

Legislative Assembly,

Tuesday, 29th November, 1892.

Mr. Allison Smith's Report on Locomotive Workshops—
Export Timber Branding Bill: second reading—
Perth Gas Company's Act Amendment (Private)
Bill: second reading—Constitution Act Amend-
ment Bill: second reading; adjourned debate—Ad-
journment.

THE SPEAKER took the chair at
2.30 p.m.

PRAYERS.

MR. ALLISON SMITH'S REPORT ON
LOCOMOTIVE WORKSHOPS.

MR. R. F. SHOLL, in accordance with
notice, moved that the report of Mr.
Allison Smith upon the workshops and
locomotive branch of the Railway Depart-
ment, together with all correspondence
connected therewith, be laid upon the
table of the House.

Motion—put and passed.

EXPORT TIMBER BRANDING BILL.

SECOND READING:

MR. PATERSON: I rise to move the
second reading of this Bill. I am sorry
to have to state that it was one of the
Bills that did not find place in the Gov-
ernor's Speech; I say I am sorry, because
I consider it is one of the most important
Bills that could have been placed before
this House by the Government. It is not
my intention to enter into the question
of the merits or the demerits of jarrah
timber and karri timber, nor does this
Bill propose to deal with that vexed
question in any way. It is simply in-
tended to provide against a great deal of
mischief which may be done to the colony
by the use of one of these timbers instead
of the other, when used for public works.
I think the time has arrived when we
should take some steps to protect this
particular branch of the industries of the
country. Both of these timbers are very
good in their proper place, and what is
wanted is to provide against people out-
side the colony being imposed upon, and
using jarrah for karri, or *vice versa*. We
all know that karri is a most suitable
timber for superstructures above ground
or above water, and we also know that
it is not so suitable as jarrah for sub-
marine works. For instance, one may be

advantageously used for the superstruc-
ture of a jetty, and the other may be
advantageously used for the piles that
are exposed to the action of water and
the attacks of marine insects. But the
danger is that, unless steps are taken to
distinguish between the two timbers,
one may be mistaken for the other,
and what ought to be used below
may be used above, and the whole
thing turned topsy turvy. In this way
the timber of the colony may get a very
bad name, and a very important indus-
try may be very much injured. It would
be a very bad advertisement for the
colony if karri or any timber were used
for submarine works under the impression
that it was jarrah, and it was afterwards
found that the timber had decayed, when
it is well known that we claim that our
jarrah will not decay under water. I say
it would give the colony a bad name, and
do us a great deal of harm. If a man
went to his tailor and bought a suit of
clothes which purported to be of the very
best material, and that man afterwards
discovered that it was shoddy, and he
told his friends where he got his suit,
neither he nor his friends would be likely
to deal with that tailor again. It is just
the same with our timber. If people
outside the colony buy karri under the
impression that they are buying jarrah,
and the timber does not answer their
expectations, but turns out to be unfit
for the particular purpose it had been
used for, we may depend upon it that the
timber industry of the colony must
suffer. It is not my intention, as I have
already said, to say anything for or
against either of these two timbers; both
are very valuable assets of the colony. In
fact I consider that our timber consti-
tutes one of our very best assets, and we
should take every care that so important
an industry is not damaged by false
representations. Within the colony there
is not much danger of one timber being
mistaken for the other, but, outside the
colony, where people cannot tell the
difference in the appearance of one from
the other, a great deal of harm may be
done if one is palmed off on an unsuspect-
ing public as being what it actually is
not. I know, from my own knowledge,
that the other colonies are crying out
very much against being misled in this
way. Karri, I am sorry to say, has been

sold for jarrah, though I do not know that jarrah has been sold for karri. I have spoken to the owners of our local timber mills on this subject, and they are almost all of them particularly anxious that a Bill of this kind should become law, in order that people outside the colony may be protected, and that these valuable timbers may be used in their proper place, and not be mistaken one for the other. The Bill is not a very lengthy Bill, and I hope it will commend itself to the good sense of the House, and that it will be passed without any serious objection. In committee, it may perhaps be considered desirable to alter some of the details of the Bill, though I do not think members will find much to which they can object. The penalty imposed for representing karri as jarrah, or jarrah as karri, when exported out of the colony, is not a very large penalty. Even under our licensing laws, the Wines, Beer, and Spirits Sale Act, provides a penalty of £30 and three months' imprisonment for unlawfully selling a bottle of spirits; and I do not think it can be considered that a fine of £50 and three months' imprisonment is too heavy a penalty for falsely representing a cargo of timber of the value of thousands of pounds. This Bill will not entail much expense, and it will cause very little trouble. So far as the Government is concerned, it only provides that a police officer, or in special cases an inspector, shall have access to any vessel loading timber for export, in order to examine the timber and see that it has been properly branded. With regard to the responsibility which the Bill casts upon the exporter, it will be seen that the third clause provides that it shall not be lawful to place any timber on board any ship for export until it has been legibly branded at each end. If it is jarrah it has to be branded with the letter "J," and if it is karri it has to be branded with the letter "K." This branding process, I can assure hon. members, is not a serious matter for the timber companies. I have been told to-day that the Jarrah-dale Timber Company intend in future to brand all the timber they send out of the colony with the name of their mill; and I believe the Canning Timber Company do that already. This, of course, is a much more serious matter than simply

putting the letter "J" or "K" on each log. As there is no objection that I have heard on the part of these timber companies to comply with the provisions of the Bill, and, as it will entail little or no expense upon the Government, I do not anticipate any serious objection to the Bill, which I now ask this House to read a second time.

MR. R. F. SHOLL: I do not think that hon. members can take any great exception to this measure. The only doubt in my mind is whether the Bill is necessary, and whether it is likely to attain the object which the hon. member has in view. It appears from what he has told us that our timber companies are already taking all necessary precautions in this matter, when they brand all the timber they send out of the colony with their own name. It struck me, on looking through the Bill, that what the hon. member proposes to do may defeat the very object he has in view, and for this reason: if this Bill becomes law it will become known outside the colony that all timber exported out of the colony is to have a distinguishing brand; and those who buy it will be guided by this brand, and be satisfied without further inquiry that if the timber is branded "J" they are buying jarrah and nothing else. But, supposing the exporter were sufficiently dishonest to brand karri with the letter "J" (which could be very easily done) and this timber went outside the colony, to all appearance in accordance with the law of the colony, would not this be likely to put people off their guard; and, if they were imposed upon in this way, would it not be likely to do the colony and the timber industry a great deal more harm than if it were left to the public to protect themselves, instead of trusting to this branding business, which, in the case of a dishonest exporter, might mislead them? That is what I am afraid of; and that in this way the Bill may defeat the very object which the hon. member has in view, and which no doubt is a very good object, if it can be carried out. If I thought some effectual means could be provided to prevent people being imposed upon by buying karri for jarrah, or buying timber that is not what it is represented to be, I should be very glad to support such a measure; but I rather fear this

Bill will not attain that object, and that it may tend to defeat the end in view.

