

been confined to the principal centres of population. I would ask those who gave utterance to these sentiments, where, in any part of the world, and more especially in any part of Australia, have cries for reforms and for new legislation, whether for the good of the country or otherwise, ever arisen, except from the centres of population, the centres of political activity? Does one look to the Gascoyne, for instance,—a district which one hon. member who gave utterance to this objection has the honor to represent, and in which there are, no doubt, many sensible people—does one look to the Gascoyne as a likely centre of political agitation? Or would we look to Kimberley for any loud and popular outcry for political reform? No. It is from the centres of population that these popular cries must naturally come, and always do come; and, whether the cry be for good or ill, it is one that must be listened to and dealt with by any Government. That has been the experience of the other colonies; and members may mark my word it will be our experience here more and more as the colony progresses and population increases. Political agitation must necessarily be looked for in the great centres of political life and political activity; and it is absurd to advance, as an argument against the present Bill, that the agitation in favor of an extension of the franchise originated in our principal centres of population. I say it could not have arisen from any other source. The Government have seen and known for a considerable period past that this was a question that would have to be dealt with sooner or later. We could see the hand-writing on the wall, and we knew we could not ignore it. The members of this House know it too. The Government felt that the change must be grappled with, and they decided to make that change, without giving cause for any further agitation. I think they have done wisely in dealing with the subject in the manner they have done; and I feel certain that the majority of members think we have acted wisely, and will support the Government in the second reading of this Bill.

The House divided upon Mr. SHOLL'S amendment—That the Bill be read a second time that day six months; the numbers being—

Ayes	...	...	6
Noes	...	...	20

Majority against 14

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

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

Bill read a second time.

ADJOURNMENT.

The House adjourned at a quarter to 5 o'clock p.m.

Legislative Assembly,

Wednesday, 30th November, 1892.

Enforcement of Provisions of Chinese Immigration Acts—Boring for Water, Eucla—Appointment and Duties of Hydraulic Engineer—Local Tenders for Construction of Government Steam Launch and Beaufort Street Railway Bridge—Establishment of Agricultural Bureaux—Enforcement of Land Regulations—Excess Bill, 1891: first reading—Perth Protestant Orphanage Lands Sale (Private) Bill: first reading—Return showing Staff employed in Works Department—Improvements to Ladies' Gallery—Homesteads Bill: second reading—Export Timber Branding Bill: in committee—Adjournment.

THE SPEAKER took the chair at 7.30 o'clock.

PRAYERS.

ENFORCEMENT OF PROVISIONS OF CHINESE IMMIGRATION ACTS.

MR. SOLOMON, in accordance with notice, asked the Colonial Treasurer

whether, taking into consideration the increasing number of Chinese and Malays in the colony and constantly arriving, a number of whom are inmates of our lunatic asylum and prisons at the present time, clause 6 of "The Imported Labor Registry Act, 1884," is being strictly enforced; and (2) whether the various provisions of "The Chinese Immigration Act, 1889," were being strictly carried out in conformity with the spirit of the Act.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest) replied that he was informed by the Customs Department that the Act was strictly carried out, and he had not received any communication or complaint as to this matter.

BORING FOR WATER, EUCLA.

MR. HASSELL, in accordance with notice, asked the Commissioner of Crown Lands whether the Government had any intention to put a sum on the Estimates for 1893 to bore for water in the Eucla District.

THE COMMISSIONER OF CROWN LANDS (Hon. W. E. Marmion) replied that the Government were fully alive to the importance of boring for water at Eucla, which they were carefully considering, and, if they thought any practical good would result from an expenditure of money, would take action in the matter.

APPOINTMENT AND DUTIES OF HYDRAULIC ENGINEER.

MR. RICHARDSON, in accordance with notice, asked the Director of Public Works whether it was a fact that the services of a hydraulic engineer (Mr. James) had been engaged by the Government. (2.) Whether it would be among his duties to examine localities and report on suitable sites on any of our rivers for the erection of headworks for irrigation purposes, and also to prepare estimates of cost thereof. (3.) Whether he would also specially examine the rivers Swan, Murray, and Blackwood, as well as other rivers above their estuaries, with a view to reporting on the practicability and cost of constructing tidal locks for irrigation purposes. (4.) Whether he would be instructed, during the various seasons of the year, to take

gaugings of the quantity of water flowing down to the sea in our principal rivers.

THE DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC WORKS (Hon. H. W. Venn) replied to questions 1 and 2 in the affirmative. (3.) He would report on all the rivers from the Preston to the Swan in connection with irrigation works. (4.) Not at present, until the Government were in possession of his reports on the general question. No steps would be taken to gauge the amount of water flowing into the sea.

LOCAL TENDERS FOR CONSTRUCTION OF GOVERNMENT STEAM LAUNCH AND BEAUFORT STREET RAILWAY BRIDGE.

MR. MOLLOY, in accordance with notice, asked the Commissioner of Railways whether it was a fact that a local boatbuilder had offered to tender for the construction and supply of a steamboat required for the services of the Government at a less price than the same was now being imported into the colony for; and, if so, why the tender had not been accepted? also, whether a local manufacturer had offered to tender for the supply of the new Beaufort Railway Bridge, and had been refused the opportunity by the Engineer-in-Chief.

