

Legislative Assembly.

Tuesday, 27th August, 1895.

Sanitation outside municipal boundaries—Appointment of Telegraph Messenger, Rockingham—Estimates 1895-6; further considered in committee—Public Health Act Further Amendment Bill: first reading—Adjournment.

THE SPEAKER took the chair at 4.30 o'clock, p.m.

PRAYERS.

APPOINTMENT OF TELEGRAPH MESSENGER, ROCKINGHAM.

MR. SOLOMON, in accordance with notice, asked the Premier, whether, having in view the inconvenience caused to the inhabitants and settlers of Rockingham, in consequence of the absence from his office of the postmaster and telegraph operator through delivering messages, a messenger could not be appointed to assist him.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest) replied that enquiries were being made in regard to the matter.

SANITATION OUTSIDE MUNICIPAL BOUNDARIES.

MR. MORAN, with leave, without notice, asked the Premier whether the Government were considering the question of sanitation, outside the boundaries of the Coolgardie municipality, as requested by that municipal body?

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest) said the Government had already taken all the steps they were empowered to take in regard to this matter. The police had been instructed to assist the municipalities and the Roads Boards in every possible way to carry out the power which they possessed under the Act. He believed there was no law at present by which sanitary arrangements could be controlled, in respect of Crown Lands, outside municipalities other than under the power given to the Roads Boards and the police; and, as he had already said, the Government had given instructions to the police to assist the Roads Boards in every way possible. He noticed that the hon. member for the Greenough had a Bill on the table of the House dealing with this subject of sanitation, and giving extended powers to municipalities for dealing with lands surrounding, but outside, their municipal boundaries; and, if that Bill became law, of course the necessary legal authority would be

provided to enable the municipalities to deal with this matter themselves. He could assure the hon. member that the Government, through their agents, were most anxious and willing, to do everything they could to assist the Municipal Councils in maintaining, not only their towns, but also the waste lands surrounding their towns, in as sanitary a condition as possible.

ESTIMATES, 1895-6.

Defences, £11,733 1s. 4d. (Debate resumed.)

MR. R. F. SHOLL, referring to the item "Field Day Expenses and State Ceremonial £2,856," asked whether the "Minister for War" would give the committee some information as to why this item had been increased from £200 (the amount voted last year) to £2,856.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest) said he had already, the other evening, informed the committee why this amount had been increased. It was now proposed to pay the Volunteers for attending certain parades ordered by the Commandant. In addition to the ordinary parades it was considered necessary to have other parades, and it was proposed to pay the men a little more than heretofore for attending parades. Last year, as hon. members were aware, a proposal was made to have a paid force, a militia, in lieu of the Volunteers; but the proposal did not meet with much approval, the general opinion being that the Volunteer system should continue in existence. Personally, he had been in favor of that view all along. He thought that the establishment of a paid force would be a death-blow to the Volunteer movement as it was generally understood. In order to encourage that movement, and to make it more popular, it was now proposed to give a little more compensation to Volunteers who attended these parades, ordered by the Commandant; and this was the reason why this vote had been increased. At present it was very difficult to get men to attend parades in the day time; they could not afford to lose their time, unless they received some compensation; and the result was that most of the parades were now held in the evening. That was all very well in summer time, but there were obvious disadvantages in having all parades held in the evening. For his own part he thought this was a move in the right direction, if they wished to encourage the Volunteer movement. He believed it would work well; at any rate,

they might give it a trial. They could easily find out by the end of the year whether it was working satisfactorily or not, and whether it had the effect of encouraging and stimulating the Volunteer movement. If it did so, he was sure that members would be glad to continue the vote.

MR. LEAKE: Will the system be applied to country corps as well as to those at Perth and Fremantle?

THE PREMIER: Yes.

MR. R. F. SHOLL referring to the item "Incidental Expenses (including travelling expenses of Commandant and Volunteers) £400," asked why this item had been increased from £350 to £400, and why the Staff-Adjutant's travelling allowance should be provided for separately under another item.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest) said the Staff-Adjutant's travelling allowance (£50) was a fixed sum, and might be regarded as part of his salary. The other item came under the head of incidental expenses, and he might add that it included £100 passage money for the new Commandant.

