports received by the Government containing any charges against the Resident Medical Officer, Guildford, relative to his non-attendance on public or private patients. He moved for these papers because he had heard that complaints were very generally made by the inhabitants of Guildford and the surrounding district as to the refusal of the medical officer (Mr. Holmes) to attend upon private patients. He had also heard some complaints as to his refusal to attend public patients. His (Mr. Brockman's) idea with regard to the salary paid to these medical officers by the Government was that it was intended not only to pay them for attending Government officers, but also in order that their services might be available for the settlers of the district, upon paying for them. The salary paid to these medical officers, £100 a year, could never be intended to make them independent of private practice. On the other hand, as these medical men were in receipt of this £100 a year from the Government, other private practitioners were handicapped, and hesitated before settling down in a country district in opposition to the resident medical officer, so that the settlers and their families were entirely at the mercy of these Government doctors, and it was very hard indeed if they refused to attend upon them.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. M. Fraser) said the Government had had under consideration certain complaints against the officer in question, but it had not been found that any charge justifying official notice had been proved. It would be undesirable to produce the papers, but the attention of the medical officer had been called to the complaints.

APPOINTMENT OF SECOND MISTRESS, PERTH GIRLS' SCHOOL.

MR. STEERE asked the Colonial Secretary to lay on the table the correspondence between the Central Board of Education and the District Board, with reference to the appointment of a second mistress to the Perth (Government) Girls' School, and also the Inspector's report on the said school.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. M. Fraser) replied that the Central Board of Education would be communicated with on the subject, and a further reply given.

STEAM COMMUNICATION WITH EUCLA.

MR. VENN asked the Colonial Secretary whether the Government had taken any steps during the past year to secure to the port of Eucla steam communication, as suggested in a resolution of the Legislative Council passed last session. That resolution contemplated that the steamers employed under contract by the Government should, under the new contract, call at Eucla—when required to do so by the Government—three times going to and coming from Adelaide, in the course of the year. He had not heard whether the steamers had called there at all as yet. Did the Government intend this clause in the contract to remain a dead letter?

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. M. Fraser) said that arrangements for the steamers calling at Eucla had been made, particulars of which would be found in the copy of the contract with the Adelaide Steamship Co. annexed to the Postmaster General's report for 1884. One steamer had made one trip, and it was intended that another trip should be made about the end of September. The Government, he assured the hon. member, would enforce the terms of the contract whenever they considered it necessary to do so.

WEIR ACROSS THE RIVER SWAN.

MR. HARPER, in accordance with notice, moved, "That an humble address be presented to His Excellency the Governor, praying that he will be pleased to take such measures as may be necessary to procure from Sir John Coode a full and detailed report upon the practicability, as well as the cost, of placing a weir across the river Swan at a suitable spot above the Perth bridge; such weir to be provided with necessary lock and flood gates, the object of such weir being the prevention of the flow of salt water inland." Hon. members were aware that the river Swan, above Perth, consisted of about twenty miles of tidal water, which, during a portion of the year, became quite

salty, and was consequently unavailable for any practical purpose. The rise and fall of the tide was very small—only a few feet—and, if it were possible to prevent the flow of salt water inland, what was now salt marsh could be reclaimed and converted into rich pasture land. Beyond that, we could have a supply of fresh water available for irrigation purposes. With our growing population it was even at present impossible to supply Perth and Guildford with dairy produce, of local production, and, if our population (as he hoped it would be) doubled in a few years, this would be a very serious thing indeed. He thought it was reasonable to suppose that, given these facilities for reclamation and irrigation, there would become available a considerable area of rich soil on the banks of the river, capable of supplying all our requirements in the shape of dairy produce, vegetables, etc. It was a melancholy fact, but, on a perusal of the Blue Book for 1884, he found that during that year we introduced 116 tons of butter into the colony, valued at something over £10,000; also over 500 tons of potatoes, valued at about £1,800,—or nearly £12,000 worth of produce that really ought to be produced in the immediate vicinity of our own towns. He thought if the modest request contemplated in this address were acceded to, it would go to show whether it was practicable and within our means to compass this project.