THE COMMISSIONER OF RAILWAYS (Hon. H. W. Venn) replied: It is true that a local boatbuilder gave it as his opinion that he could construct a steam launch of as good type and at a less price than the one which is being imported; but as he had never seen the plans and specifications sent to London for this boat, and the indent having gone, there was no object in taking an opinion adverse to that of the Engineer-in-Chief. It is believed that some local manufacturer did, conversationally, represent that the iron-work for the new bridge at Beaufort Street should be let in the colony; but the recommendation of the Engineer-in-Chief on this question was to a large extent on the same lines as the previous one, namely, that practically the whole of the material would have to be specially imported for the purpose, and that the workmanship, with the exception of the erection, was a very small matter, comprising altogether only 64 tons of iron; and, such being the case, there did not seem to be much or any advantage

in deputing the importation of this iron-work to somebody else (which letting a contract would practically mean), rather than import it through our Agent General and Consulting Engineer in London, as the Government can get work of that character done by competition in England considerably cheaper than could any private individual. As in the case of the steam launch, this is merely a small isolated work of no practical significance in its relation to the employment of labor in the colony, as the amount of local labor which would under any circumstances have been employed, exclusive of the actual putting together and erection of the iron-work, would be very small indeed; and as regards the putting together and erection of the iron-work, that will, of course, be let by local tender when the time comes for its erection.

ESTABLISHMENT OF AGRICULTURAL BUREAUX.

MR. RICHARDSON, in accordance with notice, asked the Premier whether the Government proposed taking any immediate steps with the object of establishing a Central Agricultural Bureau, as also district branch ones, in accordance with the recommendation made by the questioner and Mr. W. Paterson in their report of last year on the Irrigation Settlements of Victoria and South Australia.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest) replied that the Government were not in a position to do this, with advantage, at present.

ENFORCEMENT OF LAND REGULATIONS.

MR. RICHARDSON, in accordance with notice, asked the Commissioner of Crown Lands,—1. Whether he was aware that the condition of residence (Clause No. 48) of the Land Regulations was systematically evaded by many holding their land under that clause. 2. Whether the Government had, in consequence of such evasions, either enforced any forfeitures of land, or would insist on the double annual payments required by the Land Regulations from all those who took up their land under the non-residential clauses of the Regulations. 3. Whether sufficient precautions were being taken by the Lands Department to check

abuses of the Land Regulations by the putting in of untruthful certificates, certifying that the required improvements had been faithfully performed.

THE COMMISSIONER OF CROWN LANDS (Hon. W. E. Marmion) replied :

1. I am not aware that the condition of residence is systematically evaded by holders under Clause 48 of the Land Regulations. Evasions may, and probably do occur, but declarations as to residence and improvements, as required by Clause 46, sub-section *f*, of the Regulations, are furnished annually by the holders of a very large majority of blocks; and in every case where the holder fails to furnish such a declaration, a copy of the attached letter is issued. [Enclosure not printed.] 2. In some cases where the residence condition has not been carried out, the holders have been called upon to change their holding to Clause 49, and pay the double rent required by that clause, but no forfeitures have been enforced. 3. All such reasonable precautions as possible are taken to check abuses. Under the S.O.L. Regulations a certificate from two respectable persons as to completion of required conditions is insisted on before issue of Crown grants. Under the present Regulations very few holders have applied for Crown grants, but in a few cases which have occurred the declaration required by the Regulations is invariably furnished, and is generally supported by a certificate similar to that used under the S.O.L. Regulations; but as the latter is not required by the present Regulations it is not insisted on, the declaration made before a justice of the peace being considered sufficient, as any person making a false declaration renders himself liable to punishment for perjury.

EXCESS BILL, 1891.

Introduced by the Premier (Hon. Sir J. Forrest), and read a first time.

PERTH PROTESTANT ORPHANAGE LANDS SALE (PRIVATE) BILL.

Introduced by the Attorney General (Hon. S. Burt), and read a first time, and also referred to a Select Committee, consisting of Mr. Canning, Mr. Lefroy, Mr. Clarkson, Mr. Loton, and the mover (Hon. S. Burt); the Committee to report on Monday, 5th December.

RETURN SHOWING STAFF EMPLOYED IN PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT.

MR. MONGER, in accordance with notice, moved, "That owing to the reply given to the motion of the hon. member for Albany, there be placed upon the table of the House a return in detail, showing the names of the whole of the staff employed by the Public Works Department, when appointed, their employment and salary, and whether paid from the general revenue or loan funds."

Motion—put and passed.

IMPROVEMENTS TO LADIES' GALLERY.

MR. A. FORREST, in accordance with notice, moved, "That steps be taken to alter the ladies' gallery, so as to make it more comfortable and better ventilated than it is at present." He said: There are continual complaints from the ladies who attend to hear the debates in this House that the portion of the House which is set apart for them is not sufficiently ventilated, and is anything but what it ought to be. I hope the Government or the Director of Public Works will take steps to remedy these complaints, so that we may all congratulate ourselves on having moved in this direction, to provide proper accommodation for enabling ladies to come here and hear the debates. I fail to see why the ladies' gallery has to be screened off as it is, and why it should not be as open as the strangers' gallery is at the other end of the House, because I am sure the ladies are more likely to observe good order than are the gentlemen who occupy the strangers' gallery.

