

ADJOURNMENT.

The Council, at 2:35 o'clock p.m., adjourned until Wednesday, 9th August, at 4:30 o'clock p.m.

Legislative Assembly,

Tuesday, 8th August, 1893.

Message from His Excellency the Governor: Duties on Imported Live Stock—Stock Tax Bill: first reading—Use and cost of Government Steam Launch—Stock Tax upon Cattle entering the Colony by Land—Government Assistance to Children's Hospital, Perth—Homesteads Bill: second reading; Adjourned Debate—Midland Railway Company's Loan, Second Instalment—Adjournment.

THE SPEAKER took the chair at 2:30 p.m.

PRAYERS.

MESSAGE FROM HIS EXCELLENCY THE GOVERNOR—DUTIES ON IMPORTED LIVE STOCK.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest) presented the following message from His Excellency the Governor, and the same was read:—

"In accordance with the provisions of 'Clause 67 of 'The Constitution Act, 1889,' the Governor recommends that 'towards raising the supply granted to 'Her Majesty, there shall, on and after 'the eighth day of August, 1893, be 'charged upon all stock imported into 'the colony the following duties:—

Horses	...	...	per head.
Cattle, including bullocks, steers, cows, and calves, but excepting bulls for stud purposes	...	...	20 shillings.
Sheep, including wethers, ewes, and lambs, but excepting rams for stud purposes	...	...	30 shillings.
Pigs	...	...	2s. 6d.
	...	...	4s.

"Government House, Perth, 8th August, 1893."

IN COMMITTEE.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest) moved that there shall, on and after the eighth day of August, 1893, be charged upon all stock imported into the colony the following duties:—

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Sheep, including wethers, ewes, and lambs, but excepting rams for stud purposes	...	...	30 shillings.
Pigs	...	...	2s. 6d.
	...	...	4s.

He said the procedure in proposing the present tax on imported live stock was the same as had always been taken, when proposing any tax, charge, or duty upon the people; the object being that, if the House passed this particular resolution, the new impost might come into operation from that day. The resolution would be followed up, as usual, by a Bill for giving validity to the resolution; and as the Bill would have to be passed through the usual stages, there would be opportunities for its full discussion. If, however, the Bill in its final shape differed in any detail from the resolution, any revenue which might be received by the Government from the new taxation, in the meantime, in excess of the amount authorised, would of course be refunded to the persons paying such excess. The present was a rather drastic measure; but there would be a clause in the Bill providing that the Government might remit any duty paid on stock imported for breeding purposes. By assenting to the present form of resolution, the committee would not necessarily commit itself to the Bill which would have to be introduced afterwards for giving validity to the resolution.

MR. TRAYLEN moved, as an amendment, that the words "eighth day of August" be struck out of the resolution, and that the words "first day of October" be inserted in lieu thereof. His reasons for taking this course were that some few years ago the Kimberley district was discovered to be good grazing country, and the Government of that day did much to induce persons to take up grazing leases there, by imposing certain conditions in favour of those taking up the land, though these

conditions had latterly been modified. Mr. Emanuel was one of those who took up land at Kimberley, and the hon. member opposite (Mr. A. Forrest) acted as his agent in this colony. Mr. Emanuel had now partially stocked his leased area, and finding lately that it was not easy for him to purchase in the Kimberley district the additional stock that he required, he made an agreement with someone in South Australia for the purchase of 1,000 head of cattle, to be delivered to his order at Kimberley, the price to be paid being 45s. per head. But before concluding this agreement for purchase, a message was sent to Mr. A. Forrest, as the agent in Perth, inquiring whether there was in this colony any Customs duty payable on cattle so to be introduced. The reply was: No. That being the case, the vendor and purchaser agreed to terms, and arrangements were made for sending the cattle overland, by way of Eucla. Having lately met the vendor in South Australia, he (the hon. member) was astonished at being informed that the vendor understood a duty had lately been imposed on store cattle coming into Western Australia; but he endeavoured to quieten the vendor's fears by referring him to the printed Tariff, which stated that for imported cattle intended for slaughter a duty of 30s. per head must be paid. It would be seen, therefore, that in all good faith the vendor and the purchaser agreed with reference to the sending into this colony of 1,000 head of store cattle. The cattle had, at the time he was speaking, reached the border at Eucla, but were met by some mounted constables, and a duty of 30s. a head was demanded from the drovers before the cattle could be allowed to pass. He had put on the Notice Paper for that day a question to the Premier, and he understood the reply to it would be that no duty had been previously charged on cattle entering this colony overland from South Australia. These cattle had been travelled over country which, he was told, they could not re-traverse at this season; and, without previous warning, a duty of 30s. per head was suddenly imposed. By passing this resolution, hon. members would be imposing a duty suddenly and unfairly on gentlemen who had entered into a transaction *bonâ fide*, in the manner he had stated; and they had made representations

through their respective Governments, as to the hardship thus imposed on them. He thought the parties would have to take some steps for ascertaining their legal position, in reference to this unexpected demand made on them at the border. The position would be somewhat different, in respect of the present resolution, if these cattle had not already attempted to cross the border. Looking at the Tariff as it stood, he must contend that these cattle, being stores, could not come within the designation of "cattle for slaughter," as defined in the Tariff, although ultimately they would be slaughtered, no doubt, as might be said also of the cattle imported for breeding purposes. He must strenuously oppose the proposed tax, on the ground that these gentlemen had acted in good faith in sending their cattle to the border, believing they would be allowed to cross free of duty as store cattle. He hoped the hon. member for West Kimberley (Mr. A. Forrest) would second this amendment, and he wondered what would be the position of that hon. member, as the agent of the purchaser, in this transaction.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest) said he could not go into all the questions raised by the hon. member (Mr. Traylen) as to persons being interested in this way or that way. Under the present law, as he was advised, and as he believed, the Tariff definition of "cattle for slaughter" included store cattle, for if "cattle for slaughter" did not include store bullocks, the present law would be a dead letter, as it would only be necessary to get the cattle rather thin, then pass them in as stores, feed them up a few months in the colony, and thus evade the Tariff entirely. If the persons who were interested in the 1,000 cattle at the border had any doubt as to the application of the Tariff law to their cattle, they could pay the duty under protest, and then state a case for the decision of a court of law. They had not chosen to do that, and he supposed the reason was that they knew they had no case. The Government wished to make the fact clear, by bringing in the proposed Bill, that all cattle, sheep, and pigs coming into the colony should pay a duty, unless introduced expressly for breeding purposes. The only object he had in moving the present resolution was to

make this fact clear and to remove any doubt. Some persons contended that store cattle were not "cattle for slaughter," as defined in the Tariff; but he maintained that they were, and in order to settle the point he had brought in this resolution.

MR. CLARKSON said there was no hardship in the case that had been mentioned, because the vendor and purchaser, by exercising ordinary business caution, could have ascertained that there was already a stock tax which applied to store cattle coming into this colony. Their grievance was only a little dodge to get out of paying.

MR. RICHARDSON said that any fresh duty imposed must cause hardship to those importers who might be caught in an incomplete transaction. The spirit of the Tariff Act contemplated that any stock intended for slaughter should be taxed, and the fact that some imported stock had been passed in without taxation did not do away with the principle. Possibly the persons referred to might have arranged to import the 1,000 head of cattle under a wrong impression as to the Tariff law; but if any of those cattle could reasonably be classed as breeding cattle, there would be power reserved in the Bill for enabling the Government to remit the tax in respect of breeding cattle. Store bullocks must be intended for slaughter, manifestly, and should be charged accordingly.

MR. A. FORREST said he would not deny that he did act as agent for Mr. Emanuel in some pastoral transactions, and that he was asked, some eighteen months ago, whether there was a tax on store cattle imported into this colony. He took legal advice on the question, and then sent the reply "No." But the question seemed to him very different when 1,000 head of cattle were attempted to be passed in free as stores, being perhaps half fat, and intended to compete in the local markets against cattle fed in this country. The duty was a reasonable one, for the protection of pastoralists and graziers who had stocked their land for supplying the local markets, and who had plenty of stock for the present requirements. Those who were interested in the Kimberley district were of opinion that no more store cattle should be admitted free, but they were willing that breeding cattle should be admitted. If

thousands of store cattle were allowed to cross the border free of duty, having been bought at about half the price ruling in this colony, they would compete unfairly against the cattle fed here. The Government were quite right in stopping those cattle from crossing the border without paying duty. If his telegraphed reply misled the purchaser or vendor, the reply was sent in good faith, and the advice was given in good faith by the solicitor whom he consulted. They thought, at the time, that the inquiry referred to cows for breeding purposes; and he replied to the inquiry accordingly.

