

MR. TRAYLEN said his contention was that the Boards had assumed that power, without any statutory authority to enforce the by-laws.

MR. R. F. SHOLL thought no harm could arise from having this clause in the present Bill, as well as in the Municipality Act. He thought it was very necessary that all the laws relating to the public health should be consolidated.

MR. QUINLAN said there was clearly a difference of opinion as to the necessity for this clause, even among the members of the Perth Local Board itself, namely, the hon. member for Greenough (Mr. Traylen), the hon. member for Perth (Mr. Molloy), and himself (Mr. Quinlan). Personally, on this point, he agreed with the hon. member for Greenough, the chairman of the Board, inasmuch as he thought he was aiming at giving the Board a power which it did not at present, apparently, possess. At present certain persons in Perth were removing nightsoil, and disposing of it in a place where, if it was not already a nuisance, it would very soon become so. This clause would prevent anyone removing nightsoil unless he was licensed by the Board to do so, and under certain conditions.

MR. SIMPSON said it seemed to him there was such extreme difference of opinion amongst those who had a right to speak with authority on the subject, that it would be better to refer the details of this measure to a select committee. The Bill applied to other Municipalities as well as Perth, and other Municipalities ought to be represented on the select committee.

MR. TRAYLEN submitted that it was too late, and that it would not be in order now to refer the Bill to a select committee, the House having gone into committee of the whole upon it. He moved that progress be reported, and leave given to sit again on Friday.

Agreed to.

MR. SIMPSON asked whether the Chairman had ruled that his motion to refer the Bill to a select committee at this stage was out of order.

THE CHAIRMAN OF COMMITTEES said that no ruling had yet been given on that point.

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

ADJOURNMENT.

The House adjourned at ten minutes past 3 o'clock p.m.

Legislative Assembly, Wednesday, 23rd November, 1892.

Raising of third Instalment of Loan—Return showing Number of Government Employés—Renewal of Licenses to Hawkers and Pedlars—Mullewa Railway Station: Cost of Survey and Construction—Newcastle Railway Station—Report of Government Analyst upon Liquors seized by the Police—Approaches to the new Railway Station, Perth—Water Supply, Southern Cross—Return of Causes tried before Stipendiary Magistrates—Land Regulations (Rents) Amendment Bill: third reading—Homesteads Bill: second reading; adjourned debate—Adjournment.

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

PRAYERS.

RAISING OF THIRD INSTALMENT OF LOAN.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): I have very much pleasure in informing the House that the portion of our loan which was placed on the London market yesterday, through the London and Westminster Bank, has been successfully floated. The amount asked for was £400,000. There were 210 tenders; the total amount tendered for was £791,800; and the average price was £100 5s. I may inform members that the telegram I have received was evidently sent off at once when the result of the tendering was known, and that I expect this evening or to-morrow morning further details, of which I shall be glad to inform the House.

RETURN SHOWING NUMBER, &c., OF GOVERNMENT EMPLOYEES.

MR. DEHAMEL, in accordance with notice, asked the Colonial Treasurer:—

- i. When the Government would be prepared to furnish the return of the number of Government

employees and other particulars moved for by the hon. member for Geraldton, and ordered on the 7th day of March last to be laid on the Table of this House; and

2. Whether the Colonial Treasurer would supplement Part 4 of such return by showing the total amount payable annually for the services of all who have been appointed between the introduction of Responsible Government and the present time.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest) replied that the returns were being prepared and were about half completed when the last session closed. The preparation was not then proceeded with. If the returns were still required, and were moved for, they would be completed as soon as possible.

RENEWAL OF LICENSES TO HAWKERS AND PEDLARS.

MR. DEHAMEL, in accordance with notice, asked the Premier whether it was the intention of the Government, during the present session, to take any steps to give relief to persons who at present hold a hawker's or pedlar's license, by enabling them to obtain a renewal of their licenses for a further period of twelve months.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest) replied that no representations had been made to the Government in the matter, so far as he knew, and that the Government did not propose to move in the matter at present.

COST OF SURVEY AND CONSTRUCTION OF MULLEWA RAILWAY.

MR. DEHAMEL, in accordance with notice, asked the Commissioner of Railways:—

1. How much had already been expended on surveys of the proposed Mullewa Railway, and
2. Whether, in the event of the lowest tender for the construction of such railway being of such an amount as would make the total cost of construction and equipment exceed the sum of £150,000, the Government would again consult this House before accepting any tender, or proceeding with this work.

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

1. Before giving a reply to the hon. member on this question, I have thought it desirable to have a return made, showing the actual length of lines surveyed, both as trial lines and as the permanent line, and this return will be laid upon the table of the House as soon as it is complete.
2. In answer to question No. 2, I am only able to say that when the contingency alluded to by the hon. member arises, the Government will then be in a position to consider it.

REMOVAL OF NEWCASTLE RAILWAY STATION.

MR. CLARKSON, in accordance with notice, asked the Director of Public Works whether he had received any report from the Engineer-in-Chief regarding the removal of the railway station at Newcastle to a more convenient position, and if so, when the work would be commenced—the present “shanty,” called a station, being so inconveniently situated and so much out of order that it was unfit for the purpose.

THE COMMISSIONER OF RAILWAYS (Hon. H. W. Venn) replied:—Yes; a report from the Engineer-in-Chief has been received, and the question is being considered; and I hope to be in a position during 1893 of giving further and better station facilities at Newcastle.

REPORT OF GOVERNMENT ANALYST UPON LIQUORS SEIZED BY THE POLICE.

MR. TRAYLEN, in accordance with notice, asked the Premier whether it was the intention of the Government to lay upon the table of this House the report of the Government Analyst upon the liquors seized by the police.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest) replied that the Government did not propose to do so.

APPROACHES TO NEW PERTH RAILWAY STATION.

MR. A. FORREST, in accordance with notice, asked the Commissioner of Railways whether it was a fact that the new

railway station was to be fenced off from Wellington Street, and approached by a lane running parallel to the said street, with openings at each to William and Barrack Streets?

THE COMMISSIONER OF RAILWAYS (Hon. H. W. Venn) replied:—No. I anticipate throwing nearly the whole of Wellington Street, from William Street to Barrack Street, open to the main station, reserving a portion as a cab-stand, where the trees are now standing.

WATER SUPPLY, SOUTHERN CROSS.

MR. A. FORREST, in accordance with notice, moved, "That owing to the difficulty of procuring water for the mines at Southern Cross, the Government should, without delay, take such steps as may in their opinion be best calculated to test at what depth water in sufficient quantities can be procured." In moving this resolution he wished to draw the attention of the Government to the fact that at a depth of 130ft. in several of the mines at Southern Cross, sufficient water for running their machinery was found some time ago, but when it came to sinking a lower depth the supply fell off, and though some of the companies had gone to great expense in sinking to a depth of nearly 200ft., very little or no water was found. The result was proving very disastrous to the mining industry, and, as the companies with the limited amount of capital at their command were unable to test the question of what further depth they would have to go before a reliable supply could be obtained, he thought, that in the interests of a most important industry, the Government might fairly be asked to come to the rescue. He knew a great deal about the position of these mines and the capital at their command, and he had no hesitation in saying that it was impossible, or almost impossible, for any of these companies to undertake the great expense and responsibility of sinking their shafts say another 100ft. He thought if hon. members would look at this question in a practical way, they would agree with him that the only chance there was of solving this water difficulty was for the Government to come to the rescue and help the companies to provide what was absolutely

necessary for the successful working of these goldfields. These mines engaged a very large number of men, and spent a big sum in wages, and, if water was not procurable, he could hardly see how they were to carry on operations. That would be a very serious matter, not only for the mines and those engaged in them, but also to the colony. The Government were about to build a railway to Yilgarn, at a cost of some hundreds of thousands of pounds, and it would be a most disastrous thing if these mines were to cease working simply because they had not the means to test the depth at which they might rely upon a sufficient supply of water. They were assured by those who were in a position to form an opinion on the subject—and he believed everyone in the House would agree in the opinion—that the best stone was likely to be found at the lowest depth; but, unless water was procured, this good stone must remain unworked. All he asked was that the Government should take some steps to test at what depth water in sufficient quantity could be obtained, and, if this motion passed, to confer with the directors of the various mines as to the best way to proceed in order to give effect to the motion. It might, perhaps, appear to the Government that this was a very small question, and that the companies themselves should do this. But that was not the way he looked at it. Most people were aware that the calls upon the shareholders in these mines had been very heavy of late, and that very little had been received in return, so far. Nearly all these companies at Southern Cross had spent a lot of money in increasing their machinery, and they were now prepared to crush a large amount of stone but for this water difficulty. He did not think any of these companies, when they went to the expense they did in procuring machinery, ever thought they would have to contend with such a great difficulty in obtaining water, because they had a very fair supply of water at a comparatively low depth, and it was reasonably expected that as they went lower down the supply would increase. But instead of that the supply had fallen off, and these mines were now almost at a standstill for the want of water. The position of these mines at Yilgarn was a very peculiar one; one or

two of them were situated on a lake, and others on the top of hills, and at the present time one of the mines had pumped the whole country dry. He believed that was one of the reasons why the water supply in the mines on the hills had run dry. He hoped the Government would look at this question of obtaining water on these goldfields as one of national importance, and would be prepared to carry out the object which he had in view in moving this resolution. Unless some steps in that direction were taken at once these mines must cease operations, and, before long, even the water which had been obtained at considerable expense for the use of the inhabitants of the township, would not be available. This was a very serious prospect. He thought it behoved the Government to take immediate action in this matter, and to sink down a main shaft on some part of the field to a depth of from 300ft. to 500ft., as the case might be, and see whether it was possible to obtain a reliable supply of water for working the mines. If the companies knew for certain that they could get water at a certain depth, he believed they would then make an effort to meet this water difficulty themselves. But to expect one of these companies to sink a main shaft down that depth, without knowing whether there was water or not, was more than their means would justify them in attempting. This was not a question affecting one particular mine, but the whole field; and the success of the gold-mining industry at Yilgarn depended entirely upon the solution of this water difficulty. The proposed railway would prove of very little benefit unless the mines were worked, and therefore the whole question was one which deserved the immediate attention of the Government. He hoped the Government would agree to this motion in the way he had put it forward, and that if it was carried they would consent to meet the directors of the mining companies in conference, and see which would be the most economical and the best way for carrying out the object in view. He had no doubt in his own mind that the directors of all the companies now engaged at Southern Cross would be glad to meet the Treasurer, and point out to him the most feasible scheme for meeting the present difficulty.

MR. CLARKSON seconded the motion. As he had said on a former occasion in that House, he believed that one of the most important works to be done, not only in the interest of the gold mines but other interests as well, was this question of testing the underground water supply in this part of the country. Perhaps members were not aware that there was a very large extent of good pastoral country, and agricultural country, to be found in that direction. He had been a good deal over the country himself, and he could safely say that there were millions of acres of first-class pastoral country which were now unoccupied for the want of water. He was aware that the present Government Geologist had expressed an opinion that water would not be obtainable there by deep-sinking. Perhaps geologists, like doctors, sometimes disagreed. He remembered a very eminent geologist who was here some twenty years ago telling him that gold would never be found in Western Australia. They all knew now that plenty of gold had been found in various parts of the colony. Possibly this geologist who said that no water would be found by sinking for it at Southern Cross, might be equally mistaken with the geologist who said that no gold would be found. At any rate he (Mr. Clarkson) knew for a fact that a shaft had been sunk at Golden Valley—which was only 30 miles from Southern Cross—and a very good supply of water had been obtained at a depth of 80ft. If it could be obtained at one place, why should it not be obtained at the other? He thought it was well worth trying for, and that the Government should without delay introduce one of the latest and most improved boring machines they could get, such a machine as in other parts of the world had succeeded in boring 3000ft. Possibly we may not have to go down even 300ft. at Yilgarn; but, in any case, the experiment was well worth trying, looking at the important results which would accrue, not only as regards the gold-mining industry but also other industries. Private enterprise had done a great deal in developing these goldfields, and a large amount of private capital was sunk in them; and he thought the least the Government could do was to make an effort to find an adequate

supply of water. He had much pleasure in seconding the motion.

MR. CANNING said the feeling of opposition which prevailed in regard to class legislation generally was no doubt a reasonable and justifiable feeling, but, like many other general principles, it was capable of very considerable modification in the end; and he thought, although at first sight the present motion might appear to be most in favor of one particular class, it would be found on a little further consideration that it concerned the community generally, for reasons which he would briefly set forth. In the first place, they all knew that during the last twelve or eighteen months the fact of its having been demonstrated that payable gold existed in various localities in this colony had given a considerable impulse to population. There was no such effectual means of attracting population to a country as gold; it was the most powerful lodestone known; and had it not been for our gold discoveries in this colony, he very much doubted whether our population would have been increased from outside at the same rate as it had been during the last, say two years. It was to be borne in mind also, with regard to the Yilgarn goldfields, that the progress and further development of these fields, and their permanent character, will largely influence the interests of the people, not only of Perth and Fremantle, but also of the Eastern districts—the people of Newcastle, Northam, and York. The storekeepers, the hotel-keepers, the mechanics, the laborers, and, in fact, every class of the inhabitants of the towns he had mentioned, were largely benefited by the gold discoveries at Yilgarn; and the future prosperity of these classes, for some time to come at all events, would be materially influenced by the condition of these goldfields. The farmers were also very largely interested in the progress and development of these fields. Therefore this could hardly be considered a question affecting only one particular class of the community. It affected the interests of the whole of the population of the settled part of the colony. Another consideration, which had been hinted at by the hon. member who moved this resolution, was the fact that the reason for bringing the Yilgarn Railway into

existence was, really, the existence of these goldfields; and the success of that railway as a reproductive public work, must depend largely on the progress and permanent character of the gold-mining industry at Yilgarn. Moreover, the action contemplated by the motion of the hon. member for West Kimberley would, certainly, if successful, tend largely to solve the question of the practicability of obtaining water in that part of the colony by boring, and so of developing and turning to useful account, for pastoral and agricultural purposes, the Eastern portion of our vast territory. He, therefore, thought he had shown, somewhat incompletely perhaps, that this was not a question affecting any particular class, but a question affecting the whole of the inhabitants of the central portion of the colony, and indirectly the interests of the colony at large. For these reasons he had very much pleasure in supporting this motion of the hon member for West Kimberley.