THE DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC WORKS (Hon. H. W. Venn): Since the hon. member gave notice of this motion I have looked to see what possible improvements might be made in the ladies' gallery. There are three methods of altering the ladies' gallery so as to make it more comfortable. One is that the reporters, who seem to have a nice cool place up in their gallery, should change to the gallery down below now reserved for ladies, and that the ladies should use the gallery upstairs. I do not know whether that would be agreeable to the gentlemen of the Press. Another expedient is that a gallery might be formed on the West side of the

chamber, where the reporters used to sit when the old Council used this chamber. A third plan would be to form a gallery on the north side, above the space now used as the strangers' gallery; but if this were done, it would be necessary to provide for the library or the clerk's room in some other part of the building, as the space would be wanted for a staircase. Hon. members can see that we are very confined here for space, and if a radical alteration is to be made in this Chamber, members must be prepared to spend a considerable sum of money. I admit that the conveniences for the ladies' gallery, and also for the general public, are not such as we should like; but, having only limited funds for such a purpose, we have tried to make the Chamber as comfortable as is practicable. I can only say that if hon. members wish for a considerable extension of the accommodation, they will express their views on this occasion, and the Government may be able to place an item on the Estimates for building a new Chamber, which will cost perhaps £30,000 or £40,000.

MR. A. FORREST: We don't mean that.

THE DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC WORKS (Hon. H. W. Venn): Then there will have to be a sufficient sum put on the Estimates for carrying out one of the three alterations I have suggested.

Motion—put and passed.

HOMESTEADS BILL.

SECOND READING—ADJOURNED DEBATE.

The Order of the Day for the resumption of the adjourned debate upon the second reading of this Bill having been read, the debate upon Mr. Richardson's amendment—That all the words after "that" in Sir John Forrest's motion (That the Bill be now read a second time), be struck out, and the words "this Assembly, while fully recognising the earnest desire of the Government to facilitate the settlement of the land and hasten the development of agriculture, is, however, of opinion that, in view of the difficulties and complications which are certain to follow legislation constituting the State a money lender in aid of any special enterprise, it is desirable to postpone the consideration of this Bill until it can be more clearly ascertained by statistics whether the sale, settlement,

and cultivation of the lands in the colony are not already increasing at a satisfactory rate, without having recourse to such doubtful experiments as those proposed by the provisions in this Bill " be inserted in lieu thereof—was resumed.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest) : Sir, I will try this evening to deal with the objections raised against this Bill by several hon. members. I do not intend to refer to all that has been said against this Bill, but only to what I consider the main objections raised by hon. members, some of whom are generally in accord with the Government. In the first place, I thank those hon. members who are in accord with the Government upon this measure for the support given to the Bill; and having said that, and having expressed my thanks to them, I shall not have occasion to say much, or at all events say very little, on what they have advanced in its favor, because what I have to say to-night will be chiefly directed to meeting the objections raised by those who are opposed to this measure. I will preface my remarks by saying that, as far as the Government are concerned, we regret extremely that we should have to ask the House to approve of a measure which is objected to by so many hon. members. We should have been much better pleased to have been able to introduce a Bill which would have met with general approval; and it would also have been a greater pleasure to have been able to introduce a measure which had been in operation in some other part of Australia, for it is always perplexing and unpleasant to bring forward measures or advocate those things which are not agreeable to others. Of all the persons in this world who have to face difficulties and become unpopular, I think that those who attempt to go off the old lines have to face the most unpopularity. Such are, even in the present day, always unpopular with a large section of the community, and the reason is not far to seek: it is because they interfere with vested interests, and when those interests are interfered with it is pretty certain that the reformers will incur distrust and opposition. It would be easy for us to have gone on in the old groove to which we have been accustomed. If we had done so, and had kept on the even tenor of our way, we would not have been likely to come into

collision or opposition with anyone. If we have been forced to come into collision with some, or have provoked opposition, even if we have a host of enemies, at all events there are a host of persons who are in favor of that which we wish to do by this Bill. If the Government had been content to deal with the future as it comes, at all events we would not have to meet much opposition in this House. But the Government look on the introduction of this measure as a public duty. I will now deal with the principal objections, leaving the minor ones to be dealt with in committee. I may remark that there has been a considerable amount of opposition, not to the main principles, but only to details. There are virtually only two main principles: firstly, free grants of lands; and secondly, lending money to settlers. The hon. member for Albany raised an objection to this measure, that it had never been before the electors, and therefore the House was not in a position to deal with it. I admit that it has not been before the electors in the sense that it was a question before the country when hon. members were elected to this House, although at that time I referred to it when addressing my constituents, though not in its present shape. I say it has been before the country since July 24th last, and has been discussed in the public Press, and by all sorts and conditions of people throughout the colony. I will ask, was it not more discussed than the Loan Bill, involving the construction of railways and other public works? That Bill was passed after the general election, and when the people had not an opportunity of expressing their approval or disapproval of the particular proposals in the Bill. Again, there is the Constitution Amendment Act, which was not before the country in the sense intended to be conveyed by the hon. member for Albany, namely, on the hustings. I reply that if we have no right to deal with this Bill, we had equally no right to deal with the Loan Bill or the Constitution Amendment Act. I maintain that this question has been sufficiently before the country for this House to deal with it, as its main provisions have been before the country for four months, and the Government have given every opportunity to hon. members to find out what