MR. R. F. SHOLL said the question raised by the amendment was whether the Government were right, under the existing Tariff, in charging a duty on the cattle then at the border. Personally, he would like to see the duty on imported cattle wiped away entirely, because cheap meat meant cheap living, and if butcher's meat could not be produced here as cheaply as it could be imported, the sooner that sheep farming and cattle grazing were abandoned in this colony the better for the consuming population. He did not say that if these local industries could not live they had better die, as he might have said previously with regard to agriculture in this colony.

THE COMMISSIONER OF CROWN LANDS (Hon. W. E. Marmion) said the argument used by the last speaker applied not only to flesh meat, but to every article on the import Tariff. For instance, if it did not pay to grow wheat, without a protective duty, the farmers must give up growing it in this colony; so on with hay and other local produce. It was generally considered desirable that a protective duty should be levied on beasts imported for slaughter; and, in order to prevent evasion of the duty, the Government considered it was desirable to include, in the new bill, cattle of both sexes; but the Government were to be empowered to remit the duty, in the case of cattle imported for breeding purposes only. The opinion which the Government had received from their legal advisers was that store cattle, bullocks and steers, could not be intended for any other purpose than that of slaughter, and therefore they were subject to this tax. The present Bill would dispel any doubt on the point, and it was brought in for that purpose.

MR. TRAYLEN said he had not argued as to the expediency or otherwise of a tax on imported cattle. The strong feature in the case was that cattle of the description he had referred to had been hitherto admitted without question all along the line, and it now seemed exceedingly strange that, after having admitted all along that store cattle meant cattle to be depastured in this colony and ultimately slaughtered for food, a fresh definition was being applied to the particular store cattle then at the border. If the definition was to be so widened, why not say at once that for every head of cattle imported a duty of 30s. must be paid? The distinction between cattle to be immediately slaughtered and cattle imported for the purpose of being depastured on lands in the colony was clear enough.

MR. A. FORREST said it was a mistake to assert that a large number of cattle had been introduced over the border as store cattle. Very few had been imported into the Kimberley district, except for breeding purposes; and the increase of cattle in the Kimberley district was now so large that those persons who were interested in the Kimberley runs did not want store cattle brought in there, because they could not sell at a profit the cattle there already. The cost of bringing fat cattle from Kimberley to the Southern markets did not leave any profit, at present prices. It was reported, also, that 10,000 head of cattle were being brought overland from Queensland, and if the 1,000 cattle at the Eucla border were admitted free of duty, the other 10,000 must be admitted free also, on the same plea.

Motion for imposing the duties put and passed.

Resolution to be reported.

Report adopted.

#### STOCK TAX BILL.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest), in accordance with the foregoing resolution of the House, moved for leave to introduce a Bill intituled "An Act to provide for the Payment of Customs duty on all Live Stock imported into the Colony."

Question put and passed.

Bill introduced, read a first time, and ordered to be printed.

#### USE AND COST OF GOVERNMENT STEAM LAUNCH.

MR. SOLOMON, in accordance with notice, asked the Premier :—

1. For what pupose was the steam launch lately imported into the colony intended.
2. Whether it was being used for that purpose.
3. What it had cost the colony up to the present time.
4. What the cost of its upkeep was, including expenses of caretaker.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest) replied :—

1. The steam launch was imported for the use of the Government, principally in connection with the harbour works at Fremantle.
  2. It has not yet been used to any great extent in connection with the harbour works.
- Questions 3 and 4 necessitate the preparation of a return, and such return will be prepared and placed on the table.

#### STOCK TAX UPON CATTLE ENTERING THE COLONY BY LAND.

MR. TRAYLEN, in accordance with notice, asked the Colonial Treasurer whether any stock tax had been paid for cattle entering Western Australia by land from South Australia; if so, upon what description of cattle, into what district had the cattle entered, and what amount had been paid.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest) replied that no stock tax had been paid for cattle entering this colony by land.

#### GOVERNMENT ASSISTANCE TO CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL, PERTH.

MR. RICHARDSON, in accordance with notice, asked the Premier :—

1. Whether, in the event of any project being started to form a Children's Hospital in Perth, the Government would be willing to supplement public subscriptions towards that object in the proportion of £1 for every pound subscribed, provided the total amount required from Government did not exceed £1,000 per annum for first two years.

2. Whether, in addition to the annual subscription, and provided public annual subscription for first year to the amount of not less than £500 was assured, the Government would grant a suitable site for a building, and also the sum of £1,000—either towards the building fund or towards the purchase of a suitable building.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest) replied:—

1. The Government would be glad to consider any proposition of this kind, and would recommend assistance from public funds to assist private contributions.
2. The Government would give a site for the hospital if a suitable piece was found to be available belonging to the Crown.

#### HOMESTEADS BILL.

##### SECOND READING—ADJOURNED DEBATE.

The Order of the Day for the resumption of the adjourned debate upon the motion for the second reading of this Bill having been read,—

MR. A. FORREST said: The Bill is a short one. As to the proposed gift of a free homestead farm to any intending settler, if the Government think it wise to give away 160 acres of land, in this way, and if the offer will attract more people to this colony, I will waive any objection I may have to the principle. I do not believe in the principle of giving away the Crown lands, because the rentals required for leases are generally so small that I think it would be better to make the occupiers pay even a small amount, as those who are invited to take up the land may think it is no good. In reference to the Homesteads Bill of last session, I was in favour of helping the farmer to clear and improve his land by State loans to be advanced on the security of his improvements; and I am sorry to find that those clauses are left out of this Bill. Those persons who know the conditions of settlement in this colony will know how difficult it is for farmers to raise money by loan for clearing their land, and especially is that so since the financial and banking disasters have occurred, making the new settlers' difficulty greater

than before. If the Government consider that by giving free grants of land they will induce an increase of settlement on small areas, I will not divide the House on that question, for although I think the principle is bad, the gift itself is a small matter. I will pass to the more important part of the Bill dealing with homestead leases. Here I think the Government have not been liberal enough. They do not recognise at all the class of land to be dealt with under these clauses. I regret that my hon. friend the Commissioner of Crown Lands had not been personally to see a large proportion of this land, because he would have come back from the inspection with a different conviction, and be more liberal in his idea as to the acreage and also as to the rental. Clause 19 deals with the classification of the lands to be leased, but I do not find in the Bill any provision that such lands shall be surveyed before selection; so that a man selecting an area to be leased in a particular locality would not know, until after the survey of it was completed, whether his area was to be second or third-class land. That difficulty must crop up; and this classification clause will always be open to suspicion, because the person who has to make the survey will find great difficulty in pleasing the man who wants the lease.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): The lands to be offered for leasing will be classified first.

MR. A. FORREST: You would not survey these big blocks first. It may be impossible to classify the selections until they are surveyed; so that if I were to select 5,000 acres, the Government could not tell me whether the selection would be second or third-class land until surveyed. That difficulty will have to be dealt with in committee. I suppose the classification will not be made on the opinion of one person only. In Clause 20, providing for the area of second-class land, I think the maximum might be increased from 3,000 to 5,000, and that the third-class land, which is the worst land in the colony, might be increased to 10,000 acres as the maximum area. If you go into the back country and fence in 3,000 acres for grazing purposes chiefly, that area will not be enough for a man to make a living out of. Second-class land would require five

acres to the sheep, and third-class would require 10 acres or more. [Mr. MONGER: Fifty acres.] The most important clause is No. 21, which affects those who intend to develop this class of country—that is the amount of rental to be charged. In the first instance, we ask a man who takes 5,000 acres to fence the area, and this area will take about 15 miles of fencing, at a cost of £40 a mile, or nearly £600 for fencing; then the ring-barking will cost £500; and these improvements must be made before any return on the outlay can be obtained. He would also have to erect his homestead and dig wells. So that he would have to spend £1,500 before he could get any return for his outlay. He would require 1,000 sheep for stocking 5,000 acres. Well, we find the Government are asking 3d. an acre for second-class and 2d. an acre for third-class land, according to this Bill.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): The leaseholder would be buying the land, at that rental.

MR. A. FORREST: He would be buying it dearly, too. I think the rent should be 2d. an acre for second class and 1d. for third-class land, and these amounts should be further reduced during the first seven years, so that while he is laying out money for the improvements he should not be also required to shell out a lot of money for rent. I don't agree with the proposal for charging the full amount of the rental during the first seven years of the lease. Clause 23 introduces a new principle into our Land Regulations, and one that I object to, as it will bear very hardly on the people who take up this land. The clause says: "The lessee shall pay the prescribed cost of survey in five yearly instalments, the first instalment being paid with the rent at the time of application, and the remaining instalments on the first day of March in each following year." To survey a 5,000 acre block would cost the lessee £50.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): What would it cost the Government? The same price; but I suppose that does not matter.

