

run. Further, I would like to ask, what sum the country is to be made liable for, under this Bill?

THE HON. J. MORRISON: This Bill seems to me to be rather a liberal one, for under it the Government may advance twenty shillings in the £ on any amount the institutions in question may have had. This seems to me a very fair advance to make on deposit receipts due five, seven, and ten years hence. Looking at it from an ordinary business point of view, I think seventy-five per cent. would have been quite sufficient to have advanced on the deposit receipts of reconstructed banks.

THE HON. J. F. T. HASSELL: These public institutions must get the money somewhere to liquidate their liabilities, and if they do not get it in this way, they will have to get a vote from public funds in the following year. The Government depend on members of roads boards not to spend more money than is necessary, and when they are overtaken by disaster such as they have been, it is only right that the Government should come forward and help them.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. S. H. Parker): I am not now in a position to say how much money this Bill will involve, and, therefore, I do not desire to press the Bill at the present moment beyond the second reading.

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

ADJOURNMENT.

The Council, at 5.30 o'clock p.m., adjourned until Tuesday, 29th August, at 2.30 o'clock p.m.

Legislative Assembly,

Thursday, 24th August, 1893.

Conservation of Rainfall on Eastern Goldfields—Wines, Beer, and Spirits Sale Act Amendment Bill: first reading—Official Receiver's Department: Cost of upkeep and results—Subsidising Agricultural Societies—Stock Tax Bill: Legislative Council's amendment—Post and Telegraph Bill: Legislative Council's amendments—Width of Roads crossed by Railways: Message from Legislative Council—Homesteads Bill: further considered in committee—Adjournment.

THE SPEAKER took the chair at 4.30 p.m.

PRAYERS.

CONSERVATION OF RAINFALL ON THE EASTERN GOLDFIELDS.

MR. CANNING, in accordance with notice, asked the Commissioner of Crown Lands, whether, having regard to the great importance of securing a supply of water for the forthcoming summer months at the Eastern Goldfields, especially at Southern Cross and Coolgardie, and in view of the non-success, so far, of boring operations, the Government had under consideration any measures for conserving the rainfall in the localities mentioned.

THE COMMISSIONER OF CROWN LANDS (Hon. W. E. Marmion) replied: The Government have constantly before them the necessity of doing something to provide a supply of water for Southern Cross, Coolgardie, and the route between these two places. With this object in view a large staff has been employed for some months past, and is still at work, and considerable sums of money have been and are still being expended in the work of well-sinking, deepening existing wells, tank-making, and boring for water, more especially at Coolgardie and *en route* to this mining centre. At Coolgardie two tanks have been excavated, with a capacity of 500,000 gallons each, and these tanks now contain between 150,000 and 200,000 gallons each. A bore has been put down, which bottomed on hard granite at about 164 feet, water having been struck at about 130 feet. The only appliances available at the time showed that 50 gallons per hour were lifted from this bore without making any visible impression on the depth of water therein, and it may fairly be considered that the supply would be equal to at

least 2,000 gallons for 24 hours. The water was pronounced by the Government Analyst not to be potable water, but it is excellent for horses and other stock; and the men who were employed at the bore, and others in the locality, have stated that they consumed the water without any ill effect, and would be satisfied to use it in the future. A derrick windlass, with tubular bucket, capable of lifting 20 gallons, has been erected at this bore, which has been fenced and supplied with troughs. The sinking of a well alongside this bore has been authorised, and, by means of drives at the bottom of the well, it is believed that a large and constant supply of water will be available, of similar quality to that in the bore. Another bore is now being put down at Coolgardie with a hand borer, which is capable of going down to about 500 feet, and the prospects of obtaining water are considered promising. Besides this, the boring contractors, Messrs. Rollo & Hall, are now proceeding to Coolgardie with their plant to put down other bores at points to be selected by the Water Supply Officer. The Superintendent of Water Supply, Mr. Renou, has gone to Coolgardie to select sites for bores, and to further advise the Commissioner of Crown Lands as to any other best probable means of providing a permanent supply of water as a standby for the large mining community likely to be at and about Coolgardie during the summer months. At Southern Cross, the Kauffmann Borer, which has been so long idle, is to be utilised at or near the site of Rollo's bore. A qualified driller has been engaged for the purpose, who is now *en route* to Southern Cross to commence operations. Extensive works, in the shape of excavations for tanks at Southern Cross, Coolgardie, and along the road to the latter, have been recommended to be undertaken by the Superintendent of Water Supply, but as these would involve an immediate expenditure of from £25,000 to £30,000, the Government does not feel justified in expending this enormous amount at present, but are doing, and will do, all they can to try and keep the route to Coolgardie open during summer, and provide a supply of water at that central point upon which the mining population may fall back in case of necessity.

WINES, BEER, AND SPIRITS SALE ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

Introduced by MR. BURT, and read a first time.

OFFICIAL RECEIVER'S DEPARTMENT AND THE BANKRUPTCY ACT.

MR. MOLLOY, in accordance with notice, moved for a return showing:—

Number of clerks employed in the Official Receiver's Office, and salaries paid each.

Number of petitions filed.

Amount paid for outside assistance.

Number of estates wound up.

Gross amount of solicitors' costs of petitions allowed, after deducting fees paid.

Fees paid to Government.

Fees paid to Official Receiver.

Statement showing, as regards estates the assets of which are realised:—

1st. Gross amount realised.

2nd. Actual amount in each paid to creditors.

The hon. member said the working of this department was a matter of the utmost importance to the mercantile community, and he thought it was very desirable that the House should have this information. The necessity for moving in this direction had been made manifest to him from the complaints which had reached him from some of his constituents. They complained that the machinery to be employed, in the case of creditors, was so cumbersome and costly that they prefer abandoning their claims rather than go to all this unnecessary trouble and expense in proving them. They said that to attempt to avail themselves of the provisions of the present Bankruptcy Act, as now administered, meant that not only did they lose the money owed to them by the unfortunate person who brought himself under the Act, but they were afterwards called upon to pay the expenses which the administration of the Act entailed. Having regard to these representations, he thought it necessary to move for this return, which would show to the public whether this Bankruptcy Act had really fulfilled its object, and whether the complaints of the people he had alluded to were justified. If it should be found that they were justified, and that the Act was not giving satisfaction, but on the contrary was an oppressive and ex-

pensive measure, then perhaps some reform might be suggested.

MR. A. FORREST said he had much pleasure in seconding the motion, because he thought that the machinery which one had to put in motion, in the case of small estates especially, before one could expect to realise anything, was altogether too elaborate and expensive. He had never heard of any dividends being paid—or very few, at any rate—once an estate got down to the Court. The papers you received from the Official Receiver, even if only a small creditor, were voluminous enough to startle you out of your senses; generally three big sheets of foolscap, which you had to fill in. An ordinary creditor was hardly competent to fill them in, and you had to go to a solicitor to do it, thereby incurring further expense. As to the staff employed at the Official Receiver's office, he believed it was a fairly large one, but still he was informed that outside assistance had to be resorted to in connection with the accounts. He thought it would be better if a proper accountant were appointed to this office than that the Official Receiver should go to any private firm outside to get assistance in winding up estates. There were many complaints against this department; in fact, creditors generally felt now, when it was rumoured that a man was likely to go insolvent, that it would be better for him to assign his estate to the larger creditors for the benefit of all. He spoke thus from some knowledge of the feeling in business circles in Perth; great dissatisfaction was expressed all round at the way in which the work of this department was carried out. He hoped the Government would not object to furnish these returns, so that the House might see what amount had been realised from the estates administered by this officer since his appointment.

MR. CLARKSON had much pleasure in supporting the motion. He had never heard any Act condemned more strongly than the present Bankruptcy Act. Everybody was condemning it, and no wonder; for, as the hon. member for Kimberley had said, estates at present were swallowed up entirely in costs, and the poor creditor got nothing, after perhaps going to a lot of expense. Unfortunately he had had a little experience of the working of it

himself, and he found that weeks and months elapsed before anything was done. So far as he could gather, this was entirely owing to some elaborate machinery in the Official Receiver's office which had to be put in motion. People were complaining about it in every direction, and he had much pleasure in supporting the hon. member who had called for these returns.

MR. R. F. SHOLL said he had had some little experience with the old Bankruptcy Act, and had hailed with delight the introduction of the present Act. Under the old system it was useless for a *bonâ fide* creditor to send in his claim against an estate in bankruptcy; because bankrupts, with the assistance of their friends, used to take care to obtain a majority in value and number in the appointment of their own committee of inspection and their own trustees; and that was generally the last that the poor creditor heard of it. The bankrupt himself, generally, used to come out a wealthy man. Things were different now. The Act was more stringently worked for the benefit of *bonâ fide* creditors, and the bankrupt generally had rather a bad time of it, compared with what it used to be. Many of those who objected to the present Act were those who were afraid to face it. The system was rather unpopular with some people, because they knew their affairs would be closely inquired into, and that if there was anything suspicious it would be brought to light, and sifted to the bottom. But there was nothing to fear in the case of the honest trader, who unfortunately became insolvent through no cause of his own. That man was not hampered or harassed in any way by the Official Receiver. There was nothing in the present Act to prevent any insolvent from making a composition with his creditors. All that was necessary was that the Official Receiver should be satisfied that it was a *bonâ fide* transaction, and that there was no underhand work in connection with it. He believed that the gentleman now occupying that position did his duty without fear or favour. He was very energetic and painstaking, and, he thought, was conferring a benefit on the whole community, and particularly the commercial community.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL (Hon. S. Burt) said of course the Government would have no objection whatever to

furnish the return asked for. As for complaints, there always would be complaints about every Bankruptcy Act. There always had been, and there always would be. Under the old Act the creditors did everything; now the Court did everything. Creditors, under the old system, did not care to do anything, and they clamoured for a new Bankruptcy Act; but when they got a new Act, which was worked officially, then there was a clamour for the old Act, and so they went on. It was not only the case here, but all over the world. One hon. member said that the creditors were now called upon to pay for the working of the Act. He did not suppose the hon. member meant directly, but indirectly; in other words, that the expenses of working the Act were too much. But if creditors would not work the Act themselves, when they had an opportunity of doing so under the old system, it must be worked by somebody else—by officers of the Government; and now that creditors found they had to pay for it, they wanted the old system. Of course there was not quite so much money available for dividends as there was formerly, simply because the Act was worked officially instead of by the creditors themselves. But he denied absolutely that the creditors were called upon to pay the expense of working the Act. He was aware that sometimes the Official Receiver required a guarantee from some creditors when he had to go to law for their benefit; and of course if he had a bad case and went to the wall, the creditors would have to pay up. But that was only natural and an everyday transaction when you went to law. What was there to rail about the Bankruptcy Act in that? It had been said that the Act was an oppressive Act. It could only be oppressive from the fact that debtors now got cross-examined as to all their dealings. Then it was said that the creditors got nothing. Well they got nothing before, and in that respect they were no worse off now than they were under the old system. If people chose to trust people, and then find that their trust was misplaced, why should they blame the Bankruptcy Act for it? The remedy for that was to be more cautious and prudent in trading. If people did not care to exercise caution or prudence in their trading transactions,

