

would mean that improvements would be left out of the question altogether. Did the hon. member intend that improvements should go by default, and that the owner should only get the unimproved value, plus 10 per cent.? That was what it would mean if the valuation for taxation purposes were to be taken. Moreover, it would be putting a dangerous weapon in the hands of land owners, because they could easily protect their properties by putting a high value on them.

Mr. W. Price : But this is "immediately prior to the decision of Parliament."

The MINISTER FOR WORKS : At the best, that would mean a year before. If the clause were to be adopted in respect to this Bill, it would have to go into all similar Bills, and the land owner would be able to anticipate it. The amendment could not be accepted. The intention of the Government was to take the whole of the estate if they took anything at all, including improvements.

Amendment put and negatived.

Clause put and passed.

Clauses 6 and 7—agreed to.

Schedule, Title—agreed to.

Bill reported without amendment ; the report adopted.

Third Reading.

Bill read a third time and transmitted to the Legislative Council.

House adjourned at 11-35 p.m.

Legislative Council,

Wednesday, 8th December, 1909.

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The PRESIDENT took the Chair at 4.30 p.m., and read prayers.

PAPERS PRESENTED.

By the Colonial Secretary : 1, Report of Woods and Forests Department, for the year ending 30th June, 1909 ; 2, Report of Surveyor General for the year ending 30th June, 1909 ; 3, By-laws under the Health Act of Port Hedland local board of health ; 4, Bunbury Harbour Board Regulations.

ELECTORAL—NORTH PROVINCE VACANCY.

On motion by the Colonial Secretary, resolved : "That owing to the death of the Hon. R. F. Sholl, a member for the North Province, the seat be declared vacant, and that the President be authorised to issue a warrant to the Clerk of the Writs for the election of a new member to supply the vacancy."

ASSENT TO BILLS.

Message from the Governor received and read notifying assent to the following Bills :—

Abattoirs.

Public Education Endowment.

Redemption of Annuities.

Land Act Special Lease.

URGENCY MOTION—FRUIT IMPORTATION, NORTH-WEST.

The PRESIDENT : I have received a written statement from the Hon. R. W. Pennefather that he wishes to

move the adjournment of the House to call attention to the following urgent matter: "That the restrictions recently imposed on the importation of fresh fruit and vegetables at the port of Broome are vexatious and oppressive, and should be immediately withdrawn." If this is supported by the proper number of members the hon. member may proceed.

Five members having risen in their places,

Hon. R. W. PENNEFATHER (North) said: I have received a telegram from the mayor of Broome the purport of which is, "Public meeting held last evening passed the following resolution, 'that this meeting expresses its indignation at the unnecessary and vexatious prohibition of the importation of fruits into Broome and other Northern ports, and requests the Ministry, in view of the urgent necessity for the use of fresh fruit and vegetables in the Northern portions of the State, to furnish every facility for admitting same.'" It appears that at Broome, which is the most populous and busy port along our North-West coast, and where a large population make a livelihood, they are very much dependent—particularly at the hot season of the year—upon fresh fruit and vegetables. These cannot be grown locally at the hot season, and the people are necessarily dependent upon the imported article, but it appears quite recently regulations have been put in force—how long they have been passed I am not informed, but evidently it has not been very long—with the result that the authorities require such particulars and such regard for observances and matters and things that it practically amounts to a prohibition of bringing fruit and vegetables to that port. I need scarcely point out to hon. members that to those living in a tropical region such as at Broome fruit and vegetables are an absolute necessity. Of course, later on they can get apples when they come into season down here, but at this time of the year the people there are dependent upon fruit imported from Singapore, and delicious fruit it is. I am not aware who is to blame for putting in force this regulation

—I hope it is not our State Government, I do not think it is—but if it be the Federal Government, then I hope the Minister in this House will through the Government convey to the Federal authorities that this oppressive restriction imposed on this port in regard to the supply of fruit and vegetables is entirely out of place. Of course, if we want to make that port practically a desert or a hamlet, and to denude it of population, we are going a fair way about it. However, I think I will have the sympathy of every member in the Chamber—if not, I will be greatly astonished—in asking that this restriction be removed at the earliest opportunity I move—

That the House do now adjourn.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. J. D. Connolly): The matter on which the hon. member has moved the adjournment of the House is entirely outside the jurisdiction of the State Government. Hon. members are no doubt aware that recently a Quarantine Act was passed by the Federal Parliament, as they had the right to do under the Federal Constitution Act. They had the right to take over the whole of the quarantine for human beings, animals, and plants in regard to importations from outside Australia into any port of Australia. The Act was proclaimed and came into force on the 1st July last, and it provides that restrictions may be placed on fruit imported into Australia. Dr. Norris, who was appointed Chief Quarantine Officer for the Commonwealth, visited this State recently for the purpose of making final arrangements for taking over the quarantine from the State Government; and the Minister for Agriculture, who formerly controlled the particular division of quarantine relating to animals and plants, pointed out that it would not be advisable to put any restrictions on the importation of fruit into the ports North of Geraldton. There were restrictions existing at Fremantle and the Southern ports so that disease might not be admitted to interfere with our orchards, but the Minister for Agriculture and his

officers thought those restrictions were not necessary north of Geraldton, and they strongly advised Dr. Norris accordingly. Dr. Norris also saw Mr. Male, the member for Kimberley, and no doubt Mr. Male also advised him in the same way. It was thought that Dr. Norris saw the force of the arguments put forward, and that the restrictions would not apply to these Northern ports. However, it seems that the Federal authorities have applied them to the Northern ports. The Under Secretary for Agriculture informs me that a fortnight ago a notification was sent by wire to Dr. Norris renewing the recommendation from the officers here, that an exemption should be made for the Northern ports, but no reply was received. Some time ago the Premier's Office took the matter in hand. They are in communication with the Federal Government about it, and to-day in answer to a wire the Under Secretary informs me that he has received the following telegram from Dr. Norris:—"Re importation of fruit, etcetera, Northern ports, matters will probably be satisfactorily arranged. Prime Minister advised to write to your Premier." The Government have done all they possibly could. When the Director of Quarantine was here they pointed out the absurdity of having these restrictions in a port like Broome. Seeing that Dr. Norris did not follow the advice, the Premier's Office have communicated by letter with the Federal Prime Minister asking him to remove the restrictions, and to-day we have a telegram from the Director of Quarantine saying that the Prime Minister is in communication with the Premier, and no doubt the matter will be satisfactorily settled. I regret if any inconvenience has been caused. Let me say, however, that this is a matter which is outside the province of the Government. The arrangements which have been made with regard to quarantine are that the Federal Government pay the State Government a sum agreed upon to carry out sea and land quarantine in this State, and Dr. Hope is the chief quarantine officer of the State and for that purpose is a Federal officer.

Hon. W. Kingsmill: Do they quarantine fruit on the advice of a doctor?

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: The sea quarantine has nothing to do with that; it is a matter purely for the Agricultural Department. In the port referred to however, there are no State officers, and the quarantine duties are carried out by the officers of the Federal Government. The State Government therefore, have not been able to do anything except to point out the absurdity of putting on these restrictions, and advising that they should be moved.

Hon. R. W. PENNEFATHER (in reply): I am glad to see that the Government are alive to the situation. I informed the Minister this morning that I intended to move this motion, and in the meantime, I am glad to see that he obtained the information which he has given to the House. At the same time I cannot help observing that although this matter is outside the jurisdiction of the State Government, when restrictions like these are forced upon us, the most effective way of dealing with them is by getting the State Government to move and use their influence with the Federal Government. That course always carries far more weight than the action of individuals in the Legislature. I hope the Colonial Secretary will not let the matter rest but will keep on reminding the Federal authorities of the inconvenience which is being caused until the restrictions are removed. I beg leave to withdraw the motion.

Motion by leave withdrawn.

BILLS (2)—THIRD READING.

1. Legitimation Bill, transmitted to the Legislative Assembly.
2. Landlord and Tenant, transmitted to the Legislative Assembly.

BILL—TRANSFER OF LAND ACT AMENDMENT.

Recommendation.

On motion by Colonial Secretary, Bill recommitted for amendment.

Clause 13—Amendment of Section 90:

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: On account of the amendment which was carried at the instance of Mr. Moss, a consequential amendment would be necessary to this clause. He moved as an amendment—

That the following words be added to the clause "and by striking out the words 'three months' and inserting 'four months' in lieu."

Amendment passed.

Bill again reported with a further amendment.

BILL—ELECTORAL ACT AMENDMENT.

Report of Committee adopted.

BILL—LAND ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. J. D. Connolly) in moving the second reading said: This is a further amendment of the Land Act. At present there are quite a number—half a dozen, I think—amendments on the statute-book, therefore, one is averse to introducing further amendments without they are absolutely necessary. It had been thought before this that an opportunity would have been given to the House to consolidate the Land Acts of the State. However, it is hoped this will be done in the very near future, and that this will be the last amendment of the present Land Act. The amendments are largely due on account of the marked changes that have come about in our land settlement of late years. The main reason for the introduction of the Bill is to provide for the cost of improvements, and also the cost of surveys, etcetera, being added to the price of the land. These payments will be extended over twenty years, as I shall explain later on. Very often they are paid out of Loan Funds, and provision is made in the Bill for recouping the Loan Funds as these moneys are returned. Another important provision that is made in the Bill is that the full cost of the surveys, instead of half the cost as at present, may be retained by the State.

