

should be considered by a select committee, who should also have before them these elaborate regulations, which are really of greater importance even than the Act itself.

Motion put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest) moved that the consideration of the bill in committee be made an Order of the Day for the following Monday.

MR. DE HAMEL moved, as an amendment, that the bill be referred to a select committee.

MR. QUINLAN seconded the amendment.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): The Government have no objection—we could have no objection—if the House really wishes it, to have this bill referred to a select committee, because it certainly is an important bill. But at the same time, after listening carefully to what the hon. member had to say, it appears to me he raised no objections to the bill that cannot be easily dealt with in Committee of the whole House. I do not think it is very likely that any great alteration will be made in this bill, for it does not deal with a very easy subject, or a subject in which many members of this House have had much experience; and I think the chances are that we shall find that the experience of other colonies, together with the experience which members of the Government have had, will at any rate be sufficient for the general principles of the bill. I myself do not see any necessity for a select committee on this bill; it has been carefully framed; it is in accord with the legislation of the other colonies on this subject, and I believe it will be found thoroughly applicable to this colony. I think it will be seen that there is nothing in the bill that cannot be dealt with by the House in committee of the whole quite as efficiently as by a select committee, for I do not believe that either a select committee or a committee of the whole House will make any alteration in the bill in any material particular. Having said this much, I may add that the Government have no objection whatever to the bill going to a select committee, if the House desires it; but I see no necessity for it.

The House divided on the motion to refer the bill to a select committee, the numbers being—

Ayes	...	...	...	4
Noes	...	...	...	9

Majority against ... 5

Ayes.	Noes.
Mr. Canning	Hon. S. Burt
Mr. Quinlan	Hon. H. W. Venn
Mr. Traylen	Mr. Baker
Mr. De Hamel (Teller).	Mr. Cookworthy
	Mr. Darlot
	Mr. Pearce
	Mr. Randell
	Mr. Symon
	Hon. Sir J. Forrest (Teller).

The committal of the bill was then fixed for the following Monday.

#### ADJOURNMENT.

The House adjourned at 3:50 p.m.

### Legislative Assembly, Monday, 14th December, 1891.

New member—Golden Gate Gold Mine Jumping case—History of Western Australia—Sparks from Locomotives—Post and Telegraph Office, North Fremantle—Improvements to Derby Wharf and Tramway—Securities of Assurance Companies—"Truck" System; Prevention of—"Rickets" in Cattle—Drought in the North: proposed Remission of Rent—Purchase of Agricultural Land in South-West Division—Assault upon Furdell Khan—Game Bill: first reading—Boyanup-Mimminup Bridge Railway Bill: first reading—Boyanup-Busselton Railway Bill: first reading—Northam-Southern Cross Railway Bill: first reading—Sharks Bay Pearl-shell Fishery Bill: first reading—Settled Estates Bill: first reading—Bills of Sale Act Amendment Bill: first reading—Public Officials Bill: first reading—General Loan and Inscribed Stock Bill: first reading—Bankruptcy Bill: first reading—Adjournment.

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

PRAYERS.

#### NEW MEMBER.

THE SPEAKER announced that on the 3rd of November last he had issued a writ for the election of a member to serve for the electoral district of Geraldton, in

the place of Mr. Edward Keane, resigned; and that by the return thereto it appeared that Mr. George Thomas Simpson, of Perth, had been duly elected in pursuance of the said writ.

Mr. Simpson was then introduced, and took and subscribed the oath, and signed the Members' Roll.

#### GOLDEN GATE GOLD-MINING COMPANY JUMPING CASE.

MR. CLARKSON: I have to ask the Commissioner of Crown Lands, Whether he will lay upon the table all papers relating to the Golden Gate Gold-mining Company jumping case.

THE COMMISSIONER OF CROWN LANDS (Hon. W. E. Marmion) laid the papers on the table.

#### HISTORY OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA.

MR. RICHARDSON: I have to ask the Premier, Whether, in the interests of historical literature, the Government would be willing to place a small sum on the Estimates for the purpose of obtaining a written history of the colony of Western Australia from its earliest days, such sum to provide for the issue of a sufficient number of volumes for sale; and further, to appoint a committee of gentlemen who would undertake to collect and arrange material required for such work, and engage the necessary literary talent for writing such history.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): The Government regret that they are unable to place a sum upon the Estimates for this purpose.

#### SPARKS FROM LOCOMOTIVES.

MR. TRAYLEN: I beg to ask the Commissioner of Railways, What steps the Government propose to take for the protection of crops, grass, and other property against damage by fire arising from sparks from locomotives, and what redress is proposed to be given for damage so caused?

THE COMMISSIONER OF RAILWAYS (Hon. H. W. Venn): The Government have always taken such precautions as are usual and possible to prevent fires or damage being caused by locomotives, and such being the case the Government are advised that they are not liable for damage so caused.

#### POST AND TELEGRAPH OFFICE, NORTH FREMANTLE.

MR. PEARSE: I have to ask the Hon. the Director of Public Works, Whether it is his intention to make provision on the Estimates for 1892 for the erection of a Post and Telegraph Office at North Fremantle?

THE DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC WORKS (Hon. H. W. Venn): The Government hope to be able to place a sum of money upon the Estimates for this purpose.

#### IMPROVEMENTS TO DERBY WHARF AND TRAMWAY.

MR. A. FORREST: I beg to ask, When it is probable that the Government will make the necessary improvements to the Wharf and Tramway at Derby, the same being absolutely necessary, in view of the large shipments of cattle during the winter months,—the money for above works being provided out of Loan Estimates?

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): The Government have the matter under consideration, and hope to be able to make the necessary improvements.