let them not blame the Act if they burnt their fingers. The Act had nothing to do with it. What was oppressive was not the Act, but the result of the inconsiderate action of those who advanced money in the first instance to those who were unable to repay it, because they invested it in speculations which resulted in loss and disappointment. The hon. member for West Kimberley said the Official Receiver should not obtain assistance from outside accountants. He did not know whether the Official Receiver did obtain outside assistance, but it was very strange to him if it was true, when he had an accountant in his own office, provided by the Government. There was no reason that he knew of why the Official Receiver should seek any assistance outside his office, and he could not believe that he did seek assistance from outside accountants, [Mr. A. FORREST: It is true.] He would make inquiries about it. As to the cross-examination of debtors, that could only do good. It made people in business cautious in their dealings, knowing that, if they became insolvent, all their actions would be ripped up by the Official Receiver. If a man had done nothing that was wrong, he had nothing to fear. Then again it was said that no dividends had ever been declared since this Act came into operation. He denied it. A very large amount of property had been obtained for the benefit of creditors, which would never have been recovered but for this system of examination. The result so far had been very good. The hon. member for Toodyay said he did not like the Act, so far as his experience of it went. What was his experience? One isolated transaction, in which, he believed, the hon. member was asked to give a guarantee for a friend that a composition would be paid. The hon. member said that months and months elapsed before anything could be done, owing to the delay in the Official Receiver's office. But what were the facts? He happened to know something about the case referred to. It did not follow that because a composition was offered the Official Receiver should accept it, without making inquiries as to the value of the assets. He is not to accept a friend's offer of 2s. 6d. in the pound without making some inquiry. All this takes time; and, in the particular case

referred to, he believed a larger composition was obtained than was first offered. [MR. CLARKSON: Less.] That seemed strange, when 8s. was first offered, and 10s. secured afterwards. He had no interest, he hoped, in this Bankruptcy Act except to see that it worked well, and he believed it would be found to work well. With regard to one matter spoken of by the hon. member for West Kimberley as to the number of forms issued under the Act, he was inclined to agree with the hon. member that they were too voluminous; but he was sorry to think they should bother and worry creditors, and drive them out of their senses, to fill them up. The forms might be rather cumbersome, and might be simplified in that respect; but the main features of the Act were good. The forms were simply matters connected with the administration of the Act, under the rules; but they could be altered at any time. He should be happy to look into the matter, and see whether fewer forms would not suffice. Having said this much, he would only add that the Government would have no objection whatever to the returns asked for being laid on the table, as soon as possible.

MR. SOLOMON thought the Attorney General was looking at this motion in a wrong light; he seemed to regard it as a charge against the Official Receiver. He (Mr. Solomon) did not look upon it in that light. He thought the intention of the mover was simply to obtain certain information with regard to office fees, and with regard to the work done under the present Act, and the results. He had himself heard several complaints with regard to the charges and fees; and he did not think that in any one case that had passed through the Court there had been anything like a fair dividend, while, on the other hand, the expenses were enormous, in proportion to the value of the estate administered. It was all very well to say it was the fault of people giving unlimited credit; but to his mind the question they had to consider was,—whether the present Act was working prejudicially or otherwise, both as regards the debtor and the creditor. There was a general opinion that the fees were excessive, and that there was too much red-tapeism altogether, a great deal of which might be done away with. So

far as he was personally concerned, he was bound to admit that the present Act was a very good one compared with the old Act; and he took it that the object of the present motion was simply to obtain some information in order to show the public the actual result of the working of the Act, and whether it was an improvement on the old system or not. For this reason he had much pleasure in supporting the motion.

Motion put and passed.

SUBSIDISING AGRICULTURAL SOCIETIES.

IN COMMITTEE.

MR. MONGER: I rise to move the motion standing in my name: "That in the opinion of this committee, for the better encouragement of agriculture, the Government should consider the advisability of subsidising the various Agricultural Societies of the colony, on the basis of the subsidy now granted in the various Municipalities." There never was a more favourable opportunity for bringing forward before this House the wishes of our Agricultural Societies than at a time when the House has under its consideration a Bill having for its object the settlement of the soil and furthering, generally, the agricultural development of the colony. In the motion which I desire to bring under the consideration of this committee, I have suggested that these societies should be subsidised on a somewhat similar principle to that upon which a subsidy is now granted by the Government to the various Municipalities, that is, a subsidy at the rate of 10s. in the £ upon the actual income of each Municipality. That is the basis upon which I ask for this subsidy to the Agricultural Societies. Speaking generally, I do not know that it would involve any great increase upon the amount of the grants already voted by the Government to assist these societies; still it would place the larger and more important societies in a better position than they are in at the present time. If I thought that I could receive the support of the Government I should move that this subsidy should be in addition to the amounts that are already granted by the Government to the various Agricultural Societies; but I have been led to understand that any proposal in that direction would not meet with favour

on the Ministerial bench. I therefore thought it advisable to word my resolution in the way I have done; and it would mean that, instead of giving to the various societies the annual grants now made to them by the Government, they should give to each society 10s. in the £ upon the actual amount of each society's revenue. I do not think this is very much to ask from a Government which appears to have the best interests of agriculture at heart. I think we are all agreed that the Agricultural Societies of this colony, especially those in the more settled portions of it, have done their best to further the interests of that very desirable class of colonist—the farmer. They hold their annual meetings and their annual shows, at which the live stock and the produce of the district are exhibited, and a spirit of rivalry is in this way stimulated amongst the settlers. These annual meetings also afford the settlers an opportunity of discussing subjects affecting their own interests, and of submitting their views upon such questions to the Government of the day. And here I may say that it has been a source of great satisfaction throughout the agricultural districts that the present Ministry have always displayed such an active interest and liberal views in dealing with matters appertaining to the welfare of those districts. I can only hope that, with additional funds in the hands of the various societies, they will be able to offer greater inducements to the settler to exhibit his stock and to exhibit his produce, and to show what the country is capable of doing. I can hardly conceive a more legitimate object for Government aid than the assistance of these associations. At the present moment we are voting annually a sum of £200 for a Queen's Plate, to encourage racing, at Perth and Roebourne. This money is voted—we have always been told so—for the purpose of improving our breed of horses. I am not inclined to say that it does not tend to improve our breed of horses, but I maintain it would be improved just as much without this vote from the Government; and if this resolution I am now asking this committee to support is likely to be disapproved of by the Government, I can only say they should show their sincerity and consistency in opposing such a resolution as this

by also doing away with this vote of £200, expended not so much for the improvement of our breed of racehorses as for the benefit of the few dealers in these animals. I have, however, no wish or intention, when that vote comes on for discussion on the Estimates, to ask the Government to strike it out; but I will ask them, before they bring forward their Estimates for the coming year, to so frame them that the Agricultural Societies in the different districts of the colony may receive the small additional sum that I now ask this committee to join me in urging upon the Government. So far as I can gather, there are only about ten Agricultural Societies in the whole of this colony, and nine out of the ten now receive an annual grant of £25 each, while the other one receives £100.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL (HON. S. BURT): How much do they raise themselves?

MR. MONGER: That is just what I am coming to. Some of these societies that are only subsidised to the extent of £25 have a revenue almost equal to the society which receives £100.

THE PREMIER (HON. SIR J. FORREST): Including entries, I suppose.

MR. MONGER: No; actual income. In the district to which I belong it exceeds this year that of the Royal Agricultural Society of the colony; and I say it is unfair to those societies which have a larger revenue than this one favoured society that they should receive smaller assistance from the Government. It is with the view of making these grants more equitable that I have brought forward this resolution in its present shape. As I have already said, I do not think it will mean a very great additional amount of money to be voted by the Government, but it will be distributed on a more equitable basis. Those societies which are most deserving of assistance—on the good old principle of helping those who help themselves—will receive the largest measure of assistance, and this cannot fail to be of great benefit to the districts concerned. It will enable the societies to give more liberal prizes; and we all know that more liberal prizes mean more eager competition in the different sections. Sir, I beg to move the resolution standing in my name.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): With regard to the observation of the hon. member that the vote for the Queen's Plate does not fulfil the object it was intended for, I hope the hon. member will show that he has the courage of his opinion, and will rise in his place when the Estimates are on, and move to strike it out. I can promise him that the Government will not divide the House on the question. We shall be very glad if he will strike it out; so that the hon. member need not trouble himself about that argument. It was a very good idea, no doubt, on the part of the hon. member to bring this resolution before the House. I have no doubt the hon. member considers that he holds a brief from the various Agricultural Societies of the colony in this matter, but it is a strange thing that, almost without any exception, no representation whatever has been made to the Government on the subject by those most immediately concerned,—the societies themselves. I am inclined to think that even if his wishes were carried out the amount of this subsidy would not be very much in the case of most of these societies, unless he wishes us to recognise, as part of the revenue of the societies, not only the members' subscription money but also all they receive from entries, gate money, and all other sources. But I do not think myself that the money received in entries from persons who are competing at the shows, and which is paid out again in prizes, should, for the purposes of this resolution, be regarded as revenue. Perhaps the hon. member considers it revenue, but I do not look upon it as revenue at all. Then again there are the fees charged for booths, games, merry-go-rounds; I suppose the hon. member regards that money as revenue. Also gate money. These societies have many ways of augmenting their incomes, in addition to the subscription money of their members. Besides that, the Government already give them a small contribution—it is not very large, I know, £25 a year; and, if the funds of the colony would permit, I should myself be very glad to see that amount increased; that is, so long as the objects we have in view were carried out. There is a marked difference, I think, between the position of these societies and the position of our

Municipalities. The Municipalities have no means of raising revenue from sports, and merry-go-rounds, and booths, and gate money. The only source of revenue they have is from taxation. Their revenue is wrung from the pockets of the ratepayers, and it is all expended on public works for the improvement of the Municipality. I do not think the two cases are at all parallel. I can only inform the hon. member that the Government have done all they can in the way of assisting the various local bodies throughout the colony, and we shall continue to do so as much as we can. But as for encouraging him to expect, at the present moment, any more assistance from the public chest for this purpose, it is idle for me to hold out any hope whatever for him. I can only say, it cannot be done,—not just now at any rate. I should be glad if the hon. member would inform me whether he has been commissioned by the various Agricultural Societies throughout the colony in this matter. I hope the hon. member has not moved in it because he thinks it may be a good thing for himself or for one particular society. If there is a desire all round, on the part of these societies, to dip deeper into the public purse, I think they would have made some representations to the Government themselves, and given some reason for putting forward such a claim. I have heard but very few complaints as to the action of the Government as regards these societies. They have been very well satisfied, so far as I know, with the small contribution which the Government is able to give them. If they are not, I think we should have had the matter represented to the Government by the societies themselves, instead of having an hon. member rising in his place to put forward a proposition like this.

