tive is Postmaster General. The Treasurer is the Executive head of the Department, and the Postmaster General is the permanent head. He has been well recognised in this colony for many years, and I do not think there will be any doubt as to who he is.

THE HON. J. W. HACKETT: Is it not well understood that we have now the last Postmaster General who is not a member of the Executive? I think some definition necessary, but I leave the matter in the hands of the Colonial Secretary who, after further consideration, can make an alteration if he thinks it necessary.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. S. H. Parker): I will bring this matter under the notice of the learned gentleman who drew this Bill—the Attorney General—and I will commend to him the remarks of my hon. friend, and, perhaps, he may deem it advisable to make the alteration.

Clause agreed to.

The remaining clauses were agreed to and the Bill reported.

ADJOURNMENT.

The Council, at 5 o'clock p.m., adjourned until Tuesday, 1st August, at 2.30 o'clock p.m.

Legislative Assembly,

Thursday, 27th July, 1893.

Return of Rails at certain Stations—Fencing Legislation—Legislation *re* Width of Tires, and Yoking Horses Abreast—Message from the Legislative Council: Concurrence in Bills—Excess Bill, 1892: first reading—Constitution Act Amendment Bill: further considered in committee—Adjournment.

THE SPEAKER took the chair at 4·30 p.m.

PRAYERS.

RETURN OF RAILS AT CERTAIN STATIONS.

MR. R. F. SHOLL, in accordance with notice, asked the Commissioner of Railways,—

1. What quantity of 46¼lb. rails was now stacked in the Northam Station yard.

2. What quantity of 46¼lb. rails, removed from the Eastern Railway line, was delivered weekly at the Northam Station yard.

3. What quantity of rails, already removed from Eastern Railway line, was now ready for delivery at Northam.

4. What quantity of 46¼lb. rails remained to be removed from the permanent way on the Eastern Railway for use on the Yilgarn Railway, and what quantity could the Contractor depend upon having delivered per day, per week, or per month.

5. What quantity of 45lb. rails was now stacked at the East Northam Station yard, at the disposal of the Contractor.

6. What quantity of 45lb. rails was now stacked at Fremantle, and what quantity was being delivered daily or weekly at Northam.

7. What quantity of 45lb. rails was now afloat, and probable date of arrival at Fremantle.

8. About what date was the balance of the rails for the completion of the Yilgarn contract expected at Fremantle.

9. Had the rails required for the Boyanup-Busselton Railway been delivered in the colony; if so, at or about what date.

THE COMMISSIONER OF RAILWAYS (Hon. H. W. Venn) replied as follows:—

1. 4½ miles.

2. 4 miles per week.

3. 1½ miles.

4. (1) 62 miles of rails remain to be removed; (2) 10 miles per month for 4½ months.

5. 1¼ miles.

6. (1) 14¾ miles are stacked at Fremantle; (2) 1¼ miles have been sent off to Northam to date.

7. About 17⅓ miles to arrive about 5th August, and 12 miles to arrive about 7th October.

8. The Government are not yet aware when the balance of 16 miles will be shipped.

9. Yes, all received, viz., in November last.

FENCING LEGISLATION.

MR. THROSSELL: I rise to move the resolution standing in my name, "That

in the opinion of this House it is desirable, in the interest of land settlement, that the laws relating to fencing land be amended on the lines of the 'Fencing Bill of 1891,' and that the Government should introduce a measure for that purpose, if possible, during the present session of Parliament." My object in bringing forward the motion is to have the principle recognised that ownership of land involves responsibility. So far as our laws affecting Government or Crown Lands are concerned, this principle is sufficiently recognised, for no man, on however small a scale, can take up land under the present regulations except under conditions of fencing and improvement. The man who takes up his 3,000 acres, although he may pay the money down for it, must, within a given time, proceed to fence that land. But it may happen that this block of 3,000 acres may be alongside one of the old fee simple grants alienated fifty years ago, and the man whom the Government has compelled to fence his land cannot call upon the old landowner beside him to contribute towards the cost of the boundary fence until the owner chooses to complete the boundary fence of his own freehold. I believe members will agree with me that this is an anomaly that should be swept away. The progress of settlement and the development of the soil demand it. I have in my mind at the present moment an instance where a landowner fenced the whole of his boundary line; on either side of him is some fee simple land, and when he called upon the owners of this land to pay half the value of the fence he had put up, they refused, their reply being—and I believe the present law justifies them in making the reply—that when they require to complete the fencing around the whole of their holdings they will then pay their share of the cost of the dividing fence, but not before. I am sure members will see that common justice demands that both the old landlord and the new should be placed on the same footing, and that the progressive man who wishes to settle on our land and who is settled, and who desires to live up to his responsibilities, should be encouraged and protected. Especially is it so desirable just now, when the country is spending such large sums of money in providing facilities for the opening up of our lands, and in encouraging settlement. I know that amongst the owners of land there are many progressive men who desire to live up to their responsibilities, and to do something with their fee simple land; but they may be surrounded by absentee landowners or non-progressive neighbours, who are content to allow their land to remain unimproved, and, while the progressive man is anxious and willing to improve his land and to fence it, he is discouraged from doing so by reason of the present state of our fencing laws, which he knows will not protect him even to the extent of compelling his neighbour to contribute his fair share towards the cost of their dividing fence, —people who are living only for the sake of the enhanced value that the expenditure of their progressive neighbour and the Government expenditure upon roads and railways will place upon their land. I have confined my resolution to legislation upon the lines of the Fencing Bill of 1881. It will be known to many members that that measure was thoroughly threshed out in the Press at the time, and that the consensus of public opinion was in favour of legislation in that direction, and that it was passed by the Legislature of the day, but that it did not become law because the Governor in Executive Council vetoed the Bill. But we are in a very different position now from the position we were in twelve years ago. Then we had no railways, and possibly it might have been a hardship in those days (though I question it) to have enforced legislation of this kind. I believe, if that Bill had become law, the country would now be reaping the advantage of it, and many hardships and much injustice would have been done away with. I have that Bill before me, and I believe I am right in saying that it was based upon the fencing legislation in force in the other colonies; and, while I am not wedded entirely to the provisions of that particular Bill—on the contrary I think there may be one or two clauses in it which I would not approve—still I believe that in that measure the Government will find ready to their hands a Bill which, with a little modification, will meet the requirements of the country. I trust, therefore, to receive the support of the Government and of the members of this House in this matter. I confess that when I first proposed to bring forward

this resolution I contemplated the introduction of a bigger Bill, dealing with other improvements, but one of my friends, whose opinion I value, persuaded me to content myself for the present with bringing forward this measure dealing with fencing alone. I am satisfied, however, in my own mind that the time is at hand when the Government will be called upon to legislate in the direction of the compulsory improvement of freehold lands. I do not think it is right that while the country is expending large sums of money in providing facilities for settlement, and the Government are embarking in extensive railway undertakings and other public works in order to encourage the development of the country,—I do not think it is right that the owners of land, whose estates are being enhanced in value by reason of this public expenditure, should be content to allow their land to remain idle and unimproved, and to contribute nothing to the revenue. I am not an advocate of a land tax as a means of enforcing the improvement of these large estates, and public opinion probably is not yet ripe in this colony for any drastic legislation on the subject; but I do think, and I do believe, that public opinion is with me in this: that the time is not far distant when this subject will have to be taken in hand by the Government. We see some 600,000 acres of fee simple land alongside one line, the Great Southern Railway, and we have no guarantee that the owners will even fence it; while on the other hand we have progressive men who are only too anxious to fence and improve their lands and to see settlement extending, and, while we compel, and I think wisely compel, these men to live up to their responsibilities and to fence and improve their lands, it is an anomaly and an injustice to these men that their neighbours cannot be made to follow their example. It is an anomaly that should be wiped out that the old holders of what are admittedly the richest areas should be allowed to stand by, doing nothing, while the more progressive man is compelled to improve, and is unable to call upon his do-nothing neighbour to contribute his fair share of the cost of a dividing fence. We should take care that upon this question we do not place ourselves in the position of some philanthropists, who are always looking out for some great object on which to exercise their philanthropy while neglecting smaller things at hand equally worthy of their attention. This is a matter that has been neglected too long. It may look a small thing by the side of some of the undertakings of the present Government, but it is a question that bears closely upon the progress of settlement, and it is a question which should be taken in hand without further delay. I have letters, and can adduce instances, to prove where progressive and enterprising settlers have spent a lot of money in the subdivision of their property, and in the erection of fences, the expense of which ought to be shared jointly by their non-progressive neighbours; and I ask the consideration of the House for these progressive men, who are doing all they can to improve their holdings and to develop the country. I trust I shall have the support of members in asking the Government to introduce a measure that will be fair and just towards these men, and that will also be in the best interests of land settlement. I do not wish to intrude further on the time of the House, beyond repeating that it is simply owing to the advice of certain members that the resolution I have brought forward did not take a different form—that in the opinion of this Assembly the time has arrived when the Government should take steps to enforce the compulsory improvement of large tracts of land taken up alongside Government Railways. I trust that some other member may be induced to take that step, unless we are forestalled by the Government themselves seeing the wisdom of dealing with that matter. The present motion simply asks for legislation founded upon the Fencing Acts of the other colonies; and if members will study the provisions of the Bill of 1881, I think they will agree with me that, with a few slight alterations, the Government will have a Bill ready to their hands that will meet the requirements of the country; and I see no reason why, with the consent of the Government, it should not be brought forward and dealt with this session. I beg to move the motion standing in my name.

MR. LOTON: I rise just to say a few words in support of the motion. I may say at once that I have not looked into the Fencing Bill to which the hon. mem-

ber refers; but I took a lot of interest in the matter—though not connected with politics at the time—and I believe that the main feature of the Bill was that wherever one person holding private land, or land held under special occupation or similar tenure, put up a dividing fence, the owner of the adjoining land had to contribute half the value of the fence, whether he had fenced his own land or not. That was to say: supposing the person was the holder of a block of 10,000 acres which was not fenced, and somebody else took up a piece of land adjoining one of the boundaries and fenced his land, the owner of the 10,000-acre block, who perhaps had held his land for years and done nothing to it, could not be compelled to pay anything towards the cost of his neighbour's fence unless he had completely fenced his own land. That was the law which the Fencing Bill of 1881 proposed to remedy, and that I take it is what this motion aims at,—that the new holder who puts up a fence shall be able to obtain from the adjoining owner one moiety of the cost of such fence, where it joins his property. I do not think it is necessary at this stage to go into any further details. When we get the Bill which the hon. member asks for, we can then discuss its provisions. The hon. member alluded to some further action which he felt inclined to press upon the Government, with regard to the compulsory improvement of freehold lands. I think it will be admitted that such a measure is one that would necessitate very serious and matured consideration. It is rather a difficult matter to say in what way and to what extent you are to compel a man to improve land that belongs to him; but I hope, and I have some grounds for hoping—in fact, I feel a great amount of certainty about it—that the Government will not have any occasion to take action in this direction of compulsory improvements. I believe that the people of the colony are becoming alive to the fact that it is in their own interest to take action themselves, without being forced in anyway by the Government. The necessity of the times, the march of events brought about by the expenditure of public money in developing the resources of the colony, and the spread of settlement—the necessities of the times, I say, must convince the owners of large freehold estates that they must either improve their lands themselves, or deal with them in some other way. They must either improve their estates by bringing them under cultivation, in various ways, or they must get rid of a portion of them, and allow someone else to improve them. That, I believe, is a position which the owners of land in the settled districts of this colony are not afraid to face, but are prepared to face. There may be isolated instances where this will not be done, but I think that on the whole it will not be requisite for the Government to take any action in that direction; and, if the hon. member had moved in the direction indicated, I do not think I should have been able to support him at the present moment, without knowing pretty clearly what his intentions were. But on the question of compulsory fencing, or, rather, in his proposal to compel an adjoining neighbour to contribute a fair share towards the cost of a dividing fence, I am entirely in accord with him.

MR. CLARKSON: I am quite in sympathy with the motion of the hon. member as it now stands; I think it is only fair and reasonable that the adjoining owner should pay half the cost of a fence, which improves his property to a certain extent. I confess I have never seen the Bill to which he alludes, that I can remember; therefore, I am not in a position to express any opinion upon it. But I can see it would be nothing but fair and right that some law relating to the subject should be introduced. So far, I am entirely in accord with the motion. But when the hon. member talks about asking the Government to compel all owners of land to improve them, that is a subject which, as the hon. member for the Swan said, will require a great deal of, and very grave, consideration. It looks to me something like an attempt to unduly interfere with the rights of property, and that is a very dangerous matter to meddle with, without very serious consideration indeed. I often hear it stated that landholders in the settled parts of the colony are not dealing with their land in the way in which they ought, that they are like the dog in the manger,—won't do anything to the land themselves, nor allow anybody else an opportunity of doing so. There is a great deal of bosh talked about that. I maintain that a very large majority of the landowners in the Eastern

Districts and the more settled portions of the colony are doing everything they possibly can with their lands in the direction of improvements. It must be remembered that a very large proportion of these old grants—although of course they include a great deal of the best land of the colony—is not suited for cultivation, or such cultivation as may be within the means of the present owners. Supposing a man owns 10,000 acres, is he to be compelled to cultivate the whole of that 10,000 acres? Even if he were willing to do so, where will he get the capital? The Banks will not advance him the money, and other financial institutions would turn a deaf ear to it, and he could simply not get the money to do it with. But a very large majority of the landowners in this part of the colony, I maintain, are doing the very best they can with their land. They are quite alive to the fact that unless they improve it in some way, within their means—I don't say clear it for cultivation entirely, but in the way of ringing and sub-dividing into small paddocks—they are quite aware that, unless they do this, their land, in a few years' time, will not be worth holding. They can see that every year it is deteriorating seriously for the want of this expenditure upon it. I say our land-owners are well aware of this, and are most anxious to improve their lands, as well as they possibly can with the means at their disposal. In fact, many of them are getting into debt for that purpose. I think it is too soon to talk about taxing these unfortunate men, because they cannot improve their land in the way some people in town think they ought to do. I hope the day is far distant when we shall hear anything about a tax of that sort.