#### SECURITIES OF ASSURANCE COMPANIES.

MR. QUINLAN: I beg to ask the Hon. the Treasurer, Whether the Government are satisfied that the various Assurance Companies doing business in Western Australia have complied with the provisions of section 4 of "The Life Assurance Companies Act, 1889," which section provides that every Company which carries on business within the Colony shall deposit with the Colonial Treasurer securities to the value of Ten thousand pounds?

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): Yes.

#### "TRUCK" SYSTEM: PREVENTION OF.

MR. TRAYLEN: I have to ask whether it is the intention of the Government to legislate for the prevention of the "truck" system of payment by contractors?

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): No. All Government contracts prohibit the "truck" system.

**"RICKETS" AMONG CATTLE.**

**MR. COOKWORTHY:** I have to ask whether it is the intention of the Government to take any action in the matter of the disease among cattle known as "Rickets," and whether they intend to act on the recommendation of the Commission recently appointed to inquire into the matter?

**THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest):** The Government intend to submit the Report of the Commission to the Agricultural Colleges in England, and to endeavor to obtain an opinion in the matter.

**DROUGHT IN THE NORTH: PROPOSED REMISSION OF RENTS.**

**MR. A. FORREST:** I have to move, "That in view of the heavy losses by settlers in the Gascoyne, North-West, and Kimberley Divisions, the Annual Rents payable in advance on 1st March, 1892, be remitted." I feel sure, sir, that I shall have the sympathy of not only both sides of this House, but also of the Government on this matter. We are all aware that at the present time the drought is raging at the North, and from all appearances it is likely to continue. Hon. members must be aware that the squatters in the Northern part of this colony are men who, in the majority of cases, live upon their stations. The whole of their assets are there, and their income depends upon the wool that comes from the sheep's back, and the fat sheep which they sell. At the present time the sheep have been shorn, but the wool is lying at the stations, the owners being unable to get it to market on account of the impassable nature of the roads through want of rain. It is also impossible for them to send fat sheep down for the very simple reason that they have none to send. I am not a man to croak, or look too gloomily ahead; but, sir, the position is now such that we must do something to help these settlers. The practical way of affording aid is that which I have suggested in the motion. A very similar thing was done under a former constitution. When the farmers at the Greenough and Dongarra lost their crops, the Government for the time being not only remitted the rents, but also supplied seed wheat for the next season out of the public funds. I shall not ask

the Government to provide sheep, but I do ask that the rents due in March, 1892, should be remitted, or, if that cannot be done, I ask the Government to postpone the payment of them until the settlers are able to get their produce to market. I am, perhaps, better able than anyone else to judge of the condition of these settlers, and unless some assistance is given them, they will be placed in a very awkward position when their rents fall due. Those who have their stations unencumbered may be able to tide over, but those who are not so fortunate, and who have been struggling along for years, will be circumstanced very differently. I feel sure that if any calamity overtakes any section of the community this House will always be willing to do the utmost it can to afford relief, and, therefore, I confidently submit this motion to the House.

**MR. LOTON:** Would the hon. member substitute the word "division" for "district"?

**MR. A. FORREST:** Certainly.

**MR. LOTON:** And omit the word "Murchison"? This will bring it within the terms of the Land Regulations.

**MR. A. FORREST:** I have no objection to that.

**MR. THROSSELL:** I will second the motion, so that the matter may be debated; but I may point out that there are so many members of this House interested in this district that the proposition of the hon. member becomes a very delicate one to deal with. I think, however, looking at the amount required to afford the relief suggested, we should pause before committing ourselves. We must also bear in mind that before we should be called upon to remit any rent, some petition asking for it should be presented to the House. To ask the Government to set aside from their revenue, which they rely on, a sum of from £10,000 to £50,000 is not a reasonable request to make, although at the same time I must say that I think the hon. member for Kimberley (Mr. A. Forrest) deserves the thanks of the House for bringing this matter under our notice.

**MR. PARKER:** Like the hon. member for West Kimberley, I am in entire sympathy with the squatters at the North. I very much regret the losses

they have sustained in their stock, and that the present lamentable state of things exists among them. Still, sir, while we sympathise with them, it is our duty to look at the matter, not as one of sympathy, but from the point of view of what is right and just. Do not let us, by remitting the rents in the present instance, establish a precedent which will act injuriously in the future, and compel us to grant to others who are not so deserving as these squatters similar concessions. We must also bear in mind that our Land Regulations are of the most liberal character. I have heard from gentlemen who have visited this colony, and who themselves are engaged in pastoral pursuits, that in no other colony are the Land Regulations so liberal. Not only are they liberal in the way of rent, but the tenure is a long one, and at the end of it every lessee is entitled to be recouped for every chain of fencing he has erected. He may, therefore, spend thousands of pounds on the land for his own benefit, and at the expiration of his term, if the Government does not re-let him the land, the country is called upon to pay thousands of pounds for improvements. I believe that in no other colony does the same thing prevail.

**THE COMMISSIONER OF CROWN LANDS (Hon. W. E. Marmion):** The land is better.

**MR. PARKER:** I have not had the pleasure of visiting the Kimberley District, but I have been told that the land there is as well suited to squatting purposes as any in Australia.

**MR. A. FORREST:** They have had no rain for eighteen months there.

**MR. PARKER:** And I very much regret it; but the question is, Are we prepared to make these squatters a grant of £40,000 or £50,000 out of the revenue? We must remember, too, that this has been an exceptional season; and we know that these gentlemen have all done very well in the past. During the last 15 years they have lost nothing, and they have, during that time, occupied the land at a low rental, and therefore I think it would be unwise to grant a remission of the rent at the present time. And especially as so many hon. members of this House are engaged in pastoral pursuits it would have been better had the matter not been brought before us

except by memorial; but I do not even consider that this course would be warranted. It would be better for the squatters to pay their rents, and to bear the losses they have sustained. It does not look well to see men who are occupying some of the richest land in Australia coming to the Legislature and saying give us £40,000 or £50,000, for that is really what it amounts to. Under a past and paternal form of Government, I believe the farmers were on one occasion assisted by the loan of money on the security of their properties.