MR. CLARKSON: The hon. member for York has not made it very clear to my mind what he considers constitutes the revenue of these societies. I understand he proposes that this subsidy is to be based upon the society's revenue, but he has not made it clear to me what he regards as revenue. If the subscription money of members is alone to be considered the revenue—and it appears to me that is the only legitimate revenue these societies can be said to have—then I am

afraid that what the hon. member proposes would be rather a doubtful blessing in the case of some societies. I think they would be better off with their £25, than if they received a subsidy equal to one-half their actual revenue. I do not think some of them have fifty paying members on their roll. Many of them have a large number of members, but I am sorry to say many of these members do not pay up their subscriptions; and I think some of these societies would receive less assistance from the Government under this subsidy arrangement than they do now. With regard to the idea that the money voted annually for the Queen's Plate should be divided between the Agricultural Societies, I agree with the hon. member in that, for I consider that that money is simply thrown away. It is a perfect farce to say that it improves our breed of horses. It doesn't improve the breed of horses one jot. We have plenty of well-bred horses here now—rather more than we can find room for; and if the hon. member had proposed that the money now voted for the Queen's Plate should be divided amongst the various Agricultural Societies, it might do some good. But, after what has fallen from the Premier, I am afraid there is very little show for these societies getting any larger grant than they now receive.

MR. QUINLAN: I have much pleasure in supporting this motion. I take it that the hon. member has moved in this matter as the representative of an agricultural district; and quite right too. I believe that some such measure is adopted in the other colonies for the purpose of encouraging the breeding of stock. I understand the hon. member's intention to be that this subsidy should be in proportion to the revenue received from paid-up subscriptions, and not in proportion to the revenue received from all sources, such as gate money, booths, and merry-go-rounds. I must differ from the hon. member for Toodyay when he says that this would be a doubtful blessing. It would have a good effect upon the Newcastle society at any rate, for I believe I am the only member of that society who has paid up his subscription this year. This subsidy would have the effect of stimulating the members of these societies to pay up their subscriptions, so as to entitle the society

to a larger subsidy. If they did not like to do so, it would be their own fault. If they did not like to help themselves, they could not blame the Government for not helping them. I believe in the principle of helping those who help themselves, and, if this motion were adopted, I am sure it would have a beneficial effect in that respect, in stimulating the members of these societies to pay up their subscriptions more regularly than they do now. For that reason, I think it is an excellent idea, and I have much pleasure in supporting it.

MR. THROSSELL: The object which the hon. member has in view, as I conceive it, is a good one. He wishes to affirm the good old principle of helping those who are prepared to help themselves. That principle has already been affirmed by the Government in subsidising municipalities, and I see no reason why it should not be extended in other directions. I fully recognise the force of what has fallen from my hon. friend on my left (Mr. Clarkson) that in the case of some of the smaller societies, with small incomes, the result of this motion might be the reverse of gratifying, because the subsidy they would be entitled to would possibly be smaller than the present annual grant. On the other hand, I can quite conceive that if this principle were adopted of granting a subsidy on the basis of a society's income it would have the effect of stimulating the societies into more active life. I think members will agree with me that a society whose chief source of income is the paltry £25 received from the Government, can do very little good, either for its members or its district, and is not worthy the name of an Agricultural Society. I take it that this motion has been brought forward in the interests of agriculture, and I can see clearly that it would have a beneficial effect in stimulating our various societies to renewed exertion, increase their roll of membership, and encourage the wealthier men of the district to give their donation of £5, or £10, or £20, to swell the revenue of their society, in order that the amount of subsidy it would be entitled to might be proportionately increased; for I take it for granted that the Government, if the motion were carried, would give 10s. in the £ upon the actual gross income of

the society. If we take this view of it, we can see very clearly that this would really afford a proof of the earnestness of the people of the various districts in supporting their societies. Looking at it in that light, I shall be inclined to support the motion. So far as my own society is concerned, I know it would be a gainer if this proposal were adopted, though I am aware that possibly my hon. friend on the left might be a loser, so far as his society is concerned. But I maintain that if this motion were carried it would have the effect of stimulating these dormant societies into real active life, and of calling forth the active help of the leading men of the district to supplement the ordinary revenue of the society to such an extent as to enable the society to claim from the Government a subsidy worthy of the name. The result would be that the annual shows of the societies would create greater interest and keener competition, the prizes offered would be worthy of the name of prizes, and, in short, we should be carrying out the real object which these societies are intended to serve, and doing much to develop the agricultural resources of the country. Although, as I have said, I am not blind to the fact that possibly some of the smaller societies might suffer from the adoption of this subsidy principle, still, on the whole, I feel that I am bound to support the resolution, with this qualification: that it should apply only to Agricultural Societies, and not to what are known as Farmers' Clubs. I say that because these clubs are generally supported by a much larger number of habitual subscribers than the societies are, and they do not stand in so much need of assistance as the more struggling societies do. With this reservation, I shall have pleasure in supporting the motion.

MR. R. F. SHOLL: I should have thought this was a bad time to bring forward a motion of this kind, when the Government are curtailing their expenditure in every direction. I think we have done quite enough to benefit the agricultural industry in this colony. We have spent hundreds of thousands in providing railway facilities, mainly for the purpose of stimulating and encouraging this industry; and we are now considering a measure for further liberalising the con-

ditions upon which land may be obtained for agricultural purposes; and, before the session closes, I should not be a bit surprised to see the tariff revised in the direction of affording further protection to our farmers and the agricultural community. As to these Agricultural Societies, they have never done any practical good that I know of in promoting the interests of agriculture.

MR. CLARKSON: You don't know anything about it.

MR. R. F. SHOLL: I think a great deal more has been done in the interests of agriculture by our railways, by reducing the cost of transport, than has ever been done by these societies, or is ever likely to be done. As a rule, I think these societies are fairly prosperous, and I do not think they really want a subsidy. It appears they have never asked for it, and we may take it for granted they do not want it. If these Agricultural Societies are going to be subsidised we shall next have the Dog and Poultry Society asking for a subsidy also, and other societies all over the country, and there will be no knowing where the thing is going to end. The hon. member for Northam says this would stimulate the members of the local societies to subscribe more liberally. If they have the interests of their society at heart they need no stimulus of this kind to induce them to subscribe; I think they ought to put their hands in their pockets and pay up their subscriptions without any stimulus of this kind, out of the public chest. As to the Queen's Plate vote, although in past years it may have done something to improve the breed of horses, I think it has now done its work in that respect; and I question whether it is wise policy to keep the vote on the Estimates any longer. As to the grants now made to the various Agricultural Societies all over the colony, I think, if instead of distributing these small sums between a number of small societies, the whole amount were handed over to one central society, holding one annual show, and offering really good prizes, it would be of more practical use than to have these small sums distributed all over the colony. The hon. member for Northam said that this £25 received from the Government is the principal source of income of some of these societies; if so, all I can say is

such a society is not worthy of the name of a society, and is not worthy of a vote at all.

MR. A. FORREST: I am sorry I am not able to support the hon. member for York on this occasion, because I think once we granted this concession to the Agricultural Societies, we should open the door for every society in the colony to ask for a subsidy on the same principle. I do not think that would be conducive to the interests of the Treasury at all events. All these Agricultural Societies at present receive some assistance from the Treasury, and I believe that in most cases the amount of this assistance, small as it is, is more than is contributed by the people of the district. There are too many of these shows, in my opinion. Every district wants its own show. Instead of combining together and having one really good show, we have little shows held only 15 or 20 miles apart, simply because the various districts will not sink their little local jealousies. If they combined together, and held one show in each district alternately, instead of every district having its own trumpery show, a great deal more good would be done. I would advise the hon. member to withdraw his motion, and, when the York society hold their next show, I would recommend him to invite the Governor and the Ministry to visit the district, and, having given them a good dinner, pull out his collection book, if his society wants any assistance. I have no doubt the Premier would only be too glad to contribute his 100 guineas. As for putting these societies on the same footing as Municipalities, that is absurd. The reason why the Government were asked to give a subsidy to the Municipalities was because they paid no rates for any public buildings, and contributed nothing towards the cost of maintaining the streets and footpaths in front of Government property. If the Government were liable to be rated, like other ratepayers, we should not have asked them for a subsidy, but, as they could not be taxed like other people, it was only fair that they should contribute something towards the expense of maintaining the roads and footpaths in order.

MR. LEFROY: The object which the hon. member for York has in view seems to be a good one, and that is to help those who show a disposition to help

themselves. I do not think that if this motion were carried it would make very much difference so far as the Treasury is concerned; but it would have this effect: instead of the money being distributed indiscriminately amongst all the societies in the same proportion—with the exception of the Royal Agricultural Society, which gets £100—it would be allotted in proportion to the vitality and energy displayed by each society in the matter of its subscription money. Some of the money that is now given to the do-nothing, unprogressive societies would go to the more active and progressive societies, who showed themselves more worthy of assistance. I take it that what the hon. member means by the revenue of a society is simply the amount realised from the subscriptions of its members. I think that ought to be understood. I would not support this proposal in any other light. I would not support it if it is intended to include gate money and entries as part of a society's revenue; but if the hon. member confines it to the subscriptions of members, I shall be very glad to support it.