MR. BROCKMAN, in seconding the motion, said he thought he should be within the mark when he said that no less than six thousand acres of the richest land in the colony might be brought under cultivation if the land referred to were reclaimed. This land would thereby increase in value at least £2 per acre per annum, so that, if the proposed scheme were carried out, the value of the land to the owners would be enhanced at least £12,000 a year; and he should imagine that the owners of the land would be quite willing to pay a water rate of £1 per acre per annum, which would yield an income of £6,000 a year, and which he should think would be very good interest on the outlay incurred.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. M. Fraser) said he was entirely with the hon. member as to the desirability of

carrying out the scheme which he contemplated, if practicable; but looking at the fact that Sir John Coode was here for a special purpose and that his time was very limited, and looking at the fact that we had now at the head of the Public Works Department a gentleman of large experience in such works as the hon. member contemplated, he would ask the hon. member to consent to the omission of the words "from Sir John Coode" from his resolution. If the hon. member would do this, it would give the Government freedom of action in the matter, and they would be able during the recess to take steps to obtain an estimate of the cost of the works necessary for carrying out the object in view.

MR. HARPER said that under the circumstances he should have no objection to the omission of the words proposed. He was glad to hear that we had an officer of our own who was capable of undertaking such work.

THE DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC WORKS (Hon. J. A. Wright) said he was perfectly in accord with the object in view, and the work would be taken in hand at once, or as soon as he had a little liberty. He assured the hon. member that the Public Works Department was perfectly competent to do all that was required in the matter.

CORRESPONDENCE RE FEDERAL COUNCIL.

MR. BROWN moved for the production of all correspondence that had passed between this Government and the Secretary of State, and the Government of any of the neighboring colonies, in reference to the question of Federation. The hon. member said he moved for these papers in consequence of a statement that had caused him much surprise, which appeared in a speech recently made by Mr. Service, the Premier of Victoria, to the effect that this colony had expressed its unwillingness to join the other Australian colonies in this federal movement. This speech was reported in the *Argus*, and must have been the result of some misapprehension. Hon. members were aware what was done last session by that House in connection with this matter, how they accepted all the resolutions passed at the Federal Convention with

one exception, and how they had also accepted the Enabling Bill, and requested the Governor to take such steps as were necessary to show the other colonies and the mother country that Western Australia desired that the bill should be passed in its integrity as drafted by the Conference. He had every faith himself that everything that was necessary to be done in the matter had been done by our own Government, but it was strange that Mr. Service should have been so misinformed as to the attitude taken up by this colony in connection with the matter, and the misunderstanding seemed to have arisen from what fell from Lord Derby, in a speech delivered by him in the Imperial Parliament, to the effect that this colony had expressed its unwillingness to join the other colonies in the proposed Federal union. This may have been a reporter's mistake, but it appeared in the *Argus* uncontradicted, and his object in calling for this correspondence was to let the public at large know that so far from this colony having declined to join in the movement, Western Australia had from the very first expressed a desire to cast its lot with the other colonies in this great and important step.

MR. STEERE said he had much pleasure in seconding the resolution. He did not quite understand what Mr. Service could be alluding to when he said that the first he had heard of this colony refusing to join was in reading the debate in the Imperial Parliament. He (Mr. Steere) happened to see the statement made by Lord Derby, in which the noble lord stated that Western Australia was one of the colonies that had approved of the 31st clause of the Enabling Bill, which provided that any colony wishing to secede from the Federal Council could do so at any time. He was very sorry to hear that this colony had approved of this clause. A bill emasculated in that way would in his opinion be worthless for the purposes of Federation.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. M. Fraser) thought that hon. members had placed too much reliance upon a newspaper report, and he thought a very proper course had been taken in moving for the correspondence.

The address was agreed to.

STAMPING BILLS OF EXCHANGE.

MR. VENN, in accordance with notice, moved, "That an humble address be presented to His Excellency the Governor, intimating, in the opinion of the House, the desirability of altering the provisions of the Stamp Act, so that the stamps required upon a bill of exchange may be duly affixed and cancelled by the drawer or by the acceptor at any time before such instrument was discounted or presented for payment." He was sure this would be found to be a most acceptable change to the general public, while at the same time it would result in no loss to the revenue.