MR. A. FORREST: This would cost the settler so much extra, in addition to the rent; and that is a new principle of trying to make the man who is developing the colony to pay the cost of survey. I shall divide the House on that, in com-

mittee. Clause 24 says: "The lessee shall, within six months from the date of approval by the Minister, take possession of the land either by himself or his agent, and shall, within three years from the first day of January or the first day of July (as the case may be) next preceding the date of the approval of his application by the Minister, fence in with a fence of such description as may be prescribed the whole of his homestead lease;" and so on. There is nothing here to show that before he can go on the land it must be surveyed, and there is nothing to show that the survey must be made first. Under the old Regulations, a lessee is not bound to do any improvements until the land is surveyed; and I should like to see the same provision here. It is impossible for a man to go on the ground and find out where his boundaries are, until the block is surveyed. These are the chief grounds of complaint I have. The Bill will be useful if certain amendments are made, because I have always thought that if we could bring these second and third-class lands into occupation, by giving long leases at low rentals, those who took up the land would not only be doing some good for themselves, but for everyone concerned in the colony. One must regret, on leaving the fringe of the Avon Valley, to find there is not a soul living on the land for hundreds of miles. Yet the land is of a fairish character, but the tenure is bad, and will not pay for shepherding, because some one may come along and select your improvements, and then you have to fight him for possession of the land. I believe this Bill will draw population here, and also induce many persons now in the colony to take up large areas and improve them, so that before many years are over there will be a large increase in our exports of wool and other produce.

MR. MONGER: Representing as I do the largest agricultural centre in Western Australia, I feel it is incumbent on me to make a few remarks on this very important Bill, and more especially as I was one of those who opposed, in the last session, the Homesteads Bill that was then introduced by the Premier. In the course of his remarks, the hon. gentleman accused me of having been somewhat discourteous to the Government. I shall therefore try, on this occasion, to give the

more satisfaction in regard to the views I hold on the Bill now before the House. I will take this opportunity of congratulating the Premier on his very able speech the other evening, and on the lucid manner in which he presented this Bill to us; and although personally I am not in accord with its principal object, yet I have no intention of opposing the second reading. The principal object of the Bill is to give free selections of 160 acres to nearly any person in Western Australia who chooses to avail himself of the privilege; but in Clause 4 I notice that no person who is the holder of land in fee simple, in any portion of the colony, or is the holder of a special occupation lease, is privileged to take part in this concession which the Premier asks us to support. It seems strange that the man who holds a 40-acre block in the country, or a 10-acre garden selection near a town, should be debarred from what the new-comer or the man who has no property whatever is allowed to partake of. Why the homestead selector is to be allowed to take up a conditional purchase block in addition to his free selection, while the holder of a conditional purchase block or of a special occupation lease is to be debarred from taking up a homestead area, I fail to see. And, again, I cannot see that a selector can make a living on 160 acres of such land. If we are going to give land away, let us give to each occupier enough for him to live on, so that he may have a reasonable chance of maintaining a family. The man who takes up 160 acres under these proposed conditions of occupation and improvement, if he performs the whole of his improvements within twelve months, is then called upon by the Government to pay 5s. an acre to entitle him to the fee simple of his land at once. I do not think this is going the right way to support the man who brings a little capital, and who proceeds with the fencing, clearing, and other improvements; so, in committee, I shall move, as an amendment, that after the free homestead selector has completed his improvements, if completed within the first year, he shall be entitled to the fee simple without the payment of any fee.

**THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest):** That would do away with residence, and encourage dummying.

**MR. MONGER:** The principal thing is to get people to clear and cultivate the

land; and I say that if a man takes up 160 acres, fences in the area, and clears 40 acres, that land is not going to be left unused, after he gets the fee simple, for the benefit of his neighbour or an adjoining runholder. Someone will reside on and work the selection, and so long as the land is worked, it does not matter to the State who does it or at whose expense it is done. As regards the homestead leases, I am somewhat in accord with the hon. member for the DeGrey. These blocks are by no means big enough, and the prices asked by the Government, as proposed in the Bill, appear to me to be altogether out of proportion. I would go a little further, and instead of confining it to second and third-class land, I would like to see a fourth and a fifth class—the fourth class to be given away in areas for nothing, if certain improvements were made; and the fifth class to be given, and something also paid, to those who would do certain improvements. I have heard the Commissioner of Crown Lands express his opinion with reference to poison leases. I have had some experience in poison leases, and have found that the more money you put into them the less you take out. I consider the Government cannot be too liberal in their ideas about poison leases, and I hope that in the future the head of the Lands Department will not oppose the applications for such leases in the way in which I understand he has generally done in the past. I am pleased to see that provision is made in the Bill for altering Clause 49 of the present Regulations, and I regard this as one of the best provisions in the Bill, and it was also about the only provision in the last Homesteads Bill that I approved of. I understand also that the credit of introducing this provision is due to the present head of the Lands Department; and I can only hope that the future alterations which he may recommend, in connection with the present Land Regulations, will meet with as great an amount of support as this one. Without referring to the Bill in further detail, at this stage, I hope that the clauses to which I have taken exception will, in committee, be so amended as to give satisfaction to the people of the country, and will, at all events, assist in further settlement. We know it is necessary that some stimulus should be given to agricultural develop-

ment; but, as I have always argued, and with some right on my side, the proper way to protect the agriculturists is through the medium of the Customs tariff. I can only hope that when the report of the present Tariff Commission is submitted to the consideration of this House, agriculture will receive proper protection. I have much pleasure in supporting the second reading of this Bill.

MR. CLARKSON: I intend to support the second reading of this Bill, with a view to making perhaps some amendments in committee, chiefly with regard to the homestead leasing clauses. I was one who supported the Homesteads Bill of last session, and I regret that it was not proceeded with, for I believe that if it had gone into committee it might have been made a useful measure, and made more acceptable to the people outside this House, and to a large majority within it, than perhaps the present Bill. It is very clear that unless some effort is made—and I think we are all agreed upon this—to settle people on the unimproved lands of the colony, I do not see the use of borrowing money to construct railways and improve our harbours, for, without more population and settlement, we shall have nothing for the new railways to do. No country can be regarded as progressive, unless its land is being settled in some substantial way. We have enormous areas of unimproved land of various descriptions, and this Bill does not apply to a great deal of such land. Much of it can hardly be called first, second, or third-class land. I have always strongly advocated the classification of land; and had that plan been adopted before, we should not now require, to any great extent, the homestead leasing clauses of this Bill. It is ridiculous to expect a man to pay the same price for all descriptions of land. A man naturally goes about to select the best spots for his money, and it is not to be expected that he will buy inferior land by preference. This Bill does not go far enough in that respect, for there ought to be a fifth or a sixth class, and some of it would be dear as a gift. I could point to thousands of acres of land, close to the centres of population, from one end of the colony to the other—even within a very few miles of this city—that remain in the same unimproved

condition, after sixty years of the colony's occupation. Such land is not even under lease or license. Why should not this land be embraced in these clauses as to homestead leasing? Such land would not be worth taking up, under any clauses now in this Bill; yet, while we are about it, we may as well deal with such land, and make this Bill as complete for the purpose as possible, so as to embrace all the Crown lands of the colony. Last session, great exception was taken to the financial clauses of that Bill, but I think the proposed financial assistance would have been a great inducement for settling people on the unimproved lands, and I am sorry that something of the sort is not proposed in this Bill. I did not approve altogether of the manner in which it was proposed to lend money to the selector. I should not lend £100 to a selector for the purpose of building a house; but the money might be advanced for the purpose of making substantial improvements, such as ringing, clearing, fencing, planting vines and fruit trees, and such other improvements as might be reproductive. Without speaking further on the Bill, at this stage, there are many clauses, particularly in the homestead leasing portion of the Bill, which will require very considerable amendment. The terms are not long enough, and the price proposed to be charged is too high.