MR. LEFROY: The question at present before the House is simply the motion moved by the hon. member for Northam, which does not refer in any way to the taxing of land. I have taken the trouble to look up *Hansard* for 1881, and to ascertain the history of the Fencing Bill that was introduced in that year by his honour the present Speaker, but at that time plain Mr. Steere, and hon. member for the Swan; and it will be interesting to members to know that the Bill passed this House—there was only one House at that time—by a very small majority. It created a great deal of discussion at the time, and it was very hotly opposed by Mr. Maitland Brown, the then member for Geraldton. But, notwithstanding that strong opposition, the Bill was passed, and, in due course, it was submitted to the Governor for his approval. I suppose the reason his Excellency did not approve of the Bill at the time was on account of its having been passed by such a small majority. But I notice that nearly all the country members in the House at the time, or a majority of them, were in favour of the Bill. I may say that I consider, myself, that a Bill on the lines of the Bill of 1881 would be a useful measure, a very useful measure. The main feature of the Bill was that it provided that owners of adjoining land were to share the expense of their dividing fence; that if one owner fenced his land, the adjoining owner should be called upon to pay half the value of the fence, along his own boundary. The Bill merely applied to freehold property, and not leasehold land; and I think a measure of that sort would be a very useful one indeed, in the interests of settlement. If the Government should introduce such a measure, of course we shall have an opportunity of discussing it in detail, and members will be able to express their views upon it, in assent or dissent. But I certainly think the present motion is a good one, and a wise one, and one well worthy of the support of this House.

MR. RICHARDSON: I think it cannot be gainsaid by any member of this House that the motion is in the direction of improvement, that it is in the direction of settlement, and that it is in the direction of the development of our lands; and, for these reasons, I think it is in the direction of everything that is good in the nature of land settlement, and in the best interests of industrious and progressive landholders. It may be said, broadly, without going into too many details, that, from such a measure as this, those who are doing their duty on their land, those who are progressive and advancing, and doing their best to improve their lands, need fear nothing; the only terrors it will have will be for those drones who occupy large areas of land, and never make any attempt to improve them, or to utilise them in any way for such uses as the land ought to be put to.

I shall hail the measure with special satisfaction, and more particularly inasmuch as it will press a little bit and touch up what we may call those large absentee landlords, who hold immense areas and never do anything to them, but simply lie by, drawing a certain amount of income from, and waiting to participate in the "unearned increment," which our own settlers, by their industry and the expenditure of their capital, are bringing about, and hoping that in a few years time they may be able to sell out at a very good profit, but having no intention in any shape or way to utilise their land, or to spend anything upon it. This measure is one that must touch up this class of landowner, and for that reason alone I think it is deserving of some support. It would not be difficult to quote instances of many of this particular class whom such a Bill would affect, and I think very properly affect. I myself know of a piece, somewhere in the Bunbury district, of some 2,000 acres, with one of the most beautiful running streams in the whole colony running through it. That land is held by a rich proprietor who resides in England, and who will neither sell it nor let it on a long lease, nor let anything be done with it. Scores of people have made applications with the view of utilising it, but the answer is that the proprietor does not want money or want to sell, but thinks that some day the land will be of value for one of his children. The stream itself is worth a great deal, with proper mechanical applications, for purposes of irrigation. But there it is, and nothing is done with the land, or likely to be. That is only one out of scores of instances, which has the result of retarding settlement and preventing the utilisation of the land. There can be no doubt that a measure of this kind must have a beneficial effect in promoting settlement, and for that reason I have the greatest pleasure in giving the motion my support.

MR. SOLOMON: I also shall have pleasure in supporting the motion of the hon. member for Northam. I have heard several complaints in the direction he has spoken of, and I think it is only fair that those who lay out money in improving their land should be able to call upon those who are not willing to do so, but prefer to let their land lie idle until its value is increased by the outlay and industry of other people, to contribute their share of the cost of the boundary fence.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): I do not think that anyone can very well argue against what has been said as to the fairness of calling upon the owners of adjoining lands to contribute towards the cost of a dividing fence. I think it is but reasonable that they should do so, and I believe that as a rule, speaking generally, it is done. [SEVERAL MEMBERS: No.] Then, if not, I wonder that such a Bill as this has not been brought in before. Some twelve years ago a Bill of this kind was brought into this House, and, though it did not become law, I have not heard anywhere that there has been any commotion in regard to it. Therefore, one would think that people are fairly satisfied with things as they are. However, if that is not the case, I think that a Bill of this sort would be very useful, and I think it is necessary, especially with regard to absentees who leave their lands unimproved. The motion asks the Government to bring in a measure "on the lines of the Fencing Bill of 1881." Of course it is difficult to say exactly what the hon. member intends when he says "on the lines." I suppose he is content to leave that to the Government, and let them consider what the best lines are on which to frame the Bill.

MR. RICHARDSON: The same as the whole of the Australian colonies have, I think, except ourselves.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): Of course we know that as a rule, in this colony, people who have property are fencing it in, and doing the best they can with it, so far as their means allow them. Especially is that the case in the Eastern Districts. I think there are very few instances in those districts where people who hold land have not fenced it in; I believe they have nearly all done that.

MR. MONGER: Except absentees.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): Of course this is an important matter. Merely a simple Bill having reference only to division fences would not be much trouble to prepare; but, if it is to be a Bill dealing also with other matters, it may take some time, especially in the middle of the session. It is always difficult to prepare and introduce new legisla-

tion when the House is in session, because, as we all know, the Attorney General has enough to do, and more than enough to do, to deal with the measures that are already before the House, and ———

MR. RICHARDSON: This Bill is all ready.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): There may be some difficulty in placing this measure on the table at a very early date. As to the Bill being all ready, I am not sure that the Bill of 1881 is a Bill that would meet with the approval of this House. I scarcely think that a Bill introduced twelve years ago is likely to be altogether in accordance with the views of people now. But, so far as we are concerned, we have no objection at all to the introduction of a Bill of this sort, especially as regards sharing the cost of fences. I think that proposition is reasonable and fair, and I am sorry to hear there are so many cases in which neighbours refuse to do it, because, if one man erects a fence and his neighbour uses it, it must to some extent, at any rate, enhance the value of his land.

MR. COOKWORTHY: Some people view it otherwise: it keeps their cattle from running on the other man's land.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): Is that it? The Government, at any rate, have no objection to this motion, and we will do what we can to give effect to it.

MR. A. FORREST: There is one aspect of this question which must not be overlooked. I have not seen the Bill of 1881, and do not know how far it went in this direction. But we are fully aware that in some parts of the colony, and more particularly in the Southern districts of the colony, large tracts of land were given away to the early settlers, and the best portions of these grants, the portions that are any good at all, have been sold and fenced in, and the remainder is scarcely worth fencing. There is a large quantity of this land, to my own certain knowledge, that is under water and entirely useless, and never can be any good. I may say I have myself selected 2,000 acres out of a 100,000 acre block; I have taken the good land of course, and the balance belongs to the original proprietors, and am I to compel them to pay half the cost of the boundary fence, when the land they have outside that boundary fence may not be worth a penny an acre? This is a matter that will require very careful consideration. Then come down to the Narrogin estate, which is now being cut up. Along the brook the land is very valuable land, and in the course of a year or two it will be fenced in; but, outside that, the land is not worth fencing, and I expect the owners would sooner transfer it back to the Crown than fence it, or pay the half of the boundary fence. Therefore, I say, we must be very careful what we are doing, in dealing with this question, because we may be compelling people to pay for fencing land that is absolutely valueless, while the land on the other side of the fence may be very good land. Take the Plantagenet district, again. Certain parts of the large districts that were given away in the early days of the colony were very good land, but other portions are entirely useless, and if the owners were compelled to pay one-half the cost of fencing their neighbours' good land it would be a very hard thing.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): They could sell it, I suppose.

MR. A. FORREST: They could not sell it.

MR. RICHARDSON: You try.

MR. A. FORREST: The only part of the colony, I think, where a Fencing Bill would apply would be the Eastern Districts, along the valley of the Avon, where the land is generally good land. Reference has been made to the discussion that took place in the House when the Fencing Bill was brought in twelve years ago. I have no doubt that Mr. Maitland Brown, who was the leader of the Opposition in those days, and who opposed the Bill, and the Governor of the colony, who vetoed it, knew what they were about. They could see, I suppose, that the Bill would work great hardship in many cases. Take the Commissioner of Railways' property, down South; outside it the land is not worth fencing.

THE COMMISSIONER OF RAILWAYS (Hon. H. W. Venn): That's a great mistake.

MR. A. FORREST: At any rate, we all know there are plenty of places where the land on one side of a boundary fence may be good enough land, but, if you

went a yard beyond the boundary, it would not be worth fencing. If the Attorney General is going to introduce this Bill, I hope he will be most careful in protecting those who had land given to them in the early days of the colony from being compelled to fence land that is not worth fencing.

MR. PATERSON: I must certainly take exception to what the hon. member who has just sat down said about the land down South not being worth fencing. I think that is a great mistake. I think that even scrubby land is all worth fencing; and, not only that, it pays people to fence their land. It is scarcely credible how it improves in value, for sheep and cattle. I could give an instance where it was tried as an experiment; the sheep on the land were almost starving, but, after it was fenced, they did very well on it. As to the necessity for a Fencing Bill that will enable land owners to call upon their neighbours to contribute to the cost of a dividing fence, I think no one who knows anything about the matter would gainsay it. I may mention a case in point, in connection with an estate in which I have some interest, in the South. The adjoining property is owned by a celebrated lawyer in New South Wales. We were very anxious to fence the whole of our portion, and we applied to this gentleman to contribute half the cost of the boundary fence. Of course he saw at once he was not obliged to pay anything, and he wouldn't do so. I asked him to allow me to take the timber for the fence off his land, instead of his contributing half the cost. He objected even to that, and we have never had a penny of recompense from him. I know another gentleman in the South—we all know him well—an old settler who has fenced all his land, except one bit of boundary; and the adjoining owner refuses to contribute anything because the law does not compel him to do so, unless his neighbour has fenced in the whole of his land. If only one panel is left open, the other man is not compelled to pay anything, because the fence is not then a complete fence. I think that is ridiculous, and very unfair. I was sorry to hear the hon. member for West Kimberley decrying the lands in the South; I think he had no right to do so. If members only saw the traffic there is already on our railway,—

MR. A. FORREST: It doesn't pay for greasing the wheels.

MR. PATERSON: Nonsense! I shall have to ask for a return before very long, and members will be astonished at the traffic there is already. Of course the line is scarcely opened yet. We all remember that when the line between Perth and Fremantle was first opened there was hardly a parcel sent by it; a 30lb. box was considered good freight. But we know the quantity of traffic there is now. I think it is very wrong for members to get up in this House and decry districts they know very little about. I shall have much pleasure in supporting the motion, because I believe it is a move in the right direction.

MR. THROSSELL: I should like to point out that the Bill which the Government is asked to introduce is not a compulsory fencing Bill, as some members seem to imagine. The object of the motion is simply to empower a progressive landowner, who lives up to his responsibilities as a land owner, to call upon the adjoining owner, who is neither progressive nor alive to his responsibilities, to pay his share of the value of a boundary fence. It is not a compulsory Bill, calling upon people to fence land that is not worth fencing. I think we may take it for granted that if one man considers his land is worth fencing, and puts up a fence, the land on the other side of the fence is also likely to be worth fencing, and it is only fair that the owner who benefits by the other man's expenditure should be asked to contribute towards it.

MR. MONGER: It gives me very great pleasure to support the hon. member for Northam in this very reasonable and sensible motion he has brought forward for our consideration. In my opinion, legislation in the direction he has suggested is very necessary, and I hope the Government will see their way to fall in with the suggestion of the hon. member, and introduce a Bill this session dealing with this question. I know that in the Eastern Districts it has been considered, for some considerable time past, that legislation of this kind is necessary; and I think the hon. member is to be congratulated in having taken so early an opportunity of bringing forward an expression of the

wishes of the residents in his own and the other districts in the Eastern portion of the colony. I shall have very much pleasure in supporting him.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL (Hon. S. Burt): If any other member intends to speak, I hope we shall hear whether it is proposed that this fencing legislation shall apply to leasehold land as well as freehold. When the Bill of 1881 was before the House, I know there was great difference of opinion on the subject at that time. Of course it makes a great difference if we apply it to leaseholds as well as freeholds, and to pastoral runs in all parts of the colony. For my own part, I do not see any difference in the principle of the thing, as between leasehold and freehold land. If the Bill only applies to freeholds, of course it would only have a very limited scope; in the Northern parts of the colony it would be comparatively inoperative. I assume that the committee, if it passes this resolution, will desire a Bill that shall apply to both leasehold and freehold land.