THE COMMISSIONER OF RAILWAYS (Hon. H. W. Venn): I have listened somewhat attentively to the discussion this evening, but I regret very much I have not heard any member allude to the real objects of these societies, and whether they fulfilled those objects. The only ground upon which the mover of the resolution seemed to take his stand was that he thought the present was an opportune time for bringing forward such a motion, because the Government had shown the interest which they take in matters appertaining to the agricultural industry by bringing forward a Bill having for its object the settlement of the land. But not a word have I heard as to the objects of these societies, and no one has attempted to show that they are fulfilling those objects. I should like to ask the hon. member and other members whether he or they can point to any solitary instance where any Agricultural Society in the colony has fulfilled the true objects of such associations. Members will recollect that some time ago there was an Agricultural Commission appointed, of which I had the honour of being chairman; and, in their report, the Commission dealt rather exhaustively

with this subject. I put the question to almost every witness that came before us, in every district we visited, whether the local society in their opinion was doing any practical good, so far as agriculture was concerned. The result in every instance, almost without exception, was, that in the opinion of the farmers examined before that Commission these societies had not done one iota of good to the district, so far as the cultivation of the soil was concerned, and the promotion of agriculture. The principal object in view seemed to be to have a show, and a show dinner, once a year; and, after that gala day passed by, the objects of the society were entirely lost sight of. We found there was no such thing as an Agricultural Society, in the proper meaning of the term, for the development and promotion of agriculture, and the dissemination of useful information amongst those engaged in that industry. I, myself, once read a paper on the object of such societies, and tried what I could to stimulate an interest in the matter amongst those most immediately concerned; but, outside the one idea of offering a prize for the best bullock or the best sheep, they seem to have no other idea. An exhibition of live stock is no doubt a very good thing in its way, and is one of the objects of such societies; but I take it that the main object of these associations should be the diffusion of a knowledge of agriculture, as to the most improved methods of cultivation and stock-breeding, and the thousand-and-one things necessary to successful farming. If the present Government thought that our Agricultural Societies were attempting intelligently to do anything in this direction, outside giving prizes, they would have much more sympathy with this motion than they have under existing circumstances. If the motion were agreed to, and this system of subsidies adopted, what would be the result? The result would simply be that the societies would give a few more prizes for horses, and bullocks, and sheep, which is the alpha and omega of their existence. It is simply a misnomer altogether to call such societies Agricultural Societies. Until we see a desire on the part of the agriculturists of the colony, both Agricultural Societies and Farmers' Clubs—for I cannot see any difference between the two—to spread a

knowledge of agriculture, and to profit by such knowledge, and to fulfil the true objects of such societies, I cannot see that the Government would be justified in increasing their present contributions towards these societies.

MR. CLARKSON: I must really combat some of the remarks by the hon. gentleman who has just sat down. He said that these societies do nothing to promote the farming industry. I think the hon. gentleman, when he made that statement, could not have visited the annual gatherings of any of these societies. [MR. VENN: Every one of them.] The hon. gentleman could not have seen what was going on. In my district, not only do we give prizes for live stock, but we also encourage good farming by offering prizes for the best wheat, barley, oats, hay, and dairy produce of every kind. Surely that must do something to promote the agricultural industry. I think the hon. gentleman went too far when he said that these societies do nothing at all to encourage the farming industry.

MR. TRAYLEN: I dare say I was connected with Agricultural Societies almost as early as anyone in this House, and I am bound to say I cannot take so pessimistic a view of them as the Commissioner of Railways does. I have seen these societies meet in the old country, and my idea was that they did not do so much for practical agriculture as these societies in this colony do. I am almost entirely at variance with him in his views of the uselessness of these societies as conducted in this colony. I venture to say that not even the smallest show can be held without doing some good. There is a spirit of emulation provoked in some minds, if it is only in the minds of a few; and when that spirit is evoked in a few minds, I take it it will reach others in course of time, and from these upwards again until very large results may grow from what is to-day a comparatively small thing. I do not know that we need conclude, as some members seem to do, that our smaller societies are necessarily occupants of Sleepy Hollow. It may be that their surroundings are not favourable to any brilliant results; but there may be as much activity in the minds of those connected with them as there is in larger communities, where it is easy to get together a large number of exhibitors

and to find a larger number of exhibits. I am not quite sure, taking this view of the useful work these societies are already doing, that I can support the hon. member for York in this motion; for, after all, we cannot support every good thing out of Government funds. I am sure that in the present Government we have gentlemen who are very anxious to spend public money for all good purposes; and, if they say a word against the hon. member's motion, it is not because they have no sympathy with agriculture or with Agricultural Societies and Farmers' Clubs, but because they find it utterly impossible to find the money to support everything. I have risen mainly for the sake of saying that I deprecate the views of those who speak somewhat slightly of the operations of our Agricultural Societies, because of their local character. There must be always those who have something good to show, and who cannot afford to go 50 or 100 miles with their exhibits. I hope the Government will, if possible, increase the assistance which they now give to these societies, but not necessarily on the basis indicated by the hon. member for York.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL (Hon. S. Burt): I sympathise most strongly with our Agricultural Societies, but, as there is none in the district I represent, and as the subject has been debated long enough, I beg to move that the question be now put. I think the hon. member has effected the object he had in view, and, as we have other important business to get on with, I hope the hon. member will not think that I am making this motion to preclude his replying.

Question put and passed.

Resolution put, and negatived on the voices.

STOCK TAX BILL.

MESSAGE FROM THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

The following Message was received from the Legislative Council:—

Mr. Speaker,

"The Legislative Council acquaints the 'Legislative Assembly that it has agreed 'to a Bill intituled 'An Act to provide 'for the payment of Customs Duty on 'certain Live Stock imported into the 'Colony,' subject to the amendment 'contained in the Schedule annexed; 'in which amendment the Legislative

"Council desires the concurrence of the 'Legislative Assembly.

"GEO. SHENTON,

"President.

"Legislative Council Chamber,

"Perth, 22nd August, 1893."

Schedule showing the Amendment made by the Legislative Council in "The Stock Tax Bill."

"On page 2, Clause 3—Add the following words to the end of the clause:—
"and such remission of duty shall be notified in the next following Government Gazette."

"C. LEE STEERE,

"Clerk of the Council.

"22nd August, 1893."

Ordered—That the consideration in committee of the Legislative Council's Message be made an Order of the Day for the next sitting of the House.

POST AND TELEGRAPH BILL.

MESSAGE FROM THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

The following Message was received from the Legislative Council:—

Mr. Speaker,

"The Legislative Council acquaints the 'Legislative Assembly that it has agreed 'to a Bill intituled 'An Act to consolidate and amend the Law relating to 'Posts and Telegraphs and Telephones,' 'subject to the amendments contained in 'the Schedule annexed; in which amendments the Legislative Council desires 'the concurrence of the Legislative Assembly.

"GEO. SHENTON,

"President.

"Legislative Council Chamber,

"Perth, 24th August, 1893."

Schedule of Amendments made by the Legislative Council in "The Post and Telegraph Bill."

"No. 1.—On page 7, Clause 15, lines 2 and 3, strike out the words 'recommended by the Postmaster-General' and."

"No. 2.—On page 8, Clause 19, line 5, between the words 'to' and 'which' insert 'or from.'

"No. 3.—On page 12, Clause 36, strike out sub-clauses a, b, and c.

"C. LEE STEERE,

"Clerk of the Council.

"24th August, 1893."

Ordered—That the consideration in committee of the Legislative Council's Message be made an Order of the Day for the next sitting of the House.

WIDTH OF ROADS CROSSED BY RAILWAYS.

MESSAGE FROM THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

The following Message was received from the Legislative Council:—

“Mr. Speaker,

“The Legislative Council having this day passed the following Resolution, viz.,—‘That in the opinion of this ‘‘House it is necessary that wherever ‘‘railways cross main roads or streets, ‘‘the full width of the said road or ‘‘street shall be maintained,’ presents ‘‘the same to the Legislative Assembly ‘‘for its concurrence.

“GEO. SHENTON,

“President.

“Legislative Council Chamber,

“Perth, 24th August, 1893.”

Ordered—That the consideration in committee of the Legislative Council's Message be made an Order of the Day for Wednesday, 30th August.

HOMESTEADS BILL.

IN COMMITTEE.

The House went into committee for the further consideration of this Bill.

Clause 27.—“At the expiration of five years from the first day of January or the first day of July (as the case may be) preceding the date of the approval of the application by the Minister or at any time afterwards during the continuance of the lease, the lessee (or in case of his death, his legal representatives), upon proving to the satisfaction of the Minister that the full amount of rent has been received, that all survey fees have been paid, that he or they or his or their agent or agents, or some of them, have resided for the said five years upon the land, and that there has been expended upon the prescribed improvements, which have been maintained in good order, in addition to the cost of the exterior fencing, an amount equal to the rental for the whole term of the lease, less the first five years, shall be entitled to a Crown grant for the same on payment of the difference be-

“tween the amount paid as rent per acre and the price of seven shillings and sixpence per acre in respect of second-class lands, and five shillings per acre in respect of third-class lands, together with the Crown grant and registration fees. Such Crown grant shall, in all cases, be issued in the name of the lessee:”

Debate continued upon MR. LEFROY's amendment—to strike out the words printed in italics in the above clause, and to insert the following words in lieu thereof: “of the cash value of rental due on the said lands for the remaining term of the lease reckoned at compound interest.”

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest) said that, since this clause was under consideration before, he had taken the trouble to have this question worked out, and he thought he now understood what the hon. member meant by his amendment. At the same time, he was not any more in favour of his proposal now than he was when he did not quite understand it. He now understood that what the hon. member proposed was this: that after five years had elapsed—because the fee simple could not be acquired in less than five years—if a homestead leaseholder required to purchase the land he might do so, but, instead of paying the difference between the rent he had paid and the total amount of rent required to be paid under the Bill in thirty years, he should be allowed to pay what would be an equivalent to the total amount, reckoned at 5 per cent. compound interest. Under the Bill, the price to be paid for second-class land, spread over thirty years, would be 6s. 3d. an acre; so that after five years had elapsed the Government would receive 5s. 5d. during the next twenty-five years. He had calculated what was the value of this 5s. 5d. to the Government during these twenty-five years, and he found that as nearly as possible it would be equal to 9s., or, to be exact, 8s. 11½d. an acre. That was what the Government would receive for this land, with compound interest added. He had also calculated what they would receive, if, instead of getting this 8s. 11½d., they received cash down after five years had elapsed, as proposed by the hon. member, and he found it was only 3s. 4d.; so that the Government would receive 4s. 2d. an acre for this second-class land

within five years, instead of 9s. 9d. within thirty years. With regard to third-class land, the Government would get what was equal to 5s. 4d. an acre in the twenty-five years (which was equivalent to 5s. 9d. in thirty years), as against 2s. 5d. an acre under the proposed amendment. That was about the state of the case, so far as he could make it out. What we wanted in this colony, as he said over and over again, was permanent settlement and continuous settlement. The Government wanted people to come here to occupy our lands, and to carry out the provisions of the Bill, and to settle down upon the land. That was the object of this Bill. If it had not been so, they would have brought in a Bill to enable people to acquire possession of the land, not in thirty years but in five years. Their object was to give those who took up these lands thirty years to perform their improvements, and to settle upon the land, and make their homes upon it. They did not want to encourage them to get the fee simple all in a moment, and then sell the land, or traffic with it. That was just what they wanted to avoid. Besides that, they wanted a continuous revenue from the land, coming in regularly, year after year, and not a lump sum, which might be spent, and there would be an end of it. That was one of the reasons why the sale of Crown land was so much deprecated by members, who objected to the Government alienating the land and spending the proceeds. They preferred to have a regular income from the land, which they could depend upon yearly. That was the principle which this Bill encouraged. At the same time they provided a means whereby a person, if he particularly wished it, might acquire his freehold sooner, but they offered no encouragement for him to do so. It was not a new principle; it was a principle which had been adopted right through our Land Regulations. There was nothing in the Bill, as introduced by the Government, that was inconsistent with the Land Regulations of 1887. He could not see what the hon. member's object was, and those who supported him, unless they thought that 30 years was too long to keep a man out of his title, and that they wished a Bill introduced for the purpose of enabling people to acquire large estates in as short a time as

possible, which was not the object the Government had in view.

