

Clause put and passed.

Clause 15.—“ Provision in cases of owners of homestead farms residing in a village : ”

Agreed to.

Clause 16.—“ Any selector may, with the approval of the Minister, but not otherwise, select one of the allotments in such village without payment, and the provisions of this Act with respect to residence and erection of house shall then apply to such allotment instead of the homestead farm, and at the expiration of the term of seven years aforesaid shall pay a sum of Five pounds for the Crown grant of such allotment, together with the survey, Crown grant, and registration fees—failing which it shall be forfeited, together with any improvements made upon it : ”

MR. LOTON: It seems to me we should say who is to pay this £5. I presume it is intended to be the selector, but it is not very clear.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): I think it's all right.

MR. QUINLAN moved, as an amendment, that the words “ Five pounds ” be struck out, and the words “ One pound ” be inserted in lieu thereof. It was not much of a concession, and for his own part he thought we might give the man his Crown grant free.

Amendment agreed to.

Clause, as amended, put and passed.

Clause 17.—“ Limitation of operation of Section 4, dealing with applications for homestead farms under the Bill : ”

Agreed to.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest) said they had now gone through that part of the Bill dealing with homestead farms, and he thought they might now report progress before proceeding with the next part dealing with homestead leases. He moved accordingly.

Motion agreed to.

Progress reported.

OPENING OF FIRST SECTION OF YILGARN RAILWAY.

MR. THROSSELL asked the Commissioner of Railways if the Government had come to any arrangement with the contractor for the Yilgarn Railway for the opening of the first 70 miles for general traffic.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest), on behalf of Mr. Venn, replied as follows:—No arrangement has yet been come to. The Government find it difficult to fix upon a basis for arrangement that would provide for present requirements, while sufficiently protecting the interests of the colony in the future. It is very difficult to interfere with an existing contract in the way desired. The Government is, however, willing to make an arrangement, if it can be done without too much cost and risk.

ADJOURNMENT.

The House adjourned at 20 minutes past 10 o'clock p.m.

Legislative Council,

Thursday, 17th August, 1893.

Stock Tax Bill: second reading; committee—Adjournment.

THE PRESIDENT (Hon. Sir G. Shenton) took the chair at half-past four o'clock p.m.

PRAYERS.

STOCK TAX BILL.

SECOND READING.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. S. H. Parker): I beg to move that this Bill, which is to provide for the payment of Customs duty on certain live stock imported into the colony, be read a second time. It will be observed that by the schedule provision is made for the payment of duty as follows:—Horses, 20s. per head; cattle (including bullocks, steers, cows, and calves, but excepting bulls for stud purposes), 30s. per head; sheep (including all wethers, ewes, and lambs, but excepting rams for stud pur-

poses), 2s. 6d. per head; and pigs 4s. per head. It is provided by the second clause that the said duties shall be collected and levied according to the ordinary law in force relating to Customs, and there is a proviso in the third clause making it lawful for the Governor-in-Council, if he shall think fit, to remit the duty on animals imported for breeding purposes. I have no doubt that hon. members are aware that these are the duties now chargeable upon animals introduced into the colony, but under the Tariff Act it is only provided that cattle, sheep, or pigs introduced for the purposes of slaughter shall pay the duty. Recently a great number of cattle have been introduced into the Kimberley district for slaughter, although not for immediate slaughter, and an attempt has been made to evade payment of the duty. So as to make it clear, therefore, that all cattle coming here which are eventually for slaughter are liable to pay duty, this Bill has been introduced. If, however, the Governor-in-Council is satisfied that any cattle coming here are for breeding purposes, he is specially empowered to remit the duty; but stock introduced ostensibly for the purposes of breeding, but which are only intended to be fattened, will come under the operation of the Act. I now move the second reading of the Bill.