MR. A. FORREST: I think the thanks of this House is due to the hon. member for the Murray for bringing forward this Bill, and I fail to see that those who are most interested in this matter can have any reasonable objection to the Bill. I do not think there is much in the objection of the hon. member for the Gascoyne. I think when people who are in the habit of exporting timber read the fourth clause of the Bill, and see the penalty attached for falsely representing karri as jarrah, they are not likely to use the letter "J" instead of the letter "K." This question of classifying and distinguishing our timbers when sent out of the colony has been a vexed question for many years. Both karri and jarrah are good timbers and very useful timbers for their respective purposes; what is wanted is to prevent the outside public from being imposed upon by buying one timber for the other, and using it for purposes for which it is not well adapted. I fail to see that any harm can be done by passing this small Bill. After all, we are only asking these companies to do a very small thing, merely to stamp their timber with a letter of the alphabet. I agree with the hon. member for the Gascoyne that if a man were to be dishonest enough to brand karri with the letter "J" instead of "K," and the fraud were not detected before the timber left the colony, it might do a great deal of harm. But I think the penalty provided—a fine of from £50 to £100, and three months' imprisonment, with hard labor—is likely to deter people from attempting any fraud of that kind. I shall certainly support the measure before the House.

MR. CLARKSON: I also have much pleasure in supporting this Bill. I believe the same question was before the House on a former occasion, in another form. To my mind it is deplorable that this, what I call swindle, with regard to our timber should be allowed to be carried on in this way, by representing karri as jarrah. We in the colony know there is as much difference between karri and jarrah as there is between chalk and cheese. We know that for certain purposes jarrah is an excellent timber, and

karri perfectly worthless; while for other purposes karri is a very good timber. It is good enough when used above ground; but if you put it in the ground—I am speaking from my own experience—it won't last a couple of years. I think it is perfectly monstrous that exporters of timber should impose upon people in other parts of the world by shipping karri and calling it jarrah; and I am very pleased indeed that the hon. member for the Murray has brought this Bill forward, and I shall give it my hearty support.

Motion—put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

PERTH GAS COMPANY'S ACT AMENDMENT (PRIVATE) BILL.

SECOND READING.

MR. CANNING: The Bill now before the House for its second reading is intended solely to give the Perth Gas Company power to supply what may possibly become a public want—the electric light. Under the existing Act, the Company has no such power; and, under the Bill now before the House, it would only be able to do so in strict conformity with the provisions of the Electric Light Act of last session. The Bill gives them no special privileges, and confers upon them no monopoly whatever. It simply places them in a position of being at liberty to supply the electric light, if the occasion for doing so should arise. It is really a matter that more concerns the Company and its shareholders than anyone else. In anything they may do in pursuance of this Bill they can only do it in compliance with the Electric Light Act, the same as any other company.

Motion—put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

CONSTITUTION ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

SECOND READING: ADJOURNED DEBATE.

MR. QUINLAN: Mr. Speaker, Sir,—The importance of this measure has been so thoroughly discussed outside the House and by the Press, and the debate upon the Bill has so exhausted the subject, that I do not think it is necessary for me at this stage to deal at any length with the question. I can only reiterate

what has been already said in favor of extending the franchise and abolishing the property qualification of members. As compared with the existing Act, I must confess that the Bill before us is a liberal one; but it does not go so far as I should wish, nor treat the people of the colony with that liberality that I have always advocated in the past, and am here to-day to advocate, and shall continue to advocate, until what I consider as the right of the people of the colony is granted to them,—a free and liberal franchise. There are matters of minor detail in the present Bill which I trust will be amended in committee. For instance, I notice that whilst the qualification of leaseholders as voters for the Upper House is reduced to £10, the only reduction made in the qualification of householders is from £30 to £25. I do not understand why this liberality should be shown to the man who holds a pastoral lease from the Crown, while the same liberality is not shown to the householder. I think it should be made £10 in both cases. The second sub-section of clause 12 also requires to be made more clear than it is at present. According to this a man is qualified if he has been a householder within the electoral division, occupying any dwelling-house of the clear annual value of £25, “and”—this is how the clause reads—“has occupied the same for twelve months next before the time of making the claim.” The way I read that—I may be wrong in my interpretation, and, if so, am open to correction—but the way I read it is that the claimant must have occupied the same house for twelve months before he can register. If he has not lived that time in the one house—although he may have been paying the same rent—I understand he will not be entitled to a vote. If so, it seems to be a hardship, and a step backward rather than a step forward. It is not what the majority of the people had a right to expect, and I hope this will be altered in committee. So long as a man has been paying the rent required to qualify him, I think he ought to be qualified, whether he has resided in the one house for twelve months or not. There is another serious defect in the Bill, in my opinion, and that is the way it is proposed to distribute the representation. I think that Perth is very un-

fairly treated in this respect, and that it ought to have more members. According to the last Census the population of the whole of East and West Kimberley only numbered 1,107 people, whereas the population of Perth, according to the same return, amounted to 9,617; and I venture to say that the population of the metropolis at the present time is very little short of 12,000. Yet Kimberley, with its eleven hundred people, is to have two members, and Perth with its twelve thousand is only to have three. I think the metropolis of the colony is fairly entitled to a larger representation than that, and I trust that a majority of members will be prepared to support an amendment in that direction, when the Bill is before the committee. There is another change I should have liked to have seen introduced in the present Bill, as we are dealing with the question of voting, and that is this: I should have liked to have seen proxy voting abolished altogether. It is a bad system, and is almost out of date; and I think the sooner we do away with it the better. I should be sorry to jeopardise the passage of the present Bill, although it does not go so far as I should wish to see it go; and I do not think it would be prudent to press for too much, in case we throw out the whole Bill. But I should very much like to see this proxy system abolished. It is a question that will have to be faced, sooner or later, at some future time; but I am afraid that the House as at present constituted is not likely to support so radical a change. Several members have already spoken in favor of reducing the term of residence to qualify a voter from twelve months to six; and I also am strongly in favor of the reduction. I have cordially supported the same proposition before, for in my opinion it would be most unjust to require people to reside here for twelve months before they could ask for a vote, and claim that privilege which every British subject is entitled to, so long as he submits to the laws of the country. As has been pointed out already, according to the Bill as at present worded, a person may be deprived of this right not only for twelve months, but possibly for two or three years, under certain circumstances. I believe the feeling of the House is in favor of reducing the term to six months in preference

to twelve. I also hope that some provision will be made in the Bill for the transfer of a man's vote from one district to another, in the event of the voter removing his place of residence. Possibly that is a provision that will come before us in the new Electoral Bill, for the Premier has told us that he is communicating on the subject with the Governments of the other colonies. I consider this a provision of the utmost importance, and I hope it will not be omitted in the Electoral Bill that is yet to come before us. I think that while we are dealing with this question of the franchise, it would be much better to make the Bill as liberal as possible, otherwise, we may depend upon it, it will only give occasion for further agitation, and we shall be always tinkering with the Constitution, unless we give the people of the colony what they want, and what, in my opinion, they are entitled to. They are not satisfied with the Bill as it now stands, but, for my part, I am not going to oppose the measure to the extent of wishing to have it thrown out. It is better to accept what we can get than to have nothing at all. At the same time, I think I have a perfect right to advocate what I consider is fair and just. As to the question of proxy voting,——

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): There is nothing about proxy voting in this Bill.

MR. QUINLAN: I am speaking generally, and I think I have a perfect right to express my views. I am in favor of the most liberal franchise, and the removal of all restrictions that are likely to interfere with the rights of the people. The present measure goes some little distance in that direction, and, although it does not give us all I desire, I hope it may be so improved in committee as to make it more acceptable to the public. In any case I trust we shall be able to reduce the term of residence from twelve months to six, and also make provision for transferring votes from one district to another, so long as a man only exercises his right of voting in one district. If these amendments are adopted the Bill will certainly be more popular than it is now, and will give the public generally a larger measure of contentment.