MR. QUINLAN: In rising to speak on this very important Bill, I shall confine myself to the clauses to which exception has been taken. The Bill is, to my mind, a mere farce; and the cold manner in which the Premier introduced it on this occasion showed a lack of the earnestness which was so manifest when he introduced the Homesteads Bill of last session. The reason for this, I am certain, is not far to seek, when we recollect that this Bill is shorn of the chief feature of the other Bill, by having no provision for monetary aid to encourage settlement on our lands. I have no doubt as to the reason for this omission, being fully aware of the fact of the opposition shown last session, and likewise the depression at present existing in the financial world. Still, it will be possible to amend this Bill in committee, so as to liberalise it to such an extent as may ensure a great deal of good resulting to the country. We have to face the taxation resulting



from the construction of railways and other public works; and by encouraging the settlement of the land we may help to feed the railways with traffic, and also induce many of the floating population to settle down and become good colonists. There are very few factories for employing the people who are coming here; and this fact reminds me that the revision of the Customs tariff is an important factor in connection with this Bill, as has been wisely remarked by the hon. member for York. The Bill provides very little more than is provided in the present Land Regulations; and I will endeavour to point out some of the defects. Clause 10, which prohibits any assignment before the issue of the Crown grant, is most arbitrary. A selector may, during four years, clear and fence as required, but if, through sickness or the death of any of his family, the selector should have to remove to some other part of the colony, this clause would operate arbitrarily by preventing him from transferring his interest in the improvements he had made. I think that in such case he should be allowed to compensate himself as far as possible by disposing of his interest when leaving that part of the colony. Clause 12 likewise should be made more liberal for enabling the selector to obtain the Crown grant after completing his improvements, for if the selector complies with the conditions of clearing and fencing, he thereby confers a great benefit on the State, in comparison with the £40 he is called upon to pay, at 5s. an acre, for obtaining the title immediately. Every inducement should be offered to the settler to improve his selection as quickly as possible, and I would say he should receive the Crown grant free, after completing the improvements, on payment only for the title deed. This would carry out the desire of the Government for opening up the country, and would be a wise course to adopt, instead of charging the £40 mentioned in the 12th clause, which is no inducement whatever for pushing on with the improvements, for although 5s. an acre may appear a small price, the total sum is a large one to the selector, though a small item to the State. Clauses 14 and 15, providing for village settlements, are very good, by providing facilities for poor men to obtain employment near at hand and

enabling them to work their selections. With regard to Clause 16, permitting the holder of a homestead farm to select an allotment in a village, I think the village allotment should be given to him, without charging the miserable pittance of £5. Coming now to the homestead leasing provisions, which are probably wise, I think the conditions of obtaining a Crown grant, in Clause 27, are most illiberal, for before a selector can obtain possession he must expend, during the first five years, in addition to the fencing, an amount in improvements equal to the rental for the whole term of the lease, less the five years, and then he is to pay the difference between the rental and the price of 7s. 6d. per acre for second-class land, and 5s. for third-class land, together with fees, before the Crown grant can be issued to him. The amount of purchase money required, after certain improvements have been made, is an absurdity; and I think he should then get the land without any more payment than the cost of the title and fees.

THE PREMIER (HON. SIR J. FORREST): Better give away the whole country.

MR. QUINLAN: Apparently, judging by the remarks of the hon. member for the Swan, he would not take some of the land if you paid him to live on it. I do not go so far as that. I think the man who improves an acre of land is a benefactor to his country, and it is useless to hamper selectors with such restrictions, for anyone with a feeling of independence would sooner take up an area under the present Land Regulations rather than be hemmed in with such restrictions as this Bill provides. Probably this is the reason why the member for York, who was opposed to the previous Bill, is apparently in favour of this one, because it might, no doubt, suit his purpose, he having opposed a more liberal Bill on the last occasion. At any rate these are my views, pure and simple, though I am confident that the Bill can be so amended in committee as to conduce to the welfare of the whole country. I trust that hon. members will extend their liberality, and join in making this measure worthy of the object which I know the Government have at heart, that is the opening up of this country by means of the permanent settlement of the soil. The provision in Clause 40, for imposing

conditions of improvement on town and suburban lots to be leased or sold in the future, is a move in the right direction, and I agree with the remarks made by the hon. member for Northam, the other evening, in referring to this clause. I have always ardently desired some provision of this nature, having in view the taxation that must be faced sooner or later; and this appears to me a statesmanlike method of dealing with the country's affairs.

MR. CANNING: The feeling is so general throughout the colony, in favour of some measure being taken for the more speedy increase of the population and the settlement of the land, that I think there can hardly be two opinions as to the usefulness of this measure. Whatever may be thought of some of the details, the utility of the principles embodied in it must be acknowledged. It has been said that the free grants of land are undesirable. But although this is not the plan generally adopted elsewhere, free grants of land have been given in some countries with very good results. At the present time, with our increasing public debt, and the consequent increase of taxation, it must be apparent that we need a speedy increase of population, so as to spread the burden of taxation over a larger number. The necessity of making the land more productive is also sufficiently obvious. Among the objections raised against this measure is one somewhat to the effect that by giving away the land the State will be acting unfairly towards private owners. But I do not agree in the inference that any unfavourable results to private owners will follow, for I am inclined to think that if we bring about a large increase of population, and if we promote the settlement of a larger number of persons on the land, we shall be also creating a demand for private land. It is only by making portions of any landed property useful that we can give a general value to the whole, and I think the same result will follow in the present instance. We often hear the remark made that such and such a proceeding is a good advertisement for the colony, and I think a very good advertisement would be the general announcement that free grants of land are to be obtained here—that is, free grants on certain conditions. This will be the means of induc-

ing a great many people to come here, not only from the other colonies, but also from England, where attention is being directed more than ever to the resources of this colony. When a number of people come here and settle on the lands of this colony, they will, after a time, make known its capabilities to their friends elsewhere, and those friends will come here, and in this way create a demand for the land which is now held so largely by private owners, and is so little used. It has also been objected that the principle of giving away land is not a sound one. It is said, Why give away 160 acres of land? But those objectors should bear in mind that the land is not really being given away for nothing, in the sense that one individual may convey land to another; for the land so given by the State is to be occupied only by those who take it up subject to the conditions, and if any occupier desires to obtain the Crown grant within a short time, he can do so only by making a very substantial payment. Each homestead selector will be an occupier, and not a proprietor, until he has completed all the conditions; and he cannot deal with the property as if it were his absolutely, for he must remain on the land and turn it to account, and when he has expended so much money and labour on it, he will have every interest in continuing to occupy it, and so complete the conditions which are necessary to make the property his. As regards the details of the Bill, I have no doubt they will be thoroughly well considered and discussed in committee, and such amendments as may appear desirable will, in all probability be agreed upon; but I have now only to express my entire agreement with the principles of the Bill. I think the measure cannot fail to be of very great use in various ways, and it is quite unnecessary now to go over all the advantages it offers for promoting the prosperity of the colony, as I am sure these are patent enough to most hon. members.

MR. PIESSE: Those who have had practical experience of what is called settling people on the land know full well that, unless some practical development follows afterwards, the actual settlement of railway lands does not produce the results that are expected and desired. There is the difficulty of clearing forest

land before it can be cultivated; and there is no use in denying that the mere offer of 160 acres, though it may be an inducement, will be like fastening a millstone round the poor settler's neck, in many cases. This inducement of free grants may mean settlement, such as we all desire, but unless we make the inducements sufficient to cause the settler to carry on the conditions of improvement, we shall be doing more harm than good in offering land as a free gift. Our present land laws are liberal enough, but there is a charm about free gifts of land which will induce many persons to come here and increase our population; though this inducement will be of no use to the people who came here, unless they bring the means of doing something with the land when they get it. We have at present large holders who would be prepared to develop the land they already possess, if they had the means; and I certainly think it would be much better if some means could be devised by which this result could be brought about, though perhaps that is wisely left out of this Bill. Last session I felt more inclined to support the financial clauses of the previous Bill, than the giving away of the land. No doubt we should have many difficulties to face, if we attempted to make money advances; but we must certainly do something to induce settlement, and by offering free grants of land we may possibly place within the reach of those who are desirous of settling, the means which they seek. The main principle of the Bill, with regard to homestead leases, will serve us best; for we have large areas of land which are not suitable for agriculture, under present conditions, but which may be turned to account for grazing purposes, and may eventually prove suitable for agriculture. These homestead leases are the best feature in the Bill, and I hope that when the Bill gets into committee the wisdom of the House will so improve the provisions as to make them acceptable to the community at large. There is the difficulty of classification which will meet us everywhere, but that may be overcome if we make an effort to do it. The trouble in classifying will be to get persons who will do it properly. The difficulties of surveying the country are very great, but we must not shirk the duty that has been

cast on us, but must do our utmost to bring these lands under cultivation. As to forest reserves, it is necessary to make some provision, for I know that in some districts occupation for grazing and pastoral purposes is going on extensively, and the consequence will be that in a few years we shall have very little timber suitable for fencing, and when the time for closer occupation comes, the timber for fencing will have to be hauled long distances. Provision should be made to reserve suitable timber areas, in different parts of the country. We have too much timber of a sort, no doubt, but not too much that is suitable for fencing; and I hope that when the Bill is in committee some amendment will be made for providing forest reserves. We are not looking too far ahead when we say the time must come when there will be very little timber left of the kind we want. With regard to the surveying of the lands, as provided in Clause 4, it will be a mistake to survey many homestead areas before they are selected, for we have the experience with regard to our grazing areas, and, with the exception of one or two, very few have been taken up. Some of them are not suitable for selection, and though the advice given as to surveying these was no doubt given in good faith, the result shows that those who laid off the areas could not have understood much about land. I hope that, if this Bill becomes law, more discretion will be used, and that areas really suitable for agriculture will be surveyed for the purpose. Money has been wasted upon the surveys of some of the present agricultural areas, not an acre being taken up.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): There are not enough people here yet.