Mr. RICHARDSON said he could not compliment the Premier upon the logic of his remarks, or upon the sound sense of them, in any way. He thought the hon. gentleman's speech was a good deal unlike himself; there was nothing progressive about it, there was nothing bold about it, and he did not know that there was anything statesmanlike about it. He believed the hon. member for the Moore, in his amendment, was guided by nothing but a desire to encourage the progressive man, or, if not to encourage him, at any rate not to mulct him. He could honestly say that was the object which he had in his own amendment, which went somewhat on similar lines. They had no desire to introduce class legislation, and they did not relish being told that it was only an attempt, by a side wind, to acquire large estates cheaper than they could otherwise be acquired. He did not think it was nice to have these insinuations thrown out, and, what was more, he did not think that members would stand too much of it. The Premier laid it down almost as an axiom that the Government did not desire these men to obtain the fee simple of their land before the time laid down in the Bill; and he seemed to think that the price suggested was too low, overlooking the fact that before a man could obtain his release he must have completed his improvements, whether he obtained it in five years or in thirty years. The only difference would be this: instead of spending say £300 in five years, he would spread it out over thirty years. But if he did so, the Government would mulct him for being a good settler, industrious and progressive, and would pat him on the back for being a dawdler and a drone. He maintained that the Government were acting in a spirit of downright injustice towards the energetic and progressive settler, who desired to get his release in less than the full term of 30 years. Instead of encouraging him, they mulcted him. If a man completed his improvements, and wished to pay cash down for his land, surely he was entitled to some discount; but the Government said, "No, we do not want your cash." If anyone attempted to carry on any other business on that principle, he would simply be hooted. If a man owed another

£5,000, and had agreed to repay it in 30 years, but, finding he was in a position to do so within five years, and he went to the person from whom he had borrowed it and offered to repay him there and then, would anybody in his senses refuse to receive it, and, as a matter of business, allow him a little discount on account of his making it a cash transaction? But that was not the only way to look at the thing. They wanted to encourage these men to improve the national estate, and to do so in five years instead of thirty.

MR. LEFROY was very pleased to find that the Premier now saw that there was some little sense at any rate in the amendment he had proposed, although he would not admit it the other evening.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): You did not explain it; that was why.

MR. LEFROY said he could not have put it in plainer words than he did. He that morning asked a gentleman connected with one of the insurance companies in Perth what he conceived the amendment to mean, and he replied at once, and said it could not have been put in any other way to convey the same meaning. The hon. gentleman was a little hard upon him last night, when he charged him with having jumped or sprung this amendment upon the House. He did not think the hon. gentleman could have meant that. No doubt he did not like this pet child of his to be interfered with by others. They all knew that parents generally resented any outside interference with their offspring. Still, sometimes, when parents became too indulgent, a little interference and correction from a friend of the family was useful and wholesome. It was admitted by the Premier that the object of the Bill was to encourage the improvement of the country. That also was the object of the amendment, only he wished to effect this very desirable object quicker than the Premier did. That was all. His desire was to encourage the thrifty, industrious, and progressive man, who was anxious to obtain his title deeds as soon as possible. The State would not lose anything by it. The amount paid would come to exactly the same at the end of the lease, as if paid by instalments. He must repudiate the idea that his object was to give facilities for acquiring large estates at a low price. His sole object was to give those

who desired to take an early opportunity of complying with the provisions of the Bill some encouragement to do so, and to do it straightforwardly. Why should the Premier run away with the idea that the only object such a man would have in view was to traffic with his land? Why should he sell it or traffic with it, after making his home upon it, and becoming attached to it and his surroundings? Would it not be better for the Government to make sure of their money, than to run the risk of these men, in years to come, failing to comply with the terms of their agreement? They all knew that under the present conditional purchase regulations, a large proportion of the people who took up land threw it up afterwards, and the Government lost the remainder of their rents; whereas if they had received the money in full they would have had it in the chest. The only argument of the Premier's that he could follow was that it was better to have a regular revenue coming in annually, spread over a long term of years, rather than in a lump sum, because the Government of the day might be tempted to spend it. He thought that was a very good argument, but he should like to remind the hon. gentleman that when a motion was introduced a few days ago that the money derived from the sale of Crown lands should be set aside and applied towards providing a sinking fund, the hon. gentleman opposed it, as he thought it was a good thing for the Government to have all the money they could get. This amendment would certainly give the Government more money at one time than the clause as it stood would. His belief was that the proposal of the Government would never be taken advantage of. Indeed, the Premier himself admitted that he did not wish to encourage the early alienation of the land, although the homestead lessee might have fulfilled all the conditions which the Government thought proper to impose upon him. He thought 6s. 3d. an acre was too much to ask a man to pay down after five years; he considered that the cash value of the rental during the remainder of the lease was a more equitable charge to make. As, however, there seemed to be some objection to the amendment as it stood, he proposed to ask leave to withdraw it, and to ask his hon. friend the member

for the DeGrey to substitute another amendment, which would have the same object in view.

Amendment, by leave, withdrawn.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest) moved, as an amendment, that the words "seven shillings and sixpence," in line 15, be struck out, and that the words "six shillings and threepence" be inserted in lieu thereof.

Amendment put and passed.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest) moved, as a further amendment, that the words "five shillings," in line 16, be struck out, and that the words "three shillings and ninepence" be inserted in lieu thereof.

Amendment put and passed.

MR. RICHARDSON moved, as an amendment, that the following words be inserted after the word "lands," in line 16: "or if such payment shall not be made till after the expiration of the first ten years, upon payment of the cash value of rental due on the said lands for the remaining term of lease, reckoned at compound interest at four per cent." He said he put this amendment forward as a sort of compromise between the clause as it stood and the amendment of the hon. member for the Moore. He thought no one would deny that a man must show his *bona fides* within ten years after taking up his land, if he was ever going to do so. He would suggest that there should be a schedule attached to the Bill showing exactly what a lessee would have to pay at whatever time he desired to acquire his fee simple.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest) said he regretted the hon. member was still endeavouring to alter this clause, and he regretted he was still unable to agree with the hon. member's proposal. Members seemed to take some exception to the occupants of that bench speaking warmly on this subject; but, so long as the remarks were not personal, he did not see why members should be offended, any more than the members of the Government were when members opposite urged their arguments with the same amount of fervour. He had no wish whatever to say or insinuate anything that was personal, but he intended to speak as strongly as he could against any proposition which did not commend itself to him. The present amendment certainly brought

them nearer and nearer together, and he would ask the hon. member whether he really thought it was worth while to introduce this novel principle into the Bill for the sake of the trifling difference it would make after all? Was it necessary to complicate the Bill with these actuarial computations? The Government had already conceded a great deal to members, reducing the price of the land to 6s. 3d. and 3s. 9d., and he did not think they ought to be asked to go any further in this direction. The principle underlying the whole of our Land Regulations was alike; land could not be obtained in fee simple all at once. In any case, improvements had to be made, or there were conditions as to residence to be performed, or some other conditions to be observed. If they introduced this novel principle into this Bill, why not introduce it into our other regulations dealing with land? Why should we not make a reduction to the man who was prepared to put his money down within a month after he applied for the land, instead of treating him, as we now did, in the same way as we treated the man who extended his payments over a number of years? The reason was that we wanted to settle people permanently on the land, and to encourage them to make their homes there, and become good and useful colonists. It was not the man who came with the money in his hands that our Land Regulations encouraged, but the man who would settle down on the land, and proceed to improve it. The same principle would be found in almost all modern Land Regulations. The hon. member wished to make the terms easy to the capitalist.

MR. RICHARDSON: We don't care who he is, so long as he develops the land.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): In many parts of the world it was impossible to buy land by direct payment at all; it had to be taken up on the time payment system, and no other. The desire of the Government was to encourage the same principle here, so as to encourage men of moderate means to settle on the land. The same principle of deferred payment applied to our existing Regulations, both as regards our Northern lands and the lands in other parts of the colony. Why should they depart from this principle in this particular instance? Why

should they encourage the immediate alienation of the land, and deprive the Government of an annual source of revenue? In private life, as a rule, people who had money preferred to invest it so as to bring them in an annuity; and he thought it was a very wise and judicious principle to adopt. The amendment was a direct departure from the fundamental principle of our Land Regulations, and he did not think it would operate at all beneficially. In fact, if it were adopted, he did not think it would be availed of to any great extent, and, even if it were, he did not think it would be to the interests of the colony. If they once commenced to introduce this principle into our land system, it would be impossible, in fairness to the special occupier or the conditional purchase holder, to withhold it from those who took up land under those Regulations, whether at the North or in this part of the colony. He would certainly advise members not to depart from the principle of the existing Regulations, a principle which was not confined to our own land laws, but which had been adopted by the whole of the other colonies, as well as by Canada.

Amendment put, and a division being called for, there appeared—

| | | | | |
|------|-----|-----|-----|----|
| Ayes | ... | ... | ... | 7 |
| Noes | ... | ... | ... | 11 |

Majority against ... 4

AYES.
Mr. Loton
Mr. Paterson
Mr. Richardson
Mr. R. F. Sholl
Mr. Simpson
Mr. Traylen
Mr. Lefroy (Teller).