In order that this may not fall too heavily on the selector, it is proposed to extend the payments for these additions over 20 years. It is also in order to lighten the burden, seeing that the Government are about to charge the full survey fees; that is, only the external boundaries of the holdings need be surveyed. That is to say, if a man were to take up three 500-acre blocks, one survey around the three blocks—a ring fence, as it were—would suffice. Therefore, the selector would not be put to the cost of running the survey between each of the 500-acre blocks. The payment for surveys which are carried out before selection it is provided shall extend over 20 years. Power is given where a survey has already been carried out that that survey shall be paid for—the full survey, that is the survey of the four sides of the block. Power is contained in the Bill to impose special conditions if the land is within the prescribed distance of a railway or a projected railway; and the Bill further provides that these prescribed improvements shall not exceed the amount that would be advanced by the Agricultural Bank. Provision is also made that during the first three years the half-yearly instalments for the payment of land only shall not exceed 3d. per acre or 6d. per acre per annum, that is land at 10s. per acre.

Hon. V. Hamersley: Independent of the price of the land?

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: That is the price of the land. Some land is taken up as conditional purchase with certain improvements carried out, because the Government have instituted a system of water conservation and ringbarking before the land is thrown open for settlement; that is, it will not interfere with these payments extending over 20 years. Where the land is sold for more than 10s. an acre, for £1 an acre for instance the selector is only asked to pay 6d. per acre, and the additional 6d. if the land is sold for £1 per acre will be extended over the remaining 17 years. This will give the selector in the beginning a better chance. It comes very much lighter on the selector not to pay rents in the first three years than

during the remainder of his lease. Coming to the Bill itself, the first proposed amendment is to extend the existing reservations on Crown grants to phosphatic substances. This is effected by Clause 2, and if members will turn to the original Act they will see it refers to mineral oil, etcetera. If a person takes up land he has no right to the phosphatic substances on the land. The next amendment is in regard to the improvements on the land. As I have already explained the land may be sometimes improved by ringbarking, etcetera. At present any improvements or surveys the selector has to pay for in the first year, but the survey and improvements under the provisions of this Bill are extended over 20 years. These provisions are set out in Clauses 7 and 8 of the Bill. In the case of free homesteads granted under Part 8, inasmuch as freehold has to be acquired within 7 years, it is provided that the improvements (if any) shall be paid for by half-yearly instalments extending over that period, as set out in Clause 7. Homesteads are sometimes granted on reserved areas, that is to say, areas that have been ringbarked, and so much is added for the improvements. On the free farm the payments for these improvements extend over seven years and not over 20 years. As I have already mentioned, there is an amendment in Clause 8, Subclause 2, providing that where holdings are joined together one survey will suffice instead of a survey of each separate holding. Clauses 3 and 6 are an amendment of the principal Act consequential upon the privileges conferred by Clause 8, Subclause 2, and in regard to the surveying of external boundaries Clause 4 is a consequential amendment of Section 6 of the Amending Act of 1906. Clause 5 extends Section 126, dealing with the resumption of portions of timber leases.

Hon. V. Hamersley: What does Clause 5 mean?

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: If the hon. member turns to the principal Act he will see that Clause 4 is simply consequential on an amendment made in that Act, and was not provided for

in the Act of 1906. This amendment is to rectify the error there. It is of no account, merely a formal matter. There is a proviso of Section 114 that rents shall be payable at the rate of £20 per square mile or fraction thereof, so that when a small holding is taken out of a timber lease they survey and rent on the square mile. That is amended now so that they shall continue to pay rent only on the re-adjusted area. Clause 9 merely strikes out certain words which are unnecessary, as the provisions of Sections 109 and 146 apply generally to resumptions under Section 4 of the Amendment of 1906. Clause 10 amends Section 23 of the Act of 1906. The words proposed to be struck out in paragraphs (a) and (b) are unnecessary owing to the maximum area under Section 62 of the principal Act having been brought into line with the maximum area prescribed in this section. In other words, it makes it quite clear that the 2,000 acres allowed under Section 62 is not in addition to the 2,000 acres limit fixed in the Act of 1906. This clause also provides for a further amendment owing to the question having arisen as to the interpretation of Subsection 2 respecting the holdings of husband and wife. The intention was that the husband and wife together should not hold more than 3,000 acres of land, and this subclause makes this intention quite clear. Clause 12 provides for payment for improvements on the land within a special area being extended over the term of the lease in the same manner as improvements on other land under Section 8. Section 72 of the Act of 1906 limits the selection of land within a special area to the provisions of Section 75 of the principal Act. This has been found an unnecessary restriction. The amendment makes special areas available generally under Parts V. and VIII., which really is the intention. Clause 14 contains a provision as suggested by the Auditor General, providing for a proportionate part of the instalments of the purchase money for land which has been improved out of Loan Funds to be repaid from revenue to the Lands Improvement

Loan Fund. Owing to survey before selection it may be necessary this year to spend up to £100,000 for surveys, and this could not be done out of revenue, therefore, it has to be provided out of loan. The repayments extend over 20 years, and when the repayments come in that portion which belongs to the loan account will be repaid to the loan account. Clause 15 provides that during the first three years of the conditional purchase lease the instalments to be paid for the land shall not exceed 6d. per acre per year, notwithstanding that the land may be priced at over 10s. This only relates to the price of the land. That condition does not attach to the repayments for improvements or surveys. This will give some relief to selectors, who can take up land priced at over 10s. per acre and will not have to pay any more for the first three years, the amount being added to the last 17 years. The last clause enables special improvement conditions to be imposed on land within a prescribed distance from a railway, the distance to be prescribed by regulation. As I have already explained, this is further guided by the fact that the improvements that a selector can make on the land will be allowed up to the amount which the Agricultural Bank would advance on such land. At first sight the Bill may seem puzzling, but probably with the explanation I have given it is made somewhat clear, but if members require further explanation I shall be pleased to give it when the Bill is in Committee. The Bill is puzzling in this way, it is purely an amending Act, striking out certain words from the original Act and inserting others, and we have to take into account the amending Act of 1906, and five other amending Acts, which, perhaps, make the meaning of the Bill seem somewhat obscure. On reading the Bill for the first time it did not seem to convey much to my mind, but I have studied the matter, and I have sufficient knowledge to give any information which may be required in Committee.

Hon. J. W. Hackett: Is there any chance of a consolidating Land Bill being introduced?

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: The hon. member was not here when I commenced my speech. I said it was to be regretted that it was found necessary to introduce an amending Bill, and that the amendments were required to meet the altered improvement conditions. It is hoped that a consolidating Land Bill will be introduced in the next session of Parliament. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

Hon. G. THROSSELL (East): While I am in favour of this Bill I think it is to be deprecated that continual tampering with the Land Act becomes necessary. The time has arrived when that Act should be consolidated if we are properly to understand it. In glancing through this Bill I see that there are a few good features one of the main being that which limits the payments of a new settler to 6d. per acre per year for the first three years. It goes without saying that such is an immense advantage to the new settler. A favourable feature also is that which provides for what is so necessary if we are to have prompt settlement of people on the land, survey before selection. However favourable most of us may be to this principle the Moore Government are the first who have taken it in hand earnestly. The adoption of the principle will do away altogether with that eternal waiting by the new man to get on to the land, for under it he will be able to go straight away to his block and start work. Another feature in favour of the principle is that it will greatly limit the expense of the agencies. Some time ago the Government initiated a plan for the decentralisation of the Department and provided for costly country agencies. I could never see the necessity for it, and so far as I can learn it has never been carried out to any great extent, but this principle of survey before selection will make a vast improvement, for it is clear that a tyro in a country office, with the plans before him, can give all the necessary information to the new inquirer, who will be able to get his land and go straight away to work. At the outset it will necessitate the expenditure of a good deal of money but the principle

is an excellent one. Another good feature of the Bill is that which gives power to the Minister to prepare the land before the people select it. I had this in my mind some time ago. One of the chief troubles of the new selector is that he is so helplessly bogged so soon as he gets into the country. He is told of the liberal land laws that exist here, and appreciates them ; he is also told that he will get so much money, he likewise appreciates that ; but he does not know where to find the land or how to spend the money. Under this Bill the Minister will have power, under an arrangement with the Agricultural Bank, whereby the sum of £300, for instance, which would be advanced on the block can be spent by the Minister either in clearing or providing water or other facilities. I would even go the length of putting up a cottage for the man, so that when the new settler arrives on his land he will be able to get experience there, and when all is ready will be able to acquire it at the price fixed by the Minister, plus the expenditure incurred upon it. The inexperienced man would, under this clause, be able to get a little experience and wages on his own land before really taking it up ; subsequently he would take possession. Thus instead of wasting his capital he would be husbanding it until he was ready to go to work on his property. If this scheme is carried out it will be one of the best things that has happened in the direction of overcoming the troubles of new settlers, who in the past have had to pay so much for their experience. The best thing for a new arrival to do is to get colonial experience before going on his own land. Some members of this House have had men from England and given them colonial experience. Mr. Wilding is one who has broken in more Englishmen than any other man in the State, and this he has done with a great amount of advantage. After a year's experience of early rising and the management of stock and land the young Englishman is quite ready to use his capital in making a start for himself. A recent instance has come under my particular notice. The case was one in which a young man had a capital of some £2,000 ; I advised him to