MR. PIESSE: I do not think we have so much land that we ought to give it away in 160 acre blocks. You are not able to find good land in large quantities, and the only way is to allow people to select land where they choose, and make the survey after selection; then reserve another 160 acres adjoining for future selection by the same settler, if he requires it. I know that good land is very scattered, and you will not find many areas with more than 5,000 acres of good land in one block. I hope the Bill will bring about a good result, especially from the homestead leases;

and I think the rental to be charged for these leases should be fixed on a lower scale. It is not necessary to add a fourth class to the classification of these lands. People cannot live on a sandplain. Those who have to work on land, and know what is necessary to be done, can tell the new-comer that he will have a hard task before him, and will have a good deal to do before he can earn a living out of the soil. That is no easy task; and to give 160 acres to a man, as an inducement to settle on land, is like putting a millstone round his neck, unless he has got money to work the land.

MR. CLARKSON: What will you do with sandplain?

MR. PLESSE: Make hour-glasses with it. The future will prove whether this Bill is going to bring about the results we desire. We who have had experience of the country know that the men who take up land for occupation must go on with a fixed determination to battle through the hard task before them, and not fancy they can get a living out of the soil by sitting in comfortable arm-chairs. We ought to extend to country settlers the support they desire, knowing their life is a hard one, and that the country is the backbone of the towns; and were it not for the hard work and the long days of toil—almost night and day—the settlers could not obtain the poor living they do get, which is a mere pittance of four shillings a day, their lot being very different from that of men in towns. We hear of men walking about the towns and saying they can't get work, but it is because they won't do what these unfortunate farmers have to do. No doubt a farmer's life is one of freedom, and he occupies a position of honourable independence; but we should act with caution before leading new-comers to believe that the mere fact of giving 160 acres to each settler will ensure their success, and bring about the settlement we desire. It will not, unless we also provide them with the means of working the land, or they bring the means with them.

MR. SIMPSON: So far as I have been able to gather the general principles and the tenor of this Bill, it is in marked contradistinction from the Bill submitted for consideration last session. That, I understood, was to be particularly and distinctively a poor man's Bill, for giving

him a chance of getting a living out of the land, by the State giving him 160 acres of land, lending him a sum of money for improving it, and saying to him, "Go along and become a bold peasant." Now we have a Bill submitted, which offers to give the man the same amount of land, but no money; but possibly the beautiful future laid out before him, of becoming a bold peasant, his country's pride, may induce him to take the land without the money. I gather that the man who takes up this land will have to put his hand in his pocket and pull out sovereigns to the tune of 2,000 before he earns his homestead lease properly. He will have to raise that amount of money somehow. Under these conditions, I think the rents fixed in the Bill are too high, the areas are too limited, and the purchase price of the land is too great. I distinctly believe that, if we wish to assist the settler with a free grant of land, we should offer him not 160 acres but 320, for I do not think the man can make a living off 160 acres so as to do well on the land. So far as I have seen farming, I think it is an arduous life, and if it were not environed with a magnificent surrounding of hope, I do not think anyone would tackle it. I support the second reading of this Bill, not that I think much will come of it; not with the idea of giving a man an opportunity to go on the land, and live on it, and improve it, and console himself with the belief that at the end of a certain number of years he will secure the fee simple of that land; but because I hope some good will result from the Bill. We hear plenty of philosophers on the land question. It is the great question of the world to-day—how to settle people on the land, in a way in which they may obtain a living. I dropt across a newspaper, the other day, which summed up the whole question in about twelve lines, to the effect that if a man could get a free farm from the Government, he would become exceedingly rich. But farming is a pursuit for the man of capital. At the same time, we have in this colony the opportunity of endeavouring to establish something else, and in order to do that we are going to give the settler 160 acres; though I do hope that, when in committee on the Bill, the area will be extended to 320 acres, and the rental for the homestead leases will be reduced, and the leasehold

areas increased. I shall support the second reading.

MR. SOLOMON: Every member who has spoken agrees with the principle of the Bill, and so do I. I regret that the Bill of last session is not embodied to a greater extent in this Bill; and, though I shall give it my support, I do not think it will have that good effect in promoting the settlement of the land which the Bill of last session would have had if passed into law. No doubt the objects of the Government have been to open up the country for settlement, to provide employment for the new people who are constantly coming into the colony, and to provide facilities for the producers to send their produce to market. I perfectly agree with many of the provisions in the Bill for carrying out these objects; for such a Bill is necessary, especially at the present time, when we have thousands of people coming here, who in the first instance mostly go to our goldfields, but many of whom will, as we hope, afterwards be glad to take up land under the conditions of this Bill, and remain here as permanent settlers. This Bill is opportune, and I shall give all the support I can to carry out its principal objects.

MR. MOLLOY: As one who heartily supported the measure brought in by the Government, last session, I must confess, with other hon. members, to a sense of disappointment at the measure which the Premier has introduced this session. I consider there is a marked difference between the two Bills, and that this Bill will not attain the objects which the Government desire. The title of the Bill is "An Act to provide facilities for permanent settlement, by free grants of land, by homestead farms, and by homestead leases." That there is a necessity for a measure of this kind I think no person in this House or in the colony will deny. To show there is some necessity for a measure of this kind, it is only necessary to go into a few statistics, which will demonstrate the fact very forcibly. I have taken the trouble to get some information from what is called the "Year Book," and I find that in the year 1882 the revenue per head of the population was £8 4s. 9d., the expenditure at that period being £6 15s. 3d. per head, showing a credit balance of £1 9s. 6d. per head in favour of revenue. Nine years later, in December,

1891, the revenue per head had increased to £9 12s 10½d., being an increase of £1 8s. 1½d. per head, and the expenditure had also increased considerably, being £8 8s. 10d. per head, thus leaving a difference of only £1 4s. 0½d. per head in favour of revenue; so that although the population had increased considerably, the rate per head had also increased considerably. Therefore, during that period the colony had gone backwards in the revenue contributed per head of the population, as compared with the expenditure. That leads us to the consideration of how this increase in the expenditure became necessary, and we find it became necessary by the increase in the taxation of the country consequent on our loans, and this necessitated a greater expenditure in the administration of affairs. We find also the imports of the colony amounted in value, at the earlier period, to £508,753, as against £1,280,093 in 1891. Here we have a very marked contrast, and one which at first sight seems appalling. Considering that our imports were so greatly increased during the nine years, it is somewhat remarkable that our exports, which at the earlier date were £583,054 in value, had increased in 1892 to only £799,466. Then again our exports exceeded our imports in 1882 by £74,301, whereas the ratio became so changed during the nine years following that in 1891 the imports exceeded the exports in value by the amount of £480,627—a large difference of nearly half a million in favour of imports over exports. I say these figures show that we should consider the remedy, and I think the remedy is found by the Government, in having seen the necessity for introducing this Bill. We find also that in the year 1882 our indebtedness per head was £16 12s. 2d., and that in 1891 it had risen to £30 5s. 7½d. Here we have the indebtedness in proportion to our population almost doubled. I find also that the expenditure upon railways and tramways, out of loan moneys, up to 1891 was £875,723; but while we have been improving the facilities for the conveyance of freight and for promoting the settlement of the land to this enormous extent, we find that the result of this investment of money has made the great difference I have shown in these figures. This result shows that the settlement of our land has not