MR. CANNING: I think that in view of the fact that I have taken considerable

interest in the principles embodied in the measure now before the House, I ought not to allow the opportunity to pass without making a few observations upon the Bill. I think, sir, that the Bill in its present shape, or, rather, with some slight modification and amendment, which I have no doubt will be dealt with later on, will be acceptable to the country generally. I think it should be acceptable to the House. If I sought in any way to obstruct or defeat the measure, I might perhaps complain that it is not liberal enough; but I think that on the whole we may accept it as a fairly reasonable and liberal measure. It is a measure that is unquestionably called for. Whatever may be thought by some, I believe that no measure that has been so far dealt with, or is likely to be dealt with this session, is more desired by the country at large than the particular measure now under our consideration. I may remind members that when the Enabling Bill was under the consideration of the House of Commons, it was then stated by a very important witness—a gentleman who filled a most distinguished position in this colony for the time—that, in his opinion, if the people of the colony could be polled, five out of six would be found in favor of discarding the provision requiring a property qualification for members of the Legislative Council, and also in favor of a less restricted franchise. It has been said, on the other hand, that there is a great deal of apathy amongst the people of the colony, both as regards the removal of the property qualification and the extension of the franchise, and that the cry for these reforms has been raised by a few individuals. I cannot help thinking that those who make that assertion have very imperfectly gauged the opinion of the people of the colony at large. It is hardly reasonable to suppose for one moment that the intelligent youth of this colony who are just coming to manhood's estate can remain content with the present state of things, excluded as they are from any share whatsoever, or any voice whatsoever, in the public affairs of the country. Or, is it reasonable or probable that the intelligent, active men, full of energy and enterprise, who are pouring into this colony now will be content, or would be content, to remain under the

disabilities under which they are at present laboring? Certainly not; and the only way to meet their wishes and to grant them the rights which they doubtlessly consider their rights, and which we must admit to be their rights, is that proposed by the Bill now before the House. Again, I am at a loss to know why there should be any hesitation whatever in conceding the fullest measure of political equality to all the inhabitants of the colony,—all those who may reasonably be considered fit to enjoy the privilege. What is there in the history of the other colonies of Australia to cause us the slightest alarm on that score? Nothing whatever. On the contrary, for those who consider the teachings of the world's history, for those who have been observers of what has been going on in Australia for the last thirty years, there is the strongest reason in favor of affording the fullest measure of political freedom, the most complete political rights, to the whole of the people of the colony. Let me ask members, if at any period of the world's history, or in any country, under any circumstances, there have been communities such as those in the great Australian colonies, where law has been so powerful, where order has been so easily maintained, where attempts at disorder have been repressed so easily and at so little cost and so little sacrifice of property, and without any sacrifice of life? Let us recollect for a moment the three great industrial disorders, or strikes, that have occurred within a very few years in the other Australian colonies. We had in New South Wales, in the capital city there, a very few years ago, a strike on a gigantic scale, the lumpers' strike. Well, sir, that was suppressed with scarcely any injury to property and without the sacrifice of a single life. We had a very short time ago in Queensland a shearers' strike, on a large scale. No doubt there was some little disturbance and some destruction of property, but no bloodshed; not a human life was sacrificed. Only the other day, within the last few weeks, the Government of New South Wales has had to encounter another strike on a gigantic scale—the strike at Broken Hill. At one time the appearance of things there was very menacing indeed; but that strike has been completely

suppressed without sacrifice of life. Now, let me ask any member who knows what has been going on in the world for centuries past, whether any such outbreaks were ever suppressed in the same way, with the same ease, and without any sacrifice of human life, and very little sacrifice of property, in any other country? In the present day we have had outbreaks in Germany, in Prussia, in France—I will say nothing about Russia—and I ask were they suppressed in the same way? Is law in any of those countries as powerful as it is in these great Australian colonies? I say it is not. We do not hear all the details of what takes place on the continent of Europe when disorders of the kind occur; but they are never suppressed without bloodshed. They are suppressed only by the free use of the bayonet and the cavalry sabre; and these certainly are not used without loss of human life. In no other country, in no great community, has there been such a complete measure of political freedom as the people of New South Wales, of Queensland, of Victoria, and of South Australia have been enjoying—and this triumph of law and order to which I refer has taken place in countries and amongst communities where manhood suffrage has been the law for something like 30 years, where the measure of political freedom, where the concession to the demands of the people that are now asked for here, were granted certainly over 30 years ago—for manhood suffrage has practically been the law of the land in New South Wales, Queensland, Victoria, and South Australia for upwards of that period. And what has been the result? I have just drawn attention to it—I have endeavored to point out what the result has been—the complete triumph of law and order, because every man in the community, every reasonable man, feels that he is on a footing of perfect political equality with his fellows, and equally interested in the maintenance of law and order. He knows very well that the downfall of law and order, or the injury of law and order, would be injury in the long run of his own interest; and, however, some individuals may be carried away by excitement and a turbulent spirit, yet, on the whole, the feeling of the majority is powerful enough to keep that spirit in check. I do not think that any more

complete answer could be furnished to any arguments brought forward, or to any assertions that may be made, as to the inexpediency—I won't say danger, for I do not think the word should be applied at all—but as to the inexpediency of granting too large a measure of political freedom to the people of our own colony. I think that the facts I have brought so prominently under the notice of the House should be a complete answer to any assertion of the kind. I might conclude by echoing what the hon. gentleman at the head of the Government stated in moving the second reading of the Bill—and I think I myself have said something to the same effect before—that a right gracefully and readily yielded is received as a boon, whereas if it is withheld until it can be withheld no longer, and yielded grudgingly, when it is almost wrested from those in whose power it is to grant it, then it is received without any gratitude whatever, and leaves for a long time afterwards a sore, and a feeling the reverse of gratitude. Let me again remind members of the well-known maxim that he who gives quickly gives twice. In these circumstances, I ask this House to give its cordial support to this measure, and, when the time arrives to do so, to contribute as far as possible to make it such a measure as will be as nearly as possible a perfect measure.

MR. COOKWORTHY: I should not be doing justice to my own convictions, or to the convictions of those who sent me here, if I supported this Bill as it stands. It has been said there has been a great cry and a great desire for this Bill. I do not know where. With the exception of Perth and Fremantle I have not heard of it. Even those who now possess the franchise do not seem particularly anxious to exercise it. For instance, at York the other day, how many of the electors did not take the trouble to go to the poll? Lately, again, at Fremantle, I think there were over a hundred electors who never voted at all. Even in the city of Perth, where there are such a number of people who are said to be desirous of exercising the franchise,—even there all the electors, by a large number, do not go to the trouble of coming to the poll. Of course the argument does not hold good that because those who already have the

franchise do not choose to exercise it, others who have not got it may not wish to do so. Still the fact remains that a large proportion of those who now have votes do not go to the trouble of recording them. Personally, I think it is nothing but right that a man who has to obey the laws of the land, and who has to help to maintain the revenues of the colony in which he lives, should have some voice in the legislation of the country; and I would give a man a vote for his manhood, but I would also give him a second vote for his property, if he has any. I would not make it a high property qualification, but I would certainly let him have a second vote for the property which he owns in the colony. There has been some talk lately about the man with a swag on his back. Now there is nothing discreditable for a man to be in the position of having to carry a swag on his back—I have myself in this colony been in a position where I had not even a swag to carry on my back—and I say it does not follow that there is anything discreditable in being what has been called a “swag-man.” But I do say that it is discreditable to a man to continue to be nothing but a swag-man. In this colony, the highest rank, the highest offices are open to any man who by his industry, thrift, and perseverance fits himself for them; and I do not see why the result of that industry and that thrift should not be represented in the Legislature of the country. There is nothing to prevent a poor man in Western Australia from obtaining the qualification necessary to entitle him to a second vote. It can be obtained in a very few years, by the exercise of the qualities I have referred to; and I do think that the man who has obtained that second qualification is more fit to have a larger say in making the laws of his country than the swagman, or the loafer knocking about public-houses. The hon. member for East Perth (Mr. Canning) has referred to the strikes that have occurred in the other colonies, and to the comparative ease with which these strikes were suppressed, and law and order preserved; and the hon. member said this was a strong argument in favor of manhood suffrage. But he must remember that people in the other colonies are not so pressed for food as strikers elsewhere are.