MR. BROWN, in supporting the motion, said that unless the drawer of a bill now stamped it as soon as it was drawn—although no attempt was made to negotiate it—the drawer was liable to a penalty. As a matter of fact and of practice, bills were often drawn upon persons who, for many reasons, did not accept them, and they were therefore valueless, and the stamp which the drawer was obliged to put upon these bills was simply wasted. He thought ample security would be afforded if the drawer of a bill were allowed to stamp it at any time before attempting to negotiate it. Considering as he did that the Stamp Act was a most legitimate source of revenue, and that the vexatious provision referred to had done possibly more than anything else to set people against the Act, the motion had his hearty support.

MR. MARMION said if the Attorney General could see his way clear to alter the Act as proposed, he would earn for himself the gratitude of the business portion of the community.

MR. CROWTHER said that what was wanted was only reasonable, namely, that any party interested in a bill of exchange should be at liberty to place the necessary stamp on it before attempting to negotiate it. Until a bill was accepted it was so much waste paper; but if a man now omitted to put a stamp upon it before the ink was dry upon it, the law was down upon him in a minute. The absurdity of this provision of the Act was such that as a matter of practice the Act was being ridden over rough-shod every day in the year.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL (Hon. A. P. Hensman) said he noticed, and it was somewhat peculiar, that no legal member of the House had supported the proposition.

MR. CROWTHER: It is to their advantage to remain silent.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL (Hon. A. P. Hensman) said he was sorry to hear that. He was sorry the hon. member should have such a poor opinion of the legal profession. However, no doubt, as a general principle, it was very undesirable to have penalties, if you could avoid them, and especially penalties for mere technical omissions. With regard to the motion, so far as he could understand it, it was this,—that a stamp might be affixed to a bill at any time before it was presented for payment at a bank. A bill might be renewed over and over again, before its presentation at a bank. They would thus have a series of bills, and it would only be necessary to stamp the last of them. This was how he understood the motion. Seeing, however, that it was supported by several mercantile members, there might possibly be something in it that he couldn't at present see. He quite agreed that if they could protect the revenue without providing penalties they should do so. At the same time these stamps were a legitimate source of revenue, and there must be some rule of law governing the use of them, and it would not do to have the law deliberately broken. If a man chose to draw a bill upon another, without good reason for doing so, and the person drawn upon did not accept it, that was the drawer's own lookout. People who did so recklessly, and drew bills upon persons they had no right to draw upon, must not complain if they should lose their stamps. If, however, the House chose to pass the resolution, all he could say was that it would receive due consideration, and, if it could be carried out consistently with the provisions of the Act, and at the same time the protection of the revenue, he was sure the Government would be anxious to carry out the wishes of the House. But, as at present advised, he could not quite follow the arguments put forward in support of the motion.

MR. BURT said that so far as he could see at present he was not prepared to support this address. He could see vari-

ous objections to it, which it was unnecessary to dwell upon now.

The motion upon being put was carried.

LAND REGULATIONS (MESSAGE No. 3).

On the order of the day for the consideration of His Excellency's Message (No. 3) relating to an alteration of the Land Regulations,

THE COMMISSIONER OF CROWN LANDS (Hon. J. Forrest), in rising again to move that the message be referred to a select committee, said he did not purpose to say very much on the subject that evening. He was probably in a worse position in that respect than most hon. members were, having already been courageous enough, or indiscreet enough, to have formulated his views on the subject, and to express his opinions very freely, in a memorandum now before the House. He would here say that this memorandum merely gave his own views on the subject, so far as he had been able to put them into practical shape. It did not, in any way, so far as he was aware, reflect the views of the Government, or of anyone else, except himself individually. He said this because it would not be well, he thought, for the House to suppose that in this matter the Government as a body had in any way given their adhesion to the views expressed in that memorandum. He also wished to say that on this very important subject—the most important probably that would come before them during the session—the views he held and had put forward were not fixed views which he was determined to stick to through thick and through thin. The subject was so important and of such magnitude that he thought there was room for the existence of great difference of opinion with regard to it, and he did not think it would be wise for him—and he hardly thought it would be wise for anyone—to have too fixed opinions with regard to it. They saw that a great difference of opinion existed on this subject of land legislation in the other colonies, where the Land Regulations were being continually altered. He had, as he had already said, ventured to express his own views on the subject pretty freely, but he candidly confessed that he found a great deal of difficulty in arriving at any defi-