**MR. A. FORREST:** And they did not pay it back.

**MR. PARKER:** That was the fault of the Government. In some cases also the rents of the special occupation licenses were remitted; but I cannot help thinking that the cases of the small farmers and agriculturists are different from those of the squatter. The small man we desire to retain on the soil; and if any disaster occurs which may tend to drive him off, it may be that the State does right to step in and give him assistance; but we cannot apply the same principle to the squatter. I am in entire sympathy with those at the North who have suffered by this drought; but at the same time I think it would be unwise for the Government to put its hand into the Treasury and give away £40,000 or £50,000.

**MR. A. FORREST:** That amount is wrong.

**MR. PARKER:** I do not know what the amount is, nor does it matter, because we are discussing the principle. I would also ask hon. members to bear in mind that this House has been elected on a £10 franchise. The whole of the population of the colony is not represented here, and do not let us have those people who are not represented saying, "Look at that squatter House voting this money to themselves! It never could have occurred if we had had a vote."

**MR. RICHARDSON:** The speech of the hon. member shows how unwise it is to talk of things we know nothing about. I do not myself rise to support the motion of the hon. member, for I cannot say that I am in full accord with it; nor do I think any assistance which is given should be granted in the form proposed. I can see that the Government may be placed

in a great difficulty by being called upon to remit so large an amount out of the revenue, which the country has to rely on. At the same time I think the squatters are entitled to something more than mere empty sympathy. People seem to think that directly a fall of rain occurs there is an end to all the trouble; but let me say that if the drought were to break up at this present moment one-half, or at any rate one-third, of the squatters would never regain the position they previously occupied. Many of these men have been laboring for years under great difficulties; and although the hon. member for York may think that up to now they never had any difficulties—

MR. PARKER: I did not say so.

MR. RICHARDSON: You said words amounting to that.

MR. PARKER: No!

MR. RICHARDSON: For three or four years they have had to contend against drought, but not of such intensity as the present one, which has been a drought such as has never before occurred in the country during the 25 or 26 years it has been settled. The losses this year can never be recovered, and what makes matters still worse is that the squatters cannot go to market, as they can elsewhere, and buy more sheep. They are all in the same position—all wanting sheep. It will, therefore, take years before they can stock their runs again, and they have now to begin over again the fight they commenced 25 years ago. The plan I suggested, I think, would have been the better one as a means of showing them some practical sympathy, namely, to allow the amount of the rents to remain stationary for the remainder of the term of leases. Experience has taught us that the present rents are quite heavy enough, and if this suggestion were adopted, besides, perhaps, now giving them six months further time in which to pay, it would be rendering more than that empty sympathy which we have heard so much about. I cannot, however, support the motion as it stands.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): I do not think, sir, that this debate will do any good; in fact I believe it will do a considerable amount of harm. It will not do any good to the squatters to advertise that they are in such straits, and it will certainly do no good to the colony.

Besides, if the motion is at all desirable the time to move it will be at the end of the session, when we are in a position to know more about the affairs at the North than we do at the present time. In addition to this, the matter is not one without some difficulty; for to remit these rents creates a precedent, which will bind us in the future. We all know that these pioneers at the North have a very hard time of it while they live there, and, as a general rule, it means ruin to their health; but they put up with it in order that they may make a competence quickly. If they succeed in their efforts no one, I am sure, begrudges it to them; but they must take the bad with the good. We know that this season is an exceptionally bad one, and that squatters have had many difficulties to contend against; but at the same time we know that some of them have for many years had good seasons, and who do not now, on account of one bad season, desire any assistance. I believe there are plenty of them who would not be in accord with this motion. As far as I know, no representation has been made on their behalf for any concession, and I hope those who are now acting for them have good authority for the action they are taking. I would at any rate ask the hon. member to postpone his motion, even if he will not consent to withdraw it. I would also point out that most hon. members of this House are more or less interested in these stations at the North, and I do not know that it would be competent for them to vote upon the motion. For my own part I should not be able to vote upon it, even if it were put to the House.

MR. CANNING: After the remarks of the hon. member for York, and also after what has fallen from the Premier, it is not necessary that I should detain the House at any length. I would like to point out, however, that if the motion of the hon. member for West Kimberley be agreed to, it will cut off a considerable portion of the revenue, which at the present time would not be a good thing; and in the next place I would point out that we are being asked to vote on a matter many members of this House are interested in. I must admit that I fully appreciate the difficulties the squatters in the North have to encounter, and no one has more sympathy than I have

with them. As far as I am concerned I should not feel justified, whatever decision may be arrived at, in voting in favor of the motion at any rate; and I certainly do not think we should grant any concession to any person unless application is made for it, and then only under special circumstances. I would remind hon. members that the position of all pastoral lessees is not the same. Some reside, for instance, near the sea and consequently are in a better position than those whose stations are some 200 or 300 miles inland. I think that if anything is to be done, the Government might fairly consider the advisability of entertaining any applications that are made to them for a postponement of the payment of rents due on the 1st March next; but I quite agree that to remit the whole of the rent cannot be entertained by this House.

MR. A. FORREST: As it seems to be the wish of many hon. members that I should withdraw the motion, I will do so; and one of the reasons given by the Premier—namely, that most hon. members are interested in the question—is perhaps the best that can be given for the course I now propose to adopt.

Motion, by leave, withdrawn.