MR. PIESSE said this water difficulty was ever before us in this colony, and he thought it behoved the Government to take some steps to meet the wishes of the country in general by carrying out the object expressed in the motion now before the House. From a conversation which he had a few days since with a gentleman who came from Brisbane, or some of the outlying portions of Queensland, he was given to understand that in that colony, in country which is very similar in character to that of the country surrounding, and to the Eastward of, Southern Cross and our goldfield region, artesian water has been struck in very nearly every instance. This Queensland country was almost similar in its character to the country which had been pronounced by our Government Geologist as being country where there were no indications of an artesian supply being found. But, as pointed out by the hon. member for Toodyay, different geologists held different opinions when those opinions were simply formed upon scientific deductions, and, as the hon. member had shown, those deductions were sometimes erroneous, and had proved to be so as regards the existence of gold in this colony. It might be the same with regard to this water question. At any rate, there was nothing like putting the

question to a practical test, by trying for water. In his own locality, where it had been stated that water could not be found, water had since been obtained, and at a less depth than its existence, if it existed at all, was considered probable. Although the hon. member for Toodyay had suggested that the most costly and approved boring machinery obtainable should be procured by the Government for this work, possibly it might be found that there was no necessity to use a boring apparatus for this purpose, but that a more simple method might answer the object in view. In Queensland water had been obtained, in country similar to this, and through strata quite as hard, by means of jumpers. This method had been attended with success in Queensland, where boring had not always proved a success. At any rate, he thought it was quite time that something should be done by the Government to prove the existence of water on our Yilgarn Goldfields, and the motion now before the House was well worthy of their consideration. He therefore hoped some immediate steps would be taken to enable this question to be tested in that locality.

MR. SIMPSON said he did hope that the Government, in the interest of the colony, would have nothing to do with this motion. It was just as well, in dealing with a matter of this sort, to speak plainly. He had listened with the greatest attention to the effort made by the hon. member for East Perth (Mr. Canning) to show that this was not a motion which benefited any particular industry; but he must say he had been unable to follow the hon. member in his effort in that direction, and perhaps it would be as well if they looked at this matter in a practical light, gained from a thorough acquaintance with all the circumstances surrounding it. The mines at Southern Cross that were particularly affected by this question were valued in the market to-day at nearly £40,000.

MR. CANNING: Could you get that for them?

MR. SIMPSON said he was simply quoting exactly what the shareholders considered they were worth; and it was just as well, in dealing with a motion of this kind, involving the expenditure of a large amount of public money, of trust money, to bear in mind the fact that the

shareholders in the two principal mines, Fraser's and the Centrals, had invested about £16,000 in their development, and that in return for that £16,000 spent on these two new mines, on a new goldfield, in a new country, these properties had already paid over £8,000 in dividends. Did that justify this motion, which contemplated a large expenditure out of public funds in enhancing the value of these mines? The whole argument of the hon. member who brought forward the motion amounted to this: that the Government having undertaken to build a railway to a mining centre, should consequently further undertake to sink a shaft for the benefit of the existing mines, owned by private companies. That was the meaning of this resolution, carried to its only logical conclusion. What were the facts? He had noticed very carefully the other day the reports of the various mining managers of these companies, and he had no hesitation in saying that there was nothing in those reports to justify the House in agreeing to this motion. At the Central the manager reported that he believed they were within 100 feet of water; at Fraser's they had done little or nothing to sink for water. There was one mine which, in company with the hon. member who had brought forward this motion, he had himself visited—a mine that was absolutely indicative of the character of the surrounding country—and they found that the men there had been drinking the water as it came into the mine. He thought that what he had just stated established beyond question to every practical man that fresh water at Yilgarn was a certainty by sinking. A reasonable question to ask would be: How much have the people interested in these mines spent in endeavouring to secure a water supply? The figures he had quoted with regard to the two principal mines went to show that if the owners had put their hands in their pockets to spend £1 they had already got back 10s. of it, within the short space of three years from the opening of the mines. It had been said by the mover of the resolution that the richest stone was to be found at the bottom of these mines; if so, why did they not go on sinking for it? The deepest shaft on the field was not more than 179ft. If the

richest stone was at the bottom, why did they not make an effort to get at it?

MR. A. FORREST: No water.

MR. SIMPSON: Then was the Government to do it for them? He thought the Government had no more right to contribute a shilling towards obtaining mining water for these mines, which were the property of private owners, than they had to subsidise any other private venture in order to make it profitable. The position was this: supposing the Government were to incur this expenditure, and supposing they failed in getting water, what then? The expenditure would be absolutely lost, while those immediately interested had run no risk at all.

MR. CANNING: It would settle the question.

MR. SIMPSON: The hon. member said it would settle the question. Would it not be better for the country if the proprietors of these private ventures should themselves settle the question of the value of their private property, instead of spending the money of the State in doing so? These people—and he knew something about the position of these mines; no one had put more money and energy than he had in their development, and he was open to do it again, if they allowed them to fetch their fair market value—these people could afford to place their hands in their pockets to develop their properties, and why should they not do so, as well as the farmer who had to manure his land, or the timber cutter who had to sharpen his axe, or the man engaged in any other industry had to exercise his best energies if he wanted to succeed in the world? He did think there was not the shadow of a shade of a reason to induce the Government of the colony to put a shilling into these particular private ventures to ensure their success, as suggested in the motion now before the House. It was just as well to bear in mind that there were other places in this colony, besides Southern Cross, producing gold under circumstances of extreme difficulty.

MR. CANNING: Nannine, for instance.

MR. SIMPSON: Aye; where they were paying higher wages and had to pay double the cartage they had to pay at Yilgarn, and were doing a great deal more than was being done at Yilgarn

in spending their money to find water and to develop their mines, and where they had sunk deeper in the short space of twelve months than had been done in three years at Yilgarn. No one had a stronger wish than he had to assist the mining industry by every legitimate means; but the mining community had no right whatever to come as paupers to the State, to ask for State funds, to give them a chance of enjoying fat dividends. That was his objection to the present motion.

MR. R. F. SHOLL said that anyone hearing the arguments of the hon. member who had just sat down would think this motion had been brought forward to benefit individual mines at Yilgarn. If he (Mr. Sholl) understood such was the case, he would not support it; but he took it that the object of the hon. member who brought it forward was to test at what depth a good supply of water can be obtained on this goldfield, not for the benefit of the present mines but for the benefit of the people residing there; and also to test the country as to the practicability of obtaining an artesian supply in that part of the colony. He thought it was almost the duty of the Government to test, not only this particular mining district but also the pastoral areas in these Eastern districts, as well as other parts of the colony, to ascertain whether an artesian supply of water can be obtained or not. With regard to the present motion, they all knew that the Government had gone to great expense already in trying to provide water for the public at Yilgarn. A condenser had been imported from England and erected on the field, at very great expense indeed; but he was credibly informed that this condenser was not altogether a success, owing to the density of the water. The present motion was to test whether a good supply of fresh water could be obtained—not for the benefit of any particular mines, but for the benefit of the district. He would deprecate the Government boring to assist any mines, but he thought it would be wise policy to spend a few hundred pounds to put down a bore to ascertain whether fresh water can be obtained in this locality, and at what depth.

MR. THROSSELL said that this question of water supply, not only for

our goldfields but also the surrounding country, was, in his opinion, one of the most important questions of the day. He had recently visited this country, and seen thousands and thousands of acres of land which only required water to render it equal to the North-West country for pastoral purposes. He believed that public money could not be spent to better advantage than in the attempt to supply this great want, not only for the goldfields but also for the surrounding country. No one could believe, without visiting the locality, that there was such rich land in that part; and he felt that he could heartily support the expenditure of a considerable sum of money in boring for water there. They all knew what important results had accrued in other parts of the world from the discovery of artesian supplies. It read almost like a fairy tale to read about belts of country, which were virtually worthless before the discovery was made, being transformed into magnificent country, capable of affording means of living for a considerable population, simply through the application of the borer. He hoped the present Government would see their way to introduce a borer worthy of the name to test this Yilgarn country and the surrounding district, which, if successful, would be a really reproductive work, from which the colony would reap a magnificent reward. He felt sure of one thing—that hearty blessings would follow the Government upon the first discovery of an artesian supply of water in the country he had recently had the pleasure of visiting. The motion had his most cordial support.

MR. LEFROY thought that if the mover of the resolution would consent to alter the wording of it, so as to make it more general in its application, and to make it read that, owing to the difficulty of procuring water in the Eastern districts of the colony, the Government should take these steps, the motion would be more likely to meet general support. Probably that might even meet the wishes of the hon. member for Geraldton. He thought that not only in the interests of the mines, but also in the interest of the whole colony, it was desirable that this country should be tested in some way with the view of obtaining a water supply. He knew something of the

country referred to, and had had some little experience in trying for water there; but he must inform the House that he had done so without success, so far as his efforts went. Of course he did not go very deep. The whole country in that direction seemed to bear nothing but salt water, at shallow depths. There was some fine pastoral country there, or country that would carry a considerable quantity of stock, all the way from Southern Cross right up to the Murchison, provided water could be obtained. Of course private individuals were not in a position to test the country for artesian supplies; they had not the means. But if the State would undertake to settle the question, once for all, by testing at what depth water could be procured, private individuals would then with some confidence search for themselves, if success attended the efforts of the Government. Not only would the mines at Southern Cross benefit from the discovery, but the whole of the surrounding country would be benefited thereby.

THE DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC WORKS (Hon. H. W. Venn) said hon. members who had spoken on this subject seemed apt to run away under the false delusion that the Government had done nothing up to the present time to provide this Yilgarn country with water. They seemed altogether oblivious or forgetful of the past history of that country, or they must have known that a very large sum of money had been spent already by the present Government for the purpose of testing this question. [MR. RICHARDSON: £10,000.] That was only one little sum. A great deal more than that had been spent by the Government in this direction. They had tried for water in various ways, and with what they had been led to believe were thoroughly reliable machines. The last machine, the Kauffman borer, was considered to be beyond any doubt whatever. It was approved by a very highly qualified engineer in Victoria, and they had a long newspaper account of its merits; yet, when it was brought round here and put to the test, it was pronounced a failure. That machine cost the Government a good round sum. It weighed about 45 tons, and it was a rather expensive article to send all the way to Yilgarn. He mentioned these facts to remind hon. mem-

bers that the Government had not been unmindful of this water supply question in the past, nor niggardly in their expenditure. In fact the present Government had done all they could to solve this difficulty, with the means at their command; and with regard to the present motion, the Government, he might say, had already anticipated the wishes of hon. members in this direction, because the Ministry had been in consultation on the subject some weeks past, and unanimously came to the conclusion to try yet another superior machine; and he hoped that this time they would be more successful. They also had been in consultation with a man who had been recommended to them as being a reliable authority, and he hoped that eventually, and before long, they would be in possession of a really reliable diamond drill. It had been the intention of the Government, without this motion being brought forward, to anticipate the wishes of the House and the country in this matter; and, whether the present motion passed or not, it would be found that the Government, in a few months, would proceed to thoroughly test Yilgarn and the surrounding country for water, and eventually to do the same farther North. With regard to one phase of the question he should like to say one word, and that was the question of artesian boring, from the point of view of scientific authorities. One hon. member said that he had spoken to some gentleman from Queensland, who told him that water had been invariably found in that colony in country identical in character with our Yilgarn country. He was afraid the hon. member had been misinformed. He ventured to say that it was not country identical in character and geological formation with this Yilgarn country, for it must be borne in mind that the foreshore of Queensland was bounded by immense mountains, whereas the whole of our foreshore from here to Port Darwin was very low country indeed, and differed in that respect from Queensland. He was therefore disposed to agree with the Government Geologist that there was no very encouraging prospect of an artesian water supply at Yilgarn. The Government must rely a great deal upon the report of the Government Geologist as to most

likely localities for testing for an artesian supply, but members must not run away with the idea that they were bound to obtain it. The diamond drill which the Government were next going to try the experiment with would test to the depth of 2,000ft. or more. He need hardly say that such a machine could not be purchased for a small sum. It would run the colony into a pretty large sum, and he trusted that the House, if it passed this motion, would be prepared to support the Government in its action in purchasing what was said to be the most efficient description of machine in the world for testing our country for a water supply. He should like to add that the speech of the hon. member for Geraldton (Mr. Simpson) had interested him very much. It had a ring about it which he thought ought to be heard oftener in that House and in this colony,—a ring of self-reliance. He thought if the country showed a little more of this spirit of self-reliance and a little less dependence upon Government expenditure to keep it going, it would be a good thing; and he must compliment the hon. member upon the tone of his remarks. He trusted that the feeling of self-reliance and self-help which the hon. member had endeavored to arouse in the bosoms of hon. members and of the people of the colony would find an echo throughout the country. He would only add that the Government would be glad to confer with the directors of mines, or anyone interested in the mines, at Southern Cross, as to the best localities for conducting tests, which the Government contemplated, and which would be undertaken as quickly as possible.