nite conclusions. He thought, however, he possessed one advantage over many hon. members, in that he was tolerably well acquainted with most parts of the colony, and in a position to take what might be called "a broad and comprehensive" view of the subject. It was a very easy matter for people—even people who had not paid much attention to the subject—to find fault with views put forward as he had put forward his views, but he thought before any hon. member went to the length of condemning the views of others he should be prepared to substitute something better in their place. All he desired to do now was to propose that the House should appoint a select committee to deal with the subject in the first place; but, before the committee commenced their labors, he thought it was very desirable that they should be placed in possession of the views of other hon. members. He thought himself that the mistake which people generally fell into in dealing with this land question was the mistake of looking at it from a local point of view, and from a local point of view only. Those who lived in one part of the colony generally looked at the question from the point of view that best suited their own requirements, forgetting that without a very comprehensive measure, it would be impossible to frame regulations exactly suitable for every portion of a vast territory like this. He begged to move that His Excellency's message be referred to a select committee, consisting of Mr. Marmion, Mr. Harper, Mr. Grant, Mr. Brown, Mr. Brockman, Mr. Wittenoom, and the mover.

MR. CROWTHER said he might mention at the outset that he thought the House and the country were under a debt of gratitude to the Surveyor General for having put forward his views, in the succinct but comprehensive way in which that hon. gentleman had done in his memorandum. With many of the hon. gentleman's propositions he agreed in principle, if not in detail. With regard to the appointment of a select committee, it was his intention to move that the committee be chosen by ballot, for he was anxious to be on it himself, for this reason,—that he was the only representative in the House of a purely agricultural district. With respect to the Surveyor General's pro-

posals to fix the price of land held under special occupation license at 10s. per acre, payable in twenty yearly instalments of 6d. an acre, instead of ten instalments of 1s. an acre, he did not think this would remove the great drawback against the successful working of the present system. He alluded to the difficulties in the way of carrying out the conditions as to improvements, within the time required, and with the means at the command of the men who as a rule took up land under these special occupation regulations. It was true that a more liberal interpretation was proposed to be put as to what shall constitute improvements, and that the period within which the improvements must be carried out was to be extended—which of itself would be a great improvement upon the present regulations. Still the fact remained that in the vast majority of cases these conditions as to improvements were conditions that were beyond the power of the class of men who took up these licenses to carry out, and at the same time earn for themselves a decent livelihood. As to the residential clause he agreed with it to a great extent, but the conditions as to transfer did not please him. He would not allow land to be transferred at all until it became a man's own in fee simple. He also thought that the holders of special occupation licenses should be allowed to remove any timber off their land, and do what they liked with it. It would do no harm to the land, but on the contrary do it good. He was also opposed to any hard and fast conditions as to a man forfeiting his land, in the event of his not being able to carry out the required improvements. If this default arose from circumstances over which a man had no control—accident, losses, or sickness—he thought the man ought to be allowed to retain his land (not in fee simple nor to transfer it) until he completed the necessary improvements. With regard to the Surveyor General's proposal as to grazing farms, he was not in a position to say much about it; but he was quite certain in his own mind that the proposed system would, if carried out, prove of benefit, and revolutionise the central districts of the colony. As to leases, he was sorry to see that it was proposed to increase the rent. He thought the present rent charged was quite as much as lessees as a rule could afford, and

a great deal more than many in his own district could afford.

Mr. BURGESS said he could not quite agree with the Surveyor General in his proposed amendments, though there were some very desirable alterations amongst them. With regard to the proposal to declare agricultural areas in the Central District, he thought it would be a very difficult matter to find or set apart any agricultural areas. To his mind the whole district should be regarded as an agricultural area. There were very few portions of it on which you could settle a large population: the country as a whole was too poor and patchy. The system of agricultural areas was a system which he should very much like to see adopted, but he was afraid it would be very difficult indeed to carry it out in this colony. As to the proposal to extend the payment for land over twenty years in annual instalments of 6d. an acre, he thought that was a very moderate rental. The conditions as to special occupation licenses now were not at all liberal. He thought if a man fenced his land, and improved it by clearing, making dams, and otherwise, he should be entitled to his fee simple after he paid 10s. an acre, without any further charges. With regard to grazing farms, the proposal was one that would require very serious consideration indeed. The object which the Surveyor General had in view was no doubt a good one, and, if it could be carried out, would tend very much to encourage settlement; but before adopting this system of grazing farms, he thought it would be well to bear in mind what effect these farms would have in swallowing up the whole of the good land in the country. It would virtually shut up the best of the country from sale, and people who came here with the intention of purchasing land to settle on would find very little good country open to them in the Central District of the colony. If there were a large number of these farms they would virtually extinguish the squatting interest. After setting apart agricultural areas, and allowing a certain quantity of that land to be taken for grazing farms, the land which would then be left for the pastoral leaseholder would be virtually of no service to him. The eyes of the country would be picked out, and nothing would remain of the Central District but sandplain and a very poor