NOES.
Mr. Burt
Mr. Clarkson
Sir John Forrest
Mr. A. Forrest
Mr. Marmon
Mr. Pearce
Mr. Piesse
Mr. Quinlan
Mr. Solomon
Mr. Throssell
Mr. Hassell (Teller).

Question put and negatived.

Clause, as amended, agreed to.

Clauses 28 to 42, inclusive:

Agreed to, *sub silentio*.

New Clause:

MR. TRAYLEN moved that the following new clause be added to the Bill:—"It shall not be lawful to grant to any holder of a homestead farm, or of a village block, nor for any premises upon a homestead farm, lease, or a village site, as defined by this Act, a certificate for a license to sell beer or spirituous liquors;

and every resident upon a homestead farm, lease, or upon a village site shall be deemed to be unlicensed in respect to sales of beer or spirituous liquors, and if such resident sells or disposes of such articles, or acts as agent in such sale, shall be subject to the penalties imposed by any law in force for the time being." The hon. member said he thought he should be likely to carry the committee with him on this occasion, because the clause was so based upon the principles of equity that he could scarcely see how members could do otherwise than cordially accept it. We were inviting a number of persons whom we desired to see engaged in agricultural pursuits, and he proposed that we should say to these people: "We will bestow a certain quantity of land upon you, so that you may farm it on the best principles you can, and produce as much as possible out of it, and we charge you nothing for it; but, in return for our gratuity to you, we ask that we may not be put to the expense of providing policemen to keep you in order"—for, virtually, that was what we would be doing by preventing the sale of intoxicating liquors. There was no one in that House who did not entertain the highest respect for the opinions of Mr. Walter Padbury, and Mr. Padbury was very emphatic in saying that in consequence of there being no licensed houses in his part of the colony there was no necessity for the inevitable policeman there. He submitted, with a great deal of confidence, that we should be great gainers by the adoption of this principle in connection with this homestead system, and that all who resided on these areas would be gainers themselves if no licensed houses were allowed within the boundaries of these settlements. He was not bringing forward what was an innovation in land regulations, although he did not at all entertain that dread of novelties which their hon. friend the Premier seemed to entertain, occasionally, notwithstanding the fact that the hon. gentleman himself indulged in novelties; this Homesteads Bill itself was a novelty. But in this clause he was not introducing a novelty in land legislation. The same principle was in force in the irrigation colony of Mildura, and in a more stringent form. It was made illegal by the law of Victoria to sell intoxicating beverages in

that settlement; and he believed some other colonies were adopting the same kind of legislation, so that it could not be said, as an argument against the adoption of this clause, that it was a complete innovation, and that there had been no experiment in this direction, or that we had no testimony of its value that we were able to bring forward. He understood that the chief reason why it was introduced into the Mildura colony legislation was because a number of persons of sober and temperate habits represented to Messrs. Chaffey Bros. that if they were protected from the evils that inevitably followed the issue of licenses for the sale of intoxicants they would be only too glad to take up land in their colony. He was not asking that any of the necessities of life should be kept away from these homestead areas. He did not suppose any member was prepared to say that intoxicating liquors were necessities of life. There were a number of them who had tried to live—and succeeded—for years without touching any intoxicating beverages, and he thought he might say they were as good specimens of members of Parliament as those who used these beverages in moderation. A good deal had been said in the course of the debate upon this Bill about a “bold peasantry,” and the Premier was never tired of saying that we wanted an industrious peasantry settled on our soil. This clause, if adopted, would make them still more bold and still more industrious, and save them from the evils attending the abuse of intoxicating drinks. If he wanted anything to clinch this argument he would refer to his hon. friend the member for Northam, and the district he represented. Everybody knew that Northam was *the* temperance town of the colony, and that it held the premier position amongst country towns in consequence of its temperance. He now asked that each of these village settlements might be placed in the position to emulate Northam in this respect.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest) regretted that he could not fall in with the views of the hon. member, who, he must say, was actuated by the most earnest and consistent desire to prevent the sale of intoxicating drinks, not only on these homestead areas but everywhere. His principal objection to inserting this

clause in the Bill was that he thought it would be difficult to carry it out. It was not proposed to have these homestead farms altogether apart from everyone else; he hoped they might be able to set apart some of these farms within Agricultural Areas already set apart for settlement; and it seemed to him that the hon. member's object would scarcely be attained by preventing the homestead farmer from having anything to do with the sale of intoxicating drink, when alongside him there might be a conditional purchase holder with a public house on his land. It was proposed to have the land set apart for these homestead farms cut up in alternate blocks, which would give other people an opportunity of settling alongside these homesteaders; and there would be a difficulty at once. He did not see why we should treat these homestead farmers differently from other classes of the community, or the man who took up land under other regulations than were contained in this Bill. And then there was the homestead leaseholder to be considered; he did not see how such a provision as this was going to act when they remembered that some of these leases would be 10,000 acres in extent, with other lessees adjoining them holding their land under other conditions. He did not think this was the way to take up this question of prohibition, by a mere side wind, in a Bill of this kind, by putting into it provisions which he was sure would not work. Fancy a homestead farmer, whom we hoped to encourage to go in for wine growing, being prevented from holding a wine license. He thought the cultivation of the vine was one of the objects of the Bill.

MR. TRAYLEN: The clause is not intended to apply to wine.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest) did not think this was the place to introduce legislation to prevent the sale of intoxicating drinks. This was a Bill to encourage the settlement of the land, and not to deal with the question of prohibition. The hon. member said that this principle had been tried at Mildura. He understood it was largely evaded, and that notwithstanding the prohibition a considerable amount of drink was introduced into that settlement. They knew also that in parts of the United States where prohibition laws were in force, it

did not prevent the introduction and sale of intoxicating drinks. If the hon. member wanted to deal with this question, there was another way of doing it, without attempting to foist it into a Homestead Farm Bill. He did not believe in attempting to carry a thing by a side wind when you were not prepared to attempt to do it boldly and openly; and, for this reason, he could not support the hon. member. He sympathised with him from his point of view, and did not blame him for attempting to promulgate his principles, but he did not think this was the place for it.

MR. PIESSE said his views upon temperance were, he thought, pretty well known, but he could not agree with this amendment, for the simple reason that, from his experience, the more you tried to prevent people from obtaining liquor the more eager you made them to get it. If you placed it easily within their reach, it often made them that they did not care for it; but if you tried to force them to keep away from it, they seemed to hanker for it. He was a strong believer in temperance himself, but he did not think this was the way to encourage temperance principles. He did not think that the multiplication of licensed houses tended to increase drunkenness. Throughout the district where he resided there were only two or three licensed premises when he went there; now there were about twenty, but there was no more drinking than when there were only three. As to Mildura, no later back than six months ago, he took up a newspaper published in that colony, the *Mildura Cultivator*, and he noticed in that one issue that no less than sixty persons had been charged at that settlement with sly grog selling. That seemed to support his argument, that the more you endeavoured by legislation to restrain people the more determined they were to evade the law. Although intoxicating drink was prohibited at Mildura, it was brought there and freely indulged in; only, instead of having one or two recognised and properly regulated dealers in it, they found sixty sly grog sellers. It would be the same here. He thought it was useless attempting to make people temperate by enactments of this kind. They all knew that the inhabitants of wine-drinking countries were the most temperate people. It had

been found so in Europe, and it had been found so of late in South Australia, where colonial wine was becoming a popular beverage; and he thought it would be a mistake to legislate in the direction of this clause for these homestead areas. He was very loath to oppose it, being anxious to do all he could to help the temperance cause, but he did not think this would have the effect intended.

MR. QUINLAN thought the clause, if adopted, would go a great way to defeat the object of the Bill. These homestead farmers would be producers of barley, which was turned into malt, and afterwards into beer, or they would be vine growers, and their produce would be converted into wine. Yet it was proposed to discourage the production of either barley or grapes. While respecting the hon. member for Greenough's consistency in advocating his own principles, he regretted he was unable to agree with the hon. member in this instance. If abstinence from intoxicating drink was alone capable of producing honest and honourable men, he might be prepared to go with the hon. member; but he knew many people who posed as temperance apostles who were anything but temperate in other respects. He could point to a few of them who were the greatest swindlers and impostors on the face of the earth. They not only swindled their creditors, but posed afterwards as honest citizens. There were land boomers and swindlers of the funds of public institutions among them; yet these very people were the loudest in their denunciation of those who partook of a glass of beer openly. He admired those who were consistent in what they advocated, like his hon. friend the member for Greenough, but he detested impostors, and he did not believe in this attempt to make people sober by Act of Parliament. This clause, in his opinion, would simply defeat one of the main objects of the Bill.

MR. CLARKSON said he also sympathised with the hon. member for Greenough; he sympathised with him because he thought the hon. member would be beaten on this question. Here they were proposing to settle a number of farmers on the soil, and, in the same breath, they proposed to rob the poor men of their beer,—which was rather hard lines. Surely, if a man did not want to drink beer he

was not compelled to do so; but why should they debar those who liked a glass of beer from getting one, simply because he took up land under this Bill? He felt quite confident that if this clause were agreed to, it would only lead to the opening of sly grog shops, which would be very much worse than licensed houses. Allusion had been made to Northam as an example of the beneficial effects of temperance. He thought the allusion was a very unfortunate one. He often visited Northam, and he did not see that it was any more sober than any other town in the colony; he had even heard it said that it was not so sober. He was afraid the hon. member who moved this clause had taken upon himself a task in which he was not likely to prove successful, and that was to make people sober by Act of Parliament.

MR. A. FORREST thought that, after the expressions of opinion which the clause had elicited, the hon. member might as well withdraw it, rather than take up the time of the House in discussing what was not likely to be accepted. He did not think the hon. member was happy in his reference to the prosperous condition of Mr. Padbury's district.

MR. TRAYLEN: I did not say it was prosperous; I said they did not want policemen.

MR. A. FORREST said they might not want a policeman, but they did not do without grog. Some twenty years ago, when he and a party were surveying in that neighbourhood, they found four bottles of rum in the hollow of a tree, and they carried them to their camp. Next day a man came and claimed them, and said he would much rather have a public house in the neighbourhood than these sly grog-sellers. He was an admirer of temperance, but he did not see why teetotal people should seek to thrust their principles down the throats of those who liked a glass of wine. Even the hon. member for Northam, who was a great temperance man, was going in largely for wine growing. He did not know what the hon. member intended to do with it. The hon. member for Perth, another temperance man, would refuse to take a glass of wine if offered to him, but the same member was not above selling it, and keeping a hotel. He did not understand such consistency as that. Seeing there

was no chance of this clause being agreed to, he appealed to the hon. member to withdraw it, and not take up the time of the House any longer.