go to Mr. Wilding and he followed that advice and stayed with that gentleman for two years. In the meantime his capital was invested. He gained a deal of experience as to the land and the result is that now he is on land of his own and is doing very well indeed. If wisely carried out this is a very important feature of the Bill. With regard to the improvements effected to the properties, there is provision that the cost shall be paid for by the settler in a certain time. I suppose that will mean paying back the cost of constructing roads for instance. As a matter of fact the lands should carry the expenditure put on them. This gives rise to the thought that if all this enormous settlement is to continue, and there is to be a continuance of the system of cutting down roads boards grants, steps will have to be taken to make provision for the many new works in the way of roads, water supplies, etcetra, which will be demanded by new settlers. In a year or two, no matter what the Government may do, there is bound to be this clamour, but where is the money to come from ? We should be more conservative with the lands of our State than we have been in the past. Members know as well as I do that we are really giving the land away now, and it seems to me that the time has arrived when the land itself should provide the funds required to make it suitable for settlement, and I would ask for the consideration of members whether it would not be well that all our first-class lands should be sold plus 5 per cent. per annum for improvements. What does that small amount matter when the principle will result in funds being provided for the roads boards to make roads and for all the demands which will spring up with the new settlement. A few years ago I would have been a deadly enemy to such a suggestion. There was a time when a Bill was brought in to do as Mr. Gardiner is now doing with the Midland lands, that is to put the Government lands up to auction. There is a good deal to be said in support of such a proposal, and possibly, later on I shall have something to say upon it, but at the time the idea was first mooted I was a deadly enemy to the proposal. At that time we had land in

boundless areas, but since then those lands have been boomed; they have attracted the attention of people in other countries, and a large area has become settled. The taking up of land involves responsibilities upon the Government in the nature of granting the requests for grants on the part of roads boards, but we have seen of late that the roads boards grants are being cut down largely, and we must realise that some other course will have to be adopted. When we learn that a million acres of land were selected last year we can realise that all those new settlers will require roads. The only way out of the position is that the land itself should provide this expenditure. Not even in England, or in fact anywhere else, would such a proposal be objected to. The land should carry 5 per cent, for the purpose of constructing special works such as roads and bridges. With regard to the settlement now going on, we are told everywhere that immense areas are being selected. I desire to lift a warning voice not for the first time, and remind members that we have now before us a Repurchase Bill which has for its object the buying up of estates of old pioneers because they are not improved. My idea is that we are now arriving at a stage when, instead of the old pioneers being compelled to sell their estates, it is the new selector who has 4,000, 5,000 or 10,000 acres, who will have to be watched to see that the improvement conditions are carried out. If this principle is not carried out and a careful watch kept on the new settlers, the great bulk of our land now being settled will not be improved. In the district I represent, there are hardly any, if any, of the old estates that could be purchased. The old pioneers with the aid of their boys, and with better times, are doing more than the Land Act could compel them to in the way of improving their properties; but I have the gravest possible fear that the speculator is abroad, that large areas are being taken up, which owing to new railways being built in their proximity, will be doubled in value without anything being done to them. The result of this will be that so soon as the railways are constructed these large

areas, and many of them have been taken up, will show a remarkable increase in value. If I am only one half right in what I say on this matter, is it not a just principle that the State should derive some advantage from the work of railway construction they are carrying on, rather than that the shrewd selector, without doing anything at all to his property, should have it enhanced two-fold. Later on in the session I shall have something more to say on this question. I support the Bill, but I feel most strenuously that while we should do all we possibly can to get the right sort of people to go on the land, we must be careful that we are not building up with one hand and pulling down with the other. In other words, while we are providing money for the repurchasing of estates, we are raising in our midst a greater evil even than the one that existed in the early days. The Minister says that we have 20 million acres of land available. I saw an advertisement in the Christmas number of the *Western Mail* stating that we had 60 million acres. Let us take 20 million acres as the correct amount, and seeing that during the last year one million acres have been taken up, in twenty years time there will not be one acre of land in the State to offer the new selector. Is not that absurd, and simply because we are not considering what is the area necessary to plant successfully a family on land within 15 miles of a railway. If 2,000 acres are enough for a family for all time, I wonder why we allow 4,000, 6,000, 8,000 and even 10,000 acres to be selected by one individual? As I have said before, we are building up with the one hand and pulling down with the other. To come to one or two features in the Bill, I may say that there are several matters deserving enquiry. Clause 6 provides that if a settler holds one block and does not in good time pay the cost of the survey, he forfeits, according to the Bill, all the other holdings he may possess. It is not a question of "may" but "shall," and therefore the result is that for a few pounds owing on the survey of a block a man may lose all his property. Another amendment will require considering, and that is with regard to the provision

that an outside survey is sufficient. No mention is made, however, of how the selector will look upon this amendment, and it does not provide that it shall be enforced, either with or without his consent. Supposing a man has 5,000 acres in different blocks, possibly he would sooner have more than an outside survey. I quite admit that in bringing this amendment in the Government have been guided solely by their desire to benefit the settlers. It is not difficult to understand that it may be entirely against the interests of the selector to have only one survey of his block. He has his sons in view, and if the land be surveyed in different blocks, these blocks may be transferred without difficulty. Even more important is the consideration that he wishes to go to the Agricultural Bank, and that with the outside survey enclosing the whole of his property the Bank will only lend him £400 or £500; consequently it is not absurd to ask the selector to hand over the whole of the deeds of his property for the one small loan. It is only proper that he should have the land in several blocks; so I say that clause requires consideration. I do not desire to take up the time of the House on this matter. I will simply support the second reading, but I trust hon. members will see that the time has arrived when we should be more conservative with our lands.

Hon. J. F. CULLEN (South-East): The speech we have just heard strikes me as illustrating the intoxication of a little success. The hon. member says that the time has arrived when there should be conservatism. Why we have barely alienated three per cent. of our land. We have made a good beginning, and the present Government is to be commended for what they have contributed towards this good beginning; but is it the act of sensible men because of a little success to turn round and say: "Oh we are afraid. This is going too fast. We have actually got a few hundreds of new settlers in the past few years, and we have alienated at least three per cent. of our territory. We must now become conservative; double the price and lessen the area."

I am afraid some who take this view will be asked "Have you got enough acres, and do you want to shut the door behind you?" If a certain number of gentlemen have got enough for themselves and their children, do they think this is the strategic time to become conservative and say: "Those who come after us will pay double and be strictly limited to an area which may be described as a struggler's area." I say the time has not arrived for any alarm about land settlement. We rather should say: "This initial success shows us a great deal that is sound in our system. Let us make the most of these strong points, and let us multiply the rate of settlement threefold, fivefold, or even tenfold if we can do it." A great many economists on this question seem to forget that the price of land is a very small factor in the case. The gain to the State from a new settler only begins with his instalments of the purchase money. The price of the land is a mere bagatelle in the return the bona fide settler confers on the country in which he settles. He becomes a consumer of dutiable goods, a contributor to the revenue through all the avenues of revenue collection. The actual price of the land is a small factor in the gain of a bona fide settler; and I do hope that no other hon. members will be caught by the hasty remarks of an authority that ought to be worthy of respect and of confidence. The hon. member admits that a few years ago he would not have preached the doctrine he has preached to-night. Now I am appealing from the hon. member's doctrine of to-night to the sounder doctrine he held a few years ago when he was prepared to hold a reasonable conception of the new settler, and say: "In so far as we have achieved success let us follow the same rule and go on to still greater liberality." There is no need for the apology about not bringing down a consolidating Land Bill at this stage. If consolidation is attempted too early it is immediately disturbed by the need of fresh amendments. My only difficulty about this little Bill is that it raises, not one issue only but a number of issues, and one cannot dis-

pass it without speaking somewhat widely on land policy. Furthermore, one is tempted to look upon it as an opportunity for getting in other amendments which may occur to hon. members. Certainly next session will be quite time enough to consolidate the law, perhaps the session afterwards and, possibly, in the next Parliament. Let us deal with all the weaknesses and necessities for amendments that have already occurred to the Government and to hon. members and then we shall be ready for a consolidating measure. In regard to this question of limitation of areas I know that the Bill only on this head gives effect to the amendment of the 1906 Act, but I say it is too soon to begin to put difficulties in the way of a certain class of settlers who would be a great help to us. I know personally of certain very desirable men who came to settle here after the Act of 1906, and they simply passed on. The said "We are not going to take up 2,000 acres of West Australian land. If we were on the alluvial country of New South Wales or Victoria 2,000 acres might do." The relative values of the average land of Western Australia will perhaps surprise the hon. member who has just spoken. Two thousand acres of average land in Western Australia would not be equal to more than 500 or 600 acres of the rich land of the Eastern States, and the competent man in search of land says "I am not going to settle down with my family on 2,000 acres of land." I hold it was a big blunder to come down from the maximum of 3,000 acres to 2,000 acres. However it is too late to deal with that under this Bill. But I am raising a word of caution against the influence which would naturally be exerted by an authority like the hon. member who last preceded me. I say it is a mistaken policy to legislate for a dead level of the straggledom. The sound policy is to give every man as much land as he can use. Not land to play landlord with, but as much as he and his family can use. And if a capable man were to come along with a family of six or seven children I would

give that man 3,000 acres and count it the finest bargain that could be made. Give it to him at a fair price—and there is no land in Western Australia to-day being sold at less than a fair price. Ten shillings an acre for our average land is equal to one pound per acre in the Eastern States.