MR. MONGER: I think that would be rather hard upon some of the poor squatters at the North.

Resolution put and passed.

WIDTH OF TIRES LEGISLATION, AND YOKING TEAMS ABREAST.

MR. RICHARDSON: In rising to propose the resolution standing in my name, it ought not to be necessary to urge it very strongly upon the good sense of this House. I think it is palpable that the absence of any law regulating the width of tires for carts in this colony must have cost the country, up to date, some thousands—I dare say scores of thousands—of pounds. When we recollect that it is quite easy for any teamster or carter to put any weight he likes on any width of tire, and to cut up the roads, made at great expense, into ribbons, I think a moment's reflection must convince anybody that such a state of things cannot be good or economical. I think if it were possible to get a correct estimate, and bring us face to face with what the absence of this law has cost the colony—when we remember the thousands of miles of roads to be kept up—it would astonish most of us. I may say that the attention of the other colonies has already been turned to this question. South Australia has already adopted an Act dealing with the question—that colony frequently takes the lead in progressive measures—but I am inclined to think that their Act scarcely goes far enough. I think they allow too great a weight to be carried, according to the width of tire, but that is a matter of detail. It is easy to see that a certain amount of hardship may be caused if a change in the law on this subject were brought about too suddenly, and I would propose in any Bill brought in that one or two years' notice be given, by proclamation, as to the time the Bill would come into operation. That would be a fair warning, when a new cart or a new pair of wheels had to be made, that the width of tire must be regulated by the weight to be carried. By doing that, any hardship that might otherwise occur would be avoided. When we think of the limited grants that are at the disposal of our Roads Boards for the upkeep of thousands of miles of roads, and that it is possible for those roads to be cut up in the way I have pointed out, it must be apparent to the good sense of members that it is time we made some change in our law. I may point out that this question has been gone into on a scientific basis, and that it has been clearly demonstrated that on all manner of roads the draft on a broad tire is considerably less than on a narrow one. Even on a hard road the draft is still less; and, of course, on a soft road, where you have a bog or sand, there is no comparison; a team can draw about as much again. There, again, economy would come in, and result in an immense saving to the community. With reference to the second part of the resolution, relating to yoking teams abreast, I believe it is possible that some exception may be taken by some members to this proposal. It has been urged by some members that the roads, having been used up to the present as they have been, with the teams driven in single file—the road leading to Yilgarn more particularly—have become so scoriated with furrows that it would be very difficult to bring about the proposed change. But I maintain that if we do not make a commencement in getting this road beaten down level, we shall never get on. Although heavy carts are allowed to be driven in single file, I may point out that coaches and other light vehicles have to drive

abreast, and have to suffer from the way in which the heavy carrying teams are driven; and I think the quicker a commencement is made the better. I would not advise a commencement of the new system to be made in the middle of winter, but, once the ground hardens, say in three months time, if teams were properly yoked we should find a great improvement. It may be urged as against the proposal to regulate the width of tires according to the weight of load carried, that it would necessitate weigh-bridges, so as to test the weight of teams, I do not know whether that would be necessary, but, even if it is, weigh-bridges are a great convenience, for many purposes, and I think the colony has suffered from the inconvenience of having no weigh-bridges, and that it is about time we went in for them. I beg to move, "That in the opinion of this Assembly it is desirable that legislation should be introduced, this session, making the width of tires on vehicles used on public roads proportionate to the weight carried thereon; and also to cause teams to be yoked abreast when travelling on public roads."

MR. SIMPSON: I have very much pleasure in supporting the hon. member for DeGrey's motion. Personally I have felt very great inconvenience from this practice of driving horses in a string. I remember once meeting a team—we must call it a team—of six horses in a string, on the road to Yilgarn, with a load of 15 cwt.

MR. MONGER: That came from Northam, surely.

MR. SIMPSON: I think its point of departure was Toodyay. The Government went to considerable expense to build a road to Yilgarn; but, for the simple fact that the York Roads Board declined to support the Yilgarn Board in insisting upon teams being yoked abreast, that road has been destroyed. It is now not merely a succession of ruts, but a perfect mass of ruts. So much for that road. The result has been equally disastrous upon other roads. I have been told that it is absolutely necessary in crossing sand-plains to drive horses in single file. I do not think—rich as she is in sand-plains—that Western Australia possesses all the sand-plains in the world (though one would almost imagine from the remarks of the hon. member for Kimberley this evening that it did, when he talks about land not worth a penny an acre); and we know that in other countries this practice of driving horses abreast is insisted upon. So far as my practical experience goes, the farther away a horse is from his load the more he loses in power. There can be no disputing this fact: the present system is a source of great loss to the Roads Boards and to the country, and a great inconvenience to the traffic on our roads, this practice of permitting teamsters to drive so many horses in single file. The system belongs to the age of wooden tires, and it is high time it received its quietus. I have had letters from the Yilgarn Roads Board saying they have been trying to do the best they could to assist the Government, and to act fairly by the Government who was good enough to make them a good road, by insisting that horses on that road should travel abreast; but their action was defeated by the York Roads Board, and the action of that York Roads Board was assisted by the Commissioner of Crown Lands, himself a Minister of the Government. That is what I have been informed, and I believe it to be true. I remember that four years ago we interviewed the present Premier on this subject—he was at that time Commissioner of Lands—and he told us he thought it was a reasonable thing, and that if we would put our request in proper form, he would assist us. I believe he did so, and the reason the suggestion was not carried out was because we were living then under the old form of Government. But now the hon. gentleman is at the head of the Government, and I think we shall find him ready to fall in with what is suggested by such a practical and accomplished pioneer and settler as the hon. member for the DeGrey.

MR. CLARKSON: I am sorry I cannot agree with the resolution as it stands. With regard to the first part of it, relating to the width of tires, possibly that would be an advantage; but it would take some considerable time to bring about the change, and to get it into working order. Teamsters would require a fresh set of rolling stock, and this would entail considerable expense upon them; so that, if this regulation were adopted, it certainly ought not to be brought into force at any rate for two or three years. With regard

to driving horses abreast upon the country roads in the colony, it is simply an impossibility. I speak from experience, for I have tried it myself, and we know there is nothing that teaches like experience. Theory is very good, but when it comes to practice you sometimes find it won't work. If all the roads of the colony were put in proper order and macadamised, by the Government or any other body, this idea of driving horses abreast would be a very good idea, and a practical idea, and I should then say at once, Let us drive our horses abreast, by all means. But it simply cannot be done with the roads in their present state. Teamsters are not such fools as not to know that the closer their horses are to their loads the easier it is for them to draw those loads; so they must have some reason, you may depend upon it, for driving their horses single file, and one reason is this: throughout the country districts of the colony our teamsters have to make their own roads, and they have to go through forests and thickets where it would be almost impossible to drive horses abreast, and, of course, in course of time, they make a track, which in some places may be 18 inches or 2 feet deep, and when they get into this track, what is the result? What would be the result if the horses were driven abreast? They would tread in these deep ruts, and the wheels behind would scoop them out again, and increase the draught very considerably. It is simply impossible. I have had a great deal of experience in this sort of work, and I am well acquainted with scores of men who are making their living by carting, and they all say—and I assure members it is a fact—that this system of driving abreast cannot be complied with in the country districts of the colony.

MR. SIMPSON: They do it in the Murchison district.

MR. RICHARDSON: Ours is the only colony where they don't do it.

MR. CLARKSON: I think this matter was before the House last year, in some form, and I hope members will pause before passing a law that cannot be carried out, and must remain a dead letter so far as country districts are concerned.

MR. PATERSON: The most important part of this resolution, to my mind, is that relating to the width of tires, and I shall feel very much pleasure in supporting it. No doubt wide tires help to keep the roads in good condition, and narrow tires, with heavy loads, must cut them up. There is one point about driving in single file that I am not quite certain about. I think the width between the wheels of the carts in this colony is not the same as it generally is with carts in the other colonies. I believe they have a wider space between them. Unfortunately we have started with a very narrow gauge; but, though there may be a difficulty about it, I think it can be done.

MR. A. FORREST: If this resolution had stopped at the word "thereon," dealing only with the question of width of tires, I should have supported it, and I am sure most others members would. But when it goes on to say that all teams must be driven with the horses abreast, it is a different matter altogether; and I say that anyone who thinks that this can be done on our country roads cannot have had much experience of the matter. Take the Yilgarn road, and the sandalwood road in the Eastern Districts, and the roads generally in the country, I say it would be almost impossible to drive horses abreast on them, to advantage. This proposal has been before the House on former occasions, and nothing came out of it. I have taken the opportunity of consulting many teamsters on this particular point, and they all say it can't be done, on our bush roads,—that it is impossible to take short curves round with heavy teams. It is a very different thing to drive a light buggy or a coach. The general opinion amongst teamsters—and they ought to know something about the matter—is that the present way of driving is the proper way on bush roads. It stands to reason that the York Roads Board, which has the control of the roads in one of the most important districts of the colony, the roads where the chief carrying trade of the colony is done—it stands to reason that this Board would have agreed to the suggestion of the Yilgarn Board in this matter if they hadn't good grounds for opposing it. Surely the members of such a Board as the York Board must know more about this matter than the hon. member for the Murray, who perhaps only sees one team in a week on the roads in his district, and more than other members representing districts where there is

no carrying trade at all. I shall be glad to support the resolution so far as the width of tires is concerned, but beyond that I shall not go.

MR. COOKWORTHY: After what we have just heard from the hon. member for Kimberley, I feel bound to have something to say. I represent a district where we see more than one cart in a week. In my district you will see tons of timber drawn by bullocks, two abreast, and they manage to get along the roads without much difficulty. I think my hon. friend on the right (Mr. A. Forrest) is altogether mistaken about there being no teams upon our Southern roads; I think if he saw the road between Bunbury and Bridgetown he would tell a different tale. I do not know anything about the Yilgarn road, but I know this: that on any public road down South horses can well be driven abreast, and we all know they do not cut up the roads as much when driven in that fashion. I think the resolution is a very good one, so long as it is not meant to interfere with the bye-laws of District Boards, and made to apply to bush tracks. For instance, it would be almost impossible for me to drive my team to my station two abreast. But that is not a public road, but a mere track; and, on public roads, made roads, I see no reason why horses should not be driven in that way. It would be a great advantage so far as the roads are concerned, and economical. As to the other part of the resolution, regulating the width of tires, I do not think anyone can object to that, provided that due notice be given before the regulation comes into force.

MR. R. F. SHOLL: This is a measure that ought to have been introduced and adopted in this colony years ago. Annually this House votes thousands of pounds for the upkeep of roads, which are deliberately destroyed by people who refuse to take ordinary precautions to preserve the roads. The custom throughout the colony has been to drive horses in line, and we known that the result is disastrous, so far as the roads are concerned. Some time ago—I don't know whether it is so now—the Murchison settlers agreed amongst themselves that they would only drive their horses abreast, and the consequence was they preserved their roads, and had good roads in that district. That is what ought to be insisted upon throughout the colony. It is true there is an Act in force empowering Roads Boards to do this, but they won't put it in force, because they would be put to some expense in having to alter their harness, and an extra set of shafts for their drays. But, there can be no doubt, it would be a great advantage and a great saving to the colony if this plan were generally adopted. It is not a matter that concerns individual districts or individual Roads Boards; it concerns the whole colony, and it particularly concerns this House, which has to vote thousands of pounds annually for the maintenance of the roads of the colony. It is our duty to see that this money is not wasted, and the roads on which it is spent wilfully destroyed. I notice that last year as much as £1,100 granted to one board. I daresay it was necessary. But until we have a law in force compelling teamsters to drive their horses abreast, we shall never have this money expended to the best advantage. With regard to width of tires, there is not the least doubt, if it could be introduced without inflicting any great hardship, it would be a useful regulation. But there is some objection to its coming into force at once; I think that at least twelve months' notice should be given before the law came into force. With regard to minor roads or bush tracks, I do not think it is intended that people should be prevented from driving in single file along such roads, only upon made roads, public roads. The present system is not only destructive, it is positive cruelty to the horses. I have often noticed the horses in the shafts thrown about, with the jolting of the heavy loads behind them, floundering along these terrible ruts; and I think that, even from a humanitarian point of view, it ought to be put a stop to.

MR. THROSSELL: I think, after all, this is a case of first catching your hare, and then cooking it; in other words, first make your roads and then make your law for regulating the traffic upon them. This resolution would have my hearty support if it was somewhat qualified, and made to refer only to public-made roads. It would then be a very valuable law. But to make a hard and fast rule that it shall apply to all public roads, made roads and unmade roads, would be to make a regulation which could not be complied

with. For instance, to apply such a regulation to the roads to our goldfields would simply bring the goldfields traffic to a dead stop; if it were put in force tomorrow there would be an end to all traffic. Teams now travel in one rut, and it would be a very difficult thing to get them out of the old ruts. That is a difficulty that besets both teams and individuals. To put such a law as this into operation would, I say, bring the goldfields traffic to a standstill. Nevertheless, I recognise its importance. There is no doubt that it would be an advantage to our roads if this system of driving horses abreast were generally adopted. I remember that in the old bullock-team days, the Toodyay road was notorious for being the best public road in Western Australia, and in those days the teams were driven abreast. My objection to the resolution is that it is made to apply to all public roads. Public roads, I take it, mean all roads so declared by the various Road Boards, and appearing as such on the maps of the colony. If the resolution were confined to made roads, I think it would be an admirable one, and I would go with it heart and soul, but I fear that as it is now worded it will kill itself, if it is intended to apply to all public roads outside townships, which, as a rule, are in such a state that neither a regulation as to width of tire nor as to drawing horses abreast could be carried out on them. On made public roads or macadamised roads, I would strongly support it.