class of country. He thought it would be more to the interest of the country generally to reserve the land suitable for leasing, and not to give up the whole of the country for these grazing farms. With regard to the Surveyor General's proposals as to pastoral leases, the land at present held by settlers in the Eastern and South-Eastern districts was of that character that it was really not worth any more than they were now paying for it. They were now paying 5s. per thousand acres, and would soon have to pay 10s., which to his mind was quite as much as the land was ever likely to be worth. He thought it would be a great mistake if the House were to agree to the proposal to raise the rental of these lands, or to fix any extra charge for land outside the settled districts. It would result in a large portion of the country being thrown up altogether. He saw no provision made by the Surveyor General with reference to poison lands. A great deal of country included in the pastoral leases in the Central District was utterly worthless, and he should like to draw the attention of the committee particularly to that point, so that some special regulations may be framed dealing with these poison lands, and also mineral lands.

MR. STEERE said he was very pleased to hear from the Surveyor General that he was not so wedded to these proposals that he would be unwilling to modify his views with regard to them, after conferring on the subject with other hon. members. He was also pleased to find that these suggestions simply represented the hon. gentleman's own views, and not the views of the Government. As they were not put forward as the views of the Government, but merely as the individual views of the Surveyor General, they did not of course come to them with as much force as if they represented the collective opinion of the Administration, though of course they were entitled to every consideration as the views of the official head of the department. He must say it had struck him—and he thought it must have struck every other hon. member—as an extraordinary thing that during the late general elections this question of the land regulations never cropped up at all, or at any rate was scarcely mentioned; and the natural conclusion to be drawn from that fact, he thought, was, that the present

land regulations were so liberal that the great majority of people did not consider it necessary to alter them. There could be no doubt whatever, if any great feeling of dissatisfaction had existed, it would have manifested itself at election time, as it was well known that the question was going to be brought before the House this session. He must say for his own part that he agreed in the views which he thought the generality of colonists entertained, as to there being no necessity for any great or radical alteration in the regulations. The only two points of importance which appeared to him to call for consideration were these,—how to make the conditions as to special occupation licenses more liberal, and also if possible to give greater security of tenure to pastoral leaseholders. He thought it would be very wrong and foolish on their part to attempt to revolutionise the present land regulations,—which would be the case if they accepted the Surveyor General's suggestions. He thought it would be almost impracticable to set apart agricultural areas in the Central District, as proposed: the land of the colony fit for agriculture was so patchy and so scattered about that it would be impossible to carry out such a system. He remembered the late member for the Vasse (Mr. Carey)—who probably had surveyed more land in the southern districts than any other person—he remembered Mr. Carey making this statement, that in all the blocks he had ever surveyed not one of them contained 50 per cent. that was fit for agriculture. And, speaking from his own knowledge, he thought the statement was perfectly correct. Therefore he thought it was out of the question to set apart agricultural areas; and, that being the case, he thought the whole of the Central District should be regarded as an area open to free selection,—not, however, with survey before selection, as proposed by the Surveyor General. He thought the system of survey before selection could not be carried out here except at enormous expense, and great injustice to those who had already taken up land under special occupation license. An enormous quantity of land had been purchased which had not been surveyed. Nor did he approve of the Surveyor General's suggestion that no more land should be sold. He thought it would be