Hon. W. Patrick: I would question that.

Hon. J. F. CULLEN: I would ask hon. members to remember that the lands may not have been undervalued in the earlier years. Perhaps at that stage the price at which land was sold was quite as high in proportion as the price paid in the other States. But we are not giving away land when we are selling it at 10s. an acre and upwards. The Government have not given away land nor sacrificed land, and hon. members will need to beware of being intoxicated with initial success. The time has not come to be less liberal or more stringent. I also join issue with the hon. member when he says it is a good thing for the Government to clear land for the settler. The old policy of the Eastern States was, "If you are an experienced farmer you can go on the land straight away; if you are a novice be thankful of an opportunity to learn farming under a capable man. Go and take work from someone who understands farming and learn the business." But the new doctrine is: "Take hold of anybody and precipitate him into a full blown farmer at Government expense." Now I say the Government ought not to do anything that private enterprise can do better. Government has never yet made a success of land clearing in Australia. Our own little experiment at Denmark is a disastrous failure. The least said about it the better. It was well meant; the Government were perfectly honest in it. They did their best, but it was a disastrous failure. And it will always be so if the Government goes beyond its last. How can you expect Government officers to supervise farming? The farmer needs to be an expert, and to expect a Government official to go and supervise farming and pay all

sorts of men standard wages, charging that on to the land, is absolute folly. I say by all means survey before selection now that our army of surveyors is equal to the requirements and selection will not be delayed. But stop there. It may be all right to provide water, but to start clearing the land and building houses means that the Government will spend double what the practical farmer would spend, and the property of the bona fide farmer would be loaded up. On a question like this one is tempted to say more than the stage of the session we have reached will justify one in saying. There is no time to bring in a number of amendments I would have liked to bring before the House; but at this, the first opportunity, I raise my warning to the Government not to dabble in work that private enterprise can more efficiently undertake. Let up open up the land for the people and by building railways for them give them means of transit for their produce when they get it; and let us then trust to private enterprise, and the real farmer will make £1 go as far as the Government will make £2 or £3 go. There is just one other matter I would like to mention. The Government has already initiated a sound policy of agricultural railways. I am putting their good deeds against what I think are their mistakes. I hesitate to criticise the Government because of the splendid work they have done but when a Bill like this is brought down one has to offer honest criticism. The Bill proposes that where the land value has been loaded, not for improvements but because it is classified as being above 10s. an acre in value, the selector will not have to pay more than 3d. per acre half-yearly for the first three years. This is a wise provision, but it does not go far enough. The crux of land settlement is the first three years. The Farmers and Producers' League of Western Australia, of which I had the honour to be secretary, some two years ago sent to the Premier a resolution to this effect—"In order safely and wisely to encourage land settlement it is desirable that for the first three or five years instalments should not begin;" that is to

say, that the settler would be helped for the first three or five years by having the commencement of instalments post-dated. It would not be that he would pay less, he would pay the full price, but he would commence at the end of the first three or five years as the Government might determine. We pointed out from that league that this was a sound way of helping the young farmer, and that it was even better than his getting money from the Agricultural Bank because it delayed claiming money from the farmer. So long as the young farmer carries out the statutory improvements—of course, they are provided for in the law and we need not refer to them—and so long as he lives on the land, it is a safe thing to say that we will help him for the first three or five years by delaying the commencement of instalments until after that period. The same thing later was pressed on the Government by Mr. Hopkins, who was then, I believe, a trustee of the Agricultural Bank, except that he differed from us in considering it would be wiser to recognise the duty to pay by asking for 5 per cent. interest on the instalments. However, that difference in regard to interest is neither here nor there. The Government promised a reply, but it had not come to hand. I now say to the Government not to lessen their encouragement to bona fide settlers, and to get as many as they can, to get ten times as many each year as we have been getting, because there is plenty of room for them, and every new bona fide settler will be paying us back month by month and year by year far more than the amount of the instalments.

Hon. C. SOMMERS (Metropolitan): So far as I can see the amendments in the Bill are all very necessary. I was under the impression that Section 4 had already been amended by the 1906 Act. I think we struck out the words "three thousand" in one portion of the section, but probably we omitted to do so in another portion.

The Colonial Secretary: That is so.

Hon. C. SOMMERS: What I wish to refer to particularly is the question of the homestead farms. The Govern-

ment hold these homestead farms out as an inducement to people to come here and get 160 acres free. It sounds very well, but I think that is all there is in it; it is only an advertisement; it is only £80 we give a man. That is to say, if a man takes up 160 acres in the ordinary way he will only have to pay the Government £80 for the land, spread over 20 years without interest. If a man holds a homestead farm, and wants to give it up he can transfer it to somebody else capable of holding it, or he can sell it or he can mortgage it to the Agricultural Bank, but he cannot mortgage it to another institution. These homestead farms are a sort of snare that was never intended. Farmers take up these blocks because they take them up for nothing, and then they get the balance of their land around the homestead block. More improvements are necessary on the homestead farm than on the rest of the estate, and the result is that the farmer groups his improvements generally on the homestead farm and makes his homestead there. Perhaps in a year or two he wants to mortgage the land, perhaps he wishes to get an advance altogether different to that the Agricultural Bank will give him, but he finds that he cannot mortgage that 160 acres which, with the improvements, are worth more than the rest of the estate, unless he mortgages it to the Agricultural Bank. I have known many instances where £80 has been paid to the Government to get a Crown grant for the 160 acres, and before a man is entitled to get a Crown grant he should hold the land seven years. Surely when we allow the land to be transferred and sold and mortgaged to the Agricultural Bank, there should be a proviso to enable the farmer to mortgage his homestead farm to some other institution.

Hon. J. W. HACKETT: They do it in other States.

Hon. C. SOMMERS: I think they do, and if the leader of the House will confer with the Minister for Lands probably he will find the Minister has already suggested something to this effect. At any rate, I think it would be a wise provision. I do not believe in limiting the areas. A

great deal of what Mr. Cullen says is quite true, with regard to those struggling on 2,000 acres in some districts. So long as a man is willing to comply with the conditions—in every case the conditions should be complied with—I would certainly allow the farmer to have an even greater area than is provided in the Act. Of course, it is no use talking of that, because it would be no use our trying to include any amendments in the Bill in that regard. I listened to Mr. Throssell in regard to the repurchase of estates. Mr. Throssell was the first to introduce the system of repurchasing in the Northam and Newcastle districts, and he was always dilating on the great success that had attended the repurchases, and talking of the great good it did to settlement and how it brought increased wealth to the State generally. In a new country like it is only reasonable to suppose that large areas were easily acquired in remote districts, and it is only natural that with the settlement of the State and the building of railways, the people desire these estates to be cut up into smaller areas. I am glad the Government have seen their way to purchasing these estates, and I trust as long as there is a demand for the blocks from the people they will continue to repurchase them and subdivide them as they are doing now. Mr. Throssell was alarmed as to what would happen in 20 years' time if we give away our land at the rate we are doing now. He thought we would have none left. I would be glad to see it all taken up at once. But the land is never given away; at all times the State has a right to tax it; the land is only lent; it is there for all time for taxation purposes, and it will be taxed. If we can get the people to settle on the land now, and we compel them to improve it and see that they do it, it would be more preferable than to have it alienated 20 years hence. The hon. member also says speculation is rife throughout the land, and that people are taking up land to sell it again. I come into contact with more new settlers than any other member of the House, and from my experience I say the hon. member's statement is altogether misleading. Speculation is not rife. People take up

the land with a view of settling on it and making a success of it for themselves and families. Of course in this business, as in other businesses, there are failures. People have reverses; they spend their money foolishly, perhaps, and they have to sell; but that is their misfortune, it is hardly their fault. How can we call it speculation? At any rate, if it is speculation, it ends most disastrously for them, or it is entered into the right spirit. It is certainly not speculation in the sense the hon. member meant. The same hon. member told us that by the construction of new railways the land was immediately increased in price, and that more money should be charged for it. The hon. member overlooked the fact that where a new railway is made now the land is not open for selection, because in many cases it has been held 20 or, at any rate, 10 years. I do not believe that if any of the railways now before Parliament any land has been sold within 10 or 15 miles of the route later than four years prior to the present date.

Hon. J. F. Cullen: Oh, yes!

Hon. C. SOMMERS: If the hon. member knows of such cases the percentage must be very low indeed compared with the area held prior to four years ago. He will probably find that the land has been selected from 20 to four years prior to the present date. I trust if the hon. member knows differently he will give members in Committee some figures by which we may be guided. But if the land is still open for selection I agree with the contention that the price should be raised. On the other hand where men went out 15 miles 20 years ago without a railway they deserve the increase in the price of the land gained by reason of the advent of a railway. In regard to Government work, I believe in the Government making tracks to new areas and putting down wells, but beyond that I think they are making a mistake in attempting to do any work. Of course ring-barking is good work if the Government can get it done at the proper price, but we generally find that what the farmer can get done for 1s. it costs the Government 4s. We cannot get the Government officials to supervise in the same way that the private

man can do, and for that reason I think it is a mistake. Of course, Denmark was heavily timbered country and dangerous to experiment with, and I regret the experiment has not been the success we hoped. But not a very large sum has been spent; and even if it has been spent badly, it will be a guide to the future. With regard to the three years' exemption, I think it is the best assistance we can give. If we make them pay the survey fees, and perhaps, interest by way of rent, and if we exempt their instalments for three years, it would be a proposition worthy of the attention of the Government. It would certainly be a big thing to the revenue, but it would be the very best assistance to the farmer, and I do not think the interest charge would be very much because there is very little land sold over 10s. an acre. I have much pleasure in supporting the Bill.