been progressing at that rate which we were justified in expecting, from the facilities afforded or the increase in the taxation per head of the population. Therefore it is necessary that some remedy should be applied, in order that the productions from the soil may be increased to that proportion which would justify the obligations we have incurred and the taxation which the people have to pay. It is intended that this Bill should supply the remedy. I notice that the one feature which made the Bill of last year acceptable to the country, and the one feature which would induce an increased settlement of the land, is absent from this Bill. I allude to the financial clauses of the former Bill. We have, it is true, the offer of 160 acres of land free to each settler who will cultivate it; but, after listening to all the speeches on this subject, I infer that the free gift of 160 acres will be of no value to settlers who have not some capital for working the land. If so, and if this provision is intended to induce the settlement of people on small areas, I say it is necessary that this class of settler should have an inducement other than the free gift, which will be no good without some financial aid. That being so, I fail to see the necessity for the financial clauses being left out of this Bill. But I gather that it was the opposition which was shown to the Bill on the former occasion, in many quarters, and notably among the Ministry themselves, which necessitated the Premier—not of his own free will, but in order to be in accord with other Ministers—[MEMBERS OF THE MINISTRY: No, no!]<sup>1</sup>—to withdraw the very wise financial provisions which had appeared in the other Bill, and without which this Bill is almost useless. There are many objectionable clauses in this Bill, and which have been alluded to by previous speakers. I will not recapitulate the objections which they have urged, but I am fully in accord with the objections which have been made to various clauses, and trust that in committee those clauses will be so liberalised as to make the Bill acceptable to the people that it is intended to benefit. I am sorry that the principal feature in the Bill of last session, and the one which would have produced the best effect, has been taken away from this Bill—I mean the financial assistance. It is impossible for us to attract such

a population as was suggested by the Premier, in introducing the Bill, unless we can offer to intending settlers such financial aid as was proposed in the former Bill. It is nonsense to expect that we can induce people to come here and settle on the land, by merely offering a gift of 160 acres to each selector, while we make other conditions in the Bill to prevent them from obtaining loans in any quarter until they have spent a considerable amount of money on their land—£2,000 have been suggested as the necessary amount—it is nonsense to compel them to do certain improvements and reside on the land for five years, and yet to expect that this Bill will establish settlers of small means and enable them to make a living on their land. I think the Bill will be useless without the financial assistance, and that it will only induce people with capital to come here and settle. Persons having £2,000 of capital are not going to settle on only 160 acres of land, and hamper themselves with these conditions, when they can avail themselves of the facilities for selection offered by the present Land Regulations, and which will permit them, after they have spent their own money, to get assistance from financial institutions on the security of their leaseholds. I think that persons having such capital will not tie themselves down with all the restrictions of this Bill. I will vote for the second reading, with the hope that the Bill may be so amended in committee as to achieve the results which the Government had in view in introducing it.

MR. PATERSON: It has been objected that settlers will not be able to make a living off the small areas of land proposed in the Bill. In my opinion, 160 acres in some parts of the South-Western Division will not be large enough for a homestead farm, but in other parts I think this area will be quite large enough. In many parts of the Murray district, if properly selected, half or a quarter of that area would be sufficient to maintain a family; and I may mention the Harvey Agricultural Area in particular, where a system of drainage will have to be introduced, either by a company or the Government, and where 10 to 20 acres would be quite sufficient for a settler, who would be able to do well on that size of holding. I will not dis-

parage this South-Western portion of the colony, as some hon. members do. The hon. member for York says the Government would have to pay people to occupy some portions of the land; but I say that in the South-Western portion of the colony almost every acre is good and useful, if fenced.

MR. MONGER: How many sheep to the acre?

MR. PATERSON: Some land was fenced in as a trial—I was a party to it—about 3,000 acres in all, and about 1,000 sheep are now kept on it. We surveyed it as a trial, it being the worst part of an estate in which I am interested; there is plenty of water on it; and the sheep, though not fat, grow good wool. I am sorry that the financial clauses have been left out of this Bill, because I do believe that if a small sum of public money had been made available, say £20,000, to try that plan of money advance on improvements, as an experiment, it would have given a fillip to settlement; and it is a pity that this part of the original scheme has been left out of this Bill. Why I think the proposed leasehold areas are not sufficiently large, is because the best parts of the land have been selected already, and large areas would not be taken up for the purpose of including a reasonably good piece of agricultural land. The cost of clearing and fencing a bad piece of land is just the same as for a good piece; and if settlers do not see that they can keep a sufficient quantity of stock, I do not think they will undertake to cultivate and fence these leasehold areas. I know that ring-barking, in the South-Western District, improves the capabilities of the land more than anything else; and, this work being once done, the consequent improvement goes on while we are sleeping. The whole of the South-Western District, within the Murray electorate, could be immensely improved by ringbarking; and I believe there is no brook between Perth and Bunbury that would not run all the year round, if the country were ringbarked a certain distance back. The work is not very expensive, and, when done, I believe that blocks of a very small size would be taken up the whole length of the South-Western Railway to Bunbury.

MR. MONGER: It is all private land, is it not?

MR. PATERSON: No, it is not; but at any rate the private land is all for sale at a reasonable rate. As to irrigation, I believe that is practicable, and at a very reasonable cost. The Crown land along the face of the hills might be ringbarked. I know country where water could not be got at certain seasons of the year, but since the forest has been ringbarked the water runs in brooks all the year round. The land might be ringbarked along a strip of one and a half miles wide for producing this result. I believe the import tariff has much to do with the success of land settlement, for if we protect the produce that can be grown well in this colony, this policy will be a great assistance to settlement. If a Tariff Bill can be brought in this session, and if it meets the views of people who will undertake to cultivate this land, such a Bill will help almost as much as this Homesteads Bill. I believe this Bill is good in principle, and it is the earnest wish of hon. members to promote the settlement of the Crown lands, which are not being taken up as quickly as we would like to see, because hard work and money are needed to make farming successful. I have been engaged in farming during a great many years, and I can assure the House I have not made much money by it, while I have had to do a lot of hard work. He must be a bold man who undertakes to clear and cultivate 100 acres of land in any part of the colony, and when a settler has done this work I think he has almost fulfilled his mission in this life, as he will have worked himself pretty dry. I shall heartily support the second reading of the Bill, because I wish to see it go into committee, and I shall support many of the amendments suggested by hon. members. The homestead leasing clauses are not liberal enough, and the blocks are not large enough for some parts of the colony.

MR. PEARSE: I cannot, like the hon. member for York, say I represent an agricultural community, but I can say my constituents take a deep interest in this question, and I well remember the feeling of disappointment which was manifested last session when the first Homesteads Bill was withdrawn. I believe that if the principles of this Bill be adopted, a large number of persons will settle on the land; and I am also

very pleased with the proposals for homestead leases, because there are in the Fremantle district thousands of acres unfit for cultivation, but capable of carrying a large quantity of stock, if the land were fenced and ringbarked, and the water conserved. I think the provisions ought to be liberalised, as the rents appear too high. I shall support the second reading, and in committee I hope we shall liberalise some of the clauses, after which I feel sure the Bill will give satisfaction to the country.

**THE COMMISSIONER OF CROWN LANDS** (Hon. W. E. Marmion): There seems to have been a universal chorus, if not of approbation yet of praise, with regard to the measure now before the House. Every member seems to have decided to support the principle of the Bill. That being the case, this is hardly the time or the opportunity when the details of the measure should be discussed, because when we get into committee there will be ample opportunities to suggest or make, if you can, amendments that the majority will support. I may say, on behalf of the Government, and of the Premier, who has fathered this Bill, and who has taken a great deal of pains and interest in connection with it, that the sole idea of the Government and the Premier has been to introduce a measure which, if it does not meet with universal praise, and if it does not satisfy all hon. members in this House or the public outside, will at least be an effort to increase the settlement of our lands, to increase the productiveness of the soil, and promote the settlement of a healthy and prosperous community. This is all the Government have endeavoured to do in bringing this Bill before you, and I think that, after we have heard the various views expressed by hon. members, many of whom have thrown cold water on projects of land settlement in this colony, and many of whom have alluded, in terms of ill-disguised contempt, to the condition and the circumstances of our soil, each of us may now recognise that the Government, in introducing a measure of this kind, had a difficult task to perform. None of us can fail to recognise that in Western Australia there is a superabundance of land which is not of the best character for settlement. All of us recognise that there is a great quantity of really

good agricultural land on which intending settlers can fairly be advised to cast in their lot and endeavour to improve it. But, strange to say, it is from those hon. members who have had the greatest experience in matters connected with the soil, and have had the largest experience of settlement, that we hear there is not much inducement for people to settle on the land in Western Australia. The hon. member for the Williams, in terms almost pathetic, described how the new settler must be possessed of a stout heart and a long purse. I have no doubt we may be able to get settlers with stout hearts, but we have been endeavouring, for a great many years, to attract those with long purses, and we have not succeeded.