MR. RICHARDSON did not think the motion ought to pass in its present form, knowing from bitter experience of a similar motion that was passed some years ago, when it was agreed to spend a considerable sum in obtaining a water supply for the mines of the colony, how nearly the whole of that sum was spent at Yilgarn alone, very much to the embitterment of other districts of the colony. All he would point out to the Government was this: if their intention was to launch out in the direction of finding water for our mines by means of boring machines, they must be prepared to acknowledge the

fact that Yilgarn was not the only mining district in this colony, and they must guard against withholding from other important mining centres some of that assistance they were so ready to grant to Yilgarn. They should not forget that a very liberal provision had already been made in the way of the expenditure of public money in developing the Yilgarn fields. It must be borne in mind that they had already voted a sum of £200,000 or £300,000 for a railway to that district, besides the thousands spent in endeavoring to get a water supply; and he did not think it would look well, nor cause a desirable feeling in other mining districts between here and Kimberley, to see everything in the way of Government assistance of any magnitude confined to one district. He hoped the Government would recognise the claims of other districts, and see that all their efforts in the direction of discovering or providing a water supply for our mines were not restricted to one particular field, and that the Northern goldfields would not be overlooked. This was his objection to the present motion as it now stood; it only contemplated that these steps should be taken in the case of the mines at Southern Cross. He hoped the motion, before it passed, would be so amended as to make it more general in its application.

THE COMMISSIONER OF CROWN LANDS (Hon. W. E. Marmion) said it had not been his intention to have spoken on this subject, but, after hearing the interesting speech of the hon. member for Geraldton (Mr. Simpson), inculcating a stronger feeling of self-reliance, he felt inclined to say a word or two. In the hon. member's remarks, he appeared to think it altogether undesirable that the mining industry of this colony should be supported by the State, unless every other industry in the colony was supported also. He had occasionally heard the hon. member pride himself on the fact of his having had considerable experience of some of the other Australian colonies before he came here; and he should like to have asked the hon. member (if he had been in his seat) whether in those colonies the mining industry had not been supported to a very great extent at the expense of the State? Was it not a fact that most liberal assistance had been given

to the mining industry out of public funds in those colonies, in order to assist it in every possible way? They knew it to be a fact. And why did the Governments of those colonies come to the assistance of the mining industry? Because it was felt that it was a most important industry, the development of which must tend largely to the prosperity of the country. Until within the last few years the mining industry in this colony had taken no prominence at all, but, as they all knew, of late years it had sprung into importance, and it was now acknowledged that the future of the colony largely depended upon the development of the mining industry. The Government of the country were alive to this fact, and they had every desire to assist the mining industry in every legitimate manner. He did not for a moment wish to indicate that their desire was to assist Yilgarn alone, or any particular district, or any particular mines, but to assist the mining industry generally; and he believed that all the money they spent in this direction, if spent well and judiciously, would be returned tenfold to us. That was the object of the Government, and their only desire was to spend the money so that some good result to the country might follow from its expenditure. To some extent he agreed with what had been said by his hon. colleague, the Director of Public Works, that a great deal of money had been expended by the Government already in the way of procuring a water supply for our mining districts, and that the Government did not get much credit for it. Unfortunately their efforts hitherto had not been attended with very satisfactory results, but they were not discouraged, for they believed in the lesson taught by the old adage, "If at once you don't succeed, try, try again." Although they had already expended some thousands in endeavoring to obtain water, it must be borne in mind that they had not yet gone down very deeply—the deepest bore was not more than 200ft.—and why should they be disheartened? In other parts of the world—in Queensland for instance, a colony which one hon. member had referred to—they had gone to a depth of from 2,500ft. to 3,000ft., and succeeded in obtaining water in large quantities. He did not intend to pit his knowledge

against that of scientific men—he was one of those who had always expressed a belief in the opinions of scientific men, though he was not prepared to admit that they were always right; and, notwithstanding the opinion expressed as to the improbability of discovering an artesian supply at Yilgarn, he still thought the Government were justified in spending a certain amount in endeavoring to test the question, and in order to ascertain at what depth water was likely to be struck. In doing this, as had been pointed out that evening, while assisting the mining industry, which was now at the top of the tree, they were also assisting other industries—the pastoral and the agricultural industries, and, indirectly, every industry in the colony; for it could not be doubted that the success of the gold-mining industry must contribute largely to the prosperity of every other industry. For this reason he had always felt that there was no more legitimate industry to be assisted out of public funds than the mining industry generally, and more especially that of gold-mining. Comparisons had been drawn between the amount of money spent by the Government in assisting the mining industry at Yilgarn and the mining industry in the Northern districts of the colony; but it must be borne in mind that Yilgarn was nearer home, and, as a rule, there was a tendency to assist those near home. But why had they assisted Yilgarn? Because they hoped and believed that by the development of these fields the progress and prosperity of the colony would be so stimulated that the Government would then be in a position to do justice to the claims of other parts of the colony. It must be borne in mind, too, that Yilgarn was nearer the main centres of population, where there were thousands of people living, all more or less interested in the prosperity of these fields, which were attracting a constant stream of immigration to our shores; whereas, at the Northern mining districts, the number of the population as yet was comparatively few, and distributed over a very large area of country. It must also be borne in mind that Yilgarn suffered from disabilities and drawbacks which these other mining districts did not suffer from, to the same extent. He alluded particularly to the water

difficulty. Those associated with the mining industry at Yilgarn—and he was not ashamed to say he was one of them—had expended large sums of money in endeavoring to solve this water difficulty, and in other directions, and it was notorious that they had not met with that success which they had reason to expect they would from so large an expenditure. In most of our Northern districts the same difficulty had not retarded the development of the mining industry in those districts. With the exception of Kimberley, water had been discovered at moderate depths, and the means of the mining companies engaged in the industry had been sufficient in most cases to overcome the difficulty, without any great assistance from the Government—though the Government had come to their assistance in many cases, and spent considerable sums of money, in the Murchison, and at Pilbarra, and in the Kimberley District, in obtaining supplies of water. [Mr. RICHARDSON: How much?] Not so much as at Yilgarn. But very lately the Government had recognised the importance of the Pilbarra goldfield, in such a manner as he believed no other Government in Australia had ever done, and that was by voting money to build a line of telegraph from the sea coast to the goldfields at Marble Bar. They had also recognised the importance of the Kimberley goldfields years ago by spending £60,000 or £80,000 in building a telegraph line to the fields, and they were still spending money in all directions in that country. He felt sure that the wish of the hon. member who had brought forward the present motion, although it pointed particularly to one part of the colony, was that the Government should recognise the importance of the mining industry generally, and endeavor to assist it by all possible means. The Government were willing to do so, and he believed the feeling of the House would be in support of the motion if it was altered to a certain extent, so as to make it apply, not to one particular district only but to the Eastern Districts generally, and to other districts where the necessity for such expenditure existed. As a member of the Government he would have much pleasure in supporting the motion,

though not exactly in its present form, and he trusted the hon. member would alter it in such a way as to ensure it more general support.

THE SPEAKER: The hon. member cannot alter his own motion now. His best way would be to ask leave to withdraw it, and bring the matter forward again.

MR. LOTON said that a great blot, or a great drawback, in connection with our mining industry—an industry which he was sure all of them must acknowledge to be a very important one, although possibly not the most important, but still one to which we at present looked to to tide us along very materially—the great drawback in connection with this industry from the very first had been the difficulty of securing a regular and adequate supply of water. But the same difficulty stood in the way of the development of other industries in certain parts of the colony, and particularly the pastoral industry; and he thought this motion would be more likely to meet with general support if it were not limited to the mining industry alone, and to one particular locality, but that it should be made more general in its application. This water difficulty was a very serious one in our interior districts of this colony, and as it was beyond the means of private individuals to cope with it, he thought it should be faced by the Government, not only in the interests of mining but also in the interests of other industries, which must have a very important bearing upon the progress and prosperity of the colony. As the hon. member who had brought forward the motion was debarred from amending it himself, he (Mr. Loton) begged to move the following amendment:—To strike out the words “of procuring water for the mines at Southern Cross,” and to insert the words “and uncertainty of procuring a supply of water for mining and pastoral purposes in our inland districts,” in lieu thereof.

MR. QUINLAN seconded the amendment. He thought it would be out of place, after the lengthened arguments they had heard on the subject, for him to prolong the debate at this stage, and therefore he would content himself by simply seconding the proposal of the hon. member for the Swan, which he preferred to the original resolution.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest) said no doubt that what the hon. member for the Swan proposed would wrap up the resolution a little better than that originally moved by the hon. member for West Kimberley; but, for his part, he could not see what objection there was, or could be, to the original motion, and for this reason: at the present moment the uncertainty and the difficulty of obtaining water on the Yilgarn goldfields was notorious, and the mines were languishing in consequence. He did not know whether some of the mines had not already ceased work, and he thought this fact alone was one that deserved their most serious consideration. Some people called these mines private ventures. He must say he was surprised at anyone calling our goldfields private ventures. If they were merely private ventures, he should like to ask why the Government of the colony and the Parliament of the colony had agreed to build a railway to these goldfields? He did not regard them as private ventures, but as a great source of national wealth. He regarded their development as being of the greatest importance to the whole country, and it was for that reason that the Government had proposed and that House had agreed to construct a railway to them, at a cost of some hundreds of thousands of pounds. He could not see how any reasonable man could take exception to the resolution before the House, which affirmed the desirability of the Government taking some steps to find out the depth at which sufficient water may be procured for working these goldfields, which, as he had already said, he regarded as a source of great national wealth. He always understood that the importance of this question had been recognised all along. For several years past the Government had been trying to solve the difficulty. What did they introduce the Kauffman borer for, and why did they go to the expense of sending it all the way to Southern Cross? No doubt some people would say it was in order to endeavor to get fresh water for the use of those engaged in mining. That was true; but it was not for that alone, but in order also to obtain the water necessary for crushing purposes, and the development of the fields generally. He thought if there was one place in this colony at the present moment that was

face to face with a real water difficulty, it was these Yilgarn goldfields, to which they all looked forward as a source of great wealth and great prosperity. At present these fields were languishing for the want of water, and the very existence of the mines was threatened owing to this difficulty. No other goldfield in the colony was similarly situated. He was aware that in other districts where gold was obtained great difficulties were experienced in obtaining an adequate supply of water, but not to such an extent as at Yilgarn. In the other districts water could generally be got by sinking some 60ft., 70ft., or 80ft.; but at Yilgarn you could not get water after going down 200ft. Therefore the position of these goldfields in this respect was altogether different from the position of any other of our goldfields. The Government were quite alive to the importance of these other fields, and had already taken steps, and intended to take all necessary steps that might be necessary, to provide water and other conveniences for those fields. But that was no reason why they should not try and solve this water difficulty at Yilgarn, a difficulty which had become a most serious one, threatening as it did the very existence of the mines, some of which had already ceased working. What was the use of building a railway to these fields unless they were worked? It was a most serious question, and should be decided at once—the depth at which water could be obtained—not simply for the few mines which were already opened but also for the many other mines which they hoped to see working on these fields. He should be sorry to think that the present mines were going to be the only mines that were going to be worked at Yilgarn; he hoped there would yet be hundreds of mines working in that district. He saw no reason why mines as rich, if not richer, should not be found between Southern Cross and Parker's Range, than those which were at present being worked. Therefore he should like to see this question of water supply thoroughly tested. So far as the Government were concerned, he did not think there was much use in the resolution before the House at all, for the Government were fully alive to their duty in this matter, and were

acting in this direction already; and, when they submitted their Loan Estimates, they would submit for the approval of the House what they considered necessary for this purpose. At the same time, the Government were very glad to know the views of the House in the matter, and, if this resolution passed, it would indicate to them what the feeling of hon. members was, and the Government would be able to frame their Estimates accordingly. He had no objection whatever to the amendment of the hon. member for the Swan, nor had he any objection to the original resolution. Undoubtedly, the most pressing necessity to his mind, was the existing serious state of affairs on these goldfields, in connection with which the colony was about to embark in a very large expenditure. Tenders for the construction of a railway to these fields had already been called for; and, if they did not take immediate steps to provide the fields with water, what would be the prospects of that railway, and of the large mining community they hoped to see rise there? He did not care very much whether the resolution or the amendment was agreed to. Their first attention must be directed to this water difficulty on these goldfields. What he wanted was to see the mines working and turning out gold, as they did some months ago, but which latterly they had not done, owing to various difficulties, the principal one being the want of water for crushing.