MR. THROSSELL said he had no intention of inflicting a temperance lecture upon the House, but to deal with the question in a practical manner. He considered that the hon. member for Greenough was very moderate in his proposal, confining it, as he did, to prohibiting the sale of spirituous liquors and beer. He (Mr. Throssell) would go much further himself, and propose that no license be granted for the sale of any intoxicating beverage, including colonial wine, within the boundaries of these homestead settlements. There was nothing novel about the proposition. Mildura had been referred to as a case in point, and the hon. member for the Williams said he read of sixty cases of sly grog selling at that settlement. But the hon. member did not say that those cases extended over a period of several months, and that the Mildura settlement contained a population of some thousands. He could take the hon. member to another town, three miles out of the city of Melbourne, with a population of several thousands, where he would find neither a hotel nor a licensed house of any kind for the sale of liquor. He referred to Temperance town, Moonee Ponds. When visiting it some time ago, and moving about the town, he had been much struck by one thing—the absence of the inevitable policeman. He made inquiries as to the cause of this phenomenon, and why it was that the place seemed so orderly. “For a very good reason,” was the reply he received, “this is a temperance township.” The wise and sagacious man who gave up that piece of land for a townsite made it a condition that no licensed house for the sale of intoxicating drinks should be allowed there. Many attempts had been made, at election times, to foist advocates of licensed houses upon the inhabitants; but so impressed were the people with the advantages of the existing order of things, that all attempts in that direction had been a failure; and the supporters of law and order had all the honour and glory of representing the inhabitants of that particular township to this day. He thought the argument of the hon. member who introduced this clause, as to the saving

it would cause in expenditure in connection with police protection, ought to go a long way to satisfy members that a clause like this would be an advantage from an economical point of view, so far as the State was concerned. When the prospectus of the Great Southern Railway Company's estate was issued, with its maps, it was set out in large capitals that no licensed houses for the sale of intoxicants were to be allowed on the estate. They knew that promise had not been adhered to, and they knew that the result had been a large expenditure for police stations, which was sure to follow the multiplication of licensed houses everywhere. This present Bill afforded a favourable opportunity for making a new departure, without interfering with any vested interests. In other countries the Government spent large sums in the establishment and maintenance of inebriate asylums, to afford those wretched men — and, unfortunately, ladies — the victims of strong drink, an opportunity of reforming their evil habits. He thought this was a favourable opportunity for the Government of this colony to form one part of the colony, at any rate, into a retreat, where the residents would be free from the temptations of drink, and which would provide a place of refuge for unfortunate fellows who were anxious to give up the accursed habit which had enslaved them. He was sure he was voicing the views of the Premier and of all around him when he said they all desired to give such men such an opportunity; and no better opportunity could offer itself than the present one, when they were about to establish new villages and settlements under the wing of the Government. If the Government were to establish these settlements on the principle contemplated by this clause, they would be acting wisely, and he was sure they would not fall in the estimation of the outside world. He asked members to give this question a fair, rational, and unprejudiced consideration, viewing it neither from a rabid temperance point of view on the one hand nor from a too prejudiced view on the other. He admitted that we could not make men sober by Act of Parliament, any more than you could make them honest or chaste; still he was afraid that without some restrictive legislation many men would be less sober than they

now were, and less honest. He was sorry to find his hon. friend on his right, the member for the Williams, a traitor to the good cause in this instance, and to find him opposing this clause. He thought the hon. member who had brought it forward had displayed surprising liberality in not prohibiting the sale of wine as well as spirituous liquors in this prohibition. At the same time, he thought the hon. member was wise in that, because he knew they were anxious, under this Bill, to encourage the establishment of vineyards, and it would have been very inconsistent to have prevented the growers from converting their products into wine. From that standpoint he was willing to go with the hon. member, and to concede the privilege of wine making. He believed if we were more of a wine-drinking people we would be a more temperate people. He asked members to give the proposal a trial; he earnestly pleaded with them to avail themselves of this opportunity of making this departure. If they did so, he ventured to say that in years to come they would look back with unalloyed pleasure upon that evening's work.

MR. MOLLOY said he could not allow the opportunity to pass without admitting that he sympathised with the mover of this clause, because he appreciated his motives, though he differed from the hon. member in his views. The hon. member for Northam wished to have these homestead areas converted into inebriate retreats. He thought it was an insult to our people, to proclaim it to the world that the Government of the colony were about to establish homestead settlements as inebriate retreats for the people. This was a free country, and no man had a right to force his own peculiar notions upon his fellow colonists, and to insinuate that no man could be a good settler and an honourable man on these homestead farms unless he was also a total abstainer. Why should we deny these people the same liberty as the rest of the population? They knew very well that the absence of legalised facilities for obtaining liquor on a settlement did not prevent its introduction there surreptitiously. Let them give credit to these intending settlers that their desire will be to make comfortable homes for themselves and their families, and not take it for granted that they were likely to abuse

any opportunity given them of obtaining a glass of beer.

MR. RICHARDSON sincerely hoped that the clause would get sufficient support in that House to carry it through, for he believed it would add fresh laurels to this Bill. He believed it was a clause which, if the Premier had supported, would have given him more cause for congratulation than any other clause in the Bill. He must say he had been disappointed with the attitude which the Premier had taken up in regard to this proposal, and he was still more acutely disappointed at the attitude of the hon. member for the Williams. Whatever that hon. member's professions might be with regard to temperance, he had acted that night as a traitor to his avowed principles. They had had Mildura referred to. He was in a position to be able to speak from observation gained from a personal visit to that colony, and he must say he could not have believed, without seeing it, that there could have been in real life such evidence of the success of the resolution to keep out intoxicating liquors from that settlement. The argument of some of those who opposed this clause was, when boiled down, simply this: because you could not stop some people from thieving and indulging in other vices, no attempt must be made by legislation to prevent thieving, or to restrain the free indulgence in every other vice. He did not think it was necessary to waste any time in combating that argument. Why was it that the founders of the Mildura colony adopted this principle of prohibition in the formation of that settlement? Because Chaffey Bros., besides being temperate men themselves, were also very cute Canadians, and, even taking the low ground of looking at the matter from a purely business point of view, they perceived that there was nothing more calculated to ensure the success of their settlement than running it on temperance principles. Their land system was based upon the time-payment principle, and they knew very well, as men of the world, that nothing would tend more to ensure the regular payment of their rents than to keep out the publican. He had regretted the opposition offered by the Premier to many amendments which he thought would have made this Bill a better Bill, but he

did not feel a stronger regret at his opposition to any amendment than he did at his opposition to this clause. If it would not prove a perfect success, it could not possibly do any harm, and he thought they might take it that it was likely to effect some good. He sincerely appealed to the good sense of the Ministry in this instance. He believed there were some amongst them who would like to see this clause go through. There was nothing impracticable about it. It was not a mere fad, or some Utopian idea, but a proposition based upon sound sense. It did not say to a man he should not have his own glass of beer or wine, but simply that none should be sold on these settlements.

MR. MONGER said he had no intention of forcing his views on temperance upon members that evening; but after some of the remarks that fell from the last speaker, he must really say something. He hoped no one would suppose that he was opposed to everything that had a moral tendency; he was not at all so. If he thought for a moment that they were likely to succeed by this or any other Act of Parliament in making men sober, he should be glad to give that measure his support. While giving the hon. member for the Greenough every credit for his good intentions in this matter, he would ask what was the use of introducing a clause into the Bill which no Ministry or Government in the world could carry out? Far better let respectable hotels be established, under proper supervision, than to have the country infested by sly grog sellers. Moreover, the clause was inconsistent. It permitted the sale of colonial wine, and, on the other hand, prohibited the sale of colonial beer. Surely, if it was wrong to sell beer, it was equally wrong to sell wine.

MR. R. F. SHOLL said he also sympathised with the mover of this clause, but his sympathy went further than that of most hon. members who had expressed themselves as sympathising with the hon. member, while at the same time opposing his amendment. His sympathy took a more practical form, for he was going to vote for the clause as well. He did so for this reason: this was an experimental Bill altogether, and this proposal of the hon. member for the Greenough was an experiment, and, if it succeeded, it could

not fail to work for the good of the community.

MR. TRAYLEN said he never argued for a moment in the way suggested by the hon. member for York. He had left wine out intentionally, because he thought they were likely to differ more about wine than about other beverages. He wished to acknowledge the kindly sentiments expressed by hon. members in their personal references to himself. Some years ago he had read up with a good deal of attention this temperance question, and, in his case, his convictions were based upon science, as much as upon anything else; and he felt much indebted to those who, in his earlier years, gave him some scientific insight into this question. He also wanted to say, once for all, he thought there was a great deal of cant in that expression that you could not make a man sober by Act of Parliament. If there was anybody who believed that you could, he was not one who did so. He knew a great deal better than that. He knew it was utterly impossible to make any man sober, or virtuous, or honest, or anything else by Act of Parliament. But they could do this: they could remove temptation out of the way of their weak friends; and that was all he asked the committee to do in this case. He asked that they should not deliberately place temptation in the way of men who could not resist temptation, and then punish them for giving way to the temptation we deliberately placed in their way. He put it to the committee on the broad ground that we could not afford to put policemen all round these settlements, and that it was better to prevent a mischief than to seek to provide a remedy for it. He was sorry the Premier had not been able to support the clause. The hon. gentleman said this was not the right time or place for introducing this principle of prohibition. If the hon. gentleman would indicate to him when was the right time or the right place for doing so, he would go with him heart and soul.

Question put—That the clause be added to the Bill. A division being called for, the numbers were:—

| | | | |
|----------------------|-----|-----|----|
| Ayes ... | ... | ... | 6 |
| Noes ... | ... | ... | 16 |
| — | | | |
| Majority against ... | ... | ... | 10 |

AYES.

Mr. Paterson
Mr. Richardson
Mr. R. F. Sholl
Mr. Simpson
Mr. Throssell
Mr. Traylen (Teller).

NOES.

Mr. Burt
Sir John Forrest
Mr. A. Forrest
Mr. Hassell
Mr. Lefroy
Mr. Loton
Mr. Marmion
Mr. Molloy
Mr. Monger
Mr. Pearse
Mr. Piesse
Mr. Quinlan
Mr. H. W. Sholl
Mr. Solomon
Mr. Venn
Mr. Clarkson (Teller).

