

REMINISCENCES OF OLD PERTH.

To the Editor.

Sir.—It often occurs to me, when I look back on the many long years that have rolled by what high hopes and ambitions the early settlers had respecting Western Australia as a wheat-producing country, caused, I suppose, by the enormous blocks of land taken up by the early settlers, such as Sir James Stirling, Mr. Thomas Peel, and many others. The colony had not been established more than ten or twelve years when we had four flour mills in Perth. At the present time I don't think we have more than two in any district in the colony. The first mill built in Perth was the old windmill at Point Belches, opposite The Narrows. It was conducted by the late Mr. E. Shenton, cousin to the late Mr. George Shenton. The next was Mr. W. Reenely's watermill, on the property adjoining the Government Boys' School. A little later Mr. Samuel Kingsford built another mill in Mill-lane, driven by water. He spent enormous sums of money to procure a constant supply of water, as he had to get it from the lake. The lakes in those days were where the present railway line runs from Perth to Fremantle, and to convey the water to Mill-lane he had to have large trunks made, and placed in deep drains from the lake across Wellington-street, Murray-street, Hay-street, and St. George's-terrace, into Mill-lane, where he had a large dam, with flood-gates to regulate the supply. There was not much wheat produced in the colony at this time, and his trouble and disappointment brought on illness, from which he never recovered. The next was the steam mill built by the late Mr. John Schoales and Mr. George Nash, on the spot where the Swan Brewery now stands. This was the first steam mill in the colony. Its owners' hopes ran very high, as they were under the impression that they could do all the grinding for the whole colony. But, unfortunately, the project turned out a terrible failure, owing to the difficulty in getting wheat to the mill, as there were no fine roads around the Mount to the mill, and most of the wheat had to be conveyed in boats. Another great drawback was the want of a competent person to set the engines in proper working order. The late Mr. James Lockyer was the millwright, and appeared to understand his part of the work, but the man who had the management of the engines did not seem to understand the machinery. The consequence was a breakdown almost every week, causing delay and expense, and in a short time the

mill almost every week, causing delay and expense, and in a short time the owners were compelled to close the mill doors and turn the mill into a depot. Poor Mr. Schoales broke down through misfortune and disappointment, and died in Perth, a poor but honourable gentleman. Mr. George Nash returned to his native country—Ireland—where he became a minister of the Anglican Church, leaving his brother, Richard, a barrister by profession, in Perth. The first three mills to which I have referred were built in the thirties.—Yours, etc.,

W. E. SYRED.

Befoording, September 4.