Hon. E. M. CLARKE (South-West): It is not my intention to in any way endeavour to stop the passage of this Bill, in fact it is my intention to support it. The discussion we have listened to has opened up to a great extent a question which has exercised my mind for a good many years. I have been considered somewhat conservative and possibly non-progressive; I will plead guilty to all the charges for the sake of my argument, and they can call me what they like.

Hon. J. W. Hackett: But none believes it.

Hon. E. M. CLARKE: I desire to emphasise the fact that new land laws are an absolute necessity and the discussion on this Bill has emphasised that necessity. It has been said that we should begin to conserve our lands. With that I am in accord and I come to that conclusion on solid facts. I can carry my mind back to some years ago when the Government of this State conceded to the Western Australian Land Company an enormous area. I forget the total, I believe it was a million acres.

Hon. J. W. Hackett: It was 3 million acres.

Hon. E. M. CLARKE: That was the total and one million pounds was

afterwards paid for it. What happened? No sooner was that concession given than the Government in its wisdom proceeded to reduce the price of Crown land. That does not affect the argument, but almost at the same time that the land was conceded to that Company we were giving away what were called then poison leases, and I think the people who took up those poison areas got that land at the enormous sum of something under 6d. per acre. If that is not giving land away I do not know what is. The only thing to do would be to pay people to take it. They got thousands of acres of our best land at the ridiculous price of 6d., and it has taken now something like 30 years to soak the fact into ourselves that we have been giving away our land too cheaply. I admire the hon. gentleman opposite who has sounded a note of warning, and I take a delight in supporting him in the suggestion that it is time we should begin to conserve our lands more than we have done in the past. It has taken us 25 years to increase the price of our land from 6d. per acre up to the amounts at which we sell it now—I think something like 10s. an acre.

Hon. F. Connor: 22s. for some of it.

Hon. E. M. CLARKE: That strengthens my argument, and I say emphatically, when it comes to an absolute transaction, we do not sell the land—we sell the land in a way at 10s. an acre but the purchaser of that land never pays that 10s., he pays 5 per cent. for 20 years and it becomes his.

Member: Conditionally on the holder improving it.

Hon. E. M. CLARKE: It is almost, one might say, as if I were paid to patch my own coat, because I am paid for building on my own property. It is an improvement, and while I admit it is a benefit to the State, at the same time the greatest benefit is derived by the person who improves it. We bear in mind that the first lands sold were poison lands, and they were disposed of for 6d. an acre; then we gave a huge concession of three million acres to a Company, and this, by the way, we re-purchased for one million pounds cash.

If that does not emphasise the fact that the price of land is going up, well then I shall be told something that I do not know. The land I hold does not exceed 1,000 acres, and I have as much as will keep me going. I admit, however, that in certain districts this quantity of land is not sufficient for one man to earn a living on. There is need for fresh land laws because I say we are hopelessly mixed up. It is time that something was done and while those alterations are being made it is imperative that we should try and check the policy which has been pursued in the State for years past, though that policy was unavoidable. I refer more particularly to what we give to the settler away back, but at the same time there should be a limit to what we do. What have we been doing for years past? We have been selling land for 10s. an acre, which becomes the holder's own property if he effects certain improvements and pays for them. What has been happening to the State ever since settlement began? We have been enhancing the value of the land, I will not say by how many hundreds of pounds, by building railways at once. I am pointing out all this to show that we have been adopting a false policy, not that I have any remedy to suggest, but we cannot get away from the fact that these things which I have mentioned exist. I am in favour of building railways every time, because unless a man is close to a railway he is simply out of the market, but what I wish to emphasise is this—that it is nearly time that we took a pull, and we should reorganise the whole thing and carry out our land settlement on business lines. As an old settler myself I know that there is land and land; that some of the land which the Government have to dispose of may not be worth 3d. an acre, while other land may be worth pounds, and I am satisfied that every hon. member here knows that such is the case; but what is right in connection with a private business should also be correct with regard to that which concerns the public, and I say again that I leave it for those in authority to determine what should be

done. We are mortgaging our properties to build railways, not that I find fault with that, but we are telling the people that we must withdraw subsidies from the towns and from the roads boards. Where then are we to get the sinews of war with which to construct roads and bridges? When we hear an old battler of conservative tendencies like our friend opposite, a man of his vast experience, speaking in the way that he has done, I say most emphatically that it is well up to us to back him up in his efforts. There is no question, with all our millions of acres, that the time must come when we shall not have a bit of land to sell. I also desire to say that this has been an exceptional season; it has been a season which I think one can say has not occurred within the recollection of many in the eastern districts. There has been a good rainfall in those districts but what I would like to know is—will this always continue in the future? I would ask the Minister to tell us whether there is any record of the annual rainfall in the eastern districts, and under what conditions of rainfall it is possible for a man who is financed by the Agricultural Bank to take up land and expect to make a living from it? This too should be sounded as a note of warning. I think I might say in conclusion that we are wasting our time over legislation that is never carried through these Houses of Parliament. Would it not be better for us to give some attention to the vital question of the land laws, to get out a consolidated Land Act which would be consistent with the enhanced value of the land in Western Australia.

Hon. V. HAMERSLEY (East): I would like to add a few remarks to the debate. It has been a most interesting subject and we have received a great deal of very good advice both from the ex-Minister for Lands and from other hon. members who have evidently this question of the land near at heart. I am sorry that Mr. Sommers is not in his place because I would refer to the fact that he expressed surprise at Mr. Throssell having entirely altered his views from the occa-

sion when he was responsible for bringing in the re-purchase Act, which enabled the Government to repurchase large estates. I think Mr. Sommers must have misunderstood what Mr. Throssell was aiming at. He was responsible at the time the Repurchase Act was brought in to the extent that he happened to be the Minister who introduced it, and passed it into law, but he did so after a brave attempt on his part at the time to tax large landholders. A number of years ago it was considered by everyone that there was not another acre of good land beyond that which had, up to that time, been selected.

(Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.)

Hon. V. HAMERSLEY: I was about to refer to the time when Mr. Throssell was Minister for Lands, and when he was instrumental in bringing in the Repurchase Act for acquiring some of the areas which at that time were looked upon as the only available good land within the State. He had been very anxious up to that time to put a tax on these lands to force them on to the market so that they would be sold, and it was only after several of these properties had been put up to auction and had failed to realise a purchaser that the Government of the day, of which Mr. Throssell was then a member, decided to bring in the Repurchase of Lands Act. What Mr. Throssell was referring to this evening was the danger there was in the amount of speculation which he felt was taking place throughout the State, and the fear that some large estates would again be built up and it will become necessary for the Government in a few years time to repurchase them at a very much enhanced value, as the Government have had to do in the case of several estates recently repurchased. It is only fair that we should recognise that he was really wishing to warn members of the danger we had before us in the past with regard to the building up of large estates, because it was only several years ago that the same limiting clauses were passed. Had we not then passed those clauses which limited the areas which one family can take up, because there was nothing

five years ago to prevent any man with a reasonable amount of capital from acquiring 150,000 or 250,000 acres of land, large estates would have been built up. Those provisions were passed, and I see in this measure—I believe clause 4 refers to the matter—the limiting of the area which persons can acquire. With regard to Clause 5 where it is proposed to extend the payment by the selector for the surveys, that is extending them over 20 years, it is going back on legislation which we had only quite recently repealed. It was previously pointed out to Parliament that these surveys were a great cost to the State, and the department had to pay cash for the surveys, and in many instances the selectors who acquired the land and had the surveys carried out threw up the land and really returned to the State none of the expenses the State had been put to for the cost of the surveys.

The Colonial Secretary: It is taken up by somebody else though.

Hon. V. HAMERSLEY: As a rule when somebody else takes up a block, the boundaries do not suit, they require a different area, and new lines have to be run. It is not always found that the man taking up land the second time fits in with the original survey.

The Colonial Secretary: It is now "survey before selection."

Hon. V. HAMERSLEY: It seems to me the State will be paying for the surveys, and if they have to wait for the repayment of the money there should be some substantial increase in the cost of the survey charged to the selector.

The Colonial Secretary: It is 5 per cent.

Hon. V. HAMERSLEY: Does the action of the original Act add the 5 per cent.?

The Colonial Secretary: Yes.

Hon. V. HAMERSLEY: Possibly if the selector happens to retain the land for five years the State can get back some of its money, but if it does not suit the selector to retain the land for that length of time we still stand the chance of losing a fair amount. I always thought it reasonable that half the survey fees should be paid on the survey being completed, and I still adhere to that opinion.