were the opinions of their constituents with regard to this Bill. The hon. member for Albany, and also, I think, the hon. member for York, said that the effect of bringing this measure before the House would be a confession of the failure of our public works policy. I cannot agree with those hon. members. So far as I can see, no argument could be more unfortunate or more ridiculous than that because the Government bring forward a measure having for its object the cultivation of the soil, their doing so is an admission that the public works policy, which is only now commencing, is a failure. It must require a very acute mind to discern that. At any rate, I emphatically deny such an absurd statement as that before we have spent more than a fourth part of the loan, actually before we have completed a single work in our programme, and because the Government come before the House with a proposal of this kind, that their public works policy has been a signal failure—I say it is preposterous. Several hon. members, and certainly the hon. member for Albany, said that this measure would exclude present holders from the advantages to be derived under the Bill; but, in reply, I will say that if hon. members wish to include the whole mass of the people in its scope, that is a matter of detail, and they can do so in committee. The desire of the Government is to encourage further settlement and improvement, and not to encourage those who have land already to leave it, as members possessing considerable experience have told us they would be likely to do. The desire of the Government is that persons who are already settled on the land should remain there, and continue to cultivate it. The Government wish to encourage fresh men to come here and occupy and improve our lands. In my remarks in introducing this Bill, I said it was open to anyone opposed to the policy of the Government to bring forward another scheme which would be more acceptable to the House. I am aware that those who sit on the Opposition benches are not bound to bring forward some other scheme in lieu of that which they oppose, although I invited them to do so. The only member who responded to what I may call a challenge was the hon. member for

Albany, and by responding he admits that it is necessary that something should be done. And what was his proposal? To borrow money to clear and improve our lands, to put them in a state of cultivation, to build houses, to import settlers, to bring the men here to settle on land that has been cleared and improved, and to charge the settler with the capital and interest upon the whole of the outlay by the State. I ask hon. members to compare this with the Government scheme. Where is the security, when the settler has not spent one penny? [Mr. DEHAMEL: I never spoke of importing]. I do not care whether they are here or imported, the principle is the same. The settler would be spoon-fed, and placed in comfortable quarters here at the public expense. He has not invested a single sixpence of his own money, and what interest has he in the land, or why should he remain on it when any difficulty arises, unless he finds it very profitable, and with everything to his liking? The idea is ridiculous. The man would have no interest in keeping the land, improving and stocking it; and as soon as a difficulty arose he would leave—at any rate he would have no inducement to remain. But not so with the Government scheme, which would induce a man to bring his family at their own expense, to select their own land, and spend their own money to improve that land, and afterwards, if they required it, not otherwise, they could come to the Government, which would lend them one-half of the amount they had expended on the land. I would ask hon. members which of the two schemes offers the greater security to the country, and deserves the more consideration from members of this House? As well as I can remember, excepting the hon. member for Albany with his brand-new scheme, nearly all other hon. members have contented themselves with criticising the proposals of the Government without bringing forward any scheme of their own. I have no reason to find fault with them on that account. The hon. member for York departed from the usual courtesy observed in the House, as when speaking of the measure he said that it should have been delivered to the messenger and deposited in the waste-paper basket. The hon. member, per-

haps, had thoroughly studied the measure, and felt justified in making that remark, and I am not going to quarrel with him for having said what he had a perfect right to say; but I may say that it was a want of the usual courtesy of this House. The hon. member for York also questioned my statement that the area under crop in the colony has not increased during the last five years. He said it was a damaging statement—I took his words down—and he said that, if true, it proved that the public works policy of the Government had been a failure. I join issue with the hon. member on that statement. I don't think it proves anything of the kind, seeing that the public works policy is only beginning, and has had no time to bear any fruit, except in hope and anticipation of the future. I distinctly state that the public works policy has not had time to prove the benefit that we hope it will prove to this colony; and how a statement made by me in all good faith, on the foundation of the statistics of the colony, should be called a damaging statement, I am unable to understand. I say again, it can be proved that the area under crop in this colony during the last five years has not increased; I say it deliberately. I do not wish to say anything that is damaging, or I might have said something more.

MR. R. F. SHOLL: The figures in the Blue Book are incorrect. Look at the Census returns, which are more reliable.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): I go by the Blue Book.

MR. SIMPSON: The other shows the Blue Book is wrong.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): The hon. member for York also said this Bill was unfair to present land-holders, and also that it would decrease the value of property. Well, I am glad to say he is the only member in this House who has said so.

MR. MONGER: I did not say it. I said it was unfair to existing settlers, but I said nothing about decreasing the existing value of property.

MR. RICHARDSON: It will increase the value of existing property if passed.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): I took down the words. The hon. member for York said it would interfere with the value of landed property. I think

I have conclusively shown that the effect of improvements going on upon homestead areas over a large portion of the country will not only do no harm to existing interests, but will increase the value of property. The hon. member for York made another startling statement, which he may say he did not use. He said he objected to new-comers getting these advantages in order to make themselves a nuisance. Did the hon. member say that?

MR. MONGER: I said I objected to new-comers getting these advantages, and eventually make themselves a nuisance; and so they will.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): As far as that is concerned, this Bill is no more for new-comers than for old-comers; it is for those who are here equally with those who may come here. The hon. member for Beverley referred to America, and used a most extraordinary argument, and before I criticise his observations I may say that I value his opinion and I fully expected him to support the measure; but since he has chosen to oppose the Bill, he will not find fault with me if I combat the objections which he raised. He used some most extraordinary arguments. He said I quoted America (I also quoted Canada), and he added that I had forgotten to say that for ten years they had striven before they could get the measure passed. I think that this only shows that in America it was very difficult to convince people that it was a good Bill.

MR. HARPER: They never had loans.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): The question is, is it a good Bill? Has it done good in America and in Canada? Have they repealed it since? When I was there I was told that this free-grant system was the foundation of the settlement of those great countries, the foundation on which those great countries had flourished. They took years before they entered upon this great boon, but we shall not take all that time, for we shall carry the second reading to-night. The hon. member also said that the conditions there were different from what they are here.

MR. SIMPSON: What is the difference in the price of land?