MR. RICHARDSON: I have no objection, if any member would move an amendment to that effect.

MR. CANNING: No doubt there is very good reason for such a motion, but it seems to me that before this Act could come into operation the principal cause that has led to the motion being brought forward will have ceased to exist. The necessity for it will have been removed. It is admitted that it would not be possible, or that it would not be fair, to enforce such an Act for some considerable time to come, that it would be necessary to allow teamsters and others time to make the necessary alterations in their teams; and, by that time, the Yilgarn Railway will probably be completed, and there would be no necessity for such a law. Meantime, these men would have been put to very considerable expense for what would turn out to be an unnecessary purpose. At the present time, from what I can gather, it would be impracticable to put these regulations into force; it would simply bring traffic to a standstill if put into speedy operation, as regards many roads. It seems also that in a very short time along most of the main roads of the colony there will be railway communication, and there will then be no strong necessity for such a regulation, either as regards width of tire or driving horses abreast. With regard to by-roads, it is generally admitted it would not be possible to make this motion applicable on those roads. Therefore it seems to me that if an Act were passed based upon this motion it would be practically unnecessary by the time it came into operation, and, I think, as regards many of our roads, wholly unworkable.

MR. MONGER: I fail to see the necessity for the motion at all. So far as I can judge, the Roads Boards already have sufficient powers given to them to make by-laws in the direction which the mover of this resolution contemplates. If the Roads Boards do not see the advisability of exercising those powers and making such by-laws, I fail to see why we here should be asked to legislate in a direction opposed to the wishes of these important local bodies. If, in the districts represented by the advocates of this motion, those who occupy seats on these Roads Boards do not think fit to pass by-laws to this effect, I think it is hardly fair to those Boards that those who represent those districts in this House should come here and support a motion of this kind. So far as I am concerned, I never heard of any difference between the York and the Yilgarn Roads Boards on this question; but, if there was a difference of opinion between those two bodies as to the advisability of adopting this system of driving horses abreast, I am confident—and I say it with a perfect knowledge of the practical good sense of the gentlemen constituting the York Board—that they acted judiciously and wisely and in the best interests of the district which they represent. We have heard one hon. member talking about the tremendous sums of money voted annually by this House for the upkeep of the roads of the colony. I find that in

1892 only a paltry sum of £10,000 was voted for this purpose, and that only £15,000 was voted for the last half-year for the maintenance of the thousands of miles of road throughout the whole of this enormous territory. I do not think, therefore, that anyone can say that the Government are very extravagant in that direction; and I hope that when they bring on their Estimates this session, we shall find a very large sum of money proposed for the maintenance of our roads and bridges. If they do so, I am certain that all members here will give it their most hearty support. I am sorry that on this occasion I cannot support the hon. member for the DeGrey.

MR. LEFROY: I think that whenever the hon. member for the DeGrey introduces a motion into this House he thoroughly considers the matter he proposes to deal with; and I am sure he has done so in this case, and, although I agree with him that it is desirable in the interest of road conservation that the width of tires should be regulated in proportion to the weight carried thereon, I cannot agree with him in going to the length that he does when he wishes this House to legislate that all teams shall be driven abreast on all the public roads of the colony. My chief reason for saying this is that the Roads Boards of the colony already have the power to make by-laws regulating the manner in which horses or oxen shall be yoked. I think it is the duty of us all to encourage local government as much as possible. The Roads Boards of this colony have done extremely good work, and surely they must know perfectly well what the opinion of the people they represent is on this and other questions. The members of these Boards are representative of the people of the district, and surely the people of the district have the power to turn them out, and put others in their place, if they consider they are not carrying out the wishes of those whom they represent. Therefore, I really think, as this question has been left to the Roads Boards of the colony, it should still rest with those bodies to introduce such a by-law, if they consider it necessary. I should be glad to do all I could to protect our roads, and also the public funds of the colony; but it seems hard that on every occasion a teamster comes to a public road, if it is only for a few yards, he should be compelled to yoke his horses abreast, and that it should be made penal if he does not do so. I should prefer to see this matter left as it is, in the hands of the local Roads Boards. With regard to the other part of the resolution, as to width of tires, I think there must be very much to recommend it, because I see that it is attracting considerable attention in the other colonies, and has been for some time. I happened to come across some remarks on the subject published by that able and interesting writer in the *Australasian*, "Bruni"; and perhaps members will excuse me if I read them. They were published on the 11th March last:

"This question of broad tires is one that is attracting considerable notice throughout the rural districts of Victoria, it having become evident to most borough and shire councils that if the heavy cost of keeping the roads in order is to be reduced, the carrying of heavy loads on vehicles with narrow tires must be prohibited. The use of broad tires has been strongly opposed by many, because it is an innovation, because the narrow tires have been in use for many years, and because the objectors cannot or will not see the damage that is done by the narrow tires and the benefits that result from the use of broad ones. During my trip in this part of Victoria I did not see one heavy waggon with narrow tires, and nearly all the carts that came under my notice had broad tires. On a cart, broad tires have a clumsy appearance, but when I saw the way heavy loads were brought out of an old waterhole on the roadside, I admitted their great superiority over the ordinary tires. The broad tires were introduced into this neighbourhood by Mr. R. Anderson, of Barragunda, over a quarter of a century ago, and they have come into general use simply on their own merits. A better answer to the objectors to the compulsory use of broad tires on all heavy vehicles could not be given than this fact. Under ordinary traffic I feel satisfied that this cross-country road would not be in nearly as good condition as it is, now that all the heavy traffic is carried on broad-tired wheels. This is not the only advantage; the general opinion of those who use the broad tires is that they are of quite as easy draught on sound ground as the narrow ones, and on a sandy track or heavy ground they are very much easier on the animals drawing the vehicle."

I hope I may be pardoned for reading those remarks, but it seems to me they are very *apropos* at this present moment. We all know that the writer who writes under the name of "Bruni," in I may say the best paper published in these colonies, is a very able and intelligent man. After reading these remarks it ap-

peared to me there must be a great deal in this matter of the width of tires, and therefore I shall be very glad to support the hon. member's motion so far as it refers to that particular question; but the latter part of the resolution I am afraid I could not support.

MR. HASSELL: I shall be glad to support that portion of the resolution relating to width of tires, but I am sorry I cannot support the second part, with reference to driving horses abreast. In the district I represent it would be almost impracticable to drive teams in that fashion on the by-roads. It might be done on the main line of road, but, as we have only one main line in the whole district, the rest being by-roads and cross-country roads, I think it would be unfair to my district to pass such a law. Therefore I cannot support the second part of the resolution.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL (Hon. S. Burt): The resolution before us is put forward for the object of asking our opinion upon this matter. In the past the opinion of members has been very much divided upon this same question, and it strikes me it is about as much divided to-night as it has been in the past. I have been in the House for some years, and have heard several debates on this vexed question of driving horses. I find that in 1881—as far back as that—a resolution was proposed that it was desirable, in the interests of the country, to prohibit the driving of horses in single file. That was objected to; the country members would not have any other system than the single file system. They said they could not get along the bush roads with any other system, and the House rejected the resolution. But they were all very willing at that date to have a law regulating the width of tires. The Government next year introduced a Bill for that purpose, but the country members would not have it then. The Bill was referred to a select committee, and eventually withdrawn. I find on reference to *Hansard* that on that occasion I was among the minority, with Mr. Speaker and other sensible men; but the majority at that date struck out the clause. I hope the Government will not be bothered again to introduce legislation which they find afterwards is not required, or is not acceptable. With regard to driving horses abreast, in 1875 legislation took this shape; it was rendered permissive, by an amendment of the Roads Boards Act, for Roads Boards to make by-laws requiring horses in teams to be yoked abreast. A good many of the Boards make such a by-law, but somehow the by-law does not seem to make the horses go abreast. Some people think if you get into any trouble about anything, all you have to do is to get the Government to bring in a small Act. I have myself "settled" the by-laws made by several country Roads Boards on this question of yoking abreast, but I never yet heard of any Board enforcing any of these by-laws, and I don't suppose they ever will. What they send them for the approval of the Governor in Executive Council, I don't know. The hon. member for the DeGrey asks the House to approve of the system of yoking horses abreast, and also of a law regulating the width of tires. I think we have this fact established: unless we make it compulsory it won't be done. That was said by his honour the Speaker in the debate that took place on the subject in 1875, and it is as true now as it was then,—unless you make it compulsory it won't be done. The truth of that remark has been well borne out by subsequent experience. Therefore, if anything is to be done in this direction, it must be compulsory. I should have thought that the hon. member for the DeGrey might have sat down and prepared a little Bill himself. Although the Government and the Attorney General, I hope, always will be most delighted to help private members in any legislation they may propose, yet it must be remembered that the Attorney General has to look after the legislation of the Government before the legislation of private members. Although legislation by private members is not prohibited, we do not see much of it. Of course if the House asks the Government to introduce this measure, I take it, it is because members cannot do so themselves, though I fail to see why the Government should be asked to introduce it, unless it is to get the sanction of the Government, as a Government, with the view of passing it. But my experience of legislation based upon these resolutions, which are sometimes very loose, has often been that when the Government do bring in a Bill they find

themselves in a minority. Take the Engine Sparks Bill, for instance. We were asked to bring a Bill in on certain defined lines mentioned in the debate upon the resolution, which was passed unanimously, yet when we brought in a Bill, based upon those lines, members laughed at it at once, and we have lost sight of it altogether. It has gone somewhere at the present moment, but I hope it will see the light again some day. This resolution deals with a very vexed question, and personally I agree with it, both as regards width of tires and yoking horses abreast, for until you do so you won't have decent roads. But it seems to me that the country people will not move in the matter unless it is made compulsory upon them. They won't tax themselves unless you compel them, and you cannot blame them for that. But I have always been in favour of compulsory taxation by Roads Boards. I think it is not right that this colony should be the only country on the face of the globe that filches the public treasury to make roads. The country people pay no taxes at all in proportion to townspeople. Ask the hon. member for Perth what the rates in this city amount to at the present time. I wish I could persuade the Government not to contribute any money at all for roads. It is a wrong principle. We ought to teach the country people to tax themselves and find the money for their own roads. But so long as the present system prevails, those who provide the money—that is, this Assembly—ought to see that it is expended in the best manner possible, and we ought not to allow that money to be wasted by having the roads cut up by narrow tires and horses driven in single file. The House has a perfect right to make such a law compulsory, so long as the money is voted here for the maintenance of the public roads. I think the House should put its foot down and say, "We will make you have wider tires, and we will make you yoke your horses abreast." I hope the hon. member for the DeGrey, if he carries this proposition by a good majority, will assist the Government in preparing the Bill, to meet his views and the views of those who support him.

MR. RICHARDSON: As there seems to be some difference of opinion as to the second part of the resolution, I feel inclined to ask the House to give me leave to withdraw it; not that I do not believe in it, but I should not like to run the risk of losing the first part. I should like to have a very unanimous opinion in favour of the width of tire proposition, so as to make sure of that, in any case, and perhaps it would better to have a shot at that on its own merits. Therefore, if I may be allowed to withdraw the latter part of the resolution, I shall be glad to do so. It is all very well for the Roads Boards to have power to do this and that, but if they don't do it, and at the same time get a large amount of money out of the public funds, which is wasted, I consider it is about time the Legislature of the colony should step in and say, "If we vote you this money, we insist upon you taking some precautions to keep your roads from being unnecessarily cut up and destroyed." As to the impossibility of driving teams abreast, I believe we are the only colony where they are driven in any other way. From my experience, it is simply a matter of taste or fancy on the part of teamsters; one will have nothing but the single file fashion, and another will say it is a stupid fashion. It is just a fad of teamsters, and nothing else in the world, as any bushman knows. Nevertheless, so that I may be sure of getting the other part of the resolution passed, I would ask leave to withdraw the latter part of it—namely, all the words after the word "thereon," in the third line.

Question put, that leave be given to withdraw the words.

The House divided, with the following result:—

Ayes	...	...	... 20
Noes	...	...	... 4
	Majority for		... 16

AYES.	NOES.
Mr. Burt	Mr. Cookworthy
Mr. Canning	Mr. Phillips
Mr. Clarkson	Mr. R. F. Sholl
Mr. DeHamel	Mr. Simpson (*Teller*).
Sir John Forrest	
Mr. A. Forrest	
Mr. Hassell	
Mr. Loton	
Mr. Marmion	
Mr. Molloy	
Mr. Monger	
Mr. Paterson	
Mr. Pearse	
Mr. Quinlan	
Mr. Richardson	
Mr. H. W. Sholl	
Mr. Solomon	
Mr. Throssell	
Mr. Venn	
Mr. Lefroy (*Teller*).	

Question—That leave be given to withdraw the words—put and passed.

Question — That the resolution, as amended, be agreed to—put and passed.

MESSAGE FROM THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

CONCURRENCE IN BILLS.