We can overdo the question of meeting the average selector. I do not say that from the fact that I own a certain area of land, and from the remarks of Mr. Cullen it might be thought that having acquired so much land, I therefore want to close the doors on those coming after me, but I certainly feel that as we are disposing of a million acres of land per annum we can soon run the State on the rocks with the tremendous cost the State would be put to in regard to the surveys, and the further extensive help that is granted to the selector who comes from goodness knows where with the idea of taking on the chance of making a livelihood and making a success for himself—unless he pays something for the survey he has not invested anything, and I think he should certainly show his bona fides in what he is doing by paying half the survey fees as is provided in the present Act. Seeing that we do not charge a poll tax as some States do on people coming into the country, it is only reasonable that a man who has acquired land should pay something of the direct expense the State is put to. With regard to remitting payments for the first three years, I think that is what is meant.

The Colonial Secretary: Not remitting them entirely, only asking them to pay a proportion of the 10s.; threepence per acre per half year or sixpence a year.

Hon. V. HAMERSLEY: I thought it was limited for the first three years.

The Colonial Secretary: Only anything over 10s.

Hon. V. HAMERSLEY: They pay on ten shillings, but nothing over that?

The Colonial Secretary: They pay that during the last 17 years.

Hon. V. HAMERSLEY: I do not fully grasp the meaning of the clause in regard to this question, but we can be too lenient in this matter. I cannot get away from the fact that it will enable a good deal of dummying and not bona fide selection. If there were some saving clause, by which it only referred to improved land, where the improvements are being carried out, it would undoubtedly be a much more favourable clause in those circumstances. I certainly have not grasped the clause from the study which I have been able to

devote to the Bill. I do not think I have any further remarks to make on the Bill in general. I am satisfied the Government have good reason for trying to meet the wishes of a good many new settlers, but I sincerely hope the Government will be successful in their endeavours to meet the wishes of a number of new settlers who are going on these lands, but who have no experience, and who are likely in many instances to cause surveys and inspections to such an extent that a great deal of extra expense will attach to those lands, and people are very likely indeed to throw them up. I certainly feel we should be very careful in continually tinkering with legislation of this kind. In fact I feel the slight alterations suggested by the measure are only likely to lead to a further confusion, and every time we alter one of these Bills unless they are substantial alterations, I do not know if it is worth our while doing so. Unless there is a very great gain indeed to the community we do no good by tinkering with the Acts which are on the statute-book.

Hon. R. W. PENNEFATHER (North): I would like to revert to the observations that have already fallen from the previous speakers as to the necessity of the Government during the next session bringing in a consolidating measure in reference to land settlement. There is no doubt that these amendments create great confusion and extreme difficulty to anyone, except after much study, to find out the state of our land laws after the number of amending Acts that have been passed. I am in thorough accord with the main principles of this amending Bill, and particularly with reference to remitting the rate of land payments from sixpence per acre to three-pence per acre for the first three years. I am only sorry the Government have not seen their way to remit the payments altogether for the first three years. That has been brought under the notice of the House previously.

Hon. J. W. Hackett: Postpone the payments?

Hon. R. W. PENNEFATHER: Yes, postpone the first three annual payments. This subject has already been referred to in the House by the Hon. Charles

Piesse who tabled a motion last year, if I remember rightly, on the subject. I hope the Ministry will see their way financially to agree to the suggestion next year when they bring in a consolidating measure and make it a permanent enactment that for the first three years the payment of rents should be postponed. I was sorry to hear during the discussion some rather slighting remarks as to the Government's efforts to improve the country at Denmark. I had the pleasure of being down there four or five months ago and saw the great improvements being effected by the Government. There was a complete plant, traction engine, fine teams of bullocks and so on, and I am sure that the Government with such facilities at command can clear the land 50 per cent cheaper than a private selector can do on his own account. I am inclined to think the Government have rather unduly loaded the land with cost that the land should never bear. I am inclined to think the Government have loaded the land too much, but it not due to the fact that the Government with its fine plant was not able to do the work without expending large sums of money. I think the work was done economically, and in the most effective way. Depend upon it, it is too early yet to prophesy, but in the next year or two that land, and the Government have done the right thing in the way of improving certain portions of it, will have upon it a thriving population. Ten acres cleared there is equivalent to 100 acres elsewhere. I hope members will not pass strictures on the Government in that direction, for from my own experience I know they are undeserving.

Hon. E. McLARTY (South-West): It is somewhat difficult to criticise the Bill when one has not the original Act before him to compare the amendments with. I confess I have not had sufficient time to do that, but I am satisfied to accept the assurance that the amendments are in the right direction and are introduced for the general advantage of those settling on the land. I notice that members addressing themselves to the measure

have mostly dealt with the land question from a general point of view rather than from the particular points brought out in the amendments. I shall follow the same course. With regard to the clearing of land by the Government, I am certainly not very much in favour of that. From what I have seen in every direction where this work has been undertaken by the Government I do not think they can do it as cheaply as private individuals. During the past 12 of 18 months there have been congregated about the streets of Perth, and at the labour bureau, large numbers of men who declare there is no work in the country and who appeal to the Government for employment. The Government have sent large bodies of these men away by rail to Denmark, Nangeenan, and other places, and have put them to work at a maximum wage of 8s. a day. As an employer myself I have had a good number of men coming and going, and I am satisfied that one half of those men who are railed away to go on the land clearing for the Government at 8s. a day are not worth 8s. a week. If I had such men at my place they would not remain a second day. I have had so much to do with them that I am satisfied one half of them are not worth one-half the money paid to them. As Mr. Pennefather said, the Government when in possession of the proper plant and appliances can do the work of clearing somewhat less than the private individual, but I am not a believer in the Government doing this work. I think the cost, which is added to the purchase of the land, would in most instances be far greater than would be incurred by the individual himself. With reference to free homestead grants I have long since come to the conclusion that they are a mistake. I never believed in them, and I fail to see why the country should give away its land in lots of 160 acres. It is most inconsistent that one man should have 160 acres of free land while his adjoining neighbour, separated merely by a wire fence from him, has to pay his annual rental. It will be said that the man with a free homestead block is forced

to reside on the land and do certain improvements, but my opinion is that, whether the land is a free homestead block or not, the improvements should be insisted upon. If I had my way I would strike out free homestead blocks altogether. The land of our country is surely worth something. I am not altogether in accord with the remarks of Mr. Throssell when he suggests that the price of the land should be so much increased. While I admit that the price of first-class land is very low, there are great difficulties in increasing the value. There is this reason, that the first selectors of land naturally picked out all the best of the country and obtained it at a low price, and it certainly seems rather hard that a man who comes along now to select land has to pay, perhaps, double the price of the man who had the first choice. There is much difficulty in the question. Where land is situated close to a railway, and is of first-class quality, then the price might be increased. It is entirely a question of classification. If a man takes up a big area, 10s. an acre is sufficient. I cannot recall people to mind who have made fortunes in the pursuit of agriculture. I can speak as to myself, for although I do not pose as a scientific agriculturist or would presume to dictate my opinions to other people, still, I have done almost everything a man can do on a farm, but I never made much out of the cultivation of the land. Any little profits I have made have been in other directions, such as grazing. If I had confined my business to the cultivation of the land I should not have been flourishing to-day, and there are not many who confine their attention to the cultivation of the soil who make enormous profits out of it. At the same time I am a firm believer in the productiveness and resourcefulness of the State, and no man has greater confidence in its future than I. I believe that the more one cultivates the land the more profit will accrue. My one object in view is not to grow a few bushels of wheat or a few tons of hay, for that is just getting 20s. back for £1 or more spent, but there are future

results by grazing and by getting the country grassed, and these results are considerable. I agree that the object the Government should have in view, and which I am pleased to see the Government have in view, is to get people settled on the land. It is not so much the price paid as the improvements that will accrue from its cultivation. The more people we can get settled on the land to fence, ringbark, and cultivate, the more we add to the State, and the question of whether the price is 10s. or 20s. an acre is of very small consequence. I believe that everyone who takes up land should be compelled to carry out the conditions, and there is no doubt that at present the inspectors are doing their duty and are keeping a pretty keen eye on those who are not doing what they should, so that either the lands will be forfeited or the owners will be called upon to spend a good deal of money on the property. As to the reference made to poison leases, and the small price paid for that land, I am quite satisfied that in days gone by when the State was not flourishing as it is now, the country acted wisely in giving that land away at the few pence per acre charged for it. At that time poison was the curse of the country, and those men who had the heart to take it up and eradicate it and bring the land into use, are deserving of the greatest credit. I have often wondered why people went on that land even at the low price when there were hundreds of thousands of acres without poison which could be obtained. Take the case of Messrs. Piesse of Wagin and Katanning. Those owners are now running thousands of sheep on land that a few years ago would not carry an animal. Any sheep or bullock showing on that land met with certain death. To get this land brought into use was a wise policy regardless of the cost of the land. The country was a curse until the poison was eradicated. With regard to the Denmark estate, which I have referred to before, we have had conflicting opinions passed upon it. I have not seen the land myself but I have heard good accounts of it from competent people