MR. MOLLOY had very great pleasure in supporting the amendment of the hon. member for the Swan. He had listened very attentively to the discussion on this important subject, and he had been particularly struck with some of the remarks that had fallen from the Commissioner of Railways, who, it appeared to him, went out of his way to charge the people of this colony with a want of self-reliance. He failed to see why a member of the Ministry should go into heroics and preach the doctrine of self-reliance to the members of that House. In fact, he failed to see where the question of self-reliance came in as regards the subject now before the House. To his mind it was part of the business of the Government to provide facilities for the development of the country. As had been remarked by the

Premier, we were now embarking on the expenditure of a large amount of money in providing railway facilities for opening up this part of the colony and developing the mining industry; and, surely, if we were going to spend some hundreds of thousands in providing a railway, it was only right and proper that we should also endeavor to provide a water supply for these fields, so that they may carry a large population, and become a thriving mining centre. Otherwise, what was the necessity of building a railway? It would be useless, unless we also provided a water supply. It was apparent to anyone who paid any consideration to this matter that our present prosperity was mainly due to our goldfields. It was our goldfields that had been largely the means of attracting the large population that had of late come amongst us, and these fields had already been a source of considerable revenue to the colony. It appeared to him it would be false economy, and a suicidal policy, to neglect any legitimate means of developing our mining resources, and therefore he most cordially supported the present motion, which he hoped would be passed without any serious opposition.

Amendment put—To strike out the words “of procuring water for the mines at Southern Cross,” and to insert the words “and uncertainty of procuring a supply of water for mining and pastoral purposes in our inland districts,” in lieu thereof.

The House divided, with the following result :—

Ayes	14
Noes	14
AYES.			
Mr. Darlöt		Mr. Baker	
Mr. DeHamel		Mr. Canning	
Mr. Harper		Mr. Clarkson	
Mr. Lefroy		Mr. Cookworthy	
Mr. Molloy		Sir John Forrest	
Mr. Monger		Mr. Hassell	
Mr. Paterson		Mr. Marnion	
Mr. Quinlan		Mr. Pearce	
Mr. Richardson		Mr. Phillips	
Mr. H. W. Sholl		Mr. Piesse	
Mr. Simpson		Mr. R. F. Sholl	
Mr. Solomon		Mr. Throssell	
Mr. Traylen		Mr. Venn	
Mr. Loton (Teller).		Mr. A. Forrest (Teller).	

Mr. Speaker gave his casting vote with the Ayes.

The resolution, as amended, was then put and passed.

RETURN OF CAUSES TRIED BEFORE STIPENDIARY MAGISTRATES.

MR. DEHAMEL: In rising to move the motion standing in my name, I desire to say only a very few words. At the present moment we are paying a little over £11,800 a year for our Stipendiary Magistracy, and at the same time we have established railway communication and running trains daily between various parts of the colony; and it seems to me that we might utilise these railways in the near future by amalgamating some of these Stipendiary Magistracies, and in this way effect a considerable saving to the colony. The information I am now seeking can be supplied by the Magistrates mentioned within two or three hours, for my questions are put in a very simple way. They will know from their returns what causes have been defended and what causes have been undefended before them, and whether they were civil causes or criminal. I think if these returns were furnished to the House, it would enable the Government themselves to see whether some of these Stipendiary Magistracies, as they fall vacant, may not be dispensed with, and the work carried on by the others, and the colony saved a considerable sum of money annually, while the administration of justice would in no way suffer, I beg to move, “That a return be laid on the table giving the number of all causes actually tried or heard between the 1st May and 31st October last by the Stipendiary Magistrates at Albany, Perth, Fremantle, York, Bunbury, Vasse, Toodyay, Murray, Blackwood, and Katanning respectively.” Such returns to distinguish between civil and criminal matters, and show what number of the former (civil) were (1) defended, (2) undefended; and what number of the latter (criminal) were (1) drunk, disorderly, and or common assault, (2) all other descriptions.

Question—put and passed.

LAND REGULATIONS (RENTS) AMENDMENT BILL.

Read a third time, and transmitted to the Legislative Council.

HOMESTEADS BILL.

SECOND READING: ADJOURNED DEBATE.

Debate upon Mr. Richardson's amendment—“That 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"—resumed.

MR. DEHAMEL: Sir, this Homesteads Bill, which has been placed before us, is practically a dual Bill. Clauses 3 and 4 deal exclusively with proposed amendments of the Land Regulations; and it is my intention, as far as these clauses are concerned, to give this Bill my most cordial support. I consider that these clauses, or the amendments proposed, are decidedly a step in the right direction. I think also that they hardly go far enough, and I would like to see an amendment of clause 49 of the Regulations, providing that fencing should also be included as one of the improvements on account of which the cost should be allowed in this proposed double payment of 20s. instead of 10s. per acre; also clause 46 of the Regulations should be amended in the same direction, so that the cost of fencing and the cost of erecting a house on the land taken under that clause should be reckoned as improvements within the meaning of that clause. One of the conditions should be that anyone taking up a further holding under clause 46 of the Regulations, within ten miles of his present holding, should be allowed to take it under clause 46, without the residential condition, and on the same terms as his present holding.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): He can do that now under clause 47.

THE COMMISSIONER OF CROWN LANDS (Hon. W. E. Marmion): If he is the holder of land under another of the Regulations.

MR. DEHAMEL: Under clause 46 he cannot do so.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): He can take three blocks within ten miles, I think.

MR. DEHAMEL: I hope certainly to see, as regards fencing, that the amendments of the Regulations proposed in this Bill will become law in the present session. I come now to what is really the material part of this measure, and I listened with the greatest attention to the lengthy speech in which the hon. the Premier introduced the measure to the consideration of this House, and I confess I was very much disappointed with that which I heard. I did expect, undoubtedly, that we should have very lengthy arguments brought forward by him in favor of the acceptance of this measure. I expected that he would have set before us all the advantages that were likely to accrue to us and the country by the adoption of this measure; but I certainly did not expect to find the hon. the Premier raising phantom objections, apparently for no other purpose than that of knocking them down again. In introducing a measure of this kind the mover has the right of reply, and therefore it seems to me to be utterly unnecessary for the Premier or anyone to go out of the ordinary course by raising objections—not objections in fact, but only possible objections. This seems to me to be the course which the Premier adopted on this occasion, when all he had to do was to meet the objections which might be taken to this Bill when it came to his final reply. The gist of the whole of his long speech comes to this, that anyone who ventures to have an opinion of his own, who ventures to disagree with the Premier, must be, to say the least, unpatriotic. That really looks to me to be the gist of the speech delivered to this House the other evening in introducing this Bill. I was sorry to hear the Premier indulge in a certain amount of invective against opponents, instead of limiting his objections to pure argument; but I was not altogether surprised, because his speech also contained the most positive confession of the failure of the very essence of that public works policy which two years ago he had placed before this House. I consider that the greatest arguments in proof of the failure of that policy, the strongest arguments against it, were those which

the Premier used in introducing this measure. He reminded us that the Government are incurring very great expense in the prosecution of those public works, and that although the interest on the loans may be paid out of the current revenue of the colony, yet we have undoubtedly to face the inevitable loss on the working of these various public works after they are completed. His remarks amounted practically to this, that in order to meet and counterbalance this deficiency, we must offer baits for people to come here and settle amongst us. Now, I would ask what was the plain object he set forth when placing before us that loan policy two years ago? I am going to show this by reading two or three passages from the words of the Premier on placing the Loan Bill before us two years ago. The hon. the Premier said: "Now I would like to ask those hon. members, 'How is population to be attracted, how are we to be made progressive, unless we borrow money? It is quite certain —we know it is a fact—that the revenue of the colony is not sufficient, or anything like it, to enable us to enter into any large schemes for developing this immense territory. * * * Unless there is some scheme to attract population, and to give employment to them when they come, I can only say we shall continue to go on somewhat in the way we have in the past, probably improving a little, but nothing very great. If there is no loan, there can be no public works—certainly none of any great magnitude—and very few people will come here.' And further on he said: "We wish to see the population increased, and this colony made the happy home of thousands of our race; and we believe that the only way to do this is by setting about as quickly as possible to develop the resources of the country. As I said before, this cannot be done out of current revenue, and unless hon. members are prepared to vote for this Loan Bill, or something similar to it, we cannot do it." These were the hon. the Premier's words at that time, and if further confirmation were needed I would refer to the closing words of his speech on the Address-in-Reply, at the opening of the same session, which were these:—"We confidently believe that the policy

"of public works now recommended to your honorable House will be productive of great benefit to the colony; it will, we are confident, attract population, develop our mineral resources, encourage the settlement of the land," and so on. Now, it seems to me that there is a world of irony in those words I have just read, and it seems to me that this Homesteads Bill is a confession of the failure of that public works policy. It shows that after the Premier had induced this House to sanction an expenditure of a million and a third in public works, in order to open up the country, with the special and particular object of attracting population and settling the land, he finds himself in this position, that whilst the works are in full progress, as at present, and whilst the loan money is being expended with a lavish hand in all parts of the colony—North, South, East, and West—

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): Nonsense!

MR. DEHAMEL: It is a fact that the money is being expended, and expended freely; and I say that even whilst this expenditure is going on, the Premier now, by his actions and by his words, admits that his whole policy has failed in its main object, namely, that of attracting population and settling that population on the land. In his speech the other night he said: "We have been borrowing a considerable amount of money, and some people are crying out 'for more'—I have heard no people crying out for more at present. He also said: "We cannot feed on loans, and unless we do something to increase the productiveness of the land, the time will come when we will have to see to it. If we go on spending our money without improving our estate, a day of reckoning will come." Sir, what is the meaning of these words: "A day of reckoning will come?" I say that the Premier sees clearly that the day of reckoning is coming; he sees that, by borrowing money and spending it in public works, the very object to be attained, namely, the attraction of population and the settlement of the land, is not being attained; and I say this Bill is simply an attempt to stave off the evil day by the trial of some new remedy. Well, what is that remedy? We must

remember that this expenditure has been going on, and that the main part of the expenditure is on railways, with the very object, as I have stated, of opening up the country and rendering the land fit for settlement, and enabling the farmer to send his produce at a cheaper rate to the centres of population, thereby bringing the producer and consumer together; that after giving easier access to market for the sale of produce, and materially increasing the value of the land through which these railways run, we find that the policy of the Government now is to select the eyes out of the land by reserving agricultural areas along these railways that we are building, and then to give the land away to people who will occupy it, and, as an additional bait, to offer loans of money to people who will come here and take up these homestead blocks. This seems to me one of the most unstatesmanlike propositions ever put before a deliberative Assembly in this world. The Premier then refers to people being unpatriotic, but I would ask who is unpatriotic on this occasion? Is it those who, like myself, oppose this measure, or is it the hon. the Premier who puts forth a scheme which has nothing to recommend it?

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): I don't think I called anyone unpatriotic; I referred only to a certain class of people as being unpatriotic.

MR. DEHAMEL: If the hon. the Premier will refer to *Hansard*, he will find that it is a common thing for him to refer to hon. members who happen to differ from him as being the most unpatriotic people in the world. I say that to put forward a scheme like this is one of the most damning advertisements we could possibly have. It proves clearly that the lands of this colony are so hopeless, that they are so worthless, that after being opened up by railways, and so on, the Government can do nothing more to induce settlement than to give them away, and also offer a bonus to people who will come and take them up. I would ask hon. members to look at this: To whom is this bonus offered? Is it offered to the prudent and the thrifty amongst us? I say, no. I say that these people who have already expended their money and invested portions of it in the purchase of land, whether in a

quarter-acre town lot or in agricultural holdings, and have improved the land with their own efforts and their strong arms, and have actually gone into the wilderness and begun to form homes there—these people are to be excluded actually from taking advantage of the provisions of this Bill. We find by section 6 that it is specially provided that “No person who is the owner of land within the colony in fee simple, or is the holder of land under special occupation or conditional purchase from the Crown, shall be eligible to apply for a homestead block under this Act.” It seems to me that nothing more incredible than this could possibly be put before us. Here we have a Premier, who has always prided himself on being a son of the soil, yet is proposing to exclude his fellow sons of the soil from the advantages of this Bill.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): Nonsense!

MR. DEHAMEL: Undoubtedly yes.

THE COMMISSIONER OF CROWN LANDS (Hon. W. E. Marmion): Only those who have got too much soil already.

MR. DEHAMEL: I would ask whether a man with a quarter-acre block in a town has already too much soil, or whether a man having 50 up to 200 or 300 acres in the country has too much soil. I say that by this Bill the Premier is actually seeking to tax his fellow sons-of-the-soil, while excluding them from all participation in the benefits either of free gifts of land or of loans; and why? Because—I take the Premier's own words for this—“Because it might induce the people who already have land to give up their holdings or to neglect them in order to obtain a homestead block.”

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): I do not think I said so. I said it had been pointed out to me as an objection, but that I did not believe much in the argument myself.

MR. DEHAMEL: The Premier is right. He did say it had been pointed out to him; but at the same time if anyone adopts that which is pointed out to him, and puts it forward as an argument, he himself becomes responsible for it; and I say this reason is practically no reason at all, because after the expenditure by the man of his money in taking up and improving the land which he holds, and after a far greater

expenditure of his time and labor in the partial formation of his home, it is to be feared lest he give up all he has spent and all he has achieved, for the paltry saving of £4 a year on his block and £3 a year in interest. And we are asked to believe that people who are now settled on land will actually give up the money and labor they have expended and will go away to a new homestead block, for this wretched little saving!

THE COMMISSIONER OF CROWN LANDS (Hon. W. E. Marmion): There would be no harm done if he did.

MR. DEHAMEL: I say such an argument ought never to have been placed before a deliberative Assembly such as this. I ask who is it now that has a strong belief in the country? Is it the Premier, or is it those who object to this Bill? I say that anyone who puts before the House such a miserable argument as this cannot have the slightest belief or faith in the country.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): The hon. member says I put forward that argument. I stated that I did not believe much in the argument; or, rather, the words were: "I do not believe, for my own part, much in the argument."