The following Message was delivered to and read by Mr. Speaker:—

"*Mr. Speaker,*

"The Legislative Council acquaints the "Legislative Assembly that it has agreed "to the undermentioned Bills, without "amendment:—

"1. A Bill intituled 'An Act to "'apply out of the Consolidated Revenue "'Fund the sum of One hundred thous-"'and pounds to the service of the year "'ending 30th June, 1894.'

"2. A Bill intituled 'An Act to pro-"'vide for the raising of a sum not ex-"'ceeding Five hundred thousand pounds "'by the issue of Treasury Bills, and for "'other purposes.'

"GEO. SHENTON,
"President.

"Legislative Council Chamber, Perth, "September 21st, 1893."

At half-past six o'clock p.m. Mr. Speaker left the chair.

At half-past seven o'clock p.m. Mr. Speaker resumed the chair.

EXCESS BILL, 1892.

Introduced by Sir JOHN FORREST, and read a first time.

CONSTITUTION ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

IN COMMITTEE.

This Bill was further considered in committee.

Clause 14.—"The Legislative Assembly shall consist of thirty-three members, who shall be elected for the several electoral districts hereinafter named and defined:"

MR. SIMPSON said that in this clause it was absolutely determined that the Assembly should consist of 33 members, neither more nor less. He would like to suggest that perhaps it would be well that this clause, in conjunction with the electoral districts, be referred to a select committee.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest) thought the best course to follow would be that which they had already followed when dealing with the Upper House. They fixed the number of members that was to constitute the Upper House, and passed the clause as to the electoral divisions on the understanding that it should be hereafter referred to a select committee. He thought they should now determine the number of members for the Lower House, and, having done that, the Government would have no objection to refer the electoral districts and their boundaries to a select committee. But they should first decide upon the number of members. So far as the Government were concerned they must show some consistency in this matter. The Bill was their Bill, and they had in no way altered their opinion as to the number of members for the Legislative Assembly. In fact, it was unanimously decided last year by that House, that the number should be 33, and he had heard no arguments nor seen any reason to induce him to alter that number. So far as the representation went, and the mining districts were concerned, the Government had given them three members, as a tribute on the part of the House to the importance of the mining industry.

MR. R. F. SHOLL said if the electoral districts were going to be referred to a select committee, and the Bill was going to be recommitted, there would be nothing to prevent them from then dealing with the question of the number of members.

MR. RICHARDSON could not see that there would be any harm, as they were going to refer a portion of the Bill to a select committee, if they also referred this clause. It appeared to him that the question of the number of members and the question of the distribution of seats were so intimately connected that they could not very well be separated. It must tie the hands of the select committee very much if they were told they must provide seats for 33 members, and no more nor less. The House would still have its hands free to finally settle the point, and, if it saw no reason to alter the text, to adhere to it.

MR. A. FORREST said it seemed to him that some members wished to damage the Bill. He should like to know whether

the members of this select committee, whoever they might be, were likely to know as much about the boundaries of these electoral districts as the Government were. The matter had already been thoroughly threshed out, not only by the Government but also by that House, last session, and what was the good of referring it again to a select committee, the members of which might know nothing about the geographical position of these electoral districts and their boundaries. He believed he knew the colony as well as most members, but he should be very sorry to be on a select committee to define these boundaries. He believed the Government had taken a great deal of trouble in this matter, to try to satisfy every district, and every member of the House, so far as they could, and he thought it would be impossible to improve the proposed divisions.

MR. CLARKSON said he believed that those who suggested the reference of these electoral divisions to a select committee entertained some hopes that by doing so the North would get a larger share of representation. He thought the North ought to be very well satisfied with the representation given to it in the Bill, and, in his opinion, to refer the matter to a select committee at all would simply be waste of time.

MR. SIMPSON said they had been told by the hon. member for West Kimberley that the Government had tried to satisfy every member in that House in fixing the representation as they had in the Bill. He did not believe a word of it. He did not believe that the Cabinet of this colony would so debauch its prerogatives as to consult the convenience of any member of that House in determining this question of representation and the distribution of seats. He thought it would go on the larger basis of its duty to the whole colony. His object in suggesting a reference of this clause and the following clause to a select committee was not to interfere in any way with the prerogative of the Executive, but to do what was done last session, when this question of boundaries was referred to a select committee.

MR. DEHAMEL said that in this instance he should support the Government in their endeavour to carry the Bill as they had introduced it. This matter was thoroughly threshed out last session, and he did not know of any reason in the world for appointing another select committee to do the same thing. It could only cause delay, and he deprecated any unnecessary delay in the passing of this Bill. His idea was that they should push the Bill through and avoid delays, and get this Constitution question settled as soon as possible.

THE COMMISSIONER OF CROWN LANDS (Hon. W. E. Marmion) said it must be borne in mind that the division of these electoral districts as now proposed had been before the country, he might say for the last three years,—at any rate 30 out of the 33; and the only reason the Government thought it advisable to increase the number was in order that the mining industry, which had since assumed considerable importance, might be fairly represented. What possible object could there be for referring this question to a select committee? Those who had settled these divisions and their boundaries knew more about it than any select committee was likely to do. The only result would be delay. He thought the representation proposed by the Government in the Bill was the very best that could possibly be suggested, and he believed that the hon. member for Geraldton knew it; and he failed to see what the hon. member's object could be in wishing to refer the matter to another select committee.

THE CHAIRMAN pointed out that no measure that was before a committee of the whole House could be referred to a select committee. It was only within the power of the House to refer measures to a select committee.

MR. SIMPSON said the Government had admittedly proposed three new districts in order that the gold-mining industry might be fairly represented; but he would point out that there was no separate electorate to represent mineral lands as distinct from gold-mining. There was a great difference between mining on mineral lands and gold-mining pure and simple, and he thought that a select committee might so arrange the distribution of seats as to give a separate representative for those who were working our mineral lands. His idea, all through, had been that industries and not population should be the basis of representation.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): Who would you give this separate member to?

MR. SIMPSON: I would give it to the tinfields.

MR. A. FORREST: There is no one there to represent.

MR. SIMPSON said his object was to give the workers, and the residents, and the Crown lessees on mineral lands a representative as distinct from the goldfields representatives, and he thought a select committee might arrange that.

MR. MOLLOY said he should oppose this clause being referred to a select committee.

THE CHAIRMAN: It cannot be done. This committee has no power to refer a question that is before it to a select committee; that can only be done by the House, with the Speaker in the chair. Of course it is open to any hon. member to move that I report progress—to move me out of the chair, in fact; and the further consideration of the Bill would be made an Order for a future day. The hon. member could then move that the Order of the Day for going into committee be discharged, and the Bill referred to a select committee. Or, when the motion is made for the adoption of the committee's report he can then move, before the report is adopted, that the Bill be referred to a select committee. But it cannot be done now, at this stage.

MR. MOLLOY thought that the clause as it stood would meet with the approval of the country. He thought, last session, when the subject was under discussion that, if there was to be any change in the distribution of seats, as provided for in the Bill, Perth ought to have another electorate added. The hon. member for Geraldton said he wanted industries represented and not population. If so, that was a very good reason why Perth should have received another representative, because he ventured to say that both as regards industries and population the metropolitan district had a stronger claim to an extra member than the Greenbushes tinfields had to one member. But he believed that the distribution of seats as provided for in the Bill would, on the whole, be acceptable to the country at large.

MR. SOLOMON thought that to refer the matter to a select committee would simply cause unnecessary delay, at the present time, and he would support the Government and the Bill as it stood.

Clause put and passed.

Clause 15.—Electoral districts and their boundaries:

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest) moved, as amendments, that the words "Nelson, Sussex," be struck out of sub-clause (1.), and inserted between the words "Swan and Toodyay," in sub-clause (2.) The reason he asked to make this alteration was because a small alteration had been made in the Nelson electorate, which necessitated a small alteration in the adjoining districts, Sussex and Plantagenet. The alteration in the Nelson district really did not affect anybody particularly, but there were a few people living near the coast whom it was thought desirable to include in that electorate, their interests being more identical with Bridgetown. He had consulted the hon. member for Sussex and the hon. member for Plantagenet on the subject, and they had no objection whatever to the alteration. It was not a very important one, but still it was desirable.

MR. PATERSON said he knew the alteration would make no difference as regards representation, because the few people referred to looked upon Bridgetown as their home, and they had no connection with the other electorate.

MR. R. F. SHOLL said it appeared to him that the agriculturists of the Nelson district would be swamped by the miners. He thought it would be better to give those engaged in the mining industry a separate representative. They knew that mining townships sprang up sometimes very rapidly, and it would be a very hard thing if the agricultural interests of the district were to be swamped by the mining population. This was one reason why he should have liked to have seen the matter referred to a select committee.

MR. A. FORREST was quite sure the hon. member for the Gascoyne did not understand what he had been talking about. If he did, he would have known that the settlers around Bunbury were already represented, some with the Vasse and some with the Nelson electorate, and now the hon. member suggested that a handful of miners congregated on the tin fields, a few miles from Bridgetown, and now represented by his honour the Speaker,

should have a member of their own. He agreed that the mining industry should be represented, but they could not have a representative for every field in the colony. They could not give a member to the Greenbushes tinfield and a member to the Collie coalfield, and to every other mining locality. If they did, they would want 63 members instead of 33.

MR. SIMPSON still thought that his suggestion to refer the matter to a select committee was a valuable and useful one. He was sure the Premier, at any rate, would understand there was no idea to do anything but to afford some assistance to the Government in the matter. As to the suggestion that wherever they found a coal deposit they should dab down a member there, and wherever they came across a tin deposit they should dab down a member there—which would be about as reasonable as dabbing down a member for the Gascoyne with its seven electors—they did not wish to do anything so foolish as that. All he wanted was that those interested in the development of mineral lands, as distinguished from those interested in gold mining, should have a representative.

MR. COOKWORTHY said if every mining industry were carried on to any extent, we should want, he did not know how many members, if they were going to give each separate industry a member of its own. The hon. member for Geraldton said that mineral lessees should have separate representation. If so, why should not shoemakers have a representative of their own, and carpenters have a member of their own, and every other industry have a member of its own? It would be impossible to give every industry in the colony a separate representative. They could only distribute the seats in accordance with certain geographical divisions of the colony. The goldfields were provided with three representatives under this clause, and the tinfields would have a representative in conjunction with other residents of the same district; and why they should have a separate member for themselves, he could not understand.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest) said the Government, as he had already intimated, were quite willing to refer the boundaries to a select committee if the House wished it, though he did not think that much would come out of it. With the exception of the very small change in the Nelson district referred to, all the electorates were exactly as they were passed by a select committee last year and approved by the House. However, if it was considered that any fresh light was likely to be thrown upon the subject, the Government had no objection to the matter going to another select committee. As for providing a new electorate for the Greenbushes tinfield—although he quite agreed that when you got an important industry like mining sufficiently developed and the locality sufficiently populated to justify separate representation they should have a member, if possible—he was sure that this was not the case at Greenbushes at present, though he hoped it might be some day. He understood the sense of the House to be this: that they should pass this clause now, and that on some future day the question of boundaries be referred to a select committee, not only as regarded the Assembly but also the Upper House.

Amendments put and passed.

Clause, as amended, agreed to.

Clauses 16, 17, and 18, inclusive:

Put and passed.

Clause 19.—"Every man of the age of "twenty-one years, being a natural born "or naturalised subject of Her Majesty "and not subject to any legal incapacity, "who shall have resided in Western "Australia for twelve months, shall, "subject to the provisions of this Act, if "qualified as in this section is provided, "be entitled to be registered as a voter "and when registered to vote for a "member to be elected to serve in the "Legislative Assembly for the Electoral "District in respect of which he is so "qualified, that is to say, if he—

"(1.) Is resident in the Electoral Dis- "trict at the time of making his "claim to be registered, and dur- "ing the six months then next "preceding has resided therein; "or

"(2.) Has a freehold estate in posses- "sion situate in the Electoral "district of the clear value of "Fifty pounds sterling, above all "charges and encumbrances in "any way affecting the same of or "to which he has been seized or "entitled at law or in equity,

"for six months next before the "time of making the claim; or

"(3.) Is a householder within the "district occupying any house, "warehouse, counting house, "office, shop, or other building "of the clear annual value of "Ten pounds sterling, and has "occupied the same for six "months next before the time "of making the claim; or

"(4.) Has a leasehold estate in possession situate within the district "of the clear annual value of "Ten pounds sterling, held upon "a lease which at the time of "making the claim has not less "than eighteen months to run; "or

"(5.) Has a leasehold estate so situate, "and of such value as aforesaid, "of which he has been in possession for eighteen months next "before the time of making the "claim; or

"(6.) Holds and has held for six months "previous to the time of making "the claim a lease or license "from the Crown to depasture, "occupy, cultivate, or mine upon "Crown lands within the district at a rental of not less than "Five pounds per annum.

"Or if his name is on—

"(7.) The Electoral List of any Municipality in respect of property "within the Electoral District; "or

"(8.) The Electoral List of any Road "Board District in respect of "property within the Electoral "District."