who have been through and inspected it, but I am very doubtful whether it is going to be such a land of milk and honey as is represented. I cannot understand how, situated as it is, practically hundreds of miles from a market, the lands will do great things. With 10-acre blocks I do not see how the settlers are going to make a huge fortune. I have heard it said that the land there will carry three sheep to the acre, and if a man holds a 10-acre block he will be able to carry 30 sheep upon it. At that rate he will not make a huge fortune. They say it is a great place for vegetable growing. Possibly it is but the same may be said about all the land around Perth. I hope, however, my prophesies will not be correct, but that the country will turn out all that the most sanguine hope for it. I agree it is time that we had a consolidated Land Act. We who dabble in land and have been interested in it for years find it very difficult to follow the various Acts. They are most confusing, and I am sure even the professional men of this House must at times have to consult the various Acts and give them considerable attention before they know what is intended. I hope that next year a consolidating measure will be brought down. Survey before selection is a very necessary thing, and that, again, bears a good deal upon the subject of the increased price put upon the land. In the old days a man went to select a block, and he got his line run exactly to suit himself. He shut out the poor or second-class land and took up only the very best of the country. Now, with these surveys before selection, if a man takes up a block of 500 acres probably he will get one half of it which he would never have selected if he had had his own way. He has to take it now as it is in his surveyed boundary, and, perhaps, to get 200 acres he wants he has to take up the whole land. Therefore, this principle of survey before selection is probably better for the State than for the selector, and it is no justification for increasing the price put upon the land. Then, as Mr. Hamersley pointed out, there are many instances where the people apply for land, put the

country to the cost of the survey, hold it for six or 12 months, and then abandon it. This has been a great expense to the State, and it is only reasonable that the selector should pay a share of the cost of the survey, or if he abandons the land he must share in the loss incurred. I do not intend to say very much more on this subject. Reference has been made to earth hunger, and it appears from what has been said that some members believe the State in 20 years' time will be so flourishing that there will not be an acre available. I am not afraid of that coming to pass. We still have an enormous area unalienated, and we must bear in mind that even if we get this tremendous rush of settlers, the land will always change hands, and a man wanting to acquire an estate will be able to purchase as much land as he likes. New people can come in by hundreds and thousands, and they will always be able to get as much land as they require. My desire is to see it taken up in the first place. I have often made the remark that it is a good thing to let the other fellow take it up, and grind away at it for a few years, when after he has dropped it you can always buy it on better terms from the Government. That will be the case over and over again for many years to come. I say, put all the people you can get on the land and never mind what is going to happen in 20 years' time. Those who have selected cannot take the land away, and the more it is improved, the better it will be. I have not the least fear that there will be plenty of land for those who follow. I am quite satisfied that with the improvements made by these amendments the Bill will be a good one. I have pleasure in supporting the second reading of the measure.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

BILL—BOYUP-KOJONUP RAILWAY.

Received from the Legislative Assembly and read a first time.

BILL—METROPOLITAN WATER SUPPLY, SEWERAGE, AND DRAINAGE.

In Committee.

Postponed Clause 74—Valuations :

The COLONIAL SECRETARY : When the Bill was previously before the Committee some discussion had arisen as to the wording of Subclause 2. This wording had been taken from the Roads Board Act, and certain hon. members seemed to think that it would be better to insert the wording as it appeared in the Municipal Institutions Act. With a view to effecting this proposed alteration he moved—

That Subclause 2 be struck out and the following inserted in lieu :—“(2) A sum equal to the estimated full, fair, average amount of rent at which such land may reasonably be expected to let from year to year, on the assumption (if necessary to be made) that such letting is allowed by law, less the amount of all rates and taxes, and a deduction of 20 pounds per centum for repairs, insurance and other outgoings : or”

Hon. J. W. Langsford : Could the leader of the House give any information as to what was comprised in the term “other outgoings,” the final words of the suggested amendments ? Were they in the Municipal Institutions Act ?

The COLONIAL SECRETARY : The amendment was word for word with the corresponding subclause in the Municipal Institutions Act. The words probably had not very much meaning, and it might be that it would not make very much difference if they were left out. However, it would probably be safer to follow the wording of the Municipal Institutions Act and leave them in.

Amendment put and passed.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY moved an amendment—

That in Subclause 3 the words “seven pounds ten shillings” be struck out and “six pounds” inserted in lieu.

Amendment passed.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY moved an amendment—

That lines 13 and 14 of the clause be struck out.

Amendment passed; the clause as amended agreed to.

Postponed Clause 98—Rates when payable :

The COLONIAL SECRETARY : When previously the clause was before the Committee, on motion by Mr. Langsford the words "half yearly" had been inserted in place of "yearly". It was to be remembered that the effect of this would be to double the cost of collection.

The CHAIRMAN : To save time it might be pointed out that the words "half yearly" having been inserted in the clause it was impossible at that stage to strike them out. The hon. member would be in order in recommitting on the fourth stage.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY : The Bill could be recommitting for the purpose of reconsidering the clause.

Clause as previously amended, put and passed.

Schedules, Title—agreed to.

Bill reported with amendments.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY moved

That the Bill be recommitting for the purpose of further considering Clause 98.

Hon. J. F. CULLEN : The Minister should look into this a little before taking this step. The question was whether it was wise to make half-yearly payments apply only to sums over £2. The matter had been thoroughly threshed out in Committee, and it was undesirable for the Council to make a difference between the rich man and the poor man. The sum of 30s. was just as heavy a burden to the poor man as the sum of £10 or £20 to the men rated at those amounts; and it was unwise of us for a little saving in sending out accounts to make this distinction, to say it did not matter about the little fellow but we would divide the payments for the rich man.

Question passed : Bill recommitting.

Recommittal.

Clause 98—Rates, when payable :

The COLONIAL SECRETARY moved an amendment—

That the words "half-yearly" be struck out.

If this were carried he intended to move to add a proviso, "Provided that where the

amount of any rate exceeds two pounds it shall be payable by equal half-yearly instalments." The idea was to keep the cost of administration as low as possible. To collect small amounts such as ten shillings half-yearly would add materially to the cost. Most of the rates were in small amounts. The sum of £2 was inserted in the proviso he proposed to add to the clause, but if members thought the amount too high, there was no objection to reducing it. He thought £2 was a reasonable limit. It could not affect anyone to pay £2 in rates in one sum. Members must remember that by increasing the cost of administration they increased the rates. The works were not a revenue producing concern. Rates were fixed to meet working expenses, interest and sinking fund, and the cheaper the cost of working the lower the rates would be.

Hon. J. F. CULLEN : The Minister forgot that this would create two categories of ratepayers. Two separate lots of accounts would have to be kept if we created a distinction between those paying over £2 and those paying under £2 in rates, and this would take up just as much time and cost as much as would be saved by sending out the smaller accounts once a year. The Legislative Council, supposed to represent not the poorest people, should not have consideration for the man called upon to pay over £2 and not give relief to those who paid under £2 in rates. The Committee should not agree to this retrogression.

Hon. A. G. JENKINS had supported the Bill as printed, but now the Committee had decided that rates should be paid half yearly, no distinction should be made. To create two classes of rates would entail just as much expense in the keeping of books as would be the case in collecting rates half-yearly all round.

Hon. E. M. CLARKE : We should not differentiate between the big and the little ratepayer. It was calculated to complicate matters and would not meet the end intended.

Hon. J. W. LANGSFORD : The amendment was not so innocent as it seemed to be. In Perth on a 1s. rate in order to take advantage of

the half-yearly payments the house would need to have a rental of £50, and that would probably exclude half the houses in Perth. In Claremont at a 9d. rate a house would need to be £65 in value to come within the half-yearly payments; and again in Fremantle at a 6d. rate a house would need to have an £80 rental value to get the privilege of the half-yearly payments. The amendment suggested by the Minister did not specify that it should be for anything but "any rate." It did not specify the aggregate of water, sewerage and storm water rates. The Committee after careful discussion by a large majority had decided the rates should be paid half-yearly, and members should adhere to that decision. Land rents were collected half-yearly, and in the metropolitan area the rate-payers should have the same advantage.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: The proviso was intended to cover all the rates. These might amount to 2s. 6d. in Fremantle which would be five times the rate mentioned by Mr. Langsford. There would be no hardship on the system suggested, and it would lower the cost of collection.

Amendment put and negatived.

Bill again reported without further amendment.

BILL—FISHERIES ACT AMENDMENT.

Assembly's Insistence.

The Assembly having insisted upon an amendment, the same was now considered.

In Committee.

Amendment insisted upon—Clause 2, line 12: After the word "fit" insert the words, "Provided always that such terms and conditions shall provide that no Asiatic or African alien or any person of Asiatic or African race claiming to be a British subject shall be employed."

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: This Bill, as hon. members would recollect, originated in the Legislative Council. It was sent on to the Legislative Assembly and a number of amendments were made. It was returned in due course, and the Legislative Council disagreed with the

amendment now under consideration; it was returned, and the Legislative Assembly insisted on the amendment. The position was therefore, that if we disagreed with the amendment the Bill could not be returned, and it must be accepted or the Bill would be laid aside. The Bill was brought in for a particular purpose, and it would be a pity to see it set aside. It was not essential to the life of the industry that black labour should be employed. The industry was different from the pearling industry, where it was necessary to employ black labour. In connection with the industry, however, there would be no diving to be done, and it would be possible to carry on the operations with white labour. He therefore moved—

That the Committee no longer disagree with the amendment made by the Legislative Assembly.