**MR. RICHARDSON:** You have not gone the right way about it.

**THE COMMISSIONER OF CROWN LANDS** (Hon. W. E. Marmion): The hon. member and myself, and his honor the Speaker, with others, have been endeavouring for many years to do this; we have brought in successive Acts and Regulations with the object of increasing the settlement of the soil; and I say that, although we have been moderately successful, and only moderately so, our efforts have not been attended with that degree of success we hoped for. Let us hope the renewed effort we are now making may be attended with more success than those made in the past. The hon. member for the Williams, and I believe other hon. members also, alluded to the 160 acres as not being a sufficient area for a homestead farmer to live on. Assuming that all the settlers we are likely to get will be possessed of means, then I might be inclined to agree with hon. members that it would be advisable to increase the area; but does it not strike hon. members, as it strikes me, that if you increase the area of land to be given to each settler, you must necessarily increase his means for working the increased area. If a man has not the means to work 160 acres successfully, he cannot work say 640 acres more successfully. It is better for the man of small means to concentrate his operations on a comparatively small area, rather than endeavour to do something which his small means do not allow him to do successfully. If 160 acres will not suffice for settlers of small means, it must have been an ill-advised action to



introduce this measure. If a settler takes up a homestead farm, he will not be precluded from taking up more land, even to the extent of 1,000 acres, under the ordinary Regulations; and he may improve the whole area, if he thinks proper to do so, making his home on the free homestead portion, which he will get free of all rent, while also working the additional area under the Regulations. The hon. member for Perth (Mr. Molloy) seemed to think he had struck a kind of mare's nest, when he suggested that the Premier had withdrawn the financial clauses of last session, probably because of a difference of opinion among his colleagues in the Ministry; but I may inform hon. members that such is not at all the case; that there has not been the slightest pressure brought to bear on the Premier by his colleagues. I believe the majority of the Premier's colleagues are favourable to the financial clauses. I myself think a great deal more of those clauses than I do of the free grants of land, as I have said before. I still think so, and I greatly regret that the Premier has thought it necessary to withdraw the financial clauses. Why? Not because of opposition from his colleagues, but because of the opposition of some hon. members in this House. How can it be said for a moment that this withdrawal was caused by opposition from colleagues in the Ministry? Is it not a fact that the opposition among members of this House was so great, and so strongly expressed, that the Premier felt it necessary to withdraw the Bill last session, simply because, if the Bill were pushed forward, the Government were liable to sustain a defeat in committee on the clauses, or at all events that the Bill had not met with that degree of support which was considered necessary to carry a measure of this kind? With regard to the details of this Bill, the Government are not bound hand and foot to the clauses. I do not hesitate to say I am fully prepared to liberalise this Bill to a considerable degree, and I believe the Premier is also prepared to do so. I know he has given the greatest possible consideration to this measure, and that he believes he has made every provision in it for the best. His sole desire has been to act liberally for increasing the settlement of the soil, and endeavour to

place on our lands a healthy and prosperous set of farmers. He, as you all know, is not one of those men who object to receive advice, or will hesitate to be guided by what he will acknowledge to be the superior intelligence of the majority in this House; and that being the case, when this Bill goes into committee I have no doubt there will be found room for improvement. With regard to the homestead farms, I think there is room for further liberalising the conditions of improvement, and of other details. Without toiling through the various clauses now, I think that when we come to the homestead leasing clauses in committee, there may be room for liberalising and improving the details. I, for one, shall be quite prepared to listen to the suggestions of hon. members, and to suggest something myself when the opportunity comes. At present I think it is perhaps wise not to do so. With regard to the general features of the Bill, the hon. member for York was good enough to give me some credit for certain clauses. Well, I had something to do with that change, but those clauses had been considered by the Premier before I suggested them to him, and he was glad to accept any suggestion I made and which he thought would improve the Bill, and also be likely to be favourably received by hon. members. I think the proposed amendment of the 49th clause of the Land Regulations will please a large number of settlers who have taken up land under the conditional occupation leases and licenses. I think, also, that the other alteration, which enables a man to transfer from the residence clause to the non-residence clause, by doubling the improvements, will also gratify many of the struggling people who have taken up land under the special occupation conditions, many of them with the intention of residing on the land, but, from unforeseen circumstances, have been prevented from doing so. Clause 35, which has not been alluded to, and which gives to the Commissioner or Minister for the time being the right to appoint agents throughout the various districts, is a provision which has already been availed of by anticipation, to some extent, and I think it is a useful improvement. Also—what will be done very shortly, no doubt, under this clause

—the necessity has arisen, and been felt a considerable time, for appointing surveyors to report on the improvements, which, in many instances, are not being made as required under the special occupation conditions. There is the provision for the village lands. It is my intention to suggest that a system of deferred payments should be introduced in regard to township and suburban lands, for it has always struck me as unfair to exclude these small allotments from the operation of the deferred payment system, by requiring that all town and suburban lands must be sold for cash. I can quite understand why it should be so when we had not the means of insisting on improvement conditions; but with this Bill we can adopt the principle of deferred payment, thereby not only giving opportunity to speculators who have ready capital to buy town and suburban allotments, intending to keep them for future sale to poor men at a high profit, but also giving to the poor, struggling man the opportunity of acquiring these allotments on deferred payment.

MR. A. FORREST: Perhaps the hon. gentleman will tell us who the struggling man is.

THE COMMISSIONER OF CROWN LANDS (Hon. W. E. Marmion): I do not wish to be personal. The general intention of the Bill is to increase the settlement and general productiveness of our lands, in order to endeavour to stop the importation of those enormous cargoes of food supplies which we ought to produce within the colony; and if we are successful, even to a moderate degree, in doing that, the time spent in passing this measure will not have been wasted. I sympathise keenly with the Premier, knowing the great amount of pains he has taken with this Bill; and I am sorry that what I consider to be the best feature in the Bill of last session has had to be left out of this measure. Judging from the speeches on the present Bill, I fancy that some of those hon. members who were opposed to the Bill of last year have come round somewhat, and I am inclined to whisper to my hon. friend the Premier that we might take in those clauses again. However, I am certain that those hon. members who opposed the financial clauses last year did so conscientiously, though I have as strong an opinion in the other

direction. Some assistance to the struggling settler in making his improvements—I say nothing about assisting him to erect his house—would have been a good move, and would have done more to attract people to the colony, and to assist them in settling on the land, than this Bill as it stands—good as it is, and good as I believe will be the results accruing from it—can do.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): I thank hon. members for the support they have given to the general principles of the Bill. Of course it is clearly understood that, in voting for the second reading, hon. members vote for the general principles, and that it will be quite competent for any hon. members, after so assenting, to propose alterations in details which do not affect the main principles. While thanking hon. members for the reception given to the Bill, I cannot say that the references made to the details have been altogether as satisfactory as I could have desired. My idea is that the fact of giving land away to persons coming here will popularise our system of land settlement, and bring it prominently before every man in the country, and every man coming to the country, and I believe the fact of offering a free gift of land will do more towards encouraging settlement than the fact that the small rental a leaseholder has to pay at present will not have to be paid in the future. I have been surprised, considerably surprised, to hear that the financial clauses which were in the Bill of last session seem to be regarded now by so many hon. members in a more favourable light than they were regarded at that time. I may at once freely say that it was not through any pressure from my colleagues that those clauses were omitted from this Bill, because I have received the greatest support and consideration from every one of my colleagues in dealing with this matter. In fact, I may say I have been left almost altogether to myself to do what I considered was best in dealing with this important matter. The reasons why those clauses have not appeared in the present Bill are simply these: First of all, many hon. members were opposed to them, and I say deliberately now that that portion of the Bill did not, in my opinion, meet with

the acceptance by people in the country districts that I had fully anticipated. I anticipated that those clauses would be hailed with delight by people in the country districts, and I admit, with regret, that those clauses did not receive that support from the country districts that I anticipated they would; and, that being the case, I think it is far better to defer for a time the question of financial advances to settlers, and to deal now with this portion of the scheme, which seems to be readily accepted by almost every member of this House. It will be time enough later on to deal with the other portion of the original Bill, if it is found to be necessary; and of course I would not have been anxious to introduce in the original Bill those financial clauses unless they appeared to me necessary, because that would have been altogether going out of my way to do that which is not required. I believe they were necessary, though some hon. members, and a great many people in the colony, believed they were not necessary. In a very short time we will be able to see who was right in this matter, and then we will be able to take such action as may appear necessary. I cannot agree with those who think that 160 acres to be given to each settler will be too small an area, for I think that area will be ample, certainly in all the South-Western Division of the colony. An area of 160 acres is a big piece of land. Hon. members laughed, the other evening, when I stated how far it was to walk round 160 acres, a distance of two miles. That is not a small piece of land to occupy and cultivate, and to be given for nothing; and, as the Commissioner of Crown Lands remarked, the settler is not to be prevented from taking up as much additional land as he wants, under the ordinary Regulations, by paying for it on the conditional purchase system. It has also been urged by hon. members who have had large experience in dealing with land of second and third rate character, that the homestead lease areas will be too small. Well, I can go with those hon. members some distance, for I know that if you take the land as it is now, in its unimproved condition, and merely fence it and leave it unimproved, it will hardly support a sufficient number of stock to pay; but we expect that these lands will be very much improved, by the