MR. R. F. SHOLL moved, as an amendment, that the words "and if qualified under sub-sections (2), (3), (4), (5), (6), (7), or (8), every widow, spinster, and *feme sole*" be inserted between the words "man" and "of" in the first line. The clause would then read: Every man, and (if qualified under the sub-sections referred to) every widow, spinster, and *feme sole*, of the age of 21 years, &c., shall be entitled to a vote. It would be seen that it was only women who had property in their own right, or who were ratepayers, who would be qualified to vote. It had, unfortunately, fallen to his lot to move in this matter; he said "unfortunately," because the hon. member for Sussex, who was entitled to bring it forward, in virtue of his efforts the other evening in the same direction, had informed him that he did not intend to move in the matter any further, after the result of the division the other night. But he (Mr. Sholl) thought that if a case was worth taking up at all, it was worth fighting for to the bitter end; and, as the hon. member did not intend to proceed with the matter, he intended doing so himself. But although the hon. member did not intend to propose this amendment, he hoped he would vote for it, and that every other member who voted for giving women a vote the other evening would stick to their colours. He considered he was simply doing an act of justice in bringing forward this amendment. Some hon. members said they looked upon it as a conservative measure, others said they thought it was a liberal measure; but he looked upon it as simply a just measure, this giving of a vote to those who were fairly entitled to it. It was unnecessary to go over the whole of the arguments put forward the other night in favour of giving women a vote for the Upper House. This was a matter he had always been in favour of, this giving women a vote. Surely they were not more likely to abuse their privilege than men were. He had confined his amendment to the widow, the spinster, and the *feme sole*, but if the hon. member for West Kimberley would move that married women should also be included, he would most heartily support him. He thought that some of the arguments put forward the other evening were put forward as an excuse for not voting for the amendment, and not because those who put them forward conscientiously believed in them.

THE COMMISSIONER OF CROWN LANDS (Hon. W. E. Marmion) said he was perfectly sure that the hon. member for the Gascoyne by his action in this matter would build for himself a monument in the minds of the opposite sex that would endure for a considerable time, but whether it would redound to the hon. member's glory or reflect the hon. member's folly, he would leave it to the future to disclose. The hon. member had asked them to draw an invidious line of demarcation between

men and women who should have a right to vote because they had a certain amount of property and others who had not that amount of property. There was an utter departure from every honest principle in this case. So far as he was concerned, he should be delighted to give women a vote, but, unless the hon. member was prepared to extend the same rights in that respect to women as to men, he should oppose him.

MR. RICHARDSON: Will you vote for it then?

THE COMMISSIONER OF CROWN LANDS (Hon. W. E. Marmion) said he would think about it. He thought members were trying to introduce into the Bill an element of absurdity, and they showed a want of principle when they proposed to give a man a vote for the Upper House because he had a certain amount of property and for the Lower House because he was not possessed of that property, and at the same time denied to women the right to vote for the Upper House, although they might possess the required amount of property, and proposed to give it to them for the Lower House. This was neither consistent nor liberal. Amongst those who supported this inconsistency was the hon. member for Geraldton, who posed there as a Radical member, and who scouted the idea that property had any rights; yet the hon. member was prepared to give a woman a vote for the Upper House because she had property. If the hon. member was prepared to allow women to vote if they had property, he must also allow women to vote for the Lower House without property, like men, otherwise the hon. member must come down from his pedestal. He thought the best thing they could do would be to withdraw this amendment, and not seek to give women something they had never asked for, and which members would regret having given to them.

MR. DEHAMEL said there was an old legal maxim, "If you have no case, abuse the other side." This appeared to be the position of the Commissioner of Crown Lands. For his own part, he was not going to detain the House, after the long debate on this question the other evening, except to say that if the hon. member went to a division upon his amendment he would follow him.

MR. SOLOMON said he had his own views with regard to the sincerity of these amendments. They knew very well that the mover of the present amendment was a gentleman who had always been opposed to manhood suffrage, and it seemed to him that this amendment to extend the suffrage to woman was simply intended to counteract a privilege that was given with one hand, by taking it away with the other. There could be no other object, it appeared to him, when they remembered the opposition shown by the hon. member to any liberal extension of the franchise in the direction of manhood suffrage. The country had never asked that women should have votes, nor had the subject ever been broached on the hustings by any member; the only boon promised to their constituents was that the franchise would be extended to every man over 21 years of age. He did not think they would be doing right in giving women a vote, without reference to the country.

MR. COOKWORTHY said it had not been his intention to have moved in this direction any further this session, as he thought there would be very little chance of the proposal being carried after the result of the division the other evening, and he did not want to occupy the time of the House in further discussing it. But his own opinion on the subject was not in any way altered. As for the hon. member for South Fremantle (Mr. Solomon) saying that it was brought forward as a conservative measure to counteract the effect of manhood suffrage, that was not the idea that prompted him to bring the matter forward at all. It had also been urged against the proposal that it was novel, that it was something quite new. It was not new; it was not new even in these colonies, for in New Zealand it had been carried by a majority of 33 to 8; and, if members would allow him, he would quote some words used by Sir John Hall in the debate in that colony, which very clearly expressed his own views. Sir John Hall said: "I quote a few words from Mr. Gladstone on this subject: He states, 'In the first place, I would set aside altogether the question whether the adoption of such a measure as this is likely to act in any given sense upon the fortunes of one political party or another.

It would be what I may call a sin against first principles to permit ourselves to be influenced either one way or the other by any feeling we might entertain on such a point.'" Then Sir John Hall went on to say: "Some people seem to be afraid that women's votes will affect the position held by political parties. I follow very respectfully in the steps of Mr. Gladstone when I say I do not know how that may be, and I do not care to inquire. All I know is that it is a right principle. We should be just and fear not, adopt a right principle, and trust to Providence for the consequences. But, as throwing some light upon the subject, I may quote the position in which this matter stands in the mother country. At the last election of the House of Commons a majority of members were returned pledged in favour of female franchise. Now, is that majority to be found on one side of the House or on the other? The curious fact is that, of the 355 members who are pledged in favour of female franchise, 179 are on the Liberal side and 176 on the Conservative." Those remarks of Sir John Hall he fully endorsed. If this proposal to give women the suffrage was an "absurdity," as one hon. member suggested, he did not know what wisdom consisted of. He maintained it was not an absurdity, but a question of right and justice; and, whatever the consequences might be, he was still of the same opinion as when he introduced the proposal on a former occasion.

MR. MOLLOY said he intended to support the hon. member for Gascoyne, because he considered the proposal to give women a vote was a liberal measure. He thought that women possessing the same qualification as they insisted upon men having, and being independent of other control, should have a voice in the representation of public affairs. It might be asked, why not give the franchise to every woman when she attained the age of 21? But he thought there was not the same necessity in that case as in the case of women who were in a position of independence. A woman at 21 years of age would probably be one of a family, and her father or her brothers would already have a vote. But a woman having property under her own control, and living independently, was in a different position, and had as much right to have a vote as a man.

MR. LEFROY said he generally liked to follow the hon. member for the Gascoyne, because where that hon. member went he made a pretty big hole; but, on this occasion, he was not inclined to follow the hon. member. This amendment distinctly offered an insult to women. It distinctly said we were not going to place them in the same position as men; it distinctly told them that unless they had property or were taxpayers they were not intelligent enough to be entrusted with a vote. He thought the proposition now had been reduced to an absurdity. Although there were many things to be said in support of female suffrage, it could not be gainsaid that it was an innovation, and he did not think they would be justified in suddenly adopting such an important and far reaching innovation. The hon. member for Sussex had referred to Mr. Gladstone's views on this subject; he did not know whether the hon. member was prepared to follow that great statesman on every occasion.

MR. COOKWORTHY: Follow him where he is right.

MR. LEFROY: The hon. member evidently did not wish to follow him on the question of Home Rule, or he would not wish to admit ladies into the franchise. With all due respect for women, and with no desire to slight the better sex in any way, he must say it appeared to him it would be a dangerous thing to suddenly introduce into our political system an innovation that had never been tried anywhere else, and the effect of which had never yet been found out. When this question had been more thoroughly considered, he felt certain that he should be able in a few years' time to give his support to it, or at any rate to an extension of the franchise in some way to women; but at the present time it did not appear to him that they should pass a measure of this importance hurriedly and without consideration. Had the women asked for this right, it would be a different thing. Some people might say, "How can they, when they have no opportunity of coming before the public?" But surely, if they were in any way anxious for it, they could get some of the sterner sex to champion their cause in these days as well as in

the olden days. But the question had never been mooted. It had never been broached on the hustings in any way. It had been argued that because women had been admitted to vote at municipal and school board elections they should also have a vote at parliamentary elections. But he submitted that municipal elections were very different to parliamentary elections. Municipal affairs were merely of local or parochial concern, but matters that came before the Parliament of the country were of national interest, and very different in their bearing from the little local affairs that come before a town council. There was another point which should have some weight with them in dealing with this matter. If this amendment were introduced into the Bill, it might give an opportunity for those in another place to reject the Bill. Although he was willing to admit that women were always on the side of law and order and morality, he did not think the time had yet arrived for admitting them to the parliamentary franchise.

MR. CLARKSON could not say that he agreed it would be a dangerous experiment to extend the franchise to women—not anything so dangerous as extending it in the direction of manhood suffrage. He would far sooner trust the women than the men. But he never had advocated the extension of the franchise to that extent; and, when he supported the hon. member for Sussex the other evening in his proposal to give women a vote, it was with the understanding that there should be a property qualification attached to it. He would support no other. There was a great difference of opinion on the question of female suffrage, but he thought, looking at it all round, it would be better to let it wait a little longer for its solution, and to give the matter a little more consideration. If the hon. member forced it to a division, he should feel bound to vote for it, but he thought it would be wiser to let the matter wait for some time.

MR. A. FORREST said he stated the other evening that should the proposal to give women a vote for the Upper House be carried, be would move, when they came to Clause 19, that married women, as well as other women, should also have a vote. But the motion to give women a vote for the Upper House not having been carried, he felt at liberty to vote against the present amendment. It seemed strange to him that the members who had always been against the Constitution Amendment Bill, were those who were now trying to introduce new principles into the Bill. That looked very strange and suspicious. The hon. member for the Gascoyne had been opposed to the provisions of this Amendment Bill ever since he had been a member of the House. The hon. member for Toodyay, too, had always been opposed to an extension of the franchise as proposed in this Bill. He believed, also, that the hon. member for Sussex, who had taken such a prominent part in regard to this question of extending the franchise to women, had almost in every instance voted against the more liberal portions of the Bill. Yet they found these three members now taking a prominent part in trying to make the Bill more liberal than anyone ever thought of making it. He thought that looked very strange. He thought their object was to make the Bill ridiculous, and have it sent back by the Upper House, or have it thrown out altogether. They did not want the Bill to pass at all; that was his opinion, and he was sorry to find the hon. member for Perth (Mr. Molloy),—generally to the fore—as one of the prime movers in this matter, and, when the proper time arrived, no doubt the hon. member would hear about it. He believed they would be doing the ladies a good turn by not giving them this right, but, if this amendment should be carried, he thought it should go further, and that the same right should be given to every married woman, and also to all single girls of the age of 21, as well as young men of that age. Why should it be limited to widows and spinsters who had property? A woman was just as good if she had no property as when she had. Had not many hon. members married women without a penny? Very often men would not marry a woman because she had money, so that they might not be taunted by her with having married her for her money, or with spending her money.

MR. QUINLAN said that some of his friends outside had taunted him with what he said the other evening, when he said ladies, like cats, were best at home. He thought everyone understood at the time that he only spoke in a jocular manner; but after the way the thing

appeared in the papers—though he knew the reporters generally tried to do him justice—he was almost afraid of getting a brick at his head. He admitted there was a great deal to be said in favour of giving ladies a vote, and he would go so far as to say that he had himself somewhat wavered on the subject. Still he thought that at this stage it would be too radical a change for this colony to enter upon. It appeared to him that if they gave women a right to vote at parliamentary elections, they must also, to be logical, be prepared to give them a right to sit in Parliament. They had already given women a vote at municipal elections, but he had never heard of one of them being ambitious to get a seat in the Municipal Council. He thought they showed their wisdom in that, because he could assure them they would not find it a very pleasant position. He had never heard that the women of this colony had ever asked for this right of voting at Parliamentary elections, and, until they did so, he thought it was premature to give them a vote. He should support the clause as it stood.

MR. COOKWORTHY said the hon. member for West Kimberley (Mr. A. Forrest) had imputed motives. He did not think it was within the right of any member to impute motives to another member. The hon. member said that the reason he (Mr. Cookworthy) had introduced his proposal to give women a vote was so that the Bill might be rejected in another place. That was not a fact. One of his reasons for introducing it was that, if it passed, it might induce the other House to accept the Bill, as it would add a conservative element to the Bill.

MR. SIMPSON said he agreed with the hon. member for Sussex that it was very wrong for the hon. member for West Kimberley to impute motives in this matter. He believed that the motives which had inspired the hon. member for the Gascoyne and the hon. member for Sussex were as pure as those which he believed prompted his own action. Had he the power, he would strike out with a stroke of the pen the word "man" wherever it appeared in this Bill, and insert the word "person," so as to embrace every man, woman, and child of the age of 21 years. It had been stated in the House the other night that no woman had ever sat in Parliament. That was not correct. The great old English Parliament—the Parliament of the country from which we had sprung—the first English Parliament had women sitting in it. That was an indisputable historical fact.

AN HON. MEMBER: How many years ago was that?