The hon. member was careful not to refer to the strikes that have recently disgraced America, the great land of political freedom, where these outbreaks have been known to develop almost into a civil war, where the men on strike have resorted to the use of arms against the forces of law and order. I do think it is worthy of the consideration of this House whether the principle of dual voting I have referred to should not be introduced into this Bill. There seems to be a general feeling that the present franchise should be extended, and I do not see how you are going to extend it unless you adopt a manhood franchise. If you do that, I cannot see how property also is to be represented unless you have dual voting; and unless this Bill is so amended I certainly do not intend to support it.

MR. R. F. SHOLL: I must say at once I am not at all in sympathy with the Bill. Probably, pretty near every member knows that. I listened with a great deal of attention to the Premier when he introduced the Bill, and also to those who have since spoken in support of it. But I could not gather from their speeches any good reason why this measure—this radical measure, this almost revolutionary measure, should be brought forward at the present time. It is not more than two years yet since what was thought at the time (and what I thought myself) the great privilege of Responsible Government was granted to the colony, and the present franchise and electoral law came into force. Since that time the franchise, I consider, has not had a fair show, and we can hardly say yet whether it is suitable or not. It appears to me that the only agitation in favor of this Bill has been raised—for what reason is not for me to say, by certain persons in Perth and Fremantle; but I ask members to bear in mind that sometimes a very few people can make a very big noise. These people, who hold meetings in the Town Hall and get up public agitations, cannot be said to represent the views of the colony; nor, in my opinion, do they present the views of the people of Perth and Fremantle. But my principal reason for objecting to this Bill is this: when elected to this House we were elected under the existing franchise, and the changes proposed in this Bill—revolutionary changes I call them—have never

yet been submitted to the electors of the colony. Members who represent Northern constituencies certainly have had no chance to submit this question to their constituents, and very few other members have had an opportunity of doing so. Yet, what do we propose to do now? We propose at one stroke to increase the number of voters, fivefold or sixfold, and so neutralise the votes of those who put us in this House. I think it is only fair and right that those who sent us here, and whom we are supposed to represent, should have an opportunity of saying whether they consider this Bill is required or not. I consider, myself, that I should be committing a gross breach of trust if I voted for this measure without first consulting my constituents. When I addressed them last, I stated in answer to a question that I was in favor of an amendment of the Constitution Act to this extent—that I would abolish the property qualification of members of the Lower House. I did so for this reason: that at present there are many worthy people in the colony, who, though not possessing landed property to qualify them to occupy seats in this House, were possessed of other qualifications and other property equally valuable, men of substantial means and with a large stake in the colony; but, because they had not invested their means in freehold property, they were debarred from occupying a seat in this House. I gave other reasons at the time, but it is unnecessary to refer to them now. Last year, also, I supported a measure that was brought into this House by a private member, having the same object in view. As to the franchise, I think that the mining vote should be altered, and that some machinery should be provided whereby a voter who changes his residence from one side of the street to the other should not thereby lose his vote. I think some provision should be made for the transfer of votes, and that people should not be disfranchised altogether simply because they change their place of residence. Beyond that I have not changed my mind at all as to the necessity for amending our Constitution Act. Nor do I think that my constituents have changed their minds; at any rate, they have not intimated so to me. Therefore, I think I should be committing an unpardonable and gross

breach of trust if I voted for this Bill before it is submitted to the country. I do not suppose that such a radical, such a revolutionary, measure as this for altering the nature of the Constitution was ever passed into law without being first submitted to the country for its approval. That being the case I do not see how I could possibly support the Bill; in fact I intend to move, before I sit down, that the Bill be read a second time this day six months. I do not think the country has in any way called for such a Bill. We have heard no outcry from the country about the franchise, and, beyond from a few people in Perth and Fremantle—the majority of them probably not entitled to a vote—there has been no demand for such a measure; and, if these people get what the Government now propose to give them, you will find them agitating for a great deal more by and bye. These are the men who are crying out. I think our object should be to give this privilege to those who come to the colony with the intention of remaining here, and making the colony their own, and who have shown that they intend to do so. I do not suppose any political privilege will keep all these people in the colony; but, still, if a man takes a house and brings his family here, it is some guarantee that he intends to remain here. That is partly the reason why I am in favor of a householder qualification. I would not object to reducing the present householder franchise, but I certainly do think we want something more than the mere fact of a man coming into the colony, and staying here a few months, just to look around him, before we give that man a vote, and place him in the same position as the man who has settled down in the colony, and made his home here. I agree to a great extent with what has fallen from the hon. member for Sussex (Mr. Cookworthy) that, if manhood is to entitle a person to a vote, property also should entitle him to another vote. We know that a great many people are coming into the colony just now, and it is a good sign, for their coming here is a sign that the colony is prospering—though, no doubt, a great deal is also owing to the depression that exists elsewhere. I hope, and truly hope, that most of these people will remain here and make the colony their home; but I am afraid that when a reaction takes place,

and the colony meets with reverses, as no doubt we shall sooner or later, like other countries—when a period of depression does come—I am afraid we shall find that a great many of these newcomers will leave us. I do not suppose that giving them a vote would keep them here. On the other hand it might have this effect: it might bring a certain amount of political pressure to bear on the Government to go in extensively for further loans, thus keeping people in the centres of population. We know that in the Eastern colonies the bulk of the population are concentrated in the great cities, and it is the same in this colony already. I think a great deal of this is due to the pressure brought upon the Ministries of the day to borrow money, and spend it in the centres of population, where the greater portion of it is generally spent. I would not be much afraid of adopting manhood suffrage, if it were not continually dinned into our ears by public men coming here from the other colonies, that if we do adopt it we shall only be sorry for it once, and that will be always. I ask those who have had any communication with public men who come visiting us from the other colonies, whether this is not the advice these men have given them. It has been said that sooner or later it must come to that; and no doubt it will. But why it should be hastened on by a Conservative Government like our present one—the members of which, probably, do not believe in it, in their hearts—I cannot understand. I am afraid it can only be put down to a strong desire for office, a desire to hold their present positions as long as they possibly can, and to be honored and respected for the positions they hold. If the Bill goes into committee (as I have no doubt it will), I shall support the Government in making it as conservative a measure as possible. I hope I shall be found voting with the Government on this Bill oftener than I have ever done before since I have been a member of this House.

THE COMMISSIONER OF CROWN LANDS (Hon. W. E. Marmion): We shall accept it as a good omen.