#### PROPOSED PURCHASE BY THE GOVERNMENT OF AGRICULTURAL LAND IN SOUTH-WEST DIVISION.

MR. RICHARDSON: Mr. Speaker, I have to move the following resolution standing in my name:—"That this Assembly, in view of the largely-increasing demand for agricultural land convenient to railways by *bonâ fide* settlers and agriculturists, but who have not the means to purchase in very large blocks, considers that it would be wise policy on the part of the Government if they could (acting through a business agent) arrange for the purchase of several of the large blocks of agricultural land known to be for sale in the South-West Division of the Colony, with the intention of cutting up in sections and selling to *bonâ fide* agriculturists, under the same conditions as to improvements and cultivation as other Crown lands in the South-West Division." I would like, sir, to impress on the House that this is a very important matter in the interests of agricultural settlement, which we are all

anxious to increase. I was struck, when travelling with the Agricultural Commission, with the vast contrast there was between one district and another in the matter of improvements and cultivation, and on inquiry I found that the reason of this was the many large blocks of land, ranging up to 20,000 acres each, which were owned in some districts by absentee proprietors, or by men who had not the capital to develop their holdings. We also found that many of the blocks were *bonâ fide* sold, but the reason why they did not change hands was that the owners wished to sell in one block, while the agriculturist was not in a position to treat for it. The small settler may be willing to buy 500 or 1,000 acres, but he cannot go in for anything larger. It is only reasonable that the large holder should not care to cut up his large block, because if he did so it would only mean having the eyes picked out of it. The only solution of the difficulty, therefore, is for the State to step in, purchase this land, and cut it up into smaller blocks, which could then be thrown open for selection. I would point out that the motion does not fix the price. If this course were adopted, I feel sure a very great amount of settlement would take place. Taking the statistics of the other colonies I find that about two acres to each inhabitant is under cultivation, and hon. members may, therefore, be able to form some opinion as to the result of getting a further 20,000 acres under cultivation in this colony. Victoria has about 2,000,000 acres under cultivation, and she has about 1,000,000 inhabitants; and this would mean an increase, taking the same ratio, to the population of this colony, of about 10,000. I hope, therefore, that the Government will not put any technical objection in the way. It may be asked where the money is to come from; but as we have a considerable balance in the chest, I think it could be found.

MR. A. FORREST: In rising to second this motion, I may say that I think the time is now ripe for the Government to purchase the large freehold estates that come into the market. In 1875, when I visited the Eastern Districts, I was struck with the large amount of good land that was lying idle, and I do not think that this state of affairs has been altered up to the present time.

**THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest):** There is much more land fenced.

**MR. A. FORREST:** That may be; but I am speaking of the large estates along the valley of the Avon, which I consider the best land in the colony. I have suggested the Government purchasing these unused lands during the past 20 years, whenever they have been open for sale under 20s. an acre, and cutting them up into 500-acre blocks. Unless this be done I am sure the land will remain in its native state for many years to come, and therefore I hope the Government will take the motion into their consideration, for I am sure the Premier agrees with it. The giving away of this land in the early days has done a very great amount of harm to the colony. If it had not been so thrown away, I feel sure the colony would to-day have more than 50,000 people.

**MR. PIESSE:** I cannot agree with the motion of the hon. member for the DeGrey, for the reason that at the present time we have millions of acres of land along railway lines, which are already available, and further because I do not think it right for the Government to purchase private estates and then place them in competition with the public estate. I hope the Government will not do anything of the kind—at any rate at the present time. We have lands all along our railways in almost any-sized blocks, which will take years before they are taken up.

**MR. R. F. SHOLL:** I hardly think the hon. member for the DeGrey was serious when he placed this motion on the paper. We have been spending thousands of pounds in the construction of railways to open up land, and I fail to see why it is now necessary to open up more. I think that a wholesome land tax should be the remedy in those cases where large blocks of land are held unimproved. I cannot see that because we have plenty of money in the Treasury, we should at once proceed to draw it out, for I am sure there are plenty of means of spending it to better advantage to the country than the plan suggested by the hon. member. I am aware that there are thousands of acres of the land referred to held by absentees who do nothing with it, but I think, as I said before, that the remedy for this is a

land tax on unimproved holdings. It would add a few more pounds to the already overflowing Treasury, and would compel these absentees and large holders either to sell or place it under cultivation. I am, therefore, sorry I cannot support the motion of the hon. member.

**MR. THROSSELL:** I have much pleasure in supporting this motion, for I believe it is the only way of getting the population on the soil. Everyone, after all these years of railways, must deplore the fact that the greater part of the country referred to by the hon. member is covered with trees. I notice that we are to have a Settled Estates Bill, which, I think, will do a great deal to open up these estates. If we had bought up all the lands in the Eastern Districts before the railway was constructed, we should not be in the position we are in now with regard to them, and we should not be deploring the fact that so much unimproved land is held by large holders. The hon. member for the Williams points out that we have plenty of available land, but this motion deals specially with land in the Eastern Districts, and we must remember that every district is not so favorably situated in this respect as that which the hon. member represents. There would be no loss whatever to the country by the plan suggested; there would rather be a profit. I know one hon. member of this House who recently purchased a large block of land, and then by cutting it up into small blocks, not only will make a profit of fifty per cent., but will also confer a great boon upon him from having his district settled, and ten men enabled to get a living from it where only one did before. We are going in for the construction of railways to a considerable extent, and we must ensure a settlement of the soil. The hon. gentleman who moved this resolution only suggests the purchase of some blocks; but I go further and say that every block of agricultural land available should be purchased which is within a certain radius of a railway.

**MR. CLARKSON:** I am not aware of many blocks of land which are being held in a "dog-in-the-manger" way.

**MR. RICHARDSON:** I distinctly said there was nothing of this kind. I said they were open for sale, but in such large

blocks that the small man could not go in for them.