Hon. J. W. LANGSFORD: Would it be competent for the Committee to send a further message to the Legislative Assembly? He would like to take the sense of the Committee on the question, and strike out the reference to British subjects, and he had been given to understand that this would not be unacceptable to the other Chamber.

The CHAIRMAN: Standing Order No. 222 is as follows:—

"If the Assembly return the Bill with a Message informing the Council etc., the Council may in case (1) agree with or without amendments to the amendments to which it has previously disagreed, and make, if necessary, consequent amendments to the Bill."

The ruling of the Chair, therefore, would be that the hon. member would be in order in moving the amendment he suggested.

Hon. J. W. LANGSFORD moved an amendment—

That the amendment of the Legislative Assembly be agreed to with the following amendment, namely, that the words "or any person of Asiatic or African race claiming to be a British subject" be struck out.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: Without the Standing Orders of the Legis-

lative Assembly before him he could not say whether those Standing Orders would permit of the other place discussing the Bill if it went back once more. The Standing Orders of the Legislative Council provided as the Chairman had ruled, but speaking from memory he thought the Standing Orders of the Legislative Assembly would not allow that House to reconsider the measure. Rather, therefore, than the amendment should result in the Bill being lost, the Committee might report progress so that the question might be investigated.

Hon. E. M. CLARKE: It could not but be recognised that the proposed amendment was the keystone to the whole thing, and we might as well allow the clause to pass as it appeared. If the Committee struck out the words proposed the whole thing would be destroyed.

Progress reported.

BILL—AGRICULTURAL BANK ACT AMENDMENT.

In Committee.

Clause 4—Amendment of No. 15 of 1906. s. 28:

The COLONIAL SECRETARY moved an amendment—

That the proviso in lines 11 to 15 of the proposed new section be struck out and the following inserted in lieu: "Provided that subject to regulations made under this Act such machinery shall be deemed to have been manufactured in Western Australia, notwithstanding that certain parts thereof were imported. " Provided also that employees engaged in the manufacture of such machinery are paid the ruling rate of wages."

The measure was prepared rather hurriedly, and the proviso it was proposed to strike out it was feared would apply to paragraphs (a) and (b) as well as to (d). That was never intended: it was only intended to apply to (d). Since the Committee last met the matter had been considered and the amendment he had submitted to the Committee had been drafted. It would clearly define the position, and apply to the men engaged in the manufacture of machinery and not engaged in ringbarking, etcetera.

Amendment put and passed.

Hon. J. F. CULLEN: There was no provision for the repayment of money advanced on machinery. The original Act provided for the repayment of money advanced on stock but there was nothing as to the terms of the repayment of money advanced on machinery.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: The repayment of money advanced on machinery was provided for by regulation; at any rate that was the intention, and the power was given to make regulations for the purpose. He did not think Mr. Cullen was correct in stating that the repayment of advances on stock was mentioned in the Act. It was provided by agreement and regulation.

Hon. J. M. DREW: Where the Act did not make provision for repayment it had been the custom of the Government to make agreements with settlers. Loans were advanced for the development of certain industries and special agreements made for the repayment of the money within ten years, or whatever term might be decided upon.

Hon. J. F. CULLEN: The Act provided for ordinary loans he thought.

The Colonial Secretary: Yes.

Hon. J. F. CULLEN: Machinery would come under a similar category to stock. Machinery in the hands of a careful farmer would last a long time, but in the hands of a careless man would deteriorate very quickly. There should be some provision in the Bill in regard to it.

Hon. E. M. CLARKE: This was a dangerous clause. Every practical man knew that the life of machinery was limited; some special provision should be made for an article like machinery which was perishable. If machinery were left in the field for twelve months it would be ruined; there should be some special provision for repayment of money advanced on machinery.

Hon. W. PATRICK had seen an agreement entered into with a settler and it was a very satisfactory document. The Government were protected in every way. We could rely on the Government taking care not to lend money on any.

thing that deteriorated, without the greatest security.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: The member could rest assured that the Government would be protected. The trustees would not advance money without ample security. It was provided in the Bill that only £100 should be advanced on machinery, the sum was not unlimited, and £100 worth of machinery was not all that a small farmer would require. The value of the machinery might run into double that amount and the security would be on the land as well as the machinery.

Hon. E. M. CLARKE: According to the proviso, if half a dozen persons owned one property they could get six times as much as one person could get advanced on land.

Hon. J. F. Cullen: It was in the discretion of the trustees.

Hon. E. M. CLARKE: Why give this discretion to the trustees if it was not intended that they should use it? According to the clause one man holding a certain area could borrow a certain sum, but if five men held the same area they could borrow five times the amount that the one man could obtain.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: Members must bear in mind the conditions of the Act. Take the case of three men owning 3,000 acres, if they concentrated their business on 1,000 acres why should they not get the same advance as if the three worked separately?

Hon. G. THROSSELL: This matter could safely be left to the trustees but it was not right for one man to live on the land and other partners live in London, and money be obtained from the Agricultural Bank for the development of the land. We should insert the words "provided they are residents of Western Australia" or "absentees are not eligible."

Hon. V. HAMERSLEY: The clause looked as if two men could take joint selections and each borrow an amount, and yet only one reside on the land. Persons entitled to borrow to the full extent should be residents on the land.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: The Committee should not lose sight of the

fact that the improvements had to be carried out before the money was advanced. As to the amendment suggested by Mr. Throssell, it was extremely unlikely that anyone in London would go to the bank and ask for the advance of £750. The great object to be attained by the loans was to improve the land. The trustees took into consideration the individual who sought to borrow, and sometimes they would not entertain a loan to a certain man as they felt he was not likely to succeed, and the security would not be good enough.

Hon. V. HAMERSLEY: As to the question of clearing, whereas four or five years ago it cost three or four pounds an acre to clear, now land could be cleared for from 15 to 25 shillings an acre: therefore it might be that in another five years it would come down as low as 7s. 6d. an acre. With regard to the absentees, it did not necessarily follow that reference was made solely to persons residing in London: it might happen that certain people would come out here, take up land jointly, get the full advance on it, and after spending the money and not doing as well as they should have done leaving and going to one of the other States. In such a case as that the trustees would lose considerably.

Hon. T. H. WILDING: The suggestion as to a loan of £100 to be made in connection with the purchase of machinery locally made, was a good one. He was quite satisfied that the trustees would take care not to lend money unless the bank was properly protected. With regard to the subclause providing that several people could take up land together and each receive an advance, no fear need be experienced as the money would be spent on the land and the value would remain.

Hon. J. F. CULLEN: The Minister might meet the suggestion thrown out by Mr. Throssell. It would be no hardship if the provision as to making advances to each member of a joint partnership should be limited to those resident in the State.

Hon. J. W. HACKETT: You cannot do that by Federation.

Hon. J. F. CULLEN : It was provided under the Federal laws that there must be freedom of trade, but this was a question of assistance to land owners, and the law dealing with the land contemplated residence.

Hon. J. W. HACKETT : You cannot penalise a man from living, say, in Victoria.

Hon. J. F. CULLEN : That had already been done in the clause and members having jumped the big fence might just as well take the small one also. It was not desirable that six men, the majority of whom were out of the State, should be able to get six times the amount one man could obtain from the bank.

Hon. W. PATRICK : They do not get the money : it is spent on the land.

Hon. J. F. CULLEN : It was the man who was the chief security, and it would be wise to have that man resident as he would make a good asset for the State. It would be safer for the Minister to provide that the man should be resident in the State.

Hon. W. PATRICK : The matter should be left in the hands of the trustees of the bank. There were many cases of land settlement taking place all over Western Australia where two or three men working on the goldfields had taken up land with a view of occupying it in the future. The money they were earning at present was being put into the land. Some of them might find it necessary before residing on the land to go to the Eastern States and there was no reason why they should be penalised. The Bill did not make it compulsory on the trustees to advance the money : it was a matter entirely in their discretion, and the control should be left with them. It would be a mistake to interfere with the Bill.

Hon. J. M. DREW : There were numbers of cases in various parts of the State where people had taken up land jointly and it would be a great injustice to say four brothers were only in a position to secure the loan which would be made to one individual.

Clause as amended put and passed.

Clause 5—agreed to.

Bill reported with amendments.

House adjourned at 9.13 p.m.

Legislative Assembly,

Wednesday, 8th December, 1909.

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The SPEAKER took the Chair at 4.30 p.m., and read prayers.

ASSENT TO BILLS.

Message from the Governor received and read notifying assent to the following Bills:—

1. Abattoirs.
2. Public Education Endowment.
3. Redemption of Annuities.
4. Land Act Special Lease.

PAPERS PRESENTED.

By the Minister for Lands: 1, Report by the Surveyor General to 30th June, 1909. 2, Report of the Woods and Forests Department to 30th June, 1909.

QUESTION—SCHOOL TEACHERS' MINIMUM SALARIES.

Mr. ANGWIN asked the Minister for Education: 1, How many of the teachers in charge of schools are receiving less salary than £110 per annum, exclusive of house allowance? 2, What would be the additional cost to the State if all teachers in charge of schools were to receive the minimum salary of £110 per annum, exclusive of house allowance?

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION replied: 1, 152 teachers. 2, £3,708.

QUESTION — LAND SALE, WANNEROO.

Mr. JACOBY asked the Minister for Lands: 1, Did the Lands Department sell