MR. R. F. SHOLL: I don't know whether it will be a good omen or not. I know the measure as it stands is a more radical one than exists in any of

the other colonies, with the exception perhaps of South Australia, and, in some respects, it is even more liberal than the South Australian Act, as regards the qualification of members of the Upper House. In the only one colony in Australia, except South Australia, where the Upper House is elected and no property qualification, what do we find? In the House which is supposed to act as a check upon crude and hasty legislation, there are already no less than four labor candidates holding seats in the Upper House in that colony. If that is to be the result, I do not see the object of having an Upper House at all; it would be much better to have one chamber. I do not think we want a check upon hasty legislation if that is the sort of check we are going to have, and, when the Bill goes into committee, I intend to move that there shall be a property qualification for members of the Upper House. I think it was the hon. member for Perth (Mr. Molloy) who said that a laboring man is as much interested in the good government of the country as the man of wealth and property. I think if this question of the franchise and the question of representation were left to the laboring man, the genuine, honest working man, himself, and not to those who play upon him, I should be inclined to agree with the hon. member. If the laboring man were left to himself, I should not be at all afraid of him. The average working man is contented with his lot in the colony; he goes to his work in the morning, and returns to his home at night, perfectly happy and contented. It is the political agitator that I am afraid of, who is looked up to as a sort of demi-god, and who works on the feelings of the working-class, and who uses them for his own gain and benefit, to the injury of the country. The laboring man, as a rule, does not trouble himself about politics, one way or the other, so long as he gets work; he simply thinks about his home and his family. It is your aspiring, self-seeking agitator, who plays upon the feelings of the working man, whom we have to guard against. The hon. member for Perth also said that he was in favor of payment of members. Well, sir, I will give the hon. member credit for this: he is not afraid to speak out

what he thinks; he has the courage of his opinions, and he advocates his opinions very freely. But I must say I cannot agree with the hon. member as to this question of payment of members; and I hope that so long as I am in this House I shall oppose the payment of members. The reason given by the hon. member, if I remember rightly, was that a working man cannot afford to give up his time to become a member of this Assembly, and give his services to the country for nothing. There is something in that; but, at the same time, there is always a way out of the difficulty. If a constituency requires the services of a working man to represent them in either House of the Legislature, surely it is quite competent for that constituency to subscribe amongst themselves to pay for his services, if they particularly wish for a working man to represent them, without calling upon the country to pay him. I fail to see why the country should pay for the services of members in either House, when good men can be obtained who are prepared to give their services for nothing. I say if a man cannot afford to give up his time to the country and to fulfil the duties of the honorable position of a member of this House, without being paid for it, he had better keep out of the House altogether. I do not know that I need detain the House any longer, beyond alluding to what fell from the hon. member for Greenough, when he was referring to miners' votes. I think the hon. member called them "nomadic" miners, who travel about from one place to another, wherever there happens to be a rush. It appears to me that these people who are travelling about from place to place, mining, trouble themselves very little indeed about politics; and, if the Government would only give them facilities for prospecting, provide them with a better water supply, give them a mail service, and assist them in this practical way, these people would prefer it a great deal to the privilege of exercising the franchise. I know, if I were a miner, I would much prefer it. I will not detain the House any longer, but will now formally move that this Bill be read a second time this day six months.

MR. CLARKSON: Sir, I beg to second the hon. member's motion. The Premier told us the other night that it was no use

our opposing this Bill, that it was bound to pass. I am not at all sure that the Premier was far out when he made that statement, and I fully expect to find myself in a minority—possibly a small one. But this knowledge is not going to deter me from opposing the Bill. I shall at any rate have the satisfaction of feeling that I have done what I consider to be my duty. I am perfectly willing to admit that the present franchise does require widening in some directions,—that relating to lodgers for instance. I certainly think that if a man happens to be lodging this month in Murray Street, and wishes to change his lodgings next month into Hay Street, it is perfectly ridiculous to disfranchise that man. I think a man, if entitled to a vote, should not be liable to lose it, simply because he happens to change his lodgings. I also think that a man holding a miner's right should have a vote in a mining district. I further think that the present household franchise might very well be lowered from £10 to £5. But I can not bring myself to admit that simply because a man happens to have arrived in the colony twelve months ago—and during that time he has perhaps been loafing about from one publichouse to another—he should have a vote for the election of a member of this Legislative Assembly. I should think a man should have some better qualification than that. If a man comes to this colony with the intention of making it his home, and he is a steady and industrious man, how long will it be before he could qualify himself for the present franchise? I venture to say that he could very easily do it in twelve months, especially if this land scheme of the Premier's comes into operation. I know it is the fashion nowadays—the fashion, I say—to profess the belief that every man who is called upon to obey the laws of the country should have a voice in the election of those who make those laws. That sounds very fair and very reasonable, but, if I may be allowed to use a slang expression, it does not come out well in the washing. Where does this cry for a more liberal franchise come from? Certainly not from the country districts. There it is never mentioned, except in condemnation. I represent a large country district, containing as large a rural population as any in the colony, and I

have spoken to very many on the subject, but they one and all condemn it, and say they don't want it. I think it is a very curious thing that in the country districts I have never heard this question mentioned except to condemn it. No, sir, this agitation comes from the larger towns of the colony, and chiefly from Perth and Fremantle; and it appears to me that it comes from men who wish to pose as liberal-minded men, philanthropic men, the "people's friend" (as they call themselves). These, sir, are the men who head mobs and who lead strikes in other parts of the world, and who bring ruin and starvation upon the working man and his family. These are the men who are now raising this cry for manhood suffrage in this colony. It does not come from the people of the country, nor, in my opinion, does it come from the honest, genuine working man in any part of the colony, unless he is played upon by these agitators; and all this claptrap about refusing the working man a vote is simply sickening. Who objects to the working man having a vote? No one in this House objects to the man who works obtaining a vote; that is the very man we wish to give a vote to. But we want something more substantial to go upon than a twelve months' residence in the colony, spent possibly in loafing from one publichouse to another. Has that man a right to vote? I say he has not. Therefore, I am going to oppose this Bill.

MR. LOTON: The measure now before the House, occupying the position that I do, and having taken some part in the change of Constitution and of the franchise under which we are now living, is one upon which I think it is incumbent upon me to say, at all events, a few words. The hon. gentleman, the leader of the Government, in dealing with this question, said that the measure introduced by the Government was a more liberal measure than the people of the colony had expected, and than the members of this House expected. I think he was quite right in saying so. But I do not think the hon. gentleman went so far as to say that it was a measure which the people of the colony considered was too liberal. Although there has been some opposition raised to the measure, and especially by the hon. member for the