MR. CLARKSON: I know in the Toodyay District there is any amount of land. It is, unfortunately, locked up at the present time by the Midland Railway scheme, but in a short time it will be thrown open, and then purchases may be made direct from the Crown. Again, the Great Southern Railway has millions of acres open for sale in any-sized blocks, and therefore I fail to see any occasion for this outcry. I know of one of these blocks being sold at £2 an acre; but I may ask, Could the Government afford to give this sum and then re-sell it at the prices provided by the present land regulations? I venture to say not. There is any amount of land available for the smallest farmer; but it wants looking for. I have heard it said that the owners of large blocks cannot do anything with their land themselves, nor can they let it; but I know of many instances where the owner is perfectly willing to let his land on reasonable terms, but the difficulty is to obtain tenants.

MR. CANNING: I really must express my surprise at some of the statements which have been made in this House this evening. I was always under the impression that there were millions of acres of land in this colony available for agriculture. It has been stated in England that no place offered a better field for settlement than this colony, and even in the other colonies it has been circulated that there are millions of acres of first-class land lying idle close to railways, and now we hear the almost appalling statement that nearly the whole of it has been taken up privately.

MR. RICHARDSON: Close to railways.

MR. CANNING: I was under the impression that the Government was surveying land in the alternate blocks along the Great Southern line, with a view to throwing it open to selection; but I presume I am entirely wrong, or else the hon. member for DeGrey has made some mistake. Then I also thought there was a vast area of land fit for wheat-growing near Champion Bay, which in time would be thrown open. Am I wrong in so thinking? We know that the Government offer land in the Central and Southern Districts on very favorable terms, and the question arises, If the Govern-

ment purchase land from private owners, on what terms should they re-sell it? The hon. member for the Gascoyne referred to a land tax as being a means towards ensuring the opening up of large estates, but I think anything of the kind would be premature and undesirable at the present time. It has been said that the holders of land have not in the past turned it into account; but I submit, sir, that the conditions of railway communications did not enable them to do it. What inducement was there for the holders to cultivate, when they could not compete with their produce, with imported commodities, because of the cost of carriage. I therefore think it premature to impose any tax until there are better conditions to enable holders to turn their land to profitable account.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): The observation of the hon. member for East Perth was quite in point when he said that it had been given out to people outside the colony that large quantities of good agricultural land were open for selection, and we should be doing a vast amount of injury did we now set forth that the contrary is the fact. I think the reason, in the past, why some of our best agricultural lands have not been turned to account is that there has been no easy means of transit for anything that might be produced. This argument, however, will not hold good any longer, for we have a line of railway through the Victoria Plains, and, shortly, there will be railways open to Champion Bay, to the North; to Bunbury and Busselton, and up the Preston River to the South; so that the whole of the agricultural lands in these districts will shortly be available for settlers, who will have the conveniences of railway communication. No doubt persons who have gone through the Eastern Districts in the past might not have thought that the land was sufficiently utilised, but there is a great difference now. I believe the owners of land are now using every means in their power to turn it to the best account. They have recently been going in for ringbarking to a large extent, and the amount of this class of work that has been done during the past two years is surprising. The fact is we have more land than we have people to settle it, and in these colonies it is very difficult to

get people to go on to the land as tenants. With the easy means that exist for obtaining the freehold of land, it is hardly to be expected that we shall get people to become tenants and improve the property of others, even if the land were given rent free. This cry about cutting up the large estates is a fascinating one; but I believe the whole matter resolves itself into a question of supply and demand. I can see no reason why private persons should not cut up the land as well as the Government. There is, too, another important point which we must consider—the question of ways and means. At the present time the Government has no money to invest in land, and I certainly do not know that it would be a wise policy to raise money for the purpose. It is said that there will be a large balance in the Treasury; but when we come to frame our Estimates, I am sure we shall be able to use all the money we have, and even then we shall fall short of the requirements of the colony. At one time I advocated the purchase of lands suitable for agriculture, and I thought it would be a good plan to clear it ready for the plough; but the Government have not, as yet, committed themselves to this policy, and I am not prepared to say that they will. I still think, however, it would pay to buy land and clear it so as to bring about settlement as quickly as possible. The discussion on this subject may probably do some good, but no practical purpose will be attained by pressing the matter now, because the money for it would have to be found, and that the Government cannot do at the present time.

MR. PARKER: At the risk of being told that I know nothing about the matter, I will say a few words on this motion. For some time past I have advocated a policy of settlement of the soil; but I do not know but that this motion is somewhat premature. I think with the hon. member for the Williams that as the Government has such a large quantity of land available for settlement, and while the Land Company has also large areas, which may be bought in large or small blocks, situate in a temperate climate, with a fair rainfall and capable of producing cereals and potatoes, we are perhaps rather premature in asking the Government to buy land for the purposes

named in the motion. I think our first course is to induce settlement—to bring about colonisation. If we cannot do it otherwise, let us introduce people from other parts and give them the lands if necessary. I should be prepared to go as far as to enter into negotiations with that well-known and much-abused individual, General Booth, and see if we cannot get one of his over-sea colonies among us.