MR. SIMPSON: A good many years ago. There was another great country besides England, where women vote now, and that was America, and, while on this subject of female suffrage, he should like to be allowed to quote a few weighty words that had come from that part of the world on the same subject, to show how the system was working there. The Governor of the State of Wyoming, in which female suffrage had been in operation for many years, said:—"We "have better officers in consequence of "women suffrage . . . . The men know "that if they put up candidates who are "unworthy, if they nominate dissolute "men, irresponsible or incompetent men, "women will certainly be at the polls "with her veto in the form of the ballot. "They are not so wedded to party lines "as to be willing to cast a vote for the "candidate representing the party of their "preference if he be decidedly unfit, and "on the other side stands a worthy man." Weighty words those! Another quotation showed the beneficent effect of pure womanhood upon the elections, and demonstrated how the vicious classes instinctively feared and dreaded woman's power and influence in Government. Another testimony came from a man who occupied the high position of a Judge, in New Zealand, was to this effect: "I believe that woman's vote would tran- "quilise, civilise, and improve our elec- "tions." Those were weightier words than any he could utter. He gathered wisdom from them, and they confirmed his own ideas. The brightest hope he had of this country was to see the franchise extended to the women of the country; his proudest boast would be that he had sat in that House and helped to give every woman in the land a vote. When we did so he should say we were loyal to the true principles of representative Government, loyal to the instincts of our race, and were laying the foundation

of a country which would ever be great, and admitting into our politics an influence favourable to the best interests of the community.

THE COMMISSIONER OF CROWN LANDS (Hon. W. E. Marmion) said if they did not know the hon. member who had just been addressing them, they might fancy that an angel in disguise was sitting amongst them, and he could almost imagine he could see a halo round his head. The hon. member had given them a tremendous lecture—not his own ideas certainly, but the ideas of other people. The hon. member, however, had omitted to say what the qualifications were of the women who had been admitted to the suffrage in that part of the world. He did not believe that the hon. member was prepared to give every woman in the land a vote, though he might say so. There was a very old saying that every Jack had his Jill.

MR. R. F. SHOLL: Have you got a Jill?

THE COMMISSIONER OF CROWN LANDS (Hon. W. E. Marmion) said he had, and he expected the hon. member had had a gill, and perhaps a little more. He hoped the hon. member was loyal to his Jill. What he meant to say was this: he believed every woman had in her heart some man who was her ideal, and he was afraid that women, if they had votes, would be giving them to the candidate who was their beau ideal, irrespective of political considerations. They would probably be guided by sentiment rather than political worth or political claims. At any rate he thought it was premature to give women a vote. Surely they might wait until the women themselves asked them to give them a vote. Had the wife of any hon. member in that House ever suggested to him that she ought to have a vote, or that she would like to have one?

MR. MOLLOY: They have votes now, and exercise them.

THE COMMISSIONER OF CROWN LANDS (Hon. W. E. Marmion): In parochial matters only. He believed that, as a rule, women were quite satisfied to leave it to their husbands or their male relatives to protect their interests, and he thought that if we admitted women into the suffrage we should be introducing an element of dissension not only into our political but also our social and domestic life.

MR. RICHARDSON said they had heard that evening that woman franchise had been tried, experimentally, if not in the British dominions among people of British race possessing all our British instincts of love and order, and morality, and that it had been pronounced there a great success. No doubt one practical fact of this kind was worth an hour's theorising, but he should have liked to have heard, on the other side, something of the dangers we were likely to run into if we adopted this innovation. The hon. member for the Moore (Mr. Lefroy) said that women were always found on the side of law and order and morality. That being so, could it be said that we did not care for law and order and morality. The same hon. member said that in the present amendment we offered an insult to some women. He (Mr. Richardson) thought the only member who had done that was the hon. member for South Fremantle (Mr. Solomon), who said he believed the only object of the amendment was to counteract the effect of the liberal reform our Constitution proposed in the Bill, by giving woman a vote, and that for that reason he intended to vote against it. According to that, the hon. member must think that woman's vote was going to counteract that which without woman's vote would be a good and liberal measure. He hardly thought the hon. member could have seen the logical result of his argument. He was not one who countenanced going in for experimental legislation blindfold. He did not think it would be a wise thing at one step to admit every woman in the colony into the franchise; he thought it would be better if we tried in the first place to give a vote to women who had some property to protect, and to give them an opportunity of exercising this right in their own interests. He thought we might go so far as that. There would be nothing compulsory about it. If they did not want to exercise the right, well and good; but it would be an instrument in their hands which they might use at any time, if they chose, in their own interests. He could not see any great element of danger in that. If we should find that the result here was not what they had been told it had been in America, we need not carry

the experiment any further, and extend the franchise to other women.

MR. SOLOMON said he must resent the imputation cast upon him that he had offered an insult to the sex. He never intended to do so, and he could not see where the insult came in. He only said that it appeared to him that the object of those who were advocating this principle was to counteract with one hand what we were offering with the other. If it should be proposed to go in for woman suffrage in the same sense as manhood suffrage, he should support it, as a consistent measure; but it was neither liberal nor consistent to confine the privilege to women who had property, and to them alone, and to shut out every other woman.

MR. PHILLIPS said he was not altogether averse to giving women the franchise, but he did think the matter was one that required more consideration than they had been able to give it. He was sure that two-thirds of the members of that House had never given the question a serious thought until a day or two ago, when it was first sprung upon them, and he thought that before they adopted legislation of this important character they should give the subject their serious consideration. He congratulated the hon. member for Sussex upon having brought the matter forward, and, now that the Government had ascertained the views of the House on the subject, they might take it into their consideration with a view to future action in this direction. But at present he was unable to agree with the proposal.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL (Hon. S. Burt) thought it was about time the promoters of this entertainment allowed it to be played out, and let them go to a division, without wasting any more time. There had been an amount of unreality about the whole debate, and he believed the mover of the present amendment would be very sorry himself to see it carried on a division.

MR. R. F. SHOLL: I deny that.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL (Hon. S. Burt): The words which the hon. member asked them to insert in this clause were nonsensical, and when that was pointed out, members said, airily, "We will put that all right." It was simply playing with the thing. We wanted something more serious. It could hardly be regarded seriously by the hon. member himself. The hon. member had given notice of several other amendments of much less importance, but he had not even taken the trouble to put this amendment on the Notice Paper. It had been introduced as a joke, and debated amid the laughter of the whole House. [SEVERAL MEMBERS: No, no.] He said it had. It had been introduced as a joke, and debated amid laughter, and there was an amount of unreality about the whole thing; and he would ask that they should now proceed to serious business. It was utter nonsense to introduce the words "widow, spinster, and *feme sole*" into the clause in this way. Nobody knew what they meant, beyond that they meant something in the shape of a female. But they would not work. To be consistent, they would have to go in for female suffrage on the same lines as manhood suffrage. To restrict it to women of property would be absurd. On what principle could members quote a parallel from New Zealand, when there was no such distinction drawn there? He thought New Zealand was generally regarded with disfavour by some members. Why should they be asked, without a moment's notice, to introduce such a principle into the Bill,—a principle which was no principle at all, and was only represented by a lot of nonsensical words lugged into the clause by the ear. Members were only playing with the thing, and he did not think this debate was likely to raise that Assembly in the eyes of the outside public.

MR. R. F. SHOLL asked whether the Attorney General was in order in accusing him of having introduced his amendment as a joke, and treated it as a joke? It was a reflection upon him.

THE CHAIRMAN said it did not reflect upon the hon. member's intelligence. It was not defamatory, and he did not think it was unparliamentary, to say that an hon. member was joking. Facetiousness was sometimes indulged in in other Legislatures, and he could not rule the remark to be out of order.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL (Hon. S. Burt), continuing, said this question had been sprung upon them at a moment's notice. At present they could only be said to represent a comparatively small portion of the public, and it was proposed to extend the area of representa-

tion in a direction which he might say had received the approval of the country; and surely the public had a right also to pronounce an opinion upon this other principle. Members might think it a good principle, or think it a bad principle, but the country had a right to pronounce upon it. They had no right to give the public half a principle like this; they had a right to give them the whole principle, if they desired it. But let them first let it go to the country, and let the next House, elected on a different and broader basis, deal with it, if they received a mandate from the country to that effect. The hon. member for Sussex, who started the joke the other evening, might be let off as a first offender, but the hon. member for the Gascoyne had repeated the offence and could not be so dealt with.

MR. R. F. SHOLL said the hon. member for Fremantle had accused hon. members of introducing this amendment with the view of getting the Bill thrown out by the Upper House. He denied it. It was with no such intention that he had moved in the matter, but simply as an act of justice. The hon. member said that "every Jack had his Jill." He only hoped that the Jills would worry their Jacks, and make them support only such candidates as pledged themselves to give women a vote. The principle was a just one, and no solid argument had been used against it, not even by the Attorney General, who had simply endeavoured to throw dust in their eyes by saying it was all nonsense. That was no argument at all. He did not think the Government were sincere in the matter, and he challenged them to introduce this question of giving women the suffrage into the House next session. Their action in regard to this question was on a par with their whole action in connection with this Bill: there was no sincerity about it. It was pure love of office that made them bring in the Bill at all.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL (Hon. S. Burt): Who is out of order now?

MR. COOKWORTHY asked whether it was the opponents or the supporters of this proposal to give women the suffrage who had turned it into ridicule? The supporters of the proposal were in earnest; but its opponents, with the Attorney General at their head, had turned the question before the House into ridicule.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest) said, before they went into a division on the question, he should like to make one or two observations. The second reading of this Bill was passed without any division; there was certainly some comment upon it, but no mention was made by any hon. member of any intention to introduce this principle into the Bill. Nor had the principle ever been mooted before the electors. The Bill had been before the country now for a long time, and its main features had been pretty well canvassed and discussed, on the platform and in the Press, but no one had advocated the introduction of this principle of female suffrage into the Bill. Now, at the last moment, when the Bill was well through committee, the whole discussion upon this most important measure seemed to—he would not say degenerate—but seemed to have dwindled down into a discussion about women's rights. They had had hardly any discussion with reference to the main principles of the Bill. Some of its most important clauses had been allowed to pass with scarcely any discussion, the whole attention of members having been reserved, apparently, for this question of female suffrage, only mooted in the House a day or two ago. It would be said hereafter that all the debate upon this most important Bill had been concentrated, not upon the main principles of the Bill, but upon this question of women's rights—the question of whether women should have a vote or not. The great principle of representation, and the great principle of qualification of members, both as regards the Upper House and the Lower House, had scarcely been touched upon by hon. members.

MR. SIMPSON: We settled that years ago.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): The whole of the discussion upon the Bill had been confined to a subject which was scarcely touched upon—he believed that only one member even referred to it—on the second reading, and which was altogether a new matter. He thought it showed that a great change had come over the members of that House during the few months that had elapsed since the beginning of the year—since last session—because they now seemed to accept everything that was in the Bill as right,

for they went off at a tangent to discuss a question that had never been referred to in that House until last evening. He must say he expected hon. members would have dealt with this important measure in a more serious way than they had. As he had already said, the most important clauses of the Bill had been passed over altogether, with little or no comment; the whole of the interest and the whole of the discussion seemed to have been concentrated upon a mere side issue, which had not been seriously mentioned in the House until last night.

MR. THROSSELL rose.

SEVERAL HON. MEMBERS: Divide, divide!

The committee divided upon Mr. SHOLL'S amendment, with the following result:—

Ayes	10
Noes	13
Majority against ...	3

AYES.	NOES.
Mr. Clarkson	Mr. Burt
Mr. Cookworthy	Sir John Forrest
Mr. DeHamel	Mr. A. Forrest
Mr. Molloy	Mr. Hassell
Mr. Richardson	Mr. Lefroy
Mr. H. W. Sholl	Mr. Loton
Mr. Simpson	Mr. Marmion
Sir J. G. Lee Steere	Mr. Paterson
Mr. Throssell	Mr. Pearse
Mr. R. F. Sholl (*Teller*).	Mr. Phillips
	Mr. Quinlan
	Mr. Venn
	Mr. Solomon (*Teller*).

POINT OF PROCEDURE.

MR. LEFROY: Sir,—I should like to ask a question with reference to procedure. The hon. member for Northam was about to speak when there were cries for a division. That question of a division was not put to the House in any way, but the original question was put, and the hon. member for Northam, who was on his feet, was not allowed to speak to it. I should like to know whether that is the proper procedure, because it seems to me that the hon. member for Northam was denied that freedom of speech which every member ought to have in this House. Although it is true the question before the committee had been discussed a great deal, still I think this way of silencing a member establishes a precedent which might be abused hereafter.

THE CHAIRMAN: According to the Standing Orders, a motion to divide, if made without interrupting a member actually speaking, shall be put forthwith, and take precedence of all other business. There was a general call for a division, which was tantamount to a notice for a division. If the hon. member for Northam had been actually addressing the committee, it would not have been in accordance with the Standing Orders to have put the motion for a division, so as to interrupt the hon. member. But the hon. member had not begun to speak, and, there being a general cry for a division, the proceedings were in accordance with the Standing Orders.

MR. RICHARDSON: What constitutes a motion to divide?

THE CHAIRMAN: A general call for a division, without any opposition to it, is, I take it—that is, taking the matter from a common sense point of view—tantamount to a motion for a division. There was a general call on all sides for a division, and there was no opposition to it.

MR. RICHARDSON: I would only remark that there was a general call for a division before previous speakers addressed the committee.

THE CHAIRMAN: They were actually speaking when the call was made, and no division can take place so as to interrupt a member.