Gascoyne, who, I think, is the strongest in his opposition to the Bill, still I do not think that even he is not in favor of an extension of the present franchise. The hon. member admits that he is in favor of abolishing the property qualification of members, and I understood that he was also in favor of a certain extension of the franchise; so that the hon. member goes a very long way, it appears to me, in favor of this measure. When we are dealing with this question of liberalising the franchise, the question that arises in my mind is, how far shall we go? There are a number of people in this colony now who are not entitled to vote, and I think we must all admit that the circumstances of the colony during the last two or three years have considerably changed, and are very different now from what they were when we entered upon Responsible Government. In the first place we have a large number of people coming into the colony—not only working people, but also people with means. Possibly we have a larger proportion of needy people,—adventurers you may call them; but they have a perfect right to come here, and there is no reason why some of these adventurous men should not rise in the world. A large number of these people—the greater portion of them, probably, are not now entitled to a vote; and, not only that, but a large number of people who have resided in the colony all their lifetime, in our country districts especially, the sons of our settlers, are not entitled to a vote. These are classes we ought to enfranchise, and, in what way will you do it, unless you decide to give them a vote when they reach the age of manhood, when they arrive at the age of 21 years? For this reason I intend to support a measure extending the franchise to what is called manhood suffrage. There is one part of this Bill which appears to me to be rather anomalous. By clause 16 we provide that any person who has attained the age of 21 years, and has resided in the colony 12 months, is eligible to become a member of this Assembly; but, in the case of a voter, it is required that not only shall he have resided twelve months in the colony, but he must also have resided six months in one particular district. In the case of a member we do not insist upon this six

months' residence in a particular district, but, in the case of a voter, we are asked to place that restriction, which appears to me a little anomalous. It has been said by some members that they consider 12 months' residence is too long a term to impose before a man is entitled to be registered as a voter. For my own part, I do not think that it is too long; but, when you provide for that, I do not see why you should also provide that he shall have resided six months in one particular district. My idea is to do away with all difficulties and restrictions as far as possible, and I certainly think that voters, as regards the term of residence, should be placed on the same footing as candidates who are qualified to a seat in this House. There is another point which has been lost sight of: we are arguing this question as if we were going to have an election every year. I hope, at any rate, that the people to whom we are going to give the privilege of this extended franchise will bring to bear a certain amount of sound sense and exercise a certain amount of judgment when they are electing their representatives; and I also hope that those who may be elected to seats on the Government benches will be men possessing the confidence of the people, and that we shall have no occasion for frequent elections or frequent appeals to the country. Therefore, I do not think that these people to whom we propose to extend the franchise will have an opportunity of exercising it very often. At present, our Parliament is elected for four years, and it is possible that the country at large may have no opportunity of exercising the franchise oftener than once in four years. This boon of the franchise, therefore, is not a boon that people are going to enjoy every day. With regard to the second Chamber or Upper House, it seems to me that if we are to have two Chambers the Upper House at all events should be composed of members with a property qualification, if we are going to do away with the property qualification in this House. I should be glad to support the hon. member for the Gascoyne, when the Bill is in committee, if he proposes that there shall be a property qualification for members of the Upper House, so long as the qualification he proposes is a substantial one; because, in my opinion, we

should make it a substantial one, or none at all. The colony of Victoria has been alluded to. There the property qualification is only £100. I think we might just as well have none at all as a property qualification of that kind. It is supposed that the members of these Upper Houses are to review the measures sent to them by the popular Chamber, the Chamber which represents the people of the colony, the members of which have charge of the purse of the colony, and the power of taxation. It is supposed that the Upper House is to review and act as a check upon the action of the House that is entrusted with these great powers and responsibilities. Yet in this Bill it is proposed that any man may be eligible to become a member of this Upper House who has attained the mature age of twenty-one years. These are the men who are to review the measures passed by the popular Chamber, and to confirm them or reject them as they please.

MR. RICHARDSON: They are to be elected.

MR. LOTON: I am aware they have to be elected. But, in my humble opinion, there are few men who at 21 years of age are endowed with that sound practical intelligence, and that solid practical knowledge which would entitle them to review legislative measures.

MR. RICHARDSON: They won't often be elected at that age.

MR. LOTON: I would not have them eligible for election. We hear a great deal about American institutions, and they are sometimes held up for our admiration. But what is the lowest age at which an American citizen becomes eligible to a seat in the Senate? He must be at least 30 years of age, and he must also have resided in that country for ten years. Here we propose 21 years of age, and twelve months' residence.

MR. SIMPSON: Why not provide that they shall be bald-headed.

MR. LOTON: A man may be that before he is twenty-one. I am speaking in all seriousness about this qualification of members for the Upper House, and I think the Bill requires amendment in this respect, both as regards the age and also a property qualification. I think the age should be increased to 30, at all events. I do not propose at this stage to go into any further details in con-

nection with the Bill. The hon. member for the Gascoyne says it ought to go to the country. There are two ways of going to the country; if it goes to the country now, before the franchise is extended, the very people whom we want to have a voice in the matter will have no voice at all, and we shall be asked to go to the country again under the new franchise. Most members are probably in the same position as myself as regards this question, so far as their constituents are concerned. When I was elected, the question of the qualification of members and voters was not put to me in any sort of way—I have no recollection that it was—and I shall have to exercise my own judgment in the matter; and, so far as I am concerned, I shall be quite prepared to meet my constituents; and if I thought they were not satisfied with my action in this matter, they could elect someone else in my place, if they can find a majority of electors to do so. Without any further remarks, I shall feel it my duty—subject to possible attempts at amendment in committee—to support the second reading of the Bill.

MR. RICHARDSON: I wish to say but a very few words on this Bill. I have been opposed to what is known as manhood suffrage in the past, because of the abuses which it has given rise to, and I am now as much as ever opposed to those abuses and to a certain class of people who will be included in the franchise under that universal kind of suffrage. But, after all, when you come to think of it, and you see that the tendency all round is to reduce and to broaden the franchise, and to go down step by step, first from £25 to £10, and then from £10 to £5, and then come to the question of including the man who pays no rent at all, and then you are asked to include lodgers, and to include miners—when one sees that at last the ground is cut away from under your feet altogether, and that there is nothing to stand on but the bed rock; when you see that this is the tendency of the age, the distinction becomes so very fine that it amounts to very little more than hair splitting—the difference between this kind of franchise and manhood suffrage pure and simple. I really cannot see that in a colony like this there is but very little difference between a £5 qualification or

a miner's right qualification and manhood suffrage itself. What is a miner's right, after all? Surely if a vote is worth anything at all, a man can afford to pay £1 to qualify himself, which is what a miner's right costs—or 10s. I believe, in the tin districts. I think that any politician who is prepared to advocate that the miner, who, by paying 10s., can become entitled to a vote, but who is not prepared to give a vote to that same man if engaged in some other calling, is only splitting hairs. For my part, if it is desired that £5 householders should have a vote, and holders of miners' rights at 10s. should have a vote, and lodgers should have a vote, I cannot see where we are going to stop short of the whole thing. But it appears to me that none of these distinctions touches the main question at all. It appears to me that the crucial distinction that is wanted by the ideal politician is that distinction which would enable us to differentiate between the worthless and the worthy voter, whether he be a poor man or a rich man. But is it possible, under any franchise, to make that moral distinction? I think every practical man will admit that it is not. A very worthy, industrious, steady man may be poor, through circumstances over which perhaps he has no control; he may be a man with a large family, which keeps him poor. On the other hand, we may have a very worthless man, morally speaking, and who also, owing to fortuitous circumstances over which he has no control, may be a rich man so far as worldly wealth goes. If we are going to give this man a vote and exclude the other man, it appears to me that we may do hardship to many deserving men who ought to have a vote; and, although under a system of universal suffrage we may give a vote to many who are not morally fit to vote—to scores and hundreds who are thoroughly unfit to vote, and who have no more right to have a voice in the country's councils than perhaps one of the lower animals; although, I say, we may give a vote to many who are utterly unfit for it, still, on the other hand, by refusing to adopt this manhood suffrage we may do an act of injustice to many good men, who are not on the same level plane in a material or worldly sense, but who have the moral qualification that