When we find colonists being attracted and the land being bought up by settlers desirous of settling on it, then will be the time for us to say to those who are holding the lands in an unimproved state, "You must either pay a tax upon it or you must sell it at a fair price." There has been a very rapid development in the Eastern Districts during the past few years. Much of the land has been fenced, a great deal of ringbarking has been done and a considerable amount of clearing has taken place, owing to the impetus given to the production of cereals by the construction of the Eastern Railway. Anyone now travelling between Mokine and Beverley cannot help being struck with the vast quantities of land now covered with bush, and when he knows that a great deal of it is held by absentees, who are simply holding on, waiting for the unearned increment, which ought to belong to the people, he will come to the conclusion that it is a great pity that the land cannot be thrown open for settlement. Looking at York, we know that every acre of suburban land is producing grain and no more land is to be obtained. The Eastern Districts contain some of the best soil for agricultural purposes in the colony, especially that along the valley of the Avon, and if it could only be thrown open there is no doubt that in a short time it would be bought up and become capable of supporting a large population not only of producers, but of consumers. In the York District there are only about 30,000 acres out of 1,000,000 under cultivation, and in the Toodyay District only about 30,000 acres out of about 2,000,000 acres. What I wish to see is every acre under cultivation, producing large quantities of grain, not only for home consumption, but for export, and I want to see these people supplying traffic for the railways, so that the Commissioner may come forward and tell us that they are paying.

MR. RICHARDSON: Then pass this resolution.

MR. PARKER: The hon. member says pass this resolution; but I do not see the colonists—the settlers—here. If the people were here, and they could not get land—

MR. RICHARDSON: That is the fact.

MR. PARKER: I have not come across them.

MR. RICHARDSON: I have; several.

MR. PARKER: I do not think there can be many who can truthfully say that it is impossible for them to get suitable land. If it were so, it might then be right for the Government to buy some land; but I hope the time will soon arrive when the large-landed proprietors will see that it is to their interest to cultivate the land themselves. As I have said, I do not see that the Government can go in for any such scheme of purchase as has been suggested at the present time, because it is obvious that the funds could not be provided out of the ordinary revenue, and if we thought of borrowing we must remember that two persons have to be considered—the borrower and the lender. We have £1,100,000 of our loan to raise even yet, and it would certainly be prudent for us to wait until that is floated before going into the market for more. The hon. member says that tenants cannot be had. This is quite true, and I would ask him whether we can expect anything else. When people settle upon the soil, they wish to settle upon their own land. They do not wish to make improvements for the land holders, who might turn them out in a year or two. They desire to own the land, and it is a very natural and proper desire too, and hence it is that the large-landed proprietor is able to say he is willing to let, but can get no one to take his land. Under all the circumstances I am sorry to say I cannot support the motion before the House.

MR. RICHARDSON: If the Government had taken the action I now suggest twenty years ago, it would have been far better for the colony to-day, and I say that it will be far better now than in twenty years hence. By the motion I have submitted to the House, I merely wish to affirm the principle that it would be wise to treat with the holders of these large blocks if we had the ways and means

to do it. The hon. members for York and the Gascoyne think a better way of attaining the object I have in view would be by the imposition of a land tax. We have formulated Land Regulations on the most liberal basis in order to induce people to come here, and we regret they do not come, and yet it is suggested that we should have a land tax. Such a tax would make people shy, besides which you could not make it bear on one class and not on another. I have known many people who have travelled all over this district. They did not know where to find any Government land, and all they saw they were told belonged to private individuals. Now if the land I refer to were opened up we should soon see a hundred men where one is now, and then the dream of the hon. member for York would be somewhere near approaching realisation.

Question—put and negatived.

#### ASSAULT UPON PURDELL KHAN.

MR. COOKWORTHY moved, "That 'in the opinion of this House an inquiry 'should be held into the conduct of the 'Police at Karridale, regarding their proceedings in not taking proper action in 'the case of the hawker Purdell Khan, 'who, it was alleged, was robbed and 'waylaid on the public highway, in or 'about February last.' He said: I have brought this motion before the House, sir, on account of having read the remarks of the judge of the Supreme Court who tried the case of Purdell Khan v. Herbert Davies. I have done so in the interests of the Government, whose fair fame I have great regard for, and in the interest of the country. The facts of the case are shortly these: An Afghan was following his lawful occupation as a hawker, to carry on which he held a license from the Government, and was encamped one night on the public highway. He was there because he dare not go off the highway. During the night of the 7th or 8th of February last, at about two o'clock in the morning, his cart was capsize, his property was damaged, his boxes taken away, and his jewellery, watches, and some bank notes stolen. These boxes were afterwards found by the police, empty. I believe this has not been disputed by Mr. Davies, who was the defendant in the case. The unfor-

fortunate man went to Busselton and lodged an information with the magistrate, which was handed over to the police; but nothing more was heard of it. I may say, sir, that the names of the perpetrators were well known in the district. Everyone seemed to know who they were, except the police, and I may say that there was a policeman stationed not far from where this outrage took place, and it is said that the police, instead of prosecuting, threw cold water on it. It is the general opinion in the district that the affair has been burked, and it has been said that if the cart had belonged to Mr. Davies the police would have been more active, and that the people who had taken part in the outrage would have been apprehended. I think it is a disgrace to the police in the district that they have been unable to bring the perpetrators of this outrage to justice. The judge who tried the case at the Supreme Court said that had the perpetration of the outrage committed upon Purdell Khan been brought home to his satisfaction, he would have awarded the full amount of damages claimed—namely, £200. He also said that he was only sorry that the plaintiff had not been able to get what he was entitled to at the hands of someone. His Honor said to the plaintiff: "You have been badly treated indeed, and if it had been proved to me who the parties were I should punish them very heavily in damages." It is very evident, from the remarks of the Judge, that he was satisfied that a grave and gross outrage had been committed and that a miscarriage of justice had taken place. I think, sir, that under these circumstances the Government should institute such an inquiry as is necessary, and endeavor to discover the reason for the laxity on the part of the police in not discovering the perpetrators. I have remarked before that this man was camped on the highway because he dared not leave it, but although he is not a native of this colony I maintain he is entitled to the protection of the law, and I hope it will go abroad that our law will not only punish ill-doers, but will also protect the weak. I do hope it will not be allowed to go abroad that the police will not carry out the law in this district. Mr. Davies is the proprietor of large saw mills; he is an energetic man, and he has done a great