very unwise to make any such provision. With regard to grazing farms, he did not think the system would prove successful, nor did he believe that the farms would be remunerative to those who took them, the natural pasturage of the colony being so poor. He was afraid the Surveyor General had become imbued with this idea as to grazing farms when visiting the colony of Victoria. But the natural features and grazing capabilities of land in Victoria were entirely different from our own. Here it took on an average from 15 to 20 acres to keep one sheep, whereas land in Victoria would carry one or two sheep to the acre. The same conditions for the successful working of these grazing farms did therefore not exist here as in the other colonies. As to the question of security of tenure for pastoral leaseholders, the only way he could see to accomplish the object, without at the same time injuring the agricultural interest, was to adopt the system lately introduced in New South Wales, namely, to divide every lease into equal portions, giving a long security of tenure over one-half, and leaving the other moiety open to free selection, but to be used by the lessee until it was so required. He thought if we could do that, and liberalise our special occupation regulations, and give such security to pastoral leaseholders as was compatible with our settling people on the land,—he thought if we could do that we would be making our land regulations as liberal as they possibly could be made, without detriment to the colony.

The motion to refer the subject to a select committee was then put and passed.

MR. BROWN said he knew there was a desire, and he could quite understand the desire, for a small committee, but it was quite opposed to his own view. If ever there was a subject which required the various interests of the colony to be represented upon the committee appointed to deal with it, it was this question of the land regulations. He thought it was most desirable that it should be representative of the various landed interests, soils, and climate of the colony, so that by a free interchange of views some tangible proposals may be submitted to the House. There might be objections to large committees as a rule, but there were instances in which large committees had done their work

well. He need only refer to the select committee to whom Mr. Hordern's land grant railway proposals were referred, which consisted of eleven members. That was a difficult and intricate subject to deal with, but, in his opinion, it was not so difficult and intricate as this. He thought the result of the deliberations of that committee had given universal satisfaction in Western Australia, and he believed no question was ever more thoroughly and satisfactorily threshed out as was that question of land grant railways by the select committee referred to. This, he maintained, was due to the fact that the committee consisted of such a large number of members, representing all parts of the colony and its varied interests. There was nothing kept back by that committee; their report was pretty full, and the members of the committee did not attempt to burke a full and free discussion. With regard to this land question, he had taken the sense of the House so far as he had been able to do, and he found there was a desire, a very natural desire he thought, on the part of nearly every hon. member in the House to be placed on this committee, and he had been asked to propose that the committee should consist of at least nine members. They could not of course have every member of the House on this select committee—though for his own part he should have liked to see it; but he thought they might and ought to have ten. He would therefore move that the committee consist of ten members.

MR. MARMION quite endorsed what had fallen from the hon. member for the Gascoyne that it was desirable that every landed interest in the colony should be represented on this committee, and not only the landed interests, but also the commercial interests, which were closely identified with the agricultural and pastoral industries of the colony.

THE COMMISSIONER OF CROWN LANDS (Hon. J. Forrest) said that, speaking on behalf of himself and his colleagues, they had no objection to the committee consisting of ten members.

MR. S. H. PARKER said he felt there was no chance of the House agreeing to a small committee, but, personally, he felt bound to protest against such a large committee. The hon. member for the Gascoyne said that every member in the

House was anxious to serve on this committee. Why? Because they felt that all the real work would be done by this committee, because they felt that the whole question would be settled by this committee, and that whatever decision the committee arrived at would be the decision which the House would eventually arrive at. As a rule the desire of hon. members in that House had been to escape from serving on select committees, but here they found that nearly every member—with the exception of himself and two or three others—was anxious to be placed on this committee. The reason for this, as he had already said, was obvious: hon. members felt that the report of this committee would settle the whole question, as regards its main principles,—though perhaps all the members of the committee might not be in accord as to every detail. The appointment of such a large committee could not fail to have the effect of burking free discussion in that House, for members who were not on the committee would feel that discussion would be useless, when they found a large committee like this agreeing. The object of select committees was to collect data and to marshal leading facts for the information and guidance of the House to enable it to arrive at a decision upon a subject, and not to dominate the views of the Legislature or to compel it to accept ready-made opinions. He could not help feeling that they were endangering the rights and privileges of the House, as a deliberative assembly, when they agreed to the appointment of these large select committees, and he must raise his voice against it. He protested against it on principle. Personally he had no objection to the whole House being appointed to serve on this committee, and perhaps the simplest course in this instance would be to move that the committee should consist of every member of the House. On all future occasions he should object to any select committee consisting of more than five members.