DEBATE RESUMED.

MR. COOKWORTHY moved, as an amendment in the same clause, that the words "twenty-one" (referring to the age of an elector) be struck out, and that the words "twenty-five" be inserted in lieu thereof. The great objection to the previous amendment was that it was a question of principle, and one that ought to be referred to the country, to ascertain the opinion of the constituencies upon it, or, in other words, to see which way the cat jumped. The question now before the committee was simply a question of detail, and no great principle was involved in it. He simply proposed to increase the age at which a person should be entitled to vote from 21 to 25. If the clause were carried in its present form, every youth in the colony who attained the age of 21 years would be entitled to a vote. What would be the result? The result would be this: that young men between the ages of 20 and 30 would have a preponderating influence in the election of members of Parliament. He noticed from the returns

that the number of adults in the colony between the ages of 20 and 30 amounted to 7,392, while the number between the ages of 30 and 40 was only 4,334,—a difference of very nearly 3,000. It would thus be seen that the majority of electors would be between the ages of 20 and 30. He thought anyone must allow that young men just attaining to manhood were not likely to have all the wisdom and all the experience necessary to entitle them to exercise a preponderating influence in the election of a member of Parliament. They had all heard of the follies of youth—some of them perhaps could recall their own youthful follies—and he thought all would agree with him that to give these young men such a preponderating voice in the election of members to Parliament might be of very considerable import as regards the future welfare of the colony. They did not usually see merchants, bankers, and others engaged in commercial life consulting young men of 21 years of age as to the management of their business; they generally consulted wiser and more experienced heads. He would ask, was not the management of the public affairs of a State of far more importance than the management of any one's private affairs, however important those affairs might be? He asked members to consider this in dealing with this amendment. He only proposed to defer giving these young men a vote for four years; and, surely, if they had any desire to exercise the franchise intelligently and wisely, that would not be a long time for them to wait. He thought, at any rate, we might try this experiment tentatively; if we found it did not work well, it might be altered hereafter. It would be very easy to reduce the age from 25 to 21, should they find it desirable to do so; but, if they fixed it at 21 now, they would never be able to raise it hereafter. He thought that was worthy of consideration.

MR. LOTON said he had been unable to follow the hon. member in his remarks, and he certainly could not support his amendment. He would draw his attention to the fact that they had already decided that at 21 years a man was old enough to have a seat in that House, and the hon. member himself had agreed to that. The hon. member apparently considered that a man at 21 was old enough to assist in making the laws of his country, but not wise enough to exercise the franchise intelligently. He could only say that he was surprised at such inconsistency. He should have thought that if the hon. member wanted to move in this direction at all, he would have done so as regards the qualification of members and not as regards the qualification of electors.

MR. A. FORREST said it appeared to him that his hon. friend the member for Sussex was becoming one of the foremost members of the House in dealing with this Bill. They all knew very well that in his heart the hon. member was against the Bill altogether; yet he had the audacity,——

MR. COOKWORTHY: I rise to order. Is a member of this House to be charged with audacity, because——

THE CHAIRMAN: "Audacity" is not at all an unparliamentary word. I am sure the hon. member is aware that to charge him with audacity is merely to charge him with boldness, and is no reflection upon him.

MR. A. FORREST (continuing) said he was surprised at the hon. member's audacity—or, if the hon. member preferred it, his cheek—in asking the House to agree to this amendment, when the hon. member himself had already agreed to allow a man at 21 years the right of sitting in that House, and when they had also agreed that a man at that age should be entitled to vote for a member of the Upper House.

MR. COOKWORTHY: In that case he would have property.

MR. A. FORREST: Was a man supposed to have more sense because he had a little property? It appeared to him that, because the hon. member had received a considerable amount of support in his proposal to give women a vote, the hon. member was going to move amendments in every clause of the Bill.

MR. DEHAMEL said that from time immemorial youth, by a legal fiction, attained the age of manhood at 21; but it was no use wasting time over the amendment, and he would simply add that he intended to vote against it.

Amendment put, and negatived on the voices.

MR. MOLLOY moved, as an amendment, in the same clause, to strike out all

the qualifications and conditions as to electors, in all the sub-sections from 1 to 8, except as regards being a resident of the colony. He said he did this in order to give to some hon. members who had been posing as Liberals an opportunity of showing their consistency. Some of these hon. members professed to be very anxious that there should be no other qualification for an elector than that he should be a resident of the colony; he now intended to test the sincerity of these professions, by moving to abolish all other qualification except a residence in the colony. Those hon. members who were so eager to give women a vote, whether she had property or not, would now have an opportunity of showing their consistency, and he expected they would rally round him on this occasion. The House, he was aware, had insisted upon a property qualification in the case of electors for the Upper House; but, as regards the Assembly, he thought we should have manhood suffrage, pure and simple. Under these sub-sections which he now moved to strike out, a man might have a vote in several districts, by reason of his property; but he did not think it was fair to the manhood of the colony that so many votes should be within the reach of any individual. If they wanted a truly democratic franchise, they should adopt the principle of "one man, one vote." These being his views, he thought they should do away with all these other qualifications, and for that reason he moved this amendment.

MR. SOLOMON said he was prepared to support the amendment, as he believed in the principle of "one man one vote." It would effect him personally, but for all that he believed it was only right that all men should be placed on an equality as regards their votes.

MR. R. F. SHOLL said although there had been considerable excitement amongst members over the question of women's suffrage, he did not think they should lose their heads altogether. They knew the hon. member who had brought forward this amendment had very radical ideas of his own, and no doubt the hon. member was acting consistently with his principles in moving to strike out all these sub-sections. But he could not understand any member who was so conservative as to refuse women a vote coming forward to support this amendment. He could not understand members blowing hot and cold in the same breath. For himself, he was a Conservative to the backbone, and if he could have prevented the adoption of manhood suffrage he would have done so, for he did not think it was in the interests of the country that manhood suffrage should prevail. But a majority had decided that it *shall* prevail, in a modified form at any rate; and he certainly was not going to vote for removing every restriction provided in this clause. He was not in favour of the "one-man-one-vote" principle. Being a Conservative, that would go without saying. He thought people who had a stake in the various districts of the colony should have a vote for that district; and he could not support the amendment in any way. He thought the "one-man-one-vote" system was a pernicious system, which those colonies that had adopted would yet regret having adopted.

MR. QUINLAN thought it somewhat strange that the hon. member for Perth should, without a moment's reflection, and without consulting anyone in the House, have got up and moved such a sweeping amendment as this,—an amendment of such a radical character. He thought it was particularly strange the hon. member should do so after voting, a few minutes ago, in such a conservative direction. As to the broad principle of manhood suffrage—or "one man one vote," as the hon. member had put it—he saw no objection or danger in adopting the principle, for, after all, there were many men who would never go to the trouble of obtaining a vote. He said that, having had some experience of the difficulty of getting men to go through the ceremony of having their names inserted on the roll. Three-fourths of the people did not seem to care one jot to go to the trouble of signing their names, and a very small proportion of those on the roll could be induced to go to the poll. Therefore, he did not think that, from a practical point of view, it made very little difference whether we had "one man one vote" or not. But he thought this amendment, if carried, would jeopardise the fate of the Bill in another place —a Bill which the majority of them were anxious to see pass through Parliament this session. An amendment of this

radical character would certainly be fatal to the Bill in another place. At the same time, if the hon. member pressed his amendment to a division, he felt that he must vote for it, believing as he did in the principle involved. But, for the sake of the Bill, he trusted the hon. member would not press his amendment to a division, but let the Bill go forward to the other House in a form that was likely to be acceptable.

MR. DEHAMEL thought there was a great deal to be said in favour of the amendment. The "one-man-one-vote" principle was a principle that had a great number of supporters, but the question here appeared to him to be a question of expediency. Their object on this occasion was to get this Bill passed, and passed in such a form as was likely to commend it to the acceptance of the other branch of the Legislature. He felt that to vote at present in favour of this amendment would be to risk the passing of the Bill, and, in fact, to wreck the measure altogether. He did not intend to be a party to that. For that reason he intended to vote for the clause as it stood, subject to a small amendment which he intended to move later on. He hoped the hon. member, under the circumstances, would not press his amendment to a division. If he did, he (Mr. DeHamel) would vote against it, although his personal feelings and predilections were in favour of the "one-man-one-vote" principle.

MR. MOLLOY said he was sorry he had not consulted the hon. member for West Perth as to whether he should move this amendment or not, for he was anxious at all times to consult that hon. member's views. It was his intention to press the amendment to a division, because, as he had already said, it would give those members who had avowed themselves to be liberal in their views on this question an opportunity of showing their sincerity.

Question put—That the words proposed to be struck out stand part of the clause.

The committee divided; the numbers being—

Ayes	...	...	19
Noes	...	...	3
Majority for		...	16

AYES.	NOES.
Mr. Burt	Mr. Quinlan
Mr. Clarkson	Mr. Solomon
Mr. Cookworthy	Mr. Molloy (*Teller*).
Mr. DeHamel	
Sir John Forrest	
Mr. Hassell	
Mr. Lefroy	
Mr. Loton	
Mr. Marmion	
Mr. Paterson	
Mr. Pearse	
Mr. Phillips	
Mr. Richardson	
Mr. H. W. Sholl	
Mr. Simpson	
Sir J. G. Lee Steere	
Mr. Throssell	
Mr. Venn	
Mr. A. Forrest (*Teller*).	

Question put and passed.

MR. DEHAMEL moved, as an amendment, that the word "six" be struck out of line two of sub-clause (1), and that the word "three" be inserted in lieu thereof, so as to reduce the required term of residence from six months to three months. He thought six months was too long a time to insist upon a man having resided in an electorate before he became entitled to a vote. A man might come to the colony, have a look around Perth, where there are three electorates, and decide to settle here. He would naturally take up the first house he could get on his arrival, although it might not suit him; and, after living there four or five months he might meet with a more suitable house in some other part of the town, and he would necessarily change his residence. That man, although he had been in the colony five months, would virtually be disfranchised for another year, simply because he had changed his residence from one part of Perth to another. The Premier had told them there must be some permanency of residence; but the hon. gentleman had not shown them that there was any particular virtue in six months any more than three. At any rate he thought that to reduce the term to three months would not bring about any revolutionary change, as it would not affect many people, while on the other hand it might prevent some cases of individual hardship.

MR. SIMPSON hoped that holders of a miner's right would not be debarred from exercising the manhood franchise. As a class whose occupation caused them to move frequently and follow up new finds on goldfields, a special provision should be made for the transfer of their votes from one electorate to another.

MR. R. F. SHOLL said that if miners moved frequently from one district to another, this circumstance did not entitle them to select the member for the new district into which they had last moved. A period of residence in a district would better enable the voters to judge of the suitability of candidates for that district.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest) hoped the hon. member for Albany would not press the amendment to a division, as it was not likely to be assented to by the committee; and it was obvious that any alteration in the direction proposed by the hon. member would not make the Bill more acceptable in another place. This would not be the only colony where a six months' residence in a district was required, for this provision certainly existed in New South Wales and in Queensland, but not in Victoria. These clauses were almost identical with those in the Constitution Act of Queensland, and the experience of its working in that colony might be accepted here as sufficient. It was not illiberal to say that a person must be six months in a district before obtaining a vote. A person who valued his vote would not object to wait six months before exercising it. It would be better to leave the clause as it stood. With regard to the suggestion of the hon. member for Geraldton, it might be expedient perhaps in the Electoral Act to make some provisions to meet the peculiar conditions under which those engaged in mining pursuits carried on their work—shifting about from one alluvial patch to another.

MR. DEHAMEL said that if the Premier thought that the altering of the residence term would have the effect of wrecking the Bill in another place, he would adopt the advice and not press the amendment to a division, as he wanted to see the Bill become law.

Amendment, by leave, withdrawn.

MR. R. F. SHOLL, referring to another part of the clause, asked whether, after passing this Bill into law, and assuming that an Electoral Bill would be brought forward, any condition could be inserted in the latter Bill, if necessary, such as requiring an elector to sign his name on the roll and pay a fee, without thereby repealing clauses in this, as the principal Act.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL (Hon. S. Burt) said that if an Electoral Bill were afterwards passed, it would have equal force with this Act, in fact more force, by being a later enactment. A fee might be required for registration, or a man might be required to sign his name on the roll, and he found that any provision of this nature was contained in the Electoral Act, and not in the Constitution Act, in other colonies.

Clause put and passed,

The remaining clauses (20 to 23) were agreed to without comment.

Clause 1 (which had been postponed).—Short title and commencement:

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL (Hon. S. Burt) moved to fill in the blanks by inserting the 18th October as the date when the Act should come into operation, that being the date upon which the existence of the present Upper House would terminate, according to the published proclamation.

Put and passed, and clause, as amended, agreed to.

Progress reported, and leave given to sit again.

ADJOURNMENT.

The House adjourned at three minutes to 11 o'clock p.m.

Legislative Assembly,

Monday, 31st July, 1893.

Homesteads Bill: first reading—Post and Telegraph Bill: third reading—Constitution Act Amendment Bill: referred to a select committee, as regards Clauses 6 and 15—Message from the Governor: Assent to Bills—Excess Bill, 1892: second reading; in Committee—Adjournment.

THE SPEAKER took the chair at 7·30 p.m.

PRAYERS.

HOMESTEADS BILL.

Introduced by Sir JOHN FORREST, and read a first time.