MR. DEHAMEL: It is unusual for anyone to put forward an argument and say he does not believe in it. But I say more than that: I say that not only are those old settlers to be excluded, but, under the action of this Bill, new estates are undoubtedly to be brought into competition with old ones; the values of the old estates must be decreased, in spite of anything that may be told us to the contrary. You cannot do this without decreasing the values of the old estates, for a time, at all events; and I am by no means sure that many of those old estates will not actually be rendered unsaleable. This, then, practically is the whole of the offer made by the Premier to the people of this colony; but though that is the only offer made to them, it has a bright side to it, so far as the Government are concerned, for it seems to open up the patronage of a new department entirely, as there will be the appointment of an army of inspectors to look after the homestead settlers, and an army of officials to look after the inspectors, and an army of accountants to look after these officials, besides the per-

manent heads, messengers, office boys, and the like. There will be patronage to any extent, but, unfortunately, at the expense of the colony. Sir, I cannot in any way whatever bring myself to support the Bill in its present form. But the Premier the other night threw out a challenge to me, that if I had any other suggestion to make I should make it. I never refuse a challenge, and therefore I will shortly state my suggestion by simply quoting my own words as used on previous occasions, to show what my views are on this matter, and also to show that in opposing this Bill I am thoroughly and entirely consistent. The first occasion on which I referred publicly to this question was on December 1st, 1891. I then said: "Now, the 'scheme that I would suggest is this. Let 'the Government select and set apart 'suitable tracts of 5,000 to 10,000 acres 'in extent; let them cut up these tracts 'into farms of some 200 acres in extent; 'let the Government borrow loans, and 'out of these loan moneys clear and 'plough one-tenth (20 acres) of each of 'these farms, before they let them to 'any colonist; and let the Government 'employ the immigrants who come out 'in doing this very work. The immi- 'grant will thus settle on a 200 acre 'block—cleared, ploughed, and ready 'for the seed. I would calculate the 'cost that it would be to clear and break 'up these 20 acres in each farm, and I 'would charge that amount on each of 'the farms; and not only that amount, 'but I would add interest, on the build- 'ing society principle, so that the settler 'should, over a period of 20 years, pay 'back the amount expended and interest, 'and, if you like, a small profit to the 'Government upon it.' This was the first crude scheme I put forth, in order to ventilate the subject, and challenge and encourage criticism, and thus ascertain in what respects it was approved, and in what it was deemed faulty.

MR. A. FORREST: Is the hon. member in order in reading from a newspaper in the House?

THE SPEAKER: I cannot say the hon. member is out of order.

MR. DEHAMEL: It is not a report of a speech delivered this session. From conversations I have since had with persons who are acquainted with the subject,

I find that there are certain alterations which would have to be made now, to suit the views of the people on this question. In the first place, it is generally found that whatever the Government does is very expensively done; therefore the clearing of these lands should be done by contract and not by the Government, and no provision should be made for employing the immigrants themselves upon these lands. Secondly, the land should not be cleared before selection, owing to the rapid growth of scrub after land is once cleared, but should be cleared after the selector has decided to take it up. These are the two main alterations that have been suggested, and that I would support myself, in that scheme. But, in addition to that, the Land Regulations of the whole colony ought to be made more easy. On the last occasion when I spoke in public on this matter, I said:—"The scheme which I placed before you in this hall nearly two years ago is practically the same scheme, all round, which the Premier has now placed as his own before the people of Geraldton. The alterations he has made are two. The first is a slight one, a matter of detail; he takes 160 acres instead of 200. But the second wrecks the whole scheme; for, as you will observe, mine was for the Government to clear a certain portion of the land, and extend the repayment of the cost of that clearance over a term of 20 years; while the Premier's scheme is to advance money as a loan to the settlers themselves. This alteration ruins the whole scheme. The Premier's scheme involves the dangerous principle of State aid to farmers, and out of State funds." These were my words, and I say they were perfectly true, and perfectly right. Now, I would ask whether I stand alone in my opposition to that scheme on these grounds. I ask whether the Minister for Lands himself, after his guarded utterances at Pinjarrah, believes himself in the scheme now placed before this House. I ask whether the Director of Public Works, after his utterances before the electors at Dardanup, can possibly support the scheme which is now before this House. I doubt very much whether the Premier himself believes in this scheme. It seems to me that the

hon. the Premier is something like the drowning man, clutching at the nearest straw that he can seize, and that, perceiving the failure of the main objects of his public works policy, he intended merely to throw out a feeler when he first introduced the subject in his speech at Geraldton, but that, carried away by the exhilarating influence of the hour, he mistook the exuberance of the hospitality of the Northern people for the cordial endorsement and approval of his entire policy, instead of treating it as the enthusiastic tribute of a generous people in greeting a most distinguished guest; until the Premier, carried away like this, committed himself too far. He committed himself further than he intended, and this Bill which is now placed before us is really nothing more than an attempt to keep that pledge which, if given in a cooler moment, he would hardly have given. I also regret that the mover of the amendment (Mr. Richardson) had not the courage of his convictions, and that he did not venture to put the principles of this Bill directly at issue, not only before this House, but through this House before the country. I am sorry that, with the charming inconsistency which he displayed on that occasion, after speaking strongly against and condemning this measure in every way, the hon. member for the DeGrey moved this colorless amendment which is now before the House—an amendment which seems to me to mean nothing, unless it be an attempt really to burke the real questions at issue in this case; and I really think that if the brain of the hon. member were submitted to examination, there would be found engraven on it indelibly the words of that greatest of English bards:—"Letting 'I dare not' wait upon 'I would.'" It seems to me that he never ventures to go to the real issue of this question, but that by his amendment we are being thrown very considerably off the main argument. I am no believer in half-measures, and there is only one thing that would induce me to support the amendment of the hon. member for the DeGrey, and that is that it practically shelves this question for the present session, and, therefore, for the remaining term of the present Parliament. The reason for this is that in all

human probability this will be the last session of this present Parliament, and, therefore, before we can meet again there will be a chance, even if the amendment of the hon. member is carried, for the people of the colony to express their opinions upon the measure before we are really called upon to pass it into law. This question was not before us at the last general election, and we must not close our eyes to the fact that not one of us was commissioned by our constituents to pledge the country to any measure such as this; and I say we have no right whatever to do so, particularly a measure the principles of which are so novel, and to my mind so mischievous, so fraught with peril to the future well-being of this colony. I think it is our duty to say that the whole question should be placed clearly before the electors; for not one of us has a right to adopt a principle such as this, until, at all events, we have taken the verdict of the people upon it.

MR. CANNING: The remarks of the hon. member for Albany, in claiming to be the real author of this measure before the House, remind me of the manner in which the most distinguished law-giver, Solomon, settled the rival contentions of two women who both claimed to be the mother of a particular baby, on a certain occasion; and I hope that, in considering the rival claims to the parentage of this Bill, we may arrive at an equally satisfactory conclusion. We had all thought the hon. the Premier was responsible for the authorship of the measure before the House; but the hon. member for Albany has endeavored to show us that he is the lawful parent; that he is the author of its existence; yet I hope we shall not be reduced to the necessity of attempting to solve this question in the same way that the ancient law-giver did when he dealt with the rival mothers who claimed the same baby, because it seems to me that the hon. member for Albany has treated this infant Bill in a way that I certainly think throws doubts on the legitimacy of his claim. He at one time reviles it as a misshapen thing; at another time he treats it as an offspring specially his own; so that I don't think we shall be reduced to the necessity, as was Solomon in the story, of settling the disputed parentage of this Bill by directing that the baby shall

be cut in two and each parent shall take one half. But, to treat the matter more seriously, I have on previous occasions urged strongly on the Government the necessity of addressing themselves to some plan for settling population upon the land and developing its agricultural areas. I cannot, therefore, consistently support any amendment that would have the effect of defeating the present proposals of the Government. Unquestionably, the measure now before the House may give rise to considerable difference of opinion with regard to some of its provisions, to several of which I cannot wholly assent. At the same time, it is a step in the right direction; it is an evidence of thought, of consideration, and of a determination to take some action in the direction of developing the agricultural areas. Taking into consideration the vast importance of the matter, I submit, Sir, that this Bill ought not to be disposed of hastily. It merits, at least, the fullest consideration on the part of this House. Every important provision in the Bill should be fully and carefully considered, and I think that, in order to ensure its full consideration, we should not dispose of it upon the amendment of the hon. member for the De Grey. It is true, also, that in courtesy to the framer of a measure which bears internal evidence of thought and care, we are bound to give it the fullest consideration; and it is due to the vast importance of the subject to which it relates that we should not dismiss a single important provision in it without the fullest consideration. And it seems to me that the only way in which the most full and complete consideration of its provisions can be secured will be that which is afforded by the facilities for discussion and argument under the rules of debate applied to proceedings in committee. Therefore, with the view of supporting the second reading of the Bill, I feel myself constrained to oppose the amendment of the hon. member for the De Grey.

MR. MOLLOY: I have much pleasure in rising to support the Bill now before the House. I consider, sir, that it is the most important measure which we have had for our consideration in the present session; and it is worthy of the very careful consideration of this House, in view of the necessity that exists for the

permanent settlement of a population upon the soil of this colony. We have been, for the past ten years, constructing railways for the purpose of developing the country. It was the cry, before railways were built, that they were necessary for cheapening the transit of the farmers' produce to market; and, in view of the high price they had to pay for bringing their produce to the centres of population, it was contended that they could not raise produce at a price to pay. Hence the necessity existed for constructing railways, so that we might encourage people to bestow their attention upon the cultivation of the soil; and we find now, after considerable loan moneys have been expended in this direction, after so much has been done, that still there is not a great improvement in this respect. We find from the records of our immense territory, only partly occupied, that the portion which is occupied is not made use of as it ought to be. I have taken trouble to prepare some statistics, which I am sure will be interesting to hon. members, and which will weigh with them in the consideration of this important subject. I find it is recorded that we have in this colony 678,400,000 acres; that there are in occupation 53,025,462 acres; and of this large area in occupation, only 135,583 acres were under cultivation when the Census was last taken. This is an increase, since the advent of railways ten years ago, of only 74,762 acres under cultivation; and this small increase shows the necessity which exists for some encouragement to be given to closer settlement and cultivation. Now that we are endeavoring to attract population, we should bear in mind the necessity there is for encouraging the cultivation of the soil, because, as I take it, that would be the most permanent source of wealth to this country. It has been contended by some hon. members who have spoken on this subject, that it is unwise for the Government to give away the land as a means of inducing settlement; but when we find that the occupiers at the present time have been merely holding their land in order to realise the increased value which the investment of these public moneys would give, and they are not developing their holdings by the means of cultivation, it behoves the Government, in view of the altered circumstances and

the great obligations which they have incurred by the expenditure of the moneys which have been borrowed, that they should endeavor to produce from the soil through which these railways have been made some adequate return for this expenditure. I fail to see the difference which is contended for by some hon. members who are opposing this Bill, namely, the difference between the case of a man coming here with a certain amount of capital to expend on the land which is given to him, and then having a loan granted to him on the security of the improvements which he has effected with his own money and labor, as compared with the other plan suggested by the hon. member for Albany, that the Government should first expend public money in clearing and cropping the land, and then should employ the immigrants in the work of clearing. I fail to see where the argument comes in that the latter is the better course, for I take it that the greater security will be with the Government when a man has expended his own money on his selection; and we can take it for granted that he is more likely to remain on his holding after spending his money in improving it, than if the Government were to find all that is necessary for the new settler in the first instance, because the latter would just take a selection as an experiment, and, as soon as he had to face any difficulty, having nothing of his own invested in the land and nothing to lose, he would abandon the selection and throw it on the hands of the Government. The hon. member who complains of the present Bill would be the first to complain that the Government had pursued a reckless course, if they adopted the plan of settlement which he has suggested. That there is a necessity of doing something more than has been done is shown by the fact that the increase of acreage under cultivation since the building of railways was begun is only 74,000 acres. I have here the number of acres occupied and the number cultivated in the various districts of the colony, showing that some of the principal agricultural districts are held in occupation by persons who do not use the land for its proper purpose, and do not fulfil their obligations to the State by contributing to the revenue from the productions of

their land. These figures prove that many persons are merely holding the land for the expected increase of value resulting from the investment of public moneys, and by which investment the people of the colony have a right to demand that these holdings should be used for their proper purpose of contributing towards the revenue of the State by cultivation. I find that in the Blackwood district 755,850 acres were in occupation at the last Census, and that only 2,496 acres were under cultivation; that in Fremantle district 54,391 acres were occupied and only 1,076 cultivated; that in the Gascoyne district 11,278,706 acres were occupied and only 42 cultivated. I am not saying that a greater proportion should be cultivated in this district, but I think the record will show that there are eligible districts, especially the Blackwood, in which as much has not been cultivated as might have been, having regard to the quality of the soil. In the Murray district there were 360,017 acres in occupation, and only 2,687 in cultivation, and in the North 8,901,022 acres in occupation, and only 13 acres in cultivation. Proceeding now to the districts where the principal loan money has been expended, and what are called the agricultural districts of the colony, when I refer to the districts of Toodyay and York it will be known to hon. members that the principal cry for railway construction was made in this direction, it being contended that the want of facilities for bringing produce to market was the principal reason why the soil in these localities was not more cultivated; but what do we find now? We find that railways have been made to these districts, and we find along the line of the railways a vast amount of land which has not had any improvement done to it, and that the land remains as it was before the railways were built. I contend that this is not a proper state of things, and that it does not redound to the credit or manifest the progress of the colony. If we expend public moneys in giving facilities for bringing produce to market, I think the least we should expect in return would be that the land should be turned to its proper use of production, in order that the holders should fulfil their obligations to the State. Then it is contended that we have no