system of occupation provided in this Bill, and that land which is almost useless in its natural state will be ringbarked and otherwise improved, so as to increase its capability for carrying stock. The hon. member for the Murray has told us that land in his district is capable of being improved very much. We all know there is a large amount of land in this colony which can be made to produce good crops of wheat. The York gum thickets about York seemed formerly to be perfectly useless, yet as soon as those parts were cleared and ringbarked the land produced very good crops. The salmon gum trees and thickets had prevented the grass from growing. I noticed that all the members who said the leasing areas were too small jumped to the conclusion that every man who went on the land would at once get the maximum area, and those hon. members based their calculations on the amount of money he would require to pay rent and to make the necessary improvements upon the maximum area. But we expect that many more persons will take the 1,000 acre blocks than will take the 5,000 acre blocks; and, although I am quite willing to listen to arguments in committee for improving the Bill, still I believe that if you increase the areas you will be giving to people a lot of land which they will not improve to the extent we desire.

MR. MONGER: They must improve, whatever the land they take, by the conditions of the lease.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): But we expect them to turn their leasehold areas into a smiling plain. That is what we expect. I am glad to see hon. members are so liberal to-night that they would give away all the land for nothing; but they forget that the small occupier is paying his 10s. an acre. Are we to give him the land for nothing, too? Hon. members should bear in mind that the rental of 2d. and 3d. an acre required from the homestead leaseholder, according to quality, is not a rental in the ordinary sense, but is to pay for the freehold. If you want only an occupation certificate for 99 years, the freehold will still be in the Crown, and will eventually come back to the Crown; and, unless hon. members are prepared to give away the land for nothing, I say these rentals are not too high, at 2d. and 3d. an acre, ex-

tending over 30 years, and ending in the granting of the freehold. If the land is worth anything, it is worth that. If 2d. an acre for 30 years is considered to be a high price, the best plan will be to take away the freehold right, and make the tenure a lease for 30 or 40 years, the land returning to the Crown again. My desire is that the settler shall occupy the land, and make the leasehold his own; and with that object I want to put a price on the land which will be reasonably sufficient, and be practicable for him to pay, so that he may make the land his home, and purchase the freehold. Hon. members are very liberal to-night. Some of them would give away all the land in the colony for nothing; but I hope they will remember the small occupier still pays 10s. an acre.

MR. RICHARDSON: The Government have still the right to reserve all the first-class land.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): But every selector will want first-class land for second-class, and will want second-class land for third-class. The Government will have to classify the lands before throwing them open to selection, and will have to declare which are second and which are third-class lands, before any intending occupier goes out to select them. The hon. member for West Perth (Mr. Quinlan) said I lacked earnestness in introducing this Bill. I can only tell the hon. member it is a pretty hard matter to go into heroics on the same subject twice, and I did feel that I could not go so far into the subject, in introducing this second Homesteads Bill, as I did last year, though I did try to place this Bill before hon. members in such a way as would commend it to their approval. With reference to making the leasehold areas very much larger, I pointed out last year that some of the lands to be dealt with under this Bill are already occupied as leased runs, and that unless you are to put another class of occupiers on these leased areas—men who will do something more than the present holders are doing—you will be acting most unfairly towards the present holders. They will say, "Why not give me the whole freehold to improve it; I have fenced it in already, and all I have to do will be to make some more improvements; therefore, why not give me the freehold,

as well as giving thousands of acres to others." But our object is not to interfere unnecessarily with the present occupiers, but only to interfere with them when we get other persons who are willing to do more with the land than the present occupiers are doing. That was another reason why I did not want to increase the leasehold areas beyond the limits proposed in this Bill. At one time I thought it might be desirable to refer this Bill to a select committee; but, after what has fallen from hon. members, I think we can deal with all the points, in a committee of the whole House, better than in a select committee. I will ask hon. members to give notice of the amendments they propose to make in the clauses, so that the Government may consider them, and may come to the House prepared to deal with them. In conclusion, I believe this Bill will be productive of good. I do not mean to say it is perfect as it is, for this is a very difficult subject, and there is abundance of room for difference of opinion on a question of this sort. But if we pull together, and use our best endeavours to try and make this as good a Bill as possible, under present circumstances, I believe we shall be going on the right road, and that it will be productive of good to the community.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

#### MIDLAND RAILWAY COMPANY'S LOAN (SECOND INSTALMENT).

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): Before moving the adjournment of the House, I should like to inform hon. members that the second instalment of the Midland Railway Company's Loan has been paid in London, and that the subscribers to the Loan have paid about £50,000 in addition to the amount they were called upon to subscribe on the 1st of August. I have a telegram from our Agent General in London, stating that he had to his credit at Messrs. Glyn, Mills, and Company's Bank £300,000, and he also informs me that, acting under instruction from me, and also at the request of the Midland Railway Company, he has repaid to the National Bank the sum of £60,000, which had been previously advanced to the Com-

pany under guarantee from the Government, and has got a receipt for the principal and interest, in full discharge in regard to the guarantee which had been given by the Government for that advance. I hope that is the last we shall hear, in this House, concerning that guarantee of £60,000. There is no doubt that on the 1st of September the balance of the subscriptions for the half-million loan to the Company will, for a certainty, be duly paid to our credit.

#### ADJOURNMENT.

The House adjourned at 5:35 p.m.

### Legislative Council,

Wednesday, 9th August, 1893.

Breaksea Light: Renewal of—Stamp Duty charged on Treasury Bill Coupons—Post Office Savings Bank Consolidation Bill: recommittal—Post and Telegraph Bill: first reading—Excess Bill: first reading—Adjournment.

THE PRESIDENT (Hon. Sir G. Shenton) took the chair at 4:30 o'clock p.m.

#### PRAYERS.

#### BREAKSEA LIGHT—RENEWAL OF.

THE HON. J. F. T. HASSELL, for the Hon. J. A. Wright: I have to ask the Colonial Secretary whether it is the intention of the Government to place a sum on the Estimates to renew the light on Breaksea Island, in the same manner as is now being done at Rottnest?

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. S. H. Parker): I regret to say that the Government have found it impossible to place a sum on the current year's Estimates for the work in question.

#### STAMP DUTY CHARGED ON TREASURY BILL COUPONS—MOTION FOR ADJOURNMENT.

THE HON. J. MORRISON: I beg, sir, to move that the House do now adjourn. I do so for the purpose of drawing attention to what, I feel certain, is an unintentional injustice now being done to the holders of Treasury bills of the May, 1893, issue. These bills were issued in the early part of May, and it was stated that the Government would pay  $4\frac{1}{2}$  per cent. interest, which was to be paid quarterly. It has come to my knowledge that, on the presentation of the 1st of August coupons, the holders were requested to affix a penny stamp to each before receiving the interest. Such a proceeding as this needs only to be mentioned, I am sure, for the Government to have it altered. The desire of the Government in issuing these bills was to get people interested in the finances of the colony and to lend their money at a certain rate of interest; but if they have to disburse a penny on each coupon, especially when the amounts are small, they are not receiving the interest promised by the Government. If hon. members knew what some of these amounts were they would be surprised. Take, for instance, a £10 coupon: the interest on such on 1st August would only have been 2s. 2d., and in order to get this a penny stamp had to be affixed. Thus the holder would not receive the  $4\frac{1}{2}$  per cent. promised by the Government. I am aware that clause 71 of the Stamp Act says:—"The stamp upon a receipt or coupon or warrant for interest shall be cancelled by the person by whom the receipt is given or the coupon or warrant is presented for payment before he delivers it out of his hands;" but this Act was passed, it must be remembered, before Treasury bills were thought of, and even now they are a novelty in colonial finance. Although, perhaps, on the strict wording of the Act the claim made by the Treasury may be a good one, but if it be so, it seems to me that the Stamp Act should be amended so as to exempt the coupons on Treasury bills and place them in Schedule A, among other Government exemptions. I notice that the schedule states that the receipt given for the payment of any money to or for the use of or from Her Majesty shall be exempt, and I