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): The difference is considerable, especially

in the northern parts—in the United States especially, and we know what a severe climate exists, and that the stock has to be housed for half the year. The hon. member, however, made one very encouraging and good expression. He said that everyone wished this colony to progress; but I say, what is the use of wishing it to progress unless we do something to make it progress, or put it in the way to progress.

MR. SHOLL: This Bill won't do it.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): The hon. member for Beverley also said that this Bill would have the effect of putting impecunious people on the land. I altogether deny that statement, for this reason: facilities at the present time are greater for impecunious people to go on the land than under this Bill. Anyone who can pay £4 a year can occupy land, and all he has to do is within five years to fence it and live upon it. After that he has a lease for 15 years, and during the whole of that time he need do nothing with it but pay the rent. It is only after the lapse of 20 years, and if he has not fulfilled the improvements, that the land is liable to forfeiture. Are these, I ask, conditions which will keep impecunious people off the land? They rather encourage them to go upon it. But what are the conditions this Bill provides shall be fulfilled in seven years? Within six months of getting the permit a man has to live upon the land. Within a certain time he has to fence in a quarter of it, he has to spend his own money on it, and in seven years he has to fence the whole of it, and to clear and cultivate at least one quarter of it; but at any time after entering into occupation of it, if he has spent his own money on it to the extent of £100, we will advance him half, and so on until we have advanced him up to £150. This Bill, therefore, cannot be said to encourage impecunious people, for it is obvious that a man must have a little capital, or if not he must have a strong will and strong arms. He cannot obtain a loan unless he has either spent his own money or his labor upon the land. The hon. member for the Moore, although opposed to this measure, certainly dealt with it in a most courteous way, even if he were not right in what he said. Although I do not agree with him, still I give him credit for what he said, because I know

he spoke from experience, and as one who really meant what he said. He said it was a remarkable fact that the importation of flour had decreased since 1887. In that statement he was perfectly correct, for, according to the Blue Book returns, the importation had steadily decreased up to the end of last year; but if the hon. member will take this year he will find a different state of things exists. He had not the statistics before him that I have, otherwise he would have found that during the first six months of this year the import of flour had greatly increased. During that period we had introduced into this colony flour to the value of £24,830. My returns are only to 30th June last, but probably during the latter six months of the year the amount will be still more, and will make a total importation equal to £50,000 for the year.

MR. RICHARDSON: The population has increased.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): And consequently more flour is consumed. The hon. member may congratulate himself on the decrease in the import of flour, but I tell him that it has risen again, and this year it will be more than double what it was last year. Then let us look at a few other items in our import list during the past 5½ years. During that period we imported bran and pollard of the value of £51,000, butter £100,000, wheat £27,000, oats £92,000, flour (and it is a somewhat astounding statement to make) £209,000, hay and chaff £32,000, and potatoes £25,000. These are figures which no one can dispute, because they are based on official returns, and they must give cause for reflection as to whether this is a right state of affairs, and whether we should be content to go on and not do anything to alter it. Another argument used by several hon. members was that we were giving away the land to strangers. I was sorry to hear that remark. It is said that we are doing for strangers what we would not do for our own people. Who are our own people? If a man has been here a short time, he considers himself a West Australian as much as those who have been here all their lives, and, after all, are we not in fact part of the whole British race? Do we not look upon the old country as our home?

MR. RICHARDSON: They do not give away 160 acres of land there.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): If we go home we acquire all the rights of citizenship in a short time, in the same way that people from England should do when they come here.

MR. SIMPSON: Will they give us anything?

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): We want people here, and they have plenty there. My idea is that, whether people are born here or whether they come here and take up their abode, we should remember that they are all part of the British race, having the same right to this territory—the same right to live in it and enjoy it, and do their best to promote its interests as we have. There is another argument I should like to deal with. It has been put forward by some hon. members—especially by the hon. member for the Greenough—that this Bill is unfair to the land-grant railway companies. I may say at once that if the Government thought they were acting unfairly to these companies, we would not have brought the measure forward, but I cannot see that these companies have any right to interfere with the way we intend to deal with our public lands. I have been, although I know some dispute it, a friend to persons who come here as the promoters of land-grant railways, or to try to develop our resources. But I would ask hon. members to remember that when we entered into these agreements with these companies, we shut up our lands, for a certain time, not only to allow the companies to select from them, but also to dispose of their portion when selected. After that time elapsed, the lands under the contract reserved to us come back, but there is no provision in the contract which will prevent either the company or the colony doing what each thinks best with its own lands. It would be just as unreasonable for us to object to these companies issuing a prospectus, giving away their lands (and I believe that this scheme will be adopted by them yet), as it is for them to complain that we are not acting fairly with them in disposing of our own estate in the way we think will benefit the colony best. I may remark that this argument about showing great sympathy and consideration for land-

grant railway companies has come from those hon. members who have, in the past, shown very little sympathy and very little consideration for these land-grant companies; and yet the very members who have had so little to say for these companies are charging me, who have been a friend to them and tried to help them, with now trying to do an unfair thing to the companies, which these hon. members have done nothing whatever to assist. The hon. member for the Moore said one extraordinary thing, which was that we should be more patriotic than to give away our lands. Now, I would like to know where patriotism comes in? I say it is a matter of business, and that there is no patriotism or sentiment about this question as to whether it will pay the colony better to give away the lands or to leave them unoccupied and uncultivated as they are at present. This is a simple business proposal for hon. members to consider, and if they do not like the proposals of the Government, they will not have anything to do with the transaction. On the other hand, if some hon. members do not wish to see the forest lands occupied and cultivated, for fear that the new settlers will clear away the wild flowers and the natural shrubs that are now growing in beautiful profusion in their native solitudes; and if these hon. members would rather keep the land as it is, in order that they may go on looking at and enjoying the native shrubs and flowers as being more desirable than the settlement of new families on the land; if it is desired to be patriotic in the sense of keeping the land in its unproductive and unused condition, for the purpose of looking at its natural beauties, then I say do not accept this Bill for encouraging the settlement and cultivation of the land, but leave the land as it is. The hon. member for Beverley used another extraordinary argument, which I think ought to be regarded as one of the strongest arguments in favor of this Bill. I do not remember any argument used by other speakers that was so strongly in favor of the Bill as this one, namely, that if we greatly increased the cultivation of the soil, the result would be that wheat would be reduced to 2s. a bushel.