THE HON. J. MORRISON: Although to a certain extent I think this Bill may be worthy of attention, at the same time it is a measure which should not be passed without the utmost necessity for it being shown. Although the duties imposed by it are the same as exist under the present Tariff Act, we must remember that that Act was passed by the old Legislative Council, and for the purpose of preventing sheep and cattle being sent from a glutted market in South Australia to compete with an overstocked market here. It was never intended to be a means of keeping stock out of the Kimberley district. Our great desire has been to get that country stocked, and although bullocks and steers will not materially help in this way, they nevertheless add to the value of the assets of the country; besides which, they will assist in bringing about the establishment of freezing works. An enormous trade is to be done in frozen meat, and Kimberley is an admirable country in which to establish the neces-

sary works, on account of its adaptability and suitability for breeding. What surprises me in this matter is that, seeing a new Tariff Act is being thought of, why there should be any urgency for this Bill. It looks something like special legislation for some purpose or other. I have only heard of two cases of cattle being brought in. One is in the case of a gentleman owning runs both in the Kimberley district and in the Northern Territory of South Australia, and he wished to remove some cattle from one place to another. The other is the case of a gentleman also having land at Kimberley, and who entered into an agreement for a number of bullocks and cows to be delivered upon his run at £2 5s. per head. Now, if this duty be imposed, it will increase the cost of these by 60 per cent., and this is certainly no inducement for people to add to the value of their holdings, and thus develop this country quickly. We have not sufficient cattle here at the present time to stock the country with, and persons who are willing to import should rather be encouraged than otherwise. Another objection I see to this Bill is that it will affect the consumer, for there is no doubt that it is he who will really pay the tax, and certainly, if we are going in for a duty of 60 per cent., it is, to say the least, a very liberal form of protection. I should be very sorry to have our Parliament of Western Australia obtain the name of the "Squatters' Parliament," but if Bills of this sort are brought in hastily, and in the way this Bill appears to have been, we shall soon lay ourselves open to taunt. There have already been evidences of a desire to help the squatters, and they have richly deserved it, but we must not go too far. There has already been a large reduction in the rents, and the regulations which have been passed have certainly not been unfavourable to the lessees. I see by clause 3 that the Governor may, if he think fit, remit any duty; but I cannot see why there should be any such provision. By an amendment of the schedule there would be no necessity for giving the Governor this power, which would be exercised or not, of course, according to the advice tendered to him by his Ministers. We might have a Government in the future inimical to squatters, and they might use this power against them. If it were stated that cattle, excepting cows

and bulls for breeding purposes, should pay the duty, clause 3 would not be required. When the proper time comes, I shall move that the schedule be altered in this direction. Adverting again to the necessity of encouraging the stocking of runs, I may point out that the area of the colony is 624,000,000 acres, and at the present time we have only 45,000 horses, 163,000 cattle—not quite three per head of population—and 1,685,000 sheep. I hope to see the numbers under these heads increased tenfold in a very short time, and this we cannot have if we check enterprise, as it will be checked by this Bill.

THE HON. E. T. HOOLEY: In this case I am sorry I cannot agree with the Hon. Mr. Morrison, for I think that the Government are to be commended for bringing in this Bill. It is absolutely necessary that those who bring in stock to the colony should pay a certain amount of duty for revenue purposes. And with regard to there not being sufficient stock in the country, I maintain there is quite enough to stock the whole country in a few years' time. We know that cattle increase at the rate of about 20 per cent. per annum in a fair season and fair country, so that in a few years we shall, if anything, be overstocked. With regard to the amendment of the schedule suggested by the hon. member, I consider that the Bill is properly worded as it is. We know that numbers of cows are brought in from Queensland, not one of which is fit for breeding. They might be spayed, and, if we were to exempt cows, the Act would be evaded; and with reference to the consumer, I do not think it matters much whether cattle are bought at £7 or £9 per head.

Question—that the Bill be now read a second time—put and passed.

IN COMMITTEE.

Clauses 1 and 2 passed.

Clause 3.—“Governor may remit duty.”

THE HON. G. RANDELL: I share somewhat the views of the Hon. Mr. Morrison in this matter, and I should like to hear from the Colonial Secretary the reasons why power is given to the Governor to remit the duty. I have always objected to powers of this kind being put into Acts, because they lead to constant friction and discontent. Some

obtain the privilege, and some are denied it, and consequently considerable dissatisfaction prevails. Unless I hear some satisfactory explanation as to why this clause should be retained, I shall be inclined to vote for its being struck out.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. S. H. Parker): To prevent the Act being evaded, it seems necessary, in the first instance, to include all animals as being liable to duty; but we know it is desirable at times to introduce cows and ewes for breeding purposes. Within the last few years we have experienced a great drought, and in order to re-stock the runs numbers of ewes have been imported free of duty, and in view of anything like this being necessary again, it has been deemed advisable to give this power to the Governor-in-Council.