right to encourage the settlement and cultivation of the land by the means proposed in this Bill, because, having spent these considerable sums of loan money, we can get a return from the land by the present method of sale. But I say that when we find there is no obligation on the part of those who purchase the land to compel them to cultivate it, and that there is an obligation to do so by the proposed system of settlement, then I say the new system should be tried on its merits. We want to effect a certain result, and that result is to be attained by giving the assistance which this Bill proposes to give; and I think that if the effect of it will be to save the importation of the produce that is required to feed the population, by raising that produce from the soil of the colony, we shall in this way considerably add to the prosperity and progress of the colony. It is an alarming matter that such a large amount of money should be going out of the colony for articles which can be produced within it; and if this Bill will tend to decrease importation in this direction, by making the soil produce that which we are now importing, surely the trifling loss which this Bill will bring about by granting 160 acres to each intending settler, subject to the condition of occupying and cultivating his homestead block, the £4 per block yearly thus sacrificed by the State will be a considerable gain in the end, by adding to the population and the produce of the country. It has been remarked by the hon. member for Albany that this saving is such a small matter that no one who can afford to come here and invest money in cultivating a homestead block would be induced to do so by this small saving of 6d. an acre, or £4 per block yearly; but if this is the inducement to take up the land, then I say there is no harm in granting this assistance, even according to the contention of the hon. member, because if it only entails a loss of £4 per block to the country, and if in return for it we get the land cleared and cultivated, we shall have that amount of money, the cost of this work, saved to the revenue, which would be lost to it by the want of employment which these people would be able to give in the cultivation of their holdings. I think the provisions of this Bill are of such a

character as will safeguard the State against any liability to loss, because the persons to whom these grants are to be given will have their own money and labor invested in the land; and a man having invested, say, £200 of his money, will not be disposed to lose it lightly; and if the people who take up the land are of a needy character, surely if they have £200 and will expend it on the land, it must be of great moment to them to secure that investment against loss, by complying with the conditions which attach to the granting of a certificate of title under this Bill, these conditions being of such a nature as will necessitate their permanent settlement on the soil; and if this be so, it is the result we want to achieve. We want to achieve the cultivation of the soil by producing that which the country can produce without importing this produce and sending the money out of the country; and surely if we are to attract population, it will be necessary that sufficient ground shall be cultivated to provide food and employment for those who come here. If we are not going to have the soil cultivated, then from what other source are we to produce the necessary amount to maintain the population which we are endeavoring to attract? If we borrow money to build railways, this must be intended to develop the country; and as this is one of the mainstays for the encouragement of agriculture, the more cultivation we can induce, the more prosperous the country will be. I trust this measure will receive careful consideration, and that if hon. members object to certain provisions of the Bill, they will state these objections in committee; and I take it that the Government will not lightly risk the throwing out of this measure for any difference of opinion with respect to the details. This Bill is of considerable import to the country at the present time, and if the giving of these 160 acre blocks will be the means of adding considerably to our population, and if it operates as an attractive advertisement to secure that end, then the loss of £4 a year to the revenue for each block will be money well spent, by tending to the increase of the population and their settlement on the soil, also tending to the increase of employment in agriculture. We have, in the past, been spending large sums upon

immigration; we have spent considerably more than is intended to be spent under this Bill as an experiment; and surely, if we have spent the money in introducing immigrants here, and then found that this method has failed, we should try the novel method now proposed; and if it does attract people to come here and does settle them on the soil, and if this settlement be permanent, the money will have been well spent. We have spent large sums on immigration, and have found that many of the persons whose passages were paid merely used this colony as a stepping-stone to the other colonies, and we have not been able to secure their permanent settlement here, because we have not had sufficient employment in the country at the time, or for some other reason this colony was not so attractive as the other colonies. But in this instance we intend to attract settlers by offering them free grants of land on condition that they settle on and improve it. The only objection urged by hon. members is to the loan that is proposed to be granted out of public moneys to aid these settlers in making their improvements; but I fail to see where that objection comes in, because we are merely lending money upon the security of the investment made by each settler, and that only to the extent of one-half the value he has himself expended in money and labor upon the land. It may be argued that it is not the province of the Government to advance moneys on loan, but these are peculiar circumstances, for we should be advancing the loan to secure a certain result, namely, the permanent settlement of the soil. We are not money-lenders, in the general acceptance of the term; we are doing it for the purpose of promoting the cultivation of the soil, and increasing the prosperity of the country; and if we can expend the same amount of money upon this project as we did upon immigration, surely the experiment is well worth a trial. I do hope that hon. members will give this Bill every consideration, and I trust that, in the interests of the country—I maintain it is in the interests of the country that this Bill should pass—this Bill will receive a hearty support from members of this House, and that it will be carried by a large majority. I consider that it will, more than anything

else, tend to the prosperity and development of the country, and to the permanent increase of its population; that within a few years after this Bill passes it will be the means of attracting a considerable population, and instead of our importing produce to the extent that we have been doing during the past few years, we shall have a considerable amount to export, and that it will add to the revenue considerably more than will be lost by the small concession which is proposed to be given. I have much pleasure in supporting the second reading of the Bill.

Mr. LOTON: In rising to express my views on the motion before the House for the second reading of this Bill, and on the amendment thereon, I do not propose to traverse in detail the various clauses of the Bill. I think that at this stage—it will be quite sufficient for me at all events, and I should be glad if other hon. members considered it sufficient—I think that at this stage we should confine ourselves to the main principles of the measure. If we get into committee on the Bill, as we probably shall, we shall have plenty of opportunity to discuss its details. The main principles of the Bill, if I am able to grasp them—and they are not very large ones, after all—the main principles are that the State shall offer the free gift of land in certain sized blocks, and that the State after doing that, and the selector having done certain things, shall advance a certain sum of money to him. These are the two leading principles of the measure. On looking at the title of the Bill, I find it is called “A Bill to provide facilities for agricultural settlement and to give free grants of land for homesteads.” It is rather singular that after the preamble and the “short title” and “interpretation,” clauses the first two sections of the Bill are sections amending the present Land Regulations. Why these two sections should have been introduced into this particular Bill I cannot say. No doubt the Government thought it was a good stroke of policy to introduce them here. Possibly they thought that to reduce the price to be paid for land outside declared areas to one-half the present price would be a taking little provision, and that although members might be opposed to the Bill as a whole, this little pro-

vision, which has been squeezed into the Bill, might tempt them to agree to the second reading, in order to obtain this amendment of the existing Land Regulations. But I submit that in the Bill we have passed already this session, amending the Land Regulations, was the proper place to introduce these two clauses, and not have people to look at a Bill purporting to deal only with agricultural settlement to see what the Land Regulations of the colony are. I am surprised that the Attorney General, who is reputed to possess a large amount of drafting ability, should have submitted to the introduction of these two clauses into the present Bill. But possibly he was not the gentleman who had the leading hand in drafting this particular measure; he may have had to play second fiddle in this instance. So much for clauses 3 and 4 of the Bill; and I am with these clauses so far as they go. But it seems to me, as regards the rest of the Bill, that if the Government wanted to further encourage agricultural settlement, their wisest course would have been to have gone to the present Land Regulations and seen whether they were sufficiently liberal in this respect, and, if not, to still further liberalise them. And that brings me to the first point, the question of whether it is desirable or not to give away the land as a free gift. Well, sir, if the giving away of land, pure and simple, were likely to induce settlement, or to go any distance in inducing the settlement on the land of people with a little capital and a certain amount of practical experience—the proper people to settle on the land—I do not think any member of this House would object to our land being given away, so long as it was utilised. But what is the concession provided by this Bill, after all? What does it amount to? What is there in it that is likely to tempt this class of people to come and settle upon our lands? Well, to my mind, it is a very small item indeed. In the first instance, it is laid down in this Bill that the selectors who are to take up land under this new scheme shall be possessed of a certain amount of capital. They are, at any rate, to have a sufficient amount of capital to be able to spend at least £100 in the erection of a house, if they want to borrow £50 from the Government, and

they must have sufficient capital of their own to spend another £100 in improvements before they can obtain a further loan of £50. Therefore it will be seen that those who become entitled to benefit by this Bill must be men possessed of a certain amount of capital. Now, I ask in all simplicity and humility, is the paltry bait held out by this Bill to men of this class, namely, a saving of £4 a year—which is the value of this land at the present price, under our present Regulations—is this paltry bait of £4 a year worthy the consideration of these people, with the conditions that are attached to it? I say it will have no attraction at all, not the shadow of a shade of weight in inducing this class of selectors to settle on our land. In considering this question of the settlement of our land we should endeavor to take a comprehensive grasp of the subject, and take into consideration the nature and the quality of our available land, and the character of our climate in the districts that are at all suitable for agriculture. One of the first questions that will naturally arise in the mind of any practical man will be: how much land is sufficient, not only to induce people to come to the colony to settle on the land, but how much is sufficient to enable a man and his family to succeed and to afford him any prospect of prospering in the world? I submit that 160 acres will not be sufficient, nor anything like it, and that the extra 160 acres to be set apart as alternate blocks under this Bill, and which I presume are to be reserved for the first selector, will not be sufficient, taking into consideration the nature and quality of the land now available. Mind you, this Bill is intended to encourage agriculture, to encourage farming pure and simple; it is not for the gardener or the viticulturist—

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): He can do that, too.

MR. LOTON: I say the quantity of land proposed to be given is not sufficient.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): He can take up more under the Land Regulations; as much more as he wants.

MR. LOTON: My point is this: will this saving of £4 a year induce people with capital enough to be able to afford £200 or £300 in improvements, to take up these small blocks on the conditions

provided in this Bill? I say no. I submit that if this scheme is carried it will be—not, perhaps, a large blot, but a blot upon our land administration, and it will tend to no good. If you want to encourage agricultural settlement, and our present land laws are not sufficiently liberal for that purpose, let the Government liberalise them, and not come forward with a scheme like this, which, to my mind, must end in failure. I now go on to another phase of the Bill, the principle of granting monetary assistance to these free grant selectors. The principle, I submit, is a vicious principle, to start with. It cannot be defended legitimately, I submit, by those who have put it forward. I contend that the Government of this colony, or any other colony, have no right to lend money for assisting and bolstering up one particular industry, unless they are prepared to assist other industries at the same time; and we can easily see the difficulties we should be landed in, once we entered upon that step. I understand the intention of the Government, if this scheme is carried, is to spend the unexpended balance of £40,000 provided for immigration purposes in our last Loan, in order to make advances to these selectors, after giving them the land. How many settlers will this assist? It will only assist 250 or 260. How many more will you have clamouring for it?

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): A good many, I hope.

MR. LOTON: Is there any necessity for it? After going into the market and borrowing a large sum for carrying out a liberal policy of public works, mainly railways, to open up the country and to provide cheaper means of transit, and to induce people to settle on the land and cultivate it—after borrowing and spending money for these purposes, what is our present position? The Government of the day, I am sorry to say, virtually admit that this land through which our railways run is of so poor a character, and the inducements which are offered to people here to settle on the land are so poor that, forsooth, we are bound to give our land away for nothing; and not only that, but we must also offer, as a bait to those who will settle on it, advances of money. This money we have ourselves had to borrow, for it is a portion of our last

Loan, and the Government virtually say they find it necessary to spend it in subsidising people to settle on the land, which we give them for nothing. The land itself is not a sufficient inducement to these people; we must also lend them money.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): It will cost us nothing.

MR. LOTON: Yes, it will; and I will show you how. You are supposed to lend it to these people at 5 per cent.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): And we give 4 per cent. for it.

MR. LOTON: Then you will have one per cent. to meet other incidental expenses. Under this Bill the selector has to make certain improvements, and these improvements have to be certified by Government inspectors, and you will want other officers to keep the accounts and to collect the amounts as they become due. In fact, you will have to create a new department on a small scale—though I doubt whether it will remain on a small scale very long—and the expenses will all have to come out of the public funds. Whether you have a new department created or not, somebody must be paid to do this work, and you must have a practical and thoroughly qualified person, with a knowledge of the value of agricultural improvements.

MR. RICHARDSON: And who cannot be bought over.

MR. LOTON: Yes, who cannot be bought over. I am not throwing any reflection upon any one, but we know we are not all honest men in this world; I only wish we were. Where is the money to meet this expenditure to come from? The Premier says we get the money at 4 per cent., but we know that there are certain expenses connected with the floating of the loan which we must deduct. Although you charge these people 5 per cent., there are other charges which will have to be met, all of which must come out of the pockets of the taxpayers; and I say it is unfair and unjust to these taxpayers to tax them in this way. After all, what is the amount of saving which these people will gain by being able to borrow £150 from the Government at 5 per cent.? By the time they spend their own £300 in improvements they will be able to go into the open market and to offer a tangible security for what money they may require. Even at the

present rate of interest they could borrow at 8 per cent., and possibly they would not have to pay more than 7 per cent.; so that you save them 2 per cent. on £150, or the magnificent sum of £3. The sum total of the concession proposed to be made by the Government to these people—and, mind you, they must be people of some capital—is the miserable pittance of £7 a year. They will save £4 a year by not having to pay for their land, and they will save £2 a year by being able to borrow from the Government at 5 per cent. These are the inducements which we are offering these small capitalists and practical agriculturists to come out here to settle upon our land. That is the whole sum and substance of the attractions offered by this Bill. I say it is a vicious principle—this principle of inducing people to look to, and depend upon, the Government for assistance—which is what this Bill does.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): No, no.