MR. HARPER: And ruin the farmers.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): The hon. member assumes that the production will be so increased, through the agency of this Bill, that the local markets must become glutted, and that wheat will sink in value to 2s. a bushel. Surely we are not dependent on the local market for the sale and consumption of all the produce that can be raised in this immense territory?

MR. HARPER: We are, in wheat.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): I ask the hon. member to look at the case of South Australia, as a country producing a large proportion of wheat.

MR. RICHARDSON: They are ruined. Nearly every farmer is in the hands of the Banks.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): I believe the public finances of South Australia, at the present time, are in a sound condition; and what has that colony to depend on unless it be wheat?

MR. RICHARDSON: Broken Hill saved South Australia.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): Even if we could grow nothing but wheat in this colony, the markets of the world would be open to us as exporters of wheat. Do not we all see in the newspapers the calculations made about the crop of wheat and the available amount for export from South Australia, also the amount required for local consumption? The expected receipts from the railways in that colony are to a large extent governed by the production of wheat in each season. No one need be afraid that we shall over-produce in Western Australia for some years to come. What does the argument come to? It means that it is better to have our lands uncultivated and unproductive, than to go on cultivating them. Will anyone get up and say that if Western Australia were growing more wheat and more produce of various kinds, than it is to-day, this would not be a better and more prosperous country to live in? If that is not so, then don't go on building railways to open up the country, but leave two or three people to occupy this vast territory and enjoy it for themselves. If that is not so, don't let us go on advertising ourselves as a progressive colony, in which people are flourishing and doing well, but let us make it known that the advent of new-comers will mean that this

colony must soon be over-producing, and that wheat will go down to 2s. a bushel.

MR. RICHARDSON: They won't even get that if they have to export it.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): I will not argue this point any further. Fancy this great colony with only 60,000 people scattered over 1,000,000 square miles of territory, and yet some of us are afraid to cultivate our lands because wheat will be brought down to 2s. a bushel! This year we have imported a quarter of a million pounds' worth of produce which we can easily grow for ourselves; and now that the population is increasing, I would ask how all these people who are here and others who are coming here are to be fed without importing produce from outside, if we are afraid of over-producing within the country, in these early days of our history? In contrast with these gloomy predictions, it was a pleasure to hear what the hon. member for Northam (Mr. Throssell) and the hon. members for the Murray (Mr. Paterson) and for Sussex (Mr. Cookworthy) had to say upon this. They see the advantages; and though they are among the largest holders of property in the colony, yet they are not afraid that this Bill will injure the value of their estates or reduce the price of wheat. I have said before, and say again, that I believe this Bill will not only attract people to this colony to settle upon the lands, but I go further and say it will attract people who will take up our lands, not only as homestead blocks, but will take up land in the ordinary course under the Land Regulations. In a very short time—I was going to say in the first year—our land revenue will be greater than it is now; and the whole colony will feel the effects of the operations and improvements on the homestead blocks; and I believe that the persons who come here with a little capital will not be content to live on 160 acres only, but will desire to acquire more land from the Crown under the ordinary Land Regulations. The hon. member for the Gascoyne (Mr. R. F. Sholl) almost libelled the whole colony, for he said he did not want to bring people here to starve. Well, really, I am not prepared to argue on a statement of that sort, because I should consider myself a most dishonest person if I were to encourage people to come here, knowing

they could not get enough to eat. The hon. member says he does not wish to bring people here to starve. I never heard of anyone starving in this country yet, if he was willing to work, and I never found any difficulty in getting enough to eat. I never found any person in this country who, being willing to work, had any difficulty in getting enough to eat. Then the hon. member went on to say he must oppose the measure altogether. That statement did not astonish me much, because the hon. member generally opposes everything. He also went on to say we should lose our land. Well, I don't know how we should manage to lose it, as the land would not run away. The hon. member for Geraldton indulged in some very tall talk. [MR. SIMPSON: "Hear, hear."] He said that the Bill was ridiculous, and was a wrong to the colony. That was a very good—[MR. SIMPSON: "Good shot."]—Yes, a very good shot. [MR. SIMPSON: "And fairly true."] But the hon. member did not go on to explain why the Bill was wrong and ridiculous, except that the hon. member said the agricultural industry could look after itself. He then talked of trying to prove his case by saying the present immigration grants were a failure, by referring to the report of the Crown Lands Department. But if the hon. member will only look into the Regulations under which those grants were made, he will see that there was no residence condition whatever.

MR. SIMPSON: Did they accomplish their purpose?