THE HON. J. W. HACKETT: While it appears to me that my hon. friend has made out a good case for the retention of the clause, it does seem to me that the Hon. Mr. Randell has raised rather a strong point. I find that the Governor may not only remit the duties, but he may do so secretly. There need be no record, and the public need know nothing of the exercise of the power which, at times, may be used with grave impropriety. In all cases where a remission of duty is made, I think the fact should be made known to the public, and I would suggest an addition to this clause whereby any remission should be notified in the *Government Gazette*.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. S. H. Parker): I have no objection to that.

THE HON. J. W. HACKETT: Then I move that the words “and such remission of duty shall be published in the next following *Government Gazette*.”

THE HON. G. RANDELL: I shall support the amendment of the Hon. Mr. Hackett, and I may say that I am thankful to him for proposing it, and I think it is quite sufficient.

THE HON. J. MORRISON: Would it not be as well also to state when the remission is to take place and where. Suppose a thousand head of cattle arrive on the border, are they to be kept there until arrangements are made in Perth for the remission?

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. S. H. Parker): The duty must be paid, and the remission applied for.

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

Clause 4 passed.

Schedule:

THE HON. J. MORRISON: Might I ask, if this is to be the Stock Tax Act of 1893, why camels and other stock are not included?

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. S. H. Parker): This Bill deals with animals for slaughter, and camels are not for slaughter.

THE HON. J. W. HACKETT: Neither are horses.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. S. H. Parker): Sometimes.

THE HON. J. MORRISON: I now move that the words "cows and calves, but excepting bulls for stud purposes," be struck out, and that the words "and spayed cows" be inserted in lieu thereof.

THE HON. G. RANDELL: I would call attention to the incidence of this tax. The value of horses in this country is about £25 per head, and we are called upon to pay a duty of only 20s.; while the value of bullocks is nothing like that—we have heard from the hon. member that they can be delivered at £2 5s. per head—and yet the duty is 30s. The class of horse which is imported is not nearly equal to our own horses in hardness and stamina, and I think those engaged in breeding horses here should be protected as much as persons breeding cattle.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. S. H. Parker): The reason of the difference is that horses are nothing like as numerous at the present time as sheep and cattle. We are not so fully stocked with horses as we are with cattle, nor have we such well bred stock as they have elsewhere. In fact, there is a necessity to import horses, and therefore it would be unwise to increase the duty; but there is no such necessity as regards sheep and cattle.

Amendment—put and negatived, and the schedule agreed to.

The Bill was then reported, and the report adopted.

ADJOURNMENT.

The Council, at 5.25 o'clock p.m., adjourned until Tuesday, 22nd August, at 2 o'clock p.m.

Legislative Assembly,

Thursday, 17th August, 1893.

Leave of absence to Member for East Kimberley—Opening of Victoria Public Library on Sundays—Preliminary publication of Parliamentary Bills—Duty on Camels and Merchandise entering across the Border—Criminal Law Appeal Bill: third reading—Public Depositors Relief Bill: second reading; message from the Governor; in committee—Petition of J. C. Martin—Homesteads Bill: in committee—Adjournment.

THE SPEAKER took the chair at 4.30 p.m.

PRAYERS.

LEAVE OF ABSENCE TO MEMBER FOR EAST KIMBERLEY.

MR. SOLOMON, in accordance with notice, moved that leave of absence for fourteen days be granted to the member for East Kimberley.

Motion put and passed.

OPENING OF VICTORIA PUBLIC LIBRARY ON SUNDAYS.

MR. A. FORREST, in accordance with notice, moved, "That this House, having considered the report by the committee of the Victoria Public Library, considers it expedient that the Library should be open to the public on Sundays from 2 o'clock p.m. to 6 o'clock p.m." He said: A memorial having been addressed to the trustees of the Victoria Public Library, asking for the opening of the Library on Sundays, the trustees have agreed that such opening is necessary for the public convenience, but the trustees do not consider that they ought to take it upon themselves to open the Library, this being a matter for Parliament to determine. I am sure hon. members will agree that there is no objection to the opening of the Library on Sunday afternoons, as proposed. It will not interfere with those persons who want to go to church in the morning and evening, for they can, if so disposed, spend their afternoon in the Public Library, and there obtain food for the mind. Therefore, I believe the motion will commend itself to the sense of this House. The trustees of the Library include his Honour the Speaker and other leading members of the community.

MR. CANNING: In seconding the motion, I may add that it appears to me a most reasonable one; and, so far as I