Vote put and passed.

Central Board of Health, £394:

Put and passed.

Treasury, £4,984:

MR. GEORGE asked for some explanation as to the item "Paymaster, Imperial Accounts, £100," which appeared to be a new item.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest) said he was glad the hon. members had called attention to the item, as it afforded him an opportunity of explaining it. The arrangements between the Imperial and the Colonial Governments in respect of the payment of Imperial accounts, was that the local Government paid all the accounts due from the Imperial Government, in respect of Imperial pensions, both civil and military, and also in respect of the contributions of the Imperial Government towards the colonial magistracy and the police. In fact, all claims connected with the Imperial Government were paid by the Colonial Treasury; and we received from the Imperial Government a commission of 3 per cent. for doing their business. Up to the time there was a change of Constitution, this 3 per cent. was put aside, and was not shown in the public accounts of the colony at all. It was set aside for the purpose of meeting the expenditure incurred in connection with the payment of the Imperial accounts; and any surplus was allowed to accumulate. Upon the

change of the Constitution, when he took over the Treasury, he gave directions that from that date all the expenditure in connection with this 3 per cent. should be shown on the Estimates of the colony, and that all the receipts under the same head should be carried to the credit of the colony, which, he thought, was putting the thing on a proper basis. On the 21st December, 1891, these fresh arrangements were carried into effect. On that date there was a sum of £151 12s. 4d. standing to the credit of the Imperial account, which amount was transferred to the revenue of the colony. The accumulated commission received from that date to the end of 1894 amounted to £935 6s. 3d., and the expenditure in connection therewith amounted to £668; so that there had been a saving of £418 9s. 7d., which had been carried to the credit of the revenue. The payment of all these Imperial accounts entailed a good deal of work on the Treasury; and the Under-Treasurer, upon whom the whole of the responsibility and most of the work devolved, had made repeated applications to him in regard to getting something for doing this work. He (the Premier) had always resisted this application up to the present time; but, on the present occasion, and as there appeared to be £418 9s. 7d., to the credit of the fund, he thought he could not well refuse to give the Under-Treasurer something for doing this work. He had, however, pointed out to him—and he hoped the Under-Treasurer thoroughly understood it—that this payment of £100 a year to him as paymaster would only be continued so long as there remained any funds to the credit of this particular vote. He did not suppose the colony wanted to make any profit out of these transactions with the Imperial Government. We were quite willing to assist the Imperial Government so far as we could, so long as it was not at the expense of the colony. During the last four years we had made a distinct profit, of over £100 a year out of these transactions; and, for that reason, the Government had at last agreed to place this item on the Estimates. He might add that the officer who was to receive this amount as paymaster was a most exemplary and deserving officer, and he (the Premier) did not think he was too well paid. There were a few men in the service—he thought he might count them on the fingers of one hand—who by reason not only of their long service, but also of the very great responsibility devolving upon them, men whose integrity was beyond question

--there were a few such men who were really most deserving of consideration ; and this officer was one of them. He was entrusted with a tremendous amount of responsibility, having the management and control of the accounts of the colony, and the receipt and custody of the moneys of the colony ; and, if there was one officer in the service deserving of consideration it was this officer. These were the reasons which actuated the Government, after some consideration, in placing this amount on the Estimates, to be paid out of this Imperial fund. No doubt it would be said by some members that this item having once found a place on the Estimates would always remain there. 'That might be so ; at any rate, at the present time, it was not on the Estimates as a permanent appropriation, but was placed under the heading of "Salaries, Provisional and Temporary" ; and it was understood that the amount was to be paid only out of the profits we made out of the Imperial Government.

MR. GEORGE said he had no idea when he asked a question about this item that it would have entailed such a long explanation. But, now that they had got the explanation, was it not rather a back-handed way of giving this particular officer, who had been referred by the Premier in such eulogistic terms, an increase of salary ? He did not in any way want to raise the question of whether the Under-Treasurer, who now received £600 a year, was well paid or properly paid. He might be worth £1,000 a year for aught he knew ; but what he objected to was the roundabout way of increasing an officer's salary. He would have much sooner have seen the