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): No; because no one can hold the land without living on it, and if any buyer would give the immigrant a £5 note for the land, he sold his right and scrambled through the Regulation conditions, and eventually handed the land over to somebody else. But this Bill provides that within six months the settler shall reside on the land and shall fence and improve it; he is not allowed to transfer to anyone; and if he does not effect all the improvements required, the land will come back to the Crown, with all the improvements which the man may have made upon it. There is a curious fact in dealing with this Bill, and I would like hon. members to consider it, because I have had to consider

it, and I don't know that I have quite fathomed it yet; that is, that those who have land in the country, or a great many of them, are opposing this Bill, while those who live in the towns and are engaged in mercantile pursuits are all in favor of it. I should like to ask, why this opposition of persons who are now engaged to a large extent in the cultivation and improvement of the land? Surely they don't wish us to think that the lands of the colony are not worth improving, and that the only good land is that which they have, and that they don't want any others to compete with them. I should like to know why it is that some very experienced persons who are large holders of property are so much opposed to this Bill, while others who are engaged in mercantile pursuits in the towns all say that this is the very means by which the interests of the colony can be promoted, and they themselves be made to prosper. I do not believe, as a rule, in quoting figures to prove my case, because it is commonly said you can make figures prove anything, and because also there is a good deal of assumption in dealing with figures, especially with regard to the cultivation and improvement of the land. I have taken the trouble to look into this matter a little from the financial point of view, and I find that when the £40,000 which is proposed to be expended in the first instance in settling a few hundred people upon these homestead blocks, and supposing each holder of a block to receive—I don't say that all of them would require it—assistance in loans to the extent of £150 for each block, the £40,000 would settle 266 families on the land.

MR. SIMPSON: Why families?

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): Before this money could be lent and be spent, it would mean an expenditure by these 266 holders of £80,000 of their own money. And if these people also expended on their holdings the money so borrowed from the State, it would mean £40,000 more. Perhaps it is not probable that they would expend the whole amount so borrowed in further improving their holdings; but in any case there would be £80,000 expended in improving their holdings. If this Bill becomes law, and if we divert £40,000 from the Immigration vote, it will mean that £80,000 must be expended on the

land before the £40,000 can be drawn. Is not this a result to be desired? And what would these additional farmers produce in wealth from the soil, which is now producing next to nothing? I have tried to calculate what these farmers would be likely to produce within a few years, though some may say I have overestimated the probable results. At the same time, I think that within three or four years after occupation, these homestead blocks would produce an average of £100 a year in saleable products, and that would mean £26,000 a year of wealth produced out of soil which is producing nothing now, and all this would be achieved by an expenditure of £40,000 out of the Immigration vote. I wish to point out that this £40,000 to be advanced to these settlers, and to be invested in the land, will be advanced only after £80,000 of the settlers' own money has been expended on the land, and that the expenditure so made will have the effect of producing out of the soil an amount of products valued at £26,000 a year; and that the £40,000 we propose to advance is not to be given in loans without security, but is to be advanced on the security of all the improvements these men may have made, and that before they can get any loans at all they must first spend a certain amount of their own money in making these improvements. Some persons may say that these results can be attained without these advances. My reply is that the risk is too great; and I say that if these results may be attained without our lending this money, then how much more may we not attain by lending this money?

MR. HARPER: None at all.

MR. RICHARDSON: You cannot occupy the same land in both ways.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): That means that there is only land in this colony for independent occupation, and not also for settlers who will make improvements by means of loans. I deny that statement. Now I come to the hon. member's amendment, and I regret very much that he is not in favor of this Bill, because I really expected that the hon. member (Mr. Richardson) would have supported this measure. His argument is that there was no necessity to bring forward this measure at all,

and he said that free grants would tempt people who are wholly unfitted for the work, and who would utterly fail in it to take up these homestead blocks. I have shown that this Bill will not induce impecunious persons to go upon the land, and is not so enticing to such persons as are the present Land Regulations; but that the Bill will encourage *bonâ fide* cultivators, who have some means of their own to cultivate the land, because anyone coming here without capital at all, unless well fitted for the work, would not be able to make the improvements which the Bill requires to be made within a certain time. Now, coming to the objections of the hon. member for the Swan: they were three. He first objected that clauses 3 and 4 of the Bill ought to have been in another Bill, as they are so admirable; secondly, that the amount of land in cultivation, and not the land under crop, should be the basis of calculation in estimating production; and thirdly, that the State should not assist any particular industry. To the first objection I reply that I am glad to know that sections 3 and 4 meet with his approval.

MR. LOTON: Up to a certain extent.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): To the second objection I say that the land under crop is what I look at in calculating production, for it alone produces the items of food I referred to, and I have shown that the area under crop in 1891 had not increased during the last five years. The third objection is the main one, and is very important; it is that the State should not assist any particular industry. That argument was used also by several other hon. members.

MR. RICHARDSON: By direct grants of money.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): By any particular means. I say the cultivation of the public estate is a national work. I say it is not an industry like brickmaking or brewing; it is not the same at all. I say that in the Crown lands we have a great inheritance, and the object of the Government is to make these lands productive, to make them wealth-producing; and our idea is that we should not leave them uncultivated and unused, producing nothing. And we don't wish it to be brought into cultivation gradually and slowly; we want it to be

occupied and cultivated quickly, so that the present generation may participate in some of the advantages which will accrue from the increase and prosperity which will attend the country when the vast area is under cultivation instead of remaining as it is now. What did Dean Swift, the great divine, in his writings say of politicians? He ignored them, and said the man who made two blades of grass to grow where only one grew before was a greater benefactor to his country than the whole race of politicians put together.

MR. SIMPSON: Did he grow any himself? A State-aided parson!