deal; but he is a man who wants to keep everything for himself, and he does all he can to prevent others from poaching on his preserves. There was no complaint against this hawker. He was only doing that which he was licensed to do by the Government—trying to sell his goods. That was his offence, if it was one, and the result was that he was assaulted in the very bad manner, as was remarked by the Judge. I may also say that it is not only hawkers, but other men who have gone there to trade, can only do so on payment of a commission for being allowed to trade with the employees there. Surely, sir, it is not to be allowed to go abroad that a lot of men in this colony are not to be allowed the advantages of a free people, and because they are working there, no one is to be allowed to sell them goods, unless with 10 or 20 per cent. added to the value of them, so that the employer of the purchasers may make a profit. I hope, in order to stop this, that the Government will see their way to open reserves at these mills so that for the future any trader may be able to occupy a piece of land to sell his goods on without being interfered with. It was said that the reason why the man did not take his case to the local court was that he could not get justice at the Vasse. That was the report, but I can only say that the man had no justification for saying so. I think if he had brought his case, and had been able to prove it, he would have got every justice there; but it was said that he would not prosecute. It is now nearly 12 months since the occurrence took place. The man came to Perth and went to great expense to bring his case into the Supreme Court, with what result everyone knows. I think, therefore, sir, that this is a subject for inquiry on the part of the Government.

MR. TRAYLEN: I rise to second the motion of the hon. member for the Vasse, and I do so for the reasons he has stated. As, however, the hon. member has gone into the matter so fully there is no necessity for me to recapitulate, and I shall, therefore, content myself with seconding the motion.

MR. A. FORREST: Before this question is much discussed, I should like to ask the hon. member for the Vasse what he means by saying that the man under-

stood he could not get justice at the Vasse.

**THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest):** He said the statement was made, but that he did not believe it.

**MR. COOKWORTHY:** I said it was very currently reported that the man had stated that he went to Perth because he understood he could not get justice at the Vasse. I say if he did state that he was not justified in doing so.

**MR. A. FORREST:** I am sorry that the impression should go abroad that a man cannot get justice at the Vasse. In justice to Mr. Davies, with whom I am well acquainted, I think the least that the Government can do is to give this matter the fullest inquiry. Very serious charges have been made, and I hope the Government will not refuse the application of the hon. member; because if it is a fact that anyone going to Karridale would be ordered off, and his cart overturned and his goods stolen on the highway, such things should be at once stopped. I must say, however, that I do not think such charges as these ought to be made without ample proof. Any man making them should be fully armed with facts, and not hearsay. From the speech of the hon. member the insinuation is likely to go forth that Mr. Davies did this thing, and that because it was this gentleman the police would not interfere. If that be so the sooner these policemen are removed the better. I do not understand why any favor should be shown to Mr. Davies, and I hope strong steps will be taken to sift the whole matter to the bottom, for it will be a standing disgrace if it is allowed to be said that a man cannot go to this part of the country and sell his wares without the interference of companies or anyone else.

**MR. R. F. SHOLL:** The object of the hon. member might have been accomplished without adopting the course he had chosen to pursue by this motion. If the hon. member had gone to the Government direct, there is no doubt full inquiries would have been made. I cannot help thinking that this reflects on the proprietor of these mills—Mr. Davies; and I do not think that a motion of this sort should have been brought forward without the hon. member being fully armed with the facts that a

certain thing did happen. As far as I can gather, the hon. member is acting only on what he has heard. The case has been already before the Court, and the judge has said it was a case of mistaken identity. His Honor was of opinion that the assault did happen, but there was nothing to prove who committed it. With regard to the charges against the police, I am sure if the Government had been asked to make inquiries, they would have done so. We must remember that the police are not here to defend themselves, and I think it is rather unfair to them to bring accusations against them in the way the hon. member has done. It would have been far better if he had gone quietly to the Government without coming into this House and making remarks which at least insinuate that Mr. Davies was a party to what occurred, and making charges against the police without first giving them an opportunity of being heard.

**THE ATTORNEY GENERAL (Hon. S. Burt):** The Government are inclined to agree with the remarks of the hon. member who as just sat down. If the Government had been asked to make inquiries, and had refused, it would have been quite time to have brought this motion forward. What the inquiry has to be held into is rather vaguely stated. The affair took place a long time ago, and we have now put before us an *ex-parte* statement which we have not had an opportunity of hearing before. Surely before a matter was brought before the House the head of the Department should have been given an opportunity to inquire into it. I can only suppose that the same information was supplied to the police as was given to the plaintiff's solicitor. Such is reasonable to suppose; and if it be so, there was evidently not much in it, for it turned out that defendant was acquitted of having anything to do with the matter. Would it have been right to have arrested Mr. Herbert Davies under the circumstances? Why, the Afghan himself did not know who assaulted him, and how then could the police know? If the hon. member will make a statement in writing, every inquiry will be made; and having stated this, on the part of the Government, perhaps the hon. member will be good enough to withdraw his motion.

**MR. COOKWORTHY:** I have been accused of making charges against certain persons. I have done nothing of the kind, for the simple reason that I do not know. I made the statements I did from information I had at the time, and I know one man in the district said he got 14 years' transportation for less than what had occurred in this instance. Others said the police were this and that, and that Mr. Davies could do anything; but I think, in justice to that gentleman, and his employees, an inquiry should be held; and if they are innocent they will only be too glad to have it. If I have done wrong in bringing the matter before the House in this way, I shall be quite willing to accept the advice of the Government and withdraw the motion. I do not say that the police have acted with culpable negligence; but I do say that a grave assault has taken place; that it was commonly known in the district who did it; and that up to the present it has never been found out who did it. I withdraw the motion.