MR. LOTON: Is it not so? Have they not to look to the Government for their land in the first place, and then look to the Government to find them the money to improve the land?

THE COMMISSIONER OF CROWN LANDS (Hon. W. E. Marmion): No; it is after they have improved it themselves with their own money.

MR. LOTON: In any case it is holding out an inducement to them to look to and depend upon the Government for everything. That is the lesson which this Bill teaches them. My views are entirely in an opposite direction. I would prefer to see a spirit of self-reliance among our settlers. I would prefer to see the Government encouraging a spirit of self-reliance and self-help, and encouraging industry and enterprise among the people, instead of encouraging this spirit of dependence upon the Government, at the present stage of our existence. I thought we had done with that sort of thing. I was in hopes that the Government of the colony had ceased to be a milch cow any longer; but I am sorry to say the present Government are taking an old departure instead of a new departure, and going back to the system that prevailed when the colony was a Crown colony.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): How is that?

MR. LOTON: The Government is to be a milch cow for these 200 or 300 selectors. These men, having squatted down on their 160 acres, will look to the Government for the money to help them on; and the people of the colony will have to pay for it. That is the position. These are the two main principles of the Bill now before us. There is another matter connected with the settlement of the soil which I must refer to. The Premier alluded to it in somewhat disparaging terms, and, I submit, rather unfairly. I am referring to what he said about the colony having made no progress or increase in cultivation during the last four or five years, or in the area under crop.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): Show me where I was wrong.

MR. LOTON: I say it was unfair to the colony.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): Well, show it, then.

MR. LOTON: I do not want to go into statistics, and do not intend to go into them very far. He told us the other night that there had been no increase of cultivation—[THE PREMIER: Crop, I said]—during the past five years. I will show him, if he believes in the statistics prepared by the Government which he represents, that we *have* increased, even in regard to cropping. But I submit it is not fair, when you are dealing with statistics of this kind relating to agriculture, to confine yourself to cropping; cultivation is the test. But I will show, from the statistics published by the Government themselves, that even as regards land in crop there has been an increase during the past five years. In 1887 we had 66,000 acres under crop; in 1888 we had a little less—65,000 acres; but in 1889 we had 73,000 acres; in 1890 the acreage under crop was 69,000 acres; and last year we had 64,000 acres—a falling off that year, I admit; but, on the whole, we have been increasing. There was an increase of 8,000 acres in 1889 over 1887.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): Look at 1886.

MR. LOTON: I have not got it. What I submit is that it is not fair in these matters to confine ourselves to the acreage under crop.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): What else is there produced except crop?

MR. LOTON: You should take into consideration the acreage under cultivation, all of which may not be in crop this year or that year.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): Then it does not produce anything.

MR. LOTON: It may be in fallow, which is a better system of husbandry than cropping every year. There can be no doubt that the acreage under cultivation has increased largely within the last five years. In 1887 it was 105,000 acres; in 1888 it was 106,000; in 1889 it was 117,000; in 1890 it was 122,000; and last year it reached 131,000, showing a steady increase every year. There is one very important point bearing upon this question of the extension of agriculture which must not be lost sight of. It is a significant fact that while public works are in full swing, agriculture receives a check, and this is easily accounted for. Men are attracted from the field and the farm to these public works by the inducement of higher wages, and the farmer is deprived of the labor he requires for carrying on his operations. It will be noticed from the returns I have quoted, that in one year preceding our borrowing our present loan, the year 1889, when there were no public works in progress, there was a larger area in crop than there has been in any subsequent year since the inauguration of the public works policy of the present Government. What I submit is that we must look to the expenditure of borrowed money upon public works in various parts of the colony to account in a large measure for the fact that we have made no great advance in agriculture when these works are in full swing. Our goldfields, too, have proved another attraction in drawing labor away from our farms. Coming back to the Bill, I ask again will this paltry concession of £7 a year induce the people to go and settle on the land? I say no; it will be no inducement whatever. There is another reason why development and settlement have not gone on very rapidly during the past half-dozen years. Why is it? Why, because the whole of the land, or nearly so, along the railway constructed from Albany to Beverley, was locked up. The Government could not touch it, and although the Land

Company down South might have touched it, they did not throw it open until two years ago; and during the present year, which is the first year that the Government have been able to deal with that land at all, I submit there has been a very fair amount of selections taken up. I submit that if more land was opened up between Guildford and Geraldton, a number of people would take up selections and settle upon them; but the people cannot get the land in the Midland Railway district, and this is another reason why agricultural settlement has not progressed as fast as we could wish it to do. I would like to see agriculture develop much more rapidly, but I submit that we are not going the right way about it; the inducements are not sufficient, the settlers are tied down with too many conditions, and the quantity of land which a selector may take up is not sufficient. I do not know that it is incumbent on any hon. member to submit a scheme of Land Regulations at the present moment; but I have no doubt it is the desire of many hon. members to do something, if they can, for assisting in the development of agriculture. My view of increasing the settlement and drawing people here, with a small or a large amount of capital, is this: I do not believe in limiting capital, so long as it goes on improving the country; and I do not think it matters very much whether you tie a man to live on his block or not, because, so long as you tie a man or a company to do certain improvements, if they do not live on the block themselves they must have someone on it. My view has been that we should not limit the capitalist, and not tie him down too tightly, for so long as we impose conditions of improvement, let him expend his capital and labor on it. I submit that the scheme before the House will not induce people of that class to enter on the land successfully. With regard to agricultural areas, those which are declared by the Government surely should be, as far as practicable, some of the better class of land, in fair positions. That, no doubt, is the desire and intention of the Commissioner of Crown Lands, when he declares areas; as nearly as he can, he gets the best class of land in a certain area. I say the blocks are laid out in too small a size, for in the

Eastern districts of this colony, from Northampton to Albany, and also in the Southern districts, we must have a system of stock-keeping for pastoral purposes, in connection with agriculture. It is no use for a man to attempt to settle on 160 acres of land for corn-growing, and on that quantity of land, with our soil and climate, he cannot do very much in the way of keeping stock. He must have a larger area; and the smallest number of acres I would set aside in one of those areas would be 640 acres. I would allow a selector to take 160 out of the 640 acres for the purpose of cultivation and improvement, and I would allow him to confine his operations of clearing and cultivating to the 160 acres in the first place, and he should have the balance of the 640 acres at a nominal rent—say £1 a year for the balance, if you like. The pastoralists at the present time are paying £1 per 1,000 acres; and if you reserve from a pastoralist's leasehold one-half his run, and make an agricultural area, and allow it to be selected in 640 acre blocks, on the conditions I have suggested, you might charge 6d. an acre per annum in payment, or if that be too high make it 3d. an acre, a very small payment being sufficient. My contention is that 160 acres is not sufficient. I know from experience during the last 25 years, and a man soon finds out for himself, that stock-keeping on a small area does not pay, and that he must have more land; therefore I say give him the balance of the 640 acres at a pastoral rent for a short time, and after he has had time to develop his 140 acres, give him further time for the other. This is my rough idea of the way in which we should liberalise our Land Regulations. It should not be said we are giving our land away and lending money on it. It should be borne in mind that 640 acres—and for the larger man I would double the quantity, 1,280 acres, as he would want it all, and I say we want him to have it all—will enable a man to go on working a certain portion of his holding, while he would know that the balance would be reserved to him. This may induce people to occupy and cultivate the land without State aid. I do not think there is any other point in that long speech of the Premier's that I need refer

to. I may say, though, that the hon. the Premier said the scheme he put before this House was deserving of every consideration, and he hoped that those who differed from him would give it that consideration. All I have to say, in reply, is that the same deference and consideration which he expects for his scheme should be given by himself and colleagues to the suggestions of hon. members who are opposed to his scheme, and who, I submit, can as honestly offer their views and suggestions in opposition. With the views I have expressed, I am not prepared to vote for the second reading of this Bill; and I do regret that the hon. member for the DeGrey, who spoke so strongly in condemnation of the principles of the Bill, in moving his amendment, did not have the full courage of his opinions and go straight to the mark, because it is evident that he has no faith, no belief at all, in this measure.

MR. RICHARDSON: I have a belief in the intention.

MR. LOTON: I have the same belief in the intention of the hon. the Premier to do the best he can in this matter, but I cannot support the Bill.

MR. QUINLAN: I have no hesitation in saying there has never been a measure before this House, since I have been a member of it, that has been more in accord with my opinions than this Bill. I may differ in respect of some details, when the clauses come to be discussed in committee; but as to the principles of the Bill, I have for a considerable time past desired to see some such scheme for the settlement of the land. I differ in a small degree as to the size of the homestead blocks, for if 160 acres be the general size to be taken up, I would like to see a provision for smaller areas in the Southern districts, because the cost of clearing land there is about ten times as much as in the Eastern districts, and as no difference is provided for in this Bill, I would like to see an amendment introduced for giving, say, 50-acre blocks in the Southern districts, under conditions of occupation and improvement. Such a scheme of free grants of homestead blocks has proved to be successful in Canada, as referred to by the Premier, and I admit that in Canada the clearing is much lighter work, as the forest is comparatively open land. But, notwithstanding

this difference, it is desirable that such a scheme as this should be adopted in this colony, for inducing that class of settlement which I have always said, and still maintain, is the backbone of any country. The hon. member for the DeGrey has referred to the immense amount of settlement which he says has taken place along the Great Southern Railway. That hon. member usually speaks with considerable weight in this House, but his remarks on this occasion have far from convinced me that the settlement along that railway is any argument against the introduction into this colony of the free grants of homestead blocks on the conditions of occupation and cultivation. The settlement along that railway is a proof of what results in any country from the opening up of the land by railways, as a means of conveying produce to market or port; and there is no denying the fact that the Great Southern Railway Syndicate or Company did not take the land solely with a view of running a railway for such revenue as might be got in the ordinary way, but that it was built on the land-grant system with the view of inducing and attracting people to settle on the land along the line and create traffic for it, and also to get a revenue from the sale of the land. I do regret the amendment of the hon. member for the DeGrey, and his contention that we should wait and see how fast the lands of the colony are now being settled. We have, as the hon. member for Perth has shown with his figures, such an immense area of country and such a small proportion now under cultivation; and, likewise, the hon. member for the Swan has given figures to the House; therefore, without further referring to statistics, I would ask whether any hon. member with reasonable discretion can say that the amount of land under cultivation is anything approaching what it should be in such a territory, and with such an amount of good land in various parts of the colony. Taking the land at the value of £1 an acre, supposing it was improved and cleared and cultivated it would represent an immediate increase in the value of the estate of the colony equal to £3 or £4 an acre at the lowest. In the Southern districts the cost of clearing is so large, that in speaking of the present uncleared value as £1 an acre

and increasing to £4 when improved, I was referring to the Southern districts. We know too well the losses and failures which are now causing so much distress in Melbourne, and we know that among the many causes must be reckoned the labor strikes and the land-booming; but, as we don't want to follow that example, the lesson of that distress is to produce more and borrow less. How can we produce more, unless it is out of the soil of the country in which we live? The hon. member for the Swan very correctly said that we should not diverge from the subject now before us. My views on this land question have not resulted from any agitation, nor am I in favor of this Bill because I happen to be one of the members for Perth, although it has been said by one of the large landowners that it is only the members for Perth and Fremantle who support this Bill. That is not the case with me. I act upon my own convictions, and, whatever the result may be, I say it openly and fearlessly, that I speak my own convictions and opinions. Land is the source of all wealth; it benefits the whole colony. Labor is the producer of wealth, but labor must have free access to the uncultivated areas of the country. I only repeat what has been often said, that it is from the earth and by the earth only that we are able to maintain the permanent stability of any country. This applies particularly to the immense territory of Western Australia, which is so thinly populated. It has been argued that we should not assist farmers in preference to any other class or calling. I am one who used to think likewise, but I have been convinced to the contrary; and I am here now to say, without fear of contradiction, that the farmer is not, by this means, being assisted more than any other class or calling, inasmuch as we construct railways for all trades and every class of individuals, and also subsidise municipalities, and make grants to various localities for any reasonable purpose when a good case is made out. The present Government, in whom I have the greatest confidence, would not grant one farthing unless they thought it was for the good of the country, yet on different occasions they have given to the various districts some concession or some assistance from

the State. There have been two instances this session, one being the relief granted to pastoralists in the North-West, which proposal I supported, not because it was a relief to individuals, although I knew many instances of loss and hardship, but I voted for it on general principle, as being just and right in the circumstances, after the disastrous seasons they had experienced. Those gentlemen who are opposing this Bill—no doubt from conscientious convictions—are large landowners, and I say they ought to be the last to oppose it, and ought rather to support the Bill in its entirety, because their large properties, instead of being injured, will be increased in value considerably, and I will try, in a small way, to show why and wherefore.

MR. RICHARDSON: We are not thinking of that.