Question put and negatived.

New Clause:

MR. PIESSE moved that the following new clause be added to the Bill, to stand as Clause 39:—"Notwithstanding anything contained in the Land Regulations the Governor may, by regulations, prescribe that the purchase money for town, suburban, and village lands may be paid by instalments spread over any period not exceeding five years." He moved this clause for this reason: he noticed that the Government had laid out village sites or settlements, in connection with their agricultural areas, in the vicinity of the Great Southern Railway. They were cut up into small allotments, and offered for sale, by auction, at various prices, according to their situation; but the persons whom it was thought would have purchased these blocks had not done so, principally, he believed, because they were not in a position to pay down the amount required by the Government. Under this new clause it was intended that the Government should make certain regulations dealing with these lands upon the deferred payment system. He thought these village sites would be largely availed of if easier or more liberal terms were offered to purchasers.

MR. THROSSSELL believed they would make a huge mistake if they entertained this proposal. He had no objection to the five years deferred payment principle, but the clause made no provision for residence or improvement. Clause 40 of the Bill was a clause after his own heart—a measure which he and others had been aiming at for years. Under that clause the Governor would be empowered to lease any town, suburban, or village lands on such terms as he might think fit, and might make regulations imposing special conditions as to improvements on any town, suburban, or village lands

offered for sale. Under that clause the working man and the artisan could have his little block of land on conditions of residence and improvement, and on the deferred payment system, and that clause sufficiently provided for all that was required. But, supposing this new clause were carried, what would be the result? They would have agricultural townships springing up, composed of townsite lots and suburban lots, of 5 or 10 acres, and so on, but without any conditions as to residence. Now what was the object of providing suburban allotments around our country townships? Was it not in order to provide a fixed labour supply for the outlying farmer, as was contemplated in Clause 40 of the Bill. But what would be the result of this other clause? It was proposed that these suburban lots should be put up at auction and knocked down to the highest bidder, without any condition attached as to improvement or residence, thus opening the door as wide as possible for the land speculator and the monopolist, instead of providing for the working man and the artisan. They would have men with capital buying up these lots by the dozen, and cutting them up into quarter-acre blocks, and clearing their hundreds of pounds an acre upon them. The clause was fraught with danger. They had had enough of this kind of land booming business throughout these colonies, and this was another attempt to perpetuate the evil. It was opposed to the fundamental principles of the Bill, which was intended to encourage rural and suburban settlement upon conditions of improvement and residence. It would be a fraud upon the very class of people they were anxious to see taking up land under this Homesteads Bill, and playing right into the hands of the land-boomer and monopolist.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest) said he could not follow the hon. member for Northam in his logic. His argument came to this: if you allowed these lands to be sold on the deferred payment principle, you would be playing into the hands of speculators and capitalists. He should have thought it was quite the reverse. If the law remained as it is, and you insisted upon cash down for these village lands, that might be playing into the hands of the capitalist and speculator; but it would not suit the working man and the artisan,

about whom the hon. member seemed so solicitous. The more easy you made the payment, the more must it be in the interests of men of small means. This new clause would come in as Clause 39 of the Bill; and Clause 40, referred to by the hon. member for Northam, would follow it. This new clause would provide the conditions as regards payment, in case of sales by auction; and the following clause would provide for the conditions as regards improvements. He thought the two clauses would work together very well, and make it still easier for persons of small means to acquire these suburban allotments. He was afraid the hon. member had not read the two clauses together, nor grasped altogether what the intention was. This new clause would give these people an opportunity of obtaining small blocks of suburban land without the necessity of having to pay the money down for them. There was no provision in this clause as regards residence upon town or suburban lots, and he thought it would interfere largely with the sale of such lands if they imposed such a condition. Many people liked to have a suburban place which they could occasionally visit, without being under the necessity of residing there habitually. But he thought it was a wise provision that improvements should be insisted upon, and that the land should not be held simply for purposes of speculation, pending the time that land in the neighbourhood improved by reason of railway and other facilities.

THE COMMISSIONER OF CROWN LANDS (Hon. W. E. Marmion) said he had long been in favour of a provision of this kind, whereby land sold at auction might be sold upon the deferred payment system, so as to give men of small means an opportunity of obtaining these suburban lots. It might be said that while you were giving this privilege to the man of small means, you were also giving the same privilege to the wealthy man, who might acquire a number of these lots for purposes of speculation, as was done at present. But he thought something might be done to check that. They might adopt the principle, already in vogue as regards S. O. lands, of offering certain inducements to people who resided on the lands, or (as proposed here) who carried out certain

improvements. He thought if conditions of improvement were made as regards these suburban lands, a plan might be adopted of giving the man who also resided on the land certain privileges or concessions proportionate to the improvements; while, in the case of the man who did not reside on the land, he might be required to make double the amount of improvements. This would handicap him to some extent, and go a great way to meet the objections of the hon. member for Northam.

MR. PIESSE said the hon. member for Northam was, undoubtedly, off the track altogether. The land which he (Mr. Piesse) had in his eye was land a couple of miles or so from a township and on the borders of agricultural areas; and he thought the only way to dispose of these blocks, to the right class of people, would be on the deferred payment system. The Government would, no doubt, take care that these village lots were not taken up for other purposes than cultivation. Unfortunately this clause could not apply to Northam, because all the land there had been already taken up; otherwise he had no doubt he should have had the support of the hon. member for that district. But, because it might not apply to Northam was no reason why it should not apply to other parts of the colony. There was no doubt in the world that Northam was the hub of the universe, and that, but for Northam, Western Australia would have sunk into insignificance long ago. Still, that was no reason why other parts of the colony should not have a show.

MR. THROSSELL thought the hon. member was not far astray when he said that, but for Northam, Western Australia would have gone to the dogs years ago. At the same time he was quite willing to give other parts of the colony a show; and, if the Government would so safeguard these suburban lands as not to let them become a prey to the land shark, he would be satisfied. All he wanted was to prevent these lands from being monopolised by speculators to the detriment of the working man; and, if the Government would insist upon conditions of improvement, his opposition to the clause would be very considerably modified.

MR. A. FORREST said the hon. member for Northam seemed to have a perfect horror of the land monopolist, although he

believed the hon. member himself was one of the largest owners of freehold land in the colony, and one of the dreadful monopolists of whom he appeared to stand in such horror. It seemed to him that in the hon. member's opposition to this new clause, which allowed these suburban lands to be sold at auction on the deferred payment system instead of cash down, the hon. member was anxious to play into the hands of these monopolists, whereas the clause was intended to work to the advantage of the man with small means. For his own part he did not think the clause was likely to be largely availed of by these homestead farmers, who will have to reside on their homesteads, and who will not care to take up small blocks of suburban land, in addition to their farms.

Clause put and passed.

New Clause :

MR. MONGER moved that the following new clause be added to the Bill:—

"Any holder of the quantity or of less land than stated in Clause 4 in fee simple, or the occupier of the said quantity of land under special occupation or conditional purchase, may apply for and take up under this Act a homestead farm adjoining such fee simple, special occupation, or conditional purchase block, and reside on such fee simple, special occupation, or conditional purchase block in lieu of the homestead farm as required under this Act. All other conditions included within this Act to be complied with." The hon. member said his reason for bringing forward this clause was to try to get extended to the present small holders of land the facilities for acquiring a homestead farm that were offered under this Bill to the new-comer or the man who held nothing. He only proposed to make it applicable, in the case of existing occupiers, to land adjoining their present holdings, which must not exceed 100 acres. Instead of holding the land under Clause 4, and being obliged to shift their residence to the homestead farm, he proposed that these men should be allowed to remain on their present holdings. It would be quite unnecessary to force a man who took up a homestead selection adjoining his present holding to shift his residence to the homestead selection; and, so long as all the conditions were complied with, he would be conferring as

much good upon the country as the new-comer would. There were a considerable number of settlers in the Eastern portion of the colony, and in the Northern portion, who did not hold more than 100 acres, and it was only proposed to apply this privilege to these small holders. It was a clause that would be very favourably received in all the agricultural districts of the colony, and one that would do more towards making our small farmers satisfied with this Bill than almost any other clause in it.

MR. THROSSELL thought this was one of the most important provisions of the Bill in the interests of the small man. There were a number of these small holders, to whom this clause would be a boon, scattered throughout the Eastern Districts. They had agreed that the owner of 100 acres in fee simple should participate in the privileges of this Bill; and this clause extended the same privilege to the tillage leaseholder and the conditional purchase holder, and it allowed the men now on the soil, possessed of a small area, to add 160 acres to their present holdings under the homestead regulations. He thought this would be one of the most valuable additions made to the Bill, and it had his hearty support. Like the hon. member for York, he was brought more into touch with this class of men, and they knew there were many of them who had made the mistake of taking up too small an area; and, as they advanced in life, with a family growing up around them, they found their holdings too circumscribed. This new clause would draw the sting away from the objection that those already on the soil felt with regard to this Bill.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest) said there was a difficulty in dealing with the clause in the way it had been drafted, because it would be inoperative under the provisions of the Act. These homestead selections would only be available in localities to be defined and set apart for that purpose, and there might be no homestead areas set apart in the locality of these 100-acre men's present holdings. Possibly the clause might be so framed as to meet the hon. member's object, but he did not think the clause as now worded would do so. They had already provided that these 100-acre men should have the right of taking up a homestead farm, as

well as the new-comer; but now it was proposed that they should have these homestead blocks without residing on them. In other words, it simply meant this: that those who happened to have land adjoining a homestead block should have the homestead block simply on condition of improvement, without residence. He was not opposed to this very much, for he did not think it would matter a great deal. Of course the object of the Bill was to attract new settlers, and form new homesteads, rather than to give land away to those who had already settled here, and made their homes here. They also knew that 100 acres, in some parts of the colony, was quite as much land as many men could look after properly; and, if a man wanted to add to his holding he had an opportunity of doing so under the existing regulations on very easy terms. He could quite understand that this new proposal of the hon. member for York would be very popular with holders of not more than 100 acres; but what about the man who happened to have 105 or 120 acres? The clause, he thought, would require recasting to bring it into harmony with other portions of the Bill, and probably the best plan would be to report progress now, to enable him to have an opportunity of looking into the matter closer than he had had an opportunity of doing yet. He therefore moved that progress be reported, and leave given to sit again.

Agreed to.

Progress reported.

ADJOURNMENT.

The House adjourned at 22 minutes past 10 o'clock p.m.