The question, that the committee consist of ten members, was then put and carried; whereupon

THE COMMISSIONER OF CROWN LANDS (Hon. J. Forrest) moved that the following members be added to the committee he had already named: Mr. Crowther, Mr. Steere, and Mr. Venn.

MR. PARKER required that the committee be appointed by ballot.

Hon. members having delivered to the Clerk the list of members to serve on such committee, the Clerk reported to the Speaker the following names of members as having the greatest number of votes:—The Honorable J. Forrest, Mr. Brown, Mr. Burt, Mr. Crowther, Mr. Grant, Mr. Harper, Mr. Marmion, Mr. Steere, Mr. Venn, and Mr. Wittenoom.

EXPLOSIVES BILL.

This bill was further considered in committee.

Clause 6.—Keeping of explosives:

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL (Hon. A. P. Hensman) said that when this clause was before the committee the other day an hon. member, Mr. Steere, moved as an amendment that the words "for his private use, and not for sale," in the first sub-section of the proviso, be struck out. This sub-section referred to persons keeping gunpowder to an amount not exceeding 30lbs. on their premises. He wished to know whether the committee had considered the effect of this amendment. If the amendment were carried, anybody could keep 30lbs. of gunpowder on his premises, without being licensed to do so, which he thought would be rather dangerous, especially in towns or centres of population.

MR. BROWN failed to see why it would be any more dangerous than if these words were retained. It appeared to him that the danger would be practically the same, while, on the other hand, if the words "not for sale" were omitted, a settler in the country who happened to have some powder in his house would be at liberty to sell some of it to a neighbor.

MR. CROWTHER suggested that the whole Act be restricted in its operation to municipalities. It could never be made workable nor carried out in country places.

The question, that the words proposed to be struck out be struck out, was then put and passed.

MR. STEERE moved that the words "without the limits of a municipality" be inserted in lieu thereof; which was agreed to.

MR. MARMION thought some provision should be made with regard to the

quantity of blasting powder that might be kept without a license. It was very necessary that country settlers should be allowed to keep sufficient blasting powder on their stations for their own use, and he would move that after the word "or," in the third line, the words "blasting powder to an amount not exceeding 100lbs." be inserted. There would be no more danger in keeping 100lbs. of blasting powder than 30lbs. of gunpowder.

MR. CROWTHER thought the bill was more applicable to a town like London than to Western Australia. The whole place was hardly worth being blown up.

The amendment was adopted, and the clause as amended agreed to.

Clauses 7 to 17 were agreed to, with some verbal alterations.

Clause 18.—Boats or vehicles conveying gunpowder to be provided with tarpaulins for the safe and proper covering of the same, when the quantity conveyed exceeds 10lbs.:

MR. CROWTHER asked why necessarily a tarpaulin? Would nothing else do? He thought people who knew they had powder on board would not be such fools as not to take care it was properly protected. Why not also provide that every boat or cart used in conveying over 10lbs. of powder should show a red flag?

MR. MARMION said if this clause applied to explosives it would apply to a tin of kerosene, and nobody would be allowed to carry a tin of kerosene unless it was covered with a tarpaulin.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL (Hon. A. P. Hensman) moved that the clause be struck out.

Agreed to, and clause expunged.

Clauses 19 to 21 were adopted without opposition.

Clause 22.—"It shall be lawful for any inspector of weights and measures, at all reasonable times, to inspect and test all petroleum kept, offered, or exposed for sale, and if upon such inspection and test any description of petroleum shall be found kept in such a condition as to give off an inflammable vapour at a temperature of less than one hundred degrees of Fahrenheit's thermometer and contrary to the provisions of this Act, the same shall be liable to be seized and upon conviction forfeited as aforesaid, and such person

so examining the same shall retain a sample thereof; and the person or persons so offending shall be liable for any such offence to any penalty not exceeding £5. Provided always, that if the person or persons in whose possession such petroleum shall be found as aforesaid shall claim to have a further test made on their behalf, the justices before whom complaint of the said offence may be laid shall call before them some person having competent knowledge, who shall test a portion of the sample so retained as aforesaid in the manner hereinafter provided and shall give evidence of the result of such test, and the justices shall direct payment to be made to the analyst of a sum not less than five shillings nor more than twenty shillings; and in case of conviction the person convicted shall pay the cost of such analysis, and in case of acquittal such cost shall be paid by the Colonial Treasurer out of the general revenue."