MR. QUINLAN: I would ask anyone who should take up a homestead block, such as is offered in this Bill, adjoining a large holding of 10,000 or 20,000 acres, and, supposing he clears a portion and is assisted by the Government with a loan on the security of his improvements, would not the adjoining large holding be enhanced in value the very first year? Say that land was worth £1 an acre before the improvements of the homestead blocks began? would not the effect of such improvements be to increase the squatter's adjoining land to £3 or £4 an acre? I say that when the squatter saw the effect of this settlement he would begin to do likewise, either by letting his land on conditions of improvement, and saying to the holders, "I will assist you even on better terms than the Government are offering, if you will make improvements on the land," or he would improve it himself. Those gentlemen who are holding large tracts of land, like dogs in the manger, ought to support this Bill instead of opposing it, and I hope I have shown them that their opposition is wrong. I am positively certain that if the scheme now offered by the Government is adopted there will be such a large influx as has never been seen in the colony before, attracted here from all parts of the world by the advantages of these free grants of land, with loans to assist improvements. And this Bill will attract and settle a population that will be permanent—the class of thrifty people

that we want—not those political agitators about towns, that are eager to advocate anything for securing a billet or a £5-note, pretending to teach us how to do things better than persons who have spent a lifetime in the colony, and who ought to know more about its real requirements than these noisy agitators. I hope we have not reached a stage in which persons of this class are to teach us how to do this, that, and the other; and while deprecating the bringing of such persons to this colony, where they are not wanted, I do support any measure which will induce a good class of people to come here and use our soil for its proper purpose. It has been said, also, that we shall not be doing justice to the land-grant railway companies by giving away the Crown lands; but this is the most absurd argument that has been used, for we may as well say that because I have some land in Perth, and find it to my interest to build shops or hotels on it, therefore some other owners of land in Perth will be injured by the improvements I am making on my land. Has any other owner studied me when I have had occasion to erect a place of business—has he cared for me, or have I cared for him? The land-grant railway companies must have known that the Crown lands of the colony were not to lie dormant and unoccupied, while the companies were selling their lands for £2 or £3 an acre, which has been done. I hope the Government have an eye to business, and I think they have in proposing such a measure as this. One argument used by the hon. member for the DeGrey rather surprised me, for he said there might be some value in the Bill if it proposed that only immigrants should participate in the free grants of land. I am sure the hon. member must have forgotten that he has a family growing up; and the fact stares us in the face that West Australians have been ignored in the past, anyway as shown by the appointments to the Government service; for can anyone tell me how many West Australians are in the service of the colony? I must express my feelings on this occasion by confessing that West Australians as a rule are looked upon as not knowing as much as other people. I was not born in this colony, but I was brought here so young that I may call

myself a West Australian, and may champion the cause of West Australians. We know too well that in the past West Australians have been ignored, and for the simple reason that they have had no encouragement in their own colony they have gone to other parts of the world. They have not remained in their own colony, although they were the men who would have made good squatters and good farmers, because they were acquainted with the country, knowing its ups and downs, and were prepared to stick to hard work. I might quote from newspapers to show that the question of emigration and settling people on the soil has occupied the Imperial Parliament; and we, who are a small portion of the British Empire, cannot do better than adopt some such scheme as this for attracting people to occupy our lands. I admire the Government for introducing this measure, more than for anything else they have done; and in front of the Premier I say that I never saw him so earnest and emphatic, and so full of any subject that he believes in, as when he was explaining the principles of this Bill. Formerly, I was not entirely in favor of monetary aid being granted to farmers; but now I am convinced that this is the right course. I would refer to sections 6 and 16, in a general way, to show that if I differ a little from the Premier I can substantiate it by reasons. Section 6 provides that “No person who is the owner of land “within the colony in fee simple, or is “the holder of land under special occupation or conditional purchase from “the Crown, shall be eligible to apply “for a homestead block under this Act.” I would like to see, instead of the words “fee simple,” some other definition limiting the value to so much, because this provision as it stands will debar persons who have a small holding of a quarter of an acre in or about Perth. With regard to section 16, stating the conditions on which the occupier of a homestead block may obtain a Crown grant after twelve months’ residence, and making certain improvements, it occurs to me that this section would leave a loophole for persons who have plenty of money to place cheap-jacks on the land to do the improvements, and then the rich men could claim the Crown grant at the end of

twelve months. I would also like to see some provision for insurance, as is generally the case in advancing money on properties. The hon. member for Albany has advocated the clearing of land by the Government as better than the proposals in this Bill. There is a good deal in his argument, but I do not know whether he is acquainted with the fact that cleared land, after a year or two, becomes so thickly studded with saplings and young trees that there would be the necessity of a second or third clearing; and hence I think the plan proposed in the Bill is better. With regard to the amendment of the hon. member for the DeGrey, I hope sincerely this House will not entertain it, and I trust that every hon. member who has the interests of the country at heart will look at least a little further than his nose, and will support the Government in this measure. I differ from the hon. member for Albany when he says that we, as the representatives of the people, have no right to pass this Bill; for, whatever the consequences are, I pledged myself in the past to support some scheme of land settlement, and this being the best scheme that has been offered, I shall certainly support it. With regard to the proportionate amount of land under cultivation, referred to by the hon. member for Perth (Mr. Molloy), he does not appear to know the reason why such a small amount is under cultivation in the Northern district. I have lived there some time, and the fact is too well known that it is not a district in which we should expect any considerable growth of cereals or vegetables. The hon. member also referred to the bait which this Bill offers; but I can hardly agree in calling it a bait, since we have seen so recently, from cablegrams and newspaper reports, the opinions expressed in all parts of the world in approval of such a liberal scheme of land settlement for attracting the surplus population from other countries. In fact, it is to our interest to induce people to come here, not in the expectation that we will support them in our towns by charitable aid, but to settle them on the lands of the country so that they may become producers in the community. And the probability is that we shall have a considerable influx of population, as the result of passing this Bill;

and by their settling in parts of the colony not yet occupied, we may have discoveries of useful minerals not yet known here. The hon. member for the Swan evidently fears taxation of the land. There is no question that taxation will come, and then the large holders will either have to do with their estates what this Bill proposes to do with Crown lands, or they will have to pay through the nose for the large blocks they hold around the country towns, and which are preventing the natural extension of settlement.

MR. R. F. SHOLL: Where are they?

MR. QUINLAN: I can find them in the hon. member's district, and especially in the Toodyay district; and although I am connected with a large landowner there, and may be supposed to sympathise with him in his position, nevertheless I have told the gentleman who owns that ground that the time will come when he will have to pay a tax for his large holding. I will keep the tax back as long as I can, but it will come. I would like to quote from the *Melbourne Age* some remarks on the working of the homestead system in New Zealand, and which I have kept in hand a considerable time awaiting the very Bill now before us, and which will refute the arguments of the hon. member for the DeGrey, as follow:—"The latest returns of the "Auckland settlements, giving a review "from October, 1886, to February, 1891, "show that 650 original applicants were "accepted, of whom 506 took up blocks, "and not more than 446 went upon the "land. The number of the holders "remaining was 312, of whom 282 were "actually resident. The advances made "amounted to £9,270, and £15,937 had "been spent on road works. The value "of improvements on the blocks was "£13,745. The arrears of rent amounted "to £641, and £503 was owing for "interest. In Canterbury, on the other "hand, there were at the end of January, "1891, 173 settlers, holding 5,170 acres, "on which £2,260 had been advanced, "£1,795 rent and £279 interest had "been paid, and the total arrears were "not more than £102. There are 75 "settlements in the colony altogether, of "which those in Auckland (15) and "Canterbury (22) give respectively the "worst and best evidence of the capa-

"bilities of the system." My object in quoting this is because the hon. member for the DeGrey referred to New Zealand.

MR. RICHARDSON: Have you read the report on the working of the system?

MR. QUINLAN: No, I have not.

MR. RICHARDSON: Then you ought to read it.

MR. QUINLAN: Perhaps so; but the statement I am quoting from goes on to say: "The department at Auckland considers the position of settlements is improving with the easier means of communication and the sifting out of unpractical and useless men. The advance system has been abused at Te Aroha, in Auckland. Houses upon which £20 has been advanced by the Government have cost more than £100, and the holders of the blocks have availed themselves of the advance for the clearing of their land as well. These individuals were evidently persons with capital, who took advantage of the opportunity of borrowing money from the Government at 5 per cent., a much lower rate than that prevailing outside. Other defects of the New Zealand system are the absence of any condition for the repayment of advances, the want of provision for the insurance of houses, and the lack of power in the authorities to discriminate between applicants, except that married men are to be preferred to single." I am aware that the worst and best sides are here given, and I think it only right to read the quotation as I find it. The statement proceeds thus: "The village homestead special settlement system was begun in New Zealand in June, 1886, when Mr. J. Ballance was Minister of Lands. The unemployed difficulty was then a pressing problem in the larger towns, and the scheme of settlement was 'rushed' as a relief measure to disperse the unemployed into the country districts. In the hurry sufficient care was not taken either in the selection of localities or settlers. People who had never lived out of large towns were sent on to the land without capital or experience. The experiments in the Auckland district were four times as extensive as those in any other part, the number of persons who took up the land being more than half of the total of the whole of New

Zealand. Amongst the applicants for blocks were many artisans and shop employes, as well as a large proportion of laborers. The Government paid the cost of the more indigent from the towns to the settlement, but a number of them never went upon the ground. At the end of a short period from the inauguration of the system not more than half of the original settlers remained. Special efforts had to be made by the Government to give employment to those who persevered with their holdings, in order that they might gain a subsistence, and the expense involved formed the subject of severe Parliamentary condemnation of the Government of the day. Nine months after the first land had been taken up on special village homestead conditions, 896 persons had selected 29,000 acres all over the colony, the average held being 32 acres." I may be asked why I have read all this. I have done so because it shows both the good and the bad side of the system; and I am sure that the holders of large estates in this colony will be convinced before long, as I am convinced now, that the homestead system will be beneficial to them, and in a year or two they will say: "The hon. member for West Perth was right on this occasion; he was a true prophet." These quotations have shown that in New Zealand there was at first a rush to the homestead blocks, as a means of livelihood for the unemployed, and no doubt evils resulted; but we have no unemployed to-day in this colony, or, if we have, they are those inspectors of buildings who don't want work, and are afraid to find it, as we may see every day about Perth. These persons will work if there is an election or any agitation going on—something that they don't care a jot about, whether the country goes up or down.

MR. LORON: And a liberal supply of beer.

MR. QUINLAN: And a liberal supply of beer—quite right. I am not going to mince matters. There are too many of these, and instead of introducing that kind of people into this colony—the hon. member for the DeGrey apparently thinks we should introduce anybody, because he is in favor of ignoring those who have been born and bred in this

colony—I regret seriously to have heard such an utterance from an hon. member whom I respect so much.

MR. RICHARDSON: What did I say?

MR. QUINLAN: You said that if there was anything in the argument of the Premier, it was that only the immigrants coming here should be allowed to have these free gifts of land. This Bill offers to every male who has attained the age of 18 years a free grant of 160 acres of land and monetary aid towards its improvement. The Bill does not say where these persons are to come from. It has been argued that we are about to produce more than we can consume; but the fact remains that if we can produce more than we can consume, we are not doing so now, and I venture to say it will not happen in the next ten years or more, inasmuch as, owing to the mineral resources of our colony and the large influx of population attracted by them, there must be a large and increasing demand for all the food that the land can produce. I trust that hon. members will take it from me that the conclusions I have expressed are the result of serious consideration.

MR. MONGER proposed that the debate be adjourned until the next day.

MR. SOLOMON objected to repeated adjournments, and said the members for Fremantle were desirous of sitting until the conclusion of the debate, they having arranged for a passenger carriage to be attached to the goods train leaving Perth for Fremantle at 1 o'clock a.m.

MR. DEHAMEL said it appeared that the Government had arranged a special train in order to keep the House sitting till a certain hour.

HON. MEMBERS: No, no; a goods train.

THE COMMISSIONER OF CROWN LANDS (Hon. W. E. Marmion): Does not the hon. member know that I have my carriage here to drive the hon. members to Fremantle?

MR. DEHAMEL said he did not see why the House should be kept sitting till the hon. members for Fremantle were ready to leave. He supported the motion for adjournment, or he was prepared to remain and take the division at 6 o'clock in the morning.

MR. R. F. SHOLL supported the motion for adjournment, saying the hon. member (Mr. Quinlan) had made a

lengthy speech, and his arguments ought to be answered.

THE COMMISSIONER OF CROWN LANDS (Hon. W. E. Marmion) rose to support the adjournment.

The motion for adjournment of the debate was agreed to, and the debate was adjourned accordingly.

ADJOURNMENT.

The House adjourned at 11.40 p.m.

Legislative Assembly,

Thursday, 24th November, 1892.

Relief to Widow of late Engine-driver Wright—Police Act, 1892, Amendment Bill: first reading—Return showing Amount paid to Newspapers for Government Advertisements—Industrial and Reformatory Schools Bill: first reading—Homesteads Bill: adjourned debate on motion for second reading—Constitution Act Amendment Bill: adjourned debate on motion for second reading—Adjournment.

THE SPEAKER took the chair at 7.30 p.m.

PRAYERS.

RELIEF TO WIDOW AND CHILDREN OF LATE ENGINE-DRIVER WRIGHT.

MR. SOLOMON, in accordance with notice, asked the Colonial Treasurer, whether it was the intention of the Government to place a sum on the Estimates to relieve the distress of the widow and children of the late Engine-driver Wright, who was killed by the train on the Fremantle Bridge during the present year.

THE COMMISSIONER OF RAILWAYS (Hon. H. W. Venn) replied that the Government had already paid the funeral expenses (amounting to £22) of Driver Wright, and had also made a compassionate allowance of £50 to his widow.