should entitle them to the franchise. Therefore, until we are able in some way to arrange some distinctive franchise that will enable us to differentiate between the worthless loafer who has attained his manhood, and the steady, hardworking, and deserving good fellow who has attained his manhood,—until we are able to do this, I do not see the utility of splitting hairs, and saying that the man who pays 10s. or £1 for a miner's right shall have a vote, but that the same man employed in any other calling shall not have a vote. For my part, the only thing that appears to me to be done is to go right down to the bottom rock at once and then work upwards. I remember very well this was what the present Attorney General told us once, when we were discussing either the Electoral Bill or the Constitution Bill under the former form of Government. The hon. gentleman then said it was no use going in for half-measures in this matter of the franchise, or fixing the franchise at a low rate; that the whole thing would have to be swept away in a few years, and that the best thing we could do was to go down to the bed-rock at once and work upwards. At that time I voted against the hon. gentleman in that opinion; and, although I felt there was a great deal of truth in it, I could not reconcile my mind to accept it. But in the light of subsequent history and in the light of fact and experience, I cannot help thinking that the hon. member was not very far wrong, and that there was more truth in what he said than we were disposed to acknowledge at the time. We have all felt, I have no doubt, when moving about and conversing with our fellow men that under the existing franchise there are many most deserving men who are deprived of a vote, and that our present law is doing these men an absolute injustice; and it seems to me it is no use our shirking or burking the question any longer. If we want to do justice to these men we must make up our minds to admit others who are undoubtedly, from the point of view of moral worth, utterly unworthy of a vote, and who will constitute an element of danger to the community. I know some members do not like it, but it cannot be denied that there is a certain amount of danger in giving a vote to people who are

thoroughly unfit to make use of it. But it has to be done, in order not to exclude the better disposed and better qualified man, who we all feel may be safely entrusted with the franchise. No doubt when we get this manhood suffrage, we shall have men in this House who will not do us any credit; but we cannot get out of that. It happens in every country where that system prevails. There is always a certain element in their Legislatures which the country would be better without; and it will be the same here. We shall have men admitted into Parliament who will do the country no good, and who may possibly do it a great deal of harm. But I do not see how it can be helped. You cannot make politics theoretically and morally perfect, and we must be prepared to take the good and bad in politics as in other things. The only thing we can do is to try to educate people to a sense of their responsibilities, and to endeavor to enlighten them so as to make them better able to discriminate between the worthless political adventurer who will promise anything in order to get a vote, and the man made of sterner stuff who declines to sell himself for a song in order to catch a vote. There are in all communities, I am happy to say, a fair proportion of such men, and it is their duty not to shirk the political arena, as they are too apt to do, unfortunately, in the other colonies where this system of manhood suffrage obtains.

MR. LEFROY: I wish to say a few words on the subject now before the House, not exactly for the reason given by my hon. friend the member for Toodyay—that the matter had not come before his constituents, and that consequently he was unable to support the Bill—though, in a measure, it is for the same reason. But, although this question has not been raised by the people whom I represent in this House, I nevertheless feel that, not being here as a mere delegate, but as a representative, that it is incumbent upon me to use my own judgment in the matter; and I feel that when the time comes for me to meet those whom I represent I shall be able to satisfy them that my action in supporting this Bill was such as to justify their approval. It appears to me, looking at the altered circumstances of the colony, that it is our duty to support

a measure tending in the direction indicated by this Bill. Having inaugurated Responsible Government, and assimilated our Constitution in that respect with the Constitutions of the other great Australian colonies, I think we should be lagging far behind if we did not now make an attempt also to assimilate our franchise with theirs. No doubt many of us are looking forward to the day when all these colonies will be united in one great federation, and I think that this assimilation of our franchise with the franchise of the sister colonies will be one step on our part in that direction. So far as the feeling of the country at large is concerned, I quite agree with what has fallen from some hon. members that this question has not been very seriously considered by the people. At the same time, although there has been no general expression of opinion on the subject, throughout the country, I think it will be found that the public at large will be in accord with members who intend to support this measure. I think it was the hon. member for Sussex who told us that, in this Bill, property had no representation.

MR. COOKWORTHY: No; I said I would give property double representation.

MR. LEFROY: Then I misunderstood the hon. member. I think that property is represented, to a certain extent, in this Bill, because any man who has property in various parts of the colony will be entitled to a vote in the district where his property is situated; consequently, it not only gives him a vote in consideration of his manhood, it also gives him a vote in consideration of his property. I do not intend to dwell at any length upon this question; I simply thought it was my duty not to give a silent vote on the subject. For my own part, I consider that the best form of government is government by aristocracy; I mean government by aristocracy in the truest sense of the word.

MR. MONGER: We have no aristocracy.

MR. LEFROY: The hon. member says we have no aristocracy. I mean aristocracy in the true meaning of the word—government by the best. That is what I should like to see in this colony; and I believe that to get a Government of this kind we shall have to extend the

franchise. So far as the property qualification of members is concerned, I think the abolition of that qualification is a question of very little importance. It is for the electors to decide whom they consider the best man to represent them, and I think they ought to have a free choice in the matter. My idea is that we should have a Government and a Parliament composed of our very best men, irrespective of any property qualification. That is what I mean by government by aristocracy. I think we should have government by the best men in the land, no matter what their position may be, so long as they are true, and honest, and patriotic men. It has been said that to be honest, as this world goes, is to pick one man out of a thousand; and, if this be true, it undoubtedly limits the area of selection. It may be said, that if only patriotic men were eligible for election, the result would be that we should only have my hon. friend the Premier—who, I believe, claims the monopoly of patriotism in this House—to represent the Government of the country. In any case, I think our object should be to give the electors of the colony a free choice in the selection of their representatives, and this Bill proposes to give them that choice; and I shall have much pleasure in supporting the Bill in its integrity—of course with the privilege of supporting any amendment in committee which I think will be conducive to the good of the country.

MR. PATERSON: I find myself in a somewhat anomalous position with regard to this Bill. The district I represent is divided into two classes, one half being a working population—well, we are all workers for the matter of that—and the other half being a farming population. By a working population I mean those engaged in the timber industry, who may be supposed to be in favor of an extension of the franchise. On the other hand, I may say that at a public meeting recently held in the Murray district it was unanimously decided against an extension of the franchise in the direction of this Bill; and, knowing the views of that section of my constituency, I certainly cannot support the Bill in that respect. I quite believe that every man should have a vote, but I think he should first qualify himself for that vote; and I do not think

that a mere 12 months' residence in the colony is a sufficient qualification. Some members have taken exception to the provision which requires the would-be voter to have resided six months in the particular district where he wants to vote; but I think, myself, it will take any man six months at least in a district before he can pretend to know the requirements of that district. I can only say, I am not in accord with the Bill; I think it goes too far. There is another objection I have to it: it provides that anybody may become a member of the Upper House if he is 21 years of age. I think it is ridiculous to suppose that a man (or a boy, you may call him) has gained the necessary knowledge and experience at that age to qualify him to sit in the Upper House. In Victoria the age is 30; and I think it is ridiculous to suppose that our young men mature in this colony, either in wisdom or anything else, 10 years earlier than they do in Victoria or any of the other colonies. I think it is a most revolutionary clause, and I cannot understand why it was inserted. When the time comes to go to a division on this Bill, I shall certainly be found with the minority who are opposed to it, whether my constituents may return me again or not. If they don't, I cannot help it. They may perhaps want an honest man like the Premier, but I think we are all honest men until we are proved to be dishonest. Although I believe I shall be in a minority, a small minority, I shall certainly vote in opposition to the Bill as it stands.