Motion, by leave, withdrawn.

#### GAME BILL.

Read a first time.

#### BOYANUP-MINNINUP BRIDGE RAILWAY BILL.

Read a first time.

#### BOYANUP-BUSSELTON RAILWAY BILL.

Read a first time.

#### NORTHAM-SOUTHERN CROSS RAILWAY BILL.

This Bill was read a first time.

**THE PREMIER** (Hon. Sir J. Forrest) moved that the second reading be made an Order of the Day for Thursday, 17th December.

**MR. PARKER:** I understand that the starting point of this railway has been fixed at Northam, in consequence of the report of the Engineer-in-Chief. I do not think that report has yet been laid on the table, and therefore I would ask the Government not to press the second reading of this Bill until the House has had an opportunity of seeing the report and considering it. I ask the Government either to postpone the second read-

ing or to consent to the Bill being referred to a select committee.

**THE PREMIER** (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): We shall have the report by Wednesday. It is only a short one.

**MR. PARKER:** I do not know that this will be sufficient, for it may be necessary for us to look into the information on which this report is founded. I think Thursday is rather early.

**THE PREMIER** (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): We want to get the Bill passed so as to get on with the surveys.

**MR. PARKER:** The Government certainly cannot expect that this Bill will be passed before the holidays. I do not know that I am prepared to pass it at once.

**THE PREMIER** (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): I do not know that the hon. member is everyone. The Government will lay all the information they have on the table on Wednesday, and then we will take the second reading of the Bill on Thursday.

Question put and declared negative.

**THE PREMIER** (Hon. Sir J. Forrest) called for a division, with the following result:—

Ayes ...	...	...	15
Noes ...	...	...	11

Majority for Ayes ... 4

AYES.	NOES.
Mr. Baker	Mr. Canning
Mr. Burt	Mr. Darlôt
Mr. Clarkson	Mr. DeHamel
Mr. Cookworthy	Mr. Hassell
Mr. A. Forrest	Mr. Fiesse
Mr. Loton	Mr. Quinlan
Mr. Marnion	Mr. Randell
Mr. Paterson	Mr. Sholl
Mr. Pearse	Mr. Simpson
Mr. Phillips	Mr. Traylen
Mr. Richardson	Mr. Parker (Teller).
Mr. Symon	
Mr. Throssell	
Mr. Venn	
Sir John Forrest (Teller).	

Question—put and passed.

#### SHARKS BAY PEARL-SHELL FISHERY BILL.

Read a first time.

#### SETTLED ESTATES BILL.

Read a first time.

#### BILLS OF SALE ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

Read a first time.

## PUBLIC OFFICIALS TITLES BILL.

Read a first time.

## GENERAL LOAN AND INSCRIBED STOCK ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

Read a first time.

## BANKRUPTCY BILL.

Read a first time.

## ADJOURNMENT.

The House adjourned at 10.5 p.m.

## Legislative Council,

Tuesday, 15th December, 1891.

New Member—Report on Irrigation Settlements—Third Judge: Provision for—Leave of absence to Members—Chairman of Committees: Election of—Police Bill: referred to Select Committee—Adjournment.

THE PRESIDENT (Sir T. Cockburn-Campbell, Bart.) took the chair at 3 o'clock.

## PRAYERS.

## NEW MEMBER.

THE HON. EDWARD TIMOTHY HOOLEY, having been introduced, took his seat, in the place of the Hon. E. R. Brockman, resigned.

## REPORT ON IRRIGATION SETTLEMENTS.

THE HON. J. G. H. AMHERST: I beg to ask the Hon. the Colonial Secretary, Whether the Government intend to take action on the Report of Messrs. Richardson and Paterson of a visit to the Irrigation Settlements of Mildura and elsewhere, more especially as to the establishment of a Central Agricultural Bureau in Perth.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. G. Shenton) replied: The Gov-

ernment propose to consult the Agricultural Societies throughout the Colony on this subject.

## THIRD JUDGE: PROVISION FOR.

THE HON. J. A. WRIGHT: I have to ask the Hon. the Colonial Secretary, Whether it is the intention of the Government, this session, to provide for a fully constituted Court of Appeal, by the appointment of a third Judge of the Supreme Court.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. G. Shenton) replied: The Government is considering the matter.

## LEAVE OF ABSENCE TO MEMBERS.

THE HON. J. G. H. AMHERST moved, That leave of absence for one month, on account of urgent private business, be granted to the Honorable R. E. Bush.

Question—put and passed.

THE HON. J. W. HACKETT moved, That leave of absence for one month, on account of urgent private business, be granted to the Honorables T. Burges and M. Grant.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. G. Shenton): Is it necessary to grant so long a leave to these hon. members. In the case of the Hon. J. H. Monger, we know he is out of the colony, and is ill, and we are aware that the Hon. Mr. Bush cannot get down from the Upper Gascoyne; but I fail to see that there are equally urgent reasons in the cases of the hon. members now referred to. I should think it would be quite sufficient to grant the leave until after the vacation.

THE HON. J. W. HACKETT: Can the hon. gentleman name a day?

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. G. Shenton): I propose this day week to ask for an adjournment for a fortnight—until the 5th January.

THE HON. J. W. HACKETT: I am in the hands of the House, and I will alter the motion so that the leave may be granted until 5th January.

THE HON. E. T. HOOLEY: I would like to mention that I have received a letter from the Hon. Mr. Grant, which has been written by that gentleman's secretary, stating that he was very ill.

THE PRESIDENT (Sir T. Cockburn-Campbell, Bart.): It was on this account