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): As to assisting agriculture as an industry, I am not going to argue about the dictionary meaning of "industry," but do hon. members look on gold-mining and tin-mining as industries, in the same way as brickmaking and brewing? If they do, I do not. I look on these stores of gold as a vast treasury of wealth in the ground, intended to assist in building up this great country. Is not the farmer who tills the land engaged in a great work in this country, in trying to bring the wilderness into cultivation? Why should we not assist him in some way? What are we doing for him? If a man goes hundreds of miles into the interior seeking for gold, the State provides a number of officials to look after him, and sends officers to search for water on the goldfields while the man is looking for gold; and, if the Government failed to render this assistance to the miner, it would be derided as a useless Government. Is gold-mining an industry that ought to be encouraged? What are we building this railway to Yilgarn for, if it is not to encourage gold-mining and to enable those engaged in it to carry on their operations with profit to themselves and with great use and benefit to the country? Why are we making wells and tanks all over the country, if not to assist the gold-mining industry? And why should we not do something for the farmer, who is engaged upon a greater work in subduing the forces of nature, and making the land to produce wealth. During the past five and a half years we have imported food supplies that we can grow to the value of three-quarters of a million sterling, and during

this year we shall have imported food supplies to the value of a quarter of a million; and I ask whether something is not to be done to reduce this terrible expenditure on the necessities of life imported from outside the colony, in order that we may produce from our own lands all these articles that we have been buying from others outside. There is this other point, that the people we are attracting to this colony, and who have a desire to settle on the land and cultivate it, and form homes for themselves, are the very best class of settlers that we can have. People of this class are required all over the world—in the United States, in Canada, in South America, everywhere they are sought for—and unless you hold out some great inducement to attract them here, they will not come. That is the reason why I am so anxious to offer something that will attract these desirable settlers—men who have been accustomed to work, and who will build up homes in this country and do good to it. As I said, there are only two principles in the Bill that we need discuss at present: one is the giving away of land to those who are here already and to others who will come here to settle on it as cultivators; and the other principle is that after these settlers have spent a certain amount of money on improvements, we will advance to them a certain sum to make further improvements. It has been said by someone—I think by the hon. member for Albany—that I am not in earnest, and the Government are not in earnest, with regard to this scheme. It appears to be thought that the Government are a sort of machine, that the five members who constitute the Ministry must always be in accord with each other, and are always turning up at the call of some drum. I say that the Government consists of five members who are all anxious to do their best for the colony, and who have considered, and well considered, each other's views, and will stand loyally by one another. If they are not in accord in every particular, I promise you that you will not know it. The Government are five persons, and yet only one. I say we are united and in earnest on this Bill. We want to abolish the great want of production in this country, and I feel it is my duty to try to remedy it. I must say again that I have been surprised,

and in fact I have been most surprised, at the opposition that has been shown to this Bill by influential members of this House—men who ought to know as much about this matter as anyone in the colony—I have been surprised, and I confess it. But though that may be, we now submit the Bill to this House on its merits; and we have not brought any pressure to bear on any hon. member. I have never tried to influence any member on this Bill, because I felt that this was a matter of too great importance and of too great moment for me to try and influence the opinions of others, except in a public and open manner. If this Bill does not become law, I believe it will be a great disappointment to many who are looking to this colony as their future home. The sole aim of the Government in bringing it forward is to settle and improve the lands of the colony; and we think this can be best done by passing the Bill which you have now before you.

Question—That the words proposed to be struck out stand part of the question—put. The House divided, with the following result:—

Ayes	...	...	...	16
Noes	...	...	...	13

Majority for ... 3

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

The amendment was negatived, and the Bill read a second time.

EXPORT TIMBER BRANDING BILL.

IN COMMITTEE.

Clauses 1, 2, and 3:

Agreed to, without comment.

Clause 4.—“If any exporters shall neglect to brand any such timber as aforesaid, or he shall falsely or incorrectly brand any such timber, or shall deface any such brand, he shall be liable to a penalty of not less than Fifty pounds, nor more than One hundred pounds, and to imprisonment with hard labor

“for any period not exceeding three calendar months. One moiety of such fine shall be paid to the use of Her Majesty, and one moiety shall be paid to the person laying the information against the offender:”

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL (Hon. S. Burt) moved to insert the words “before shipment,” after the word “aforesaid,” in the 2nd line; also to strike out the words “and to,” in the 8th line, and to insert the words “with or without,” in lieu thereof.

Amendments—put and passed, and clause, as amended, agreed to.

Clause 5.—Powers of inspecting officer:

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL (Hon. S. Burt) moved that this clause be struck out, with the view of inserting a new clause.

Clause struck out accordingly.

Clause 6:

Agreed to, without comment.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL (Hon. S. Burt) moved that the following new clause be added to the Bill, to stand as clause 5:—“Any police officer or constable, or any inspector specially appointed by the Governor, may at all times and at any time board any vessel loading timber for export for the purpose of examining such timber, and any person obstructing or interfering with any such officer, constable, or inspector, shall be liable to a penalty not exceeding Twenty pounds.”

Question—put and passed, and new clause added accordingly.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL (Hon. S. Burt) moved that the following new clause be added, to stand as clause 7:—“Sections A and E of the ‘Shortening Ordinance, 1853,’ shall be incorporated with and taken to form part of this Act to all intents and purposes, and in as full and ample a manner as if the said sections had been introduced and fully set forth in this Act.”

Question—put and passed, and new clauses added accordingly.

Preamble and title agreed to, and the Bill reported as amended.

ADJOURNMENT.

The House adjourned at 9:35 p.m.