MR. HASSELL: Although my constituents have not asked me to support the Bill, I intend to do so, with a few amendments, which I should like to see introduced in committee.

MR. A. FORREST: I should like to say a few words on this Bill, which I consider one of the most important Bills of the session. I may say at once I intend to support the second reading of the Bill. We must all agree that the time has arrived when every man who had been a resident of the colony for, say twelve months, or even six months, should be entitled to the same privileges as we are. Why should men, who come here and pay the same rates and taxes as we do, not have a vote as we have? There are plenty of safeguards in this Bill for those who

have large interests at stake in the colony. Every man who has property in a district will have a vote for that district, and I say that is a sufficient safeguard to counterbalance any radical influence on the part of these new-comers. Had it not been so, had the Bill not provided these safeguards, I should not vote for it, for I have been of opinion for many years that the rights of property should be protected, and I am pleased that the Premier has taken good care in this Bill to provide that protection. There are some things in the Bill which I do not approve of. I think we should provide that the members of the Upper House should be more than 21 years of age before they are eligible, and I intend to move that the age be increased to 30, for I consider it would be thoroughly absurd to have exactly the same qualification for both Houses. If that is to be the case, we may as well have only one House, and I cannot help thinking this must have been a slip on the part of the Government. We do not find it so in the other colonies. In other respects I consider the Bill a good one. It has been brought in by the Government because there has been a cry from one end of the colony to the other in favor of extending the franchise. [Mr. CLARKSON: No.] I believe if a poll were taken to-morrow from the far North to the far South there would be a majority of 7 to 1—[Mr. DEHAMEL: 10 to 1.]—in favor of giving a vote to every man who has resided in the colony a certain time. [Mr. CLARKSON: Nonsense.] It is all very well for those who already have votes to say, "We won't allow any one who comes here now to have a vote." I say that every one who comes into Western Australia should have a vote after he has been here twelve months. Nearly every member who has spoken has said that miners should have a vote, and so they should. But why should other working men not have a vote as well as miners? For instance, I have a gardener, to whom I give £1 a week and his food and a house to live in; but that man has no vote at all because he does not pay rent. Surely that man is more entitled to a vote than the man who only pays 10s. for a miner's right. I think with the honorable member for the De Grey, if we give miners a vote and lodgers

a vote, we shall only be splitting straws if we refuse a vote to every man who is a British subject and who has resided in the colony twelve months, or even six months—I do not care which. I shall support the Bill to all intents and purposes, with the exception of the amendment I have already suggested as to the qualification age of members of the Upper House, for I certainly do not think that 21 years is high enough.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL (Hon. S. Burt): I trust I may be pardoned if I also make a few remarks—and they will be few—on this occasion. The hon. member who has just sat down has really challenged me, or the Government, as to whether there has not been some slight mistake made with regard to the qualification of members of the Upper House. There has been no mistake at all so far as the Government are concerned. It is proposed by this Bill to give the electors of the colony an absolutely free choice of representatives in both Chambers; and, if the age for the Upper House is restricted to 30, it will not be a free choice, so far as that House is concerned, because the area of selection is contracted, being limited to those who are 30 years of age. It must be borne in mind that under this Bill it does not follow that an electorate, in choosing a member to represent it in the Upper House, must necessarily choose a man who is not more than 21 years of age. They may elect whom they choose,—an old gentleman of 90 if they like, or a youngster of 21. If they want a youngster of 21, I say let them have him. If they prefer people who are 30, let them choose a man of that age; or if they prefer a man of 90, let them have a man of 90. The object of the Government is to give the electors a free choice, and that was the reason we fixed the age at 21.

MR. R. F. SHOLL: Make it 15.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL (Hon. S. Burt): I don't see why we shouldn't make it 15. We do not compel the electors to choose a man of any particular age; we wish to place no restriction upon their choice.

MR. R. F. SHOLL: Would you extend it to include widows and spinsters?

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL (Hon. S. Burt): Certainly; and it will come to

that before long. One hon. member—the hon. member for the DeGrey, I think—was good enough to refer to some observations of mine made some time ago when this question of the franchise was before the House on a former occasion, and the hon. member was bound to say that my words on that occasion had come true. And, if I may be allowed to prophesy again, with regard to the inclusion of women and others in the franchise, I do not think I shall be far wrong. The tendency of party Government, as we all know, is for the opposing parties to bid below each other for popular favor. That is the evil of party Government. It is a form of Government I have always detested, for I think it is the worst form of Government in the world. The tendency of parties, as I say, is to bid lower and lower, and to underbid each other until we come to the very bottom of the scale. Therefore it was that I suggested that we should start from the bottom and build up. My suggestion was not accepted at the time, but it seems to have made one convert, at any rate, in the hon. member for the DeGrey, who says that what I then said has come true. I did not rise, however, on the present occasion to prophesy, but to correct an error that the hon. member for the Gascoyne has fallen into with regard to the reasons which actuated the Government in bringing forward this Bill. I may also say this much more, that, now that we are lowering the franchise pretty well as low as we can have it, such questions as the term of residence in the colony and residence in a district are mere matters of detail, which can be dealt with in committee. But, having extended the franchise about as low as we can put it, there is one thing more to be done, and that is to see that people are educated to exercise their privileges with some discretion and intelligence. That is a necessary accompaniment of this extended franchise, otherwise we may be putting in the hands of mere barbarians a weapon which they may use against every good interest in the country. But if you educate the people to a sense of their responsibility, and keep them educated, there need be no fear that they will not exercise the franchise to the benefit of the country. Therefore, I say

we must look in the future to the education of those who may hereafter be called upon to exercise the privilege we are now conferring on them. It is our duty to do that, for to withhold this privilege from them can never be done. It must come, sooner or later; and the Government think the time has come. The present state of things could not last. We felt that, and we brought forward this Bill. I read, a few weeks ago, before this Bill was made public—and it shows how wildly some people will talk, people who set themselves up as agitators—I read a short time ago a tirade in some newspaper, stating that the people were being deluded in this matter, that Western Australia could never expect from this Ministry a measure of this sort; that one and all of them would be the very last men in the world to bring forward a measure of this kind. Well, facts are against those who talked so wildly. Nor is it the case, and it is not right to say, as the hon. member for the Gascoyne said, that this measure was introduced because we want to retain office. I do not believe that many think that—that we brought forward this Bill so that we may keep in office. We knew that it had to come, and most of us had promised our influence to obtain this extension of the franchise the first opportunity that offered. I do not think we have been long in setting to work in fulfilling that promise, seeing that the Constitution is yet only two or three years old. I have nothing further to say on this occasion. I only trust that all of us will see there is sufficient in the Bill in the way of an extension of the franchise to justify us all in voting at least for its second reading, although on some of the clauses we may differ.

THE COMMISSIONER OF CROWN LANDS (Hon. W. E. Marmion): It is not my intention at this stage of the proceedings to inflict any lengthy remarks upon hon. members. There is only one particular phase of the question upon which I intend to say a few words. Several members who spoke in opposition to the Bill stated that it was not a measure for which there had been any general demand, and that the people of the colony generally had not manifested any great interest in this question, and that what agitation there had been had

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

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

Ayes	6
Noes	20

Majority against 14

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

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

Bill read a second time.

ADJOURNMENT.

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

Legislative Assembly,

Wednesday, 30th November, 1892.

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

THE SPEAKER took the chair at 7.30 o'clock.

PRAYERS.

ENFORCEMENT OF PROVISIONS OF CHINESE IMMIGRATION ACTS.

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