MR. STEERE thought it would be much more satisfactory if some provision were made whereby all kerosene introduced into the colony should be examined before it was allowed to be landed. He had heard of a shipment of inferior kerosene, which the Victorian Government would not allow to be landed, being sent on to this colony, and there was nothing to prevent its being landed here, and placed in the market. He thought the public here ought to be protected against inferior and dangerous brands of kerosene as much as the public in the other colonies. This clause, in his opinion, did not go far enough.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL (Hon. A. P. Hensman) said the same clause had been the law of the colony for the past twenty-four years, and it did not appear to have worked much mischief.

MR. SHENTON thought there would be considerable difficulty and expense attending the compulsory testing of every shipment of kerosene that came into the colony. No doubt it was very desirable that the public should be protected against inferior brands, and from having kerosene that was dangerously inflammable foisted upon the market, after its being condemned elsewhere. The present clause provided for the testing, on shore, of any kerosene which there might

be reasonable cause to suspect was not of the standard quality, but there was nothing in the clause to prevent such kerosene being landed, and unless it happened to be suspected it might be placed on the market, and very serious consequences might be the result. There were some difficulties in the way, he admitted, but if progress were reported, some amendment might be prepared that would meet the case.

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

NORTHERN DISTRICTS REVENUE AMENDMENT BILL.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. M. Fraser), in moving the second reading of this bill, said its object was merely to empower the Governor from time to time to appoint the persons who shall be the authorities to issue licenses under the provisions of the Northern District Special Revenue Act.

The motion for the second reading was agreed to, *sub silentio*.

The House adjourned at a quarter to twelve o'clock (midnight).

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL,

Monday, 10th August, 1885.

Kimberley gold specimens and Geological Map—School Buildings at York and Newcastle—Water-boring, Eucla District—Annuity to Lady Barlee—Message (No. 11): Execution of Public Works enumerated in the Schedule of the Loan Act, 1884—Allowance to His Excellency the Governor—Indemnification for War Losses (Message No. 4)—Imported Stock Amendment Bill: in committee—Colonial Passengers Amendment Bill: third reading—Explosives Bill: further considered in committee—Adjournment.

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

PRAYERS.

KIMBERLEY GOLD SPECIMENS AND GEOLOGICAL MAP.

MR. GRANT asked the Surveyor General to lay on the table the geological map made by Mr. Hardman of the Kimberley district, and also the gold specimens of auriferous quartz alleged to have been discovered there by Mr. Hardman, for the inspection of hon. members.

THE SURVEYOR GENERAL (Hon. J. Forrest) said the map was not yet quite ready, but would be placed on the table when completed. He was absent from the colony when Mr. Hardman returned from his expedition to the Kimberley district, and he had not the gold specimens in his possession, but would make inquiries with regard to them. As to the map, he thought, when hon. members saw it, they would be satisfied that Mr. Hardman's labors had not been thrown away, and that the money thus spent had, combined with Mr. Hardman's report, probably done more to advance the material interests of the colony than any other sum of money spent in the colony.

SCHOOL BUILDINGS, YORK AND NEWCASTLE.

In reply to MR. HARPER, THE DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC WORKS (Hon. J. A. Wright) said that tenders would be invited for the erection of the school buildings at York and Newcastle (promised last year by the Central Board), as soon as the Board had approved of the revised plans and specifications of the buildings.

WATER-BORING, EUCLA DISTRICT.

MR. BROWN, with leave, without notice, asked the Commissioner of Crown Lands whether the applicants for assistance in boring for water in the Eucla District, referred to in the Governor's Message to that House were the same persons who in 1883 had applied for and were refused similar concessions.

THE COMMISSIONER OF CROWN LANDS (Hon. J. Forrest) said he would inquire, and answer the hon. member's question another day.

ANNUITY TO LADY BARLEE.

MR. CROWTHER, in accordance with notice, moved the following resolution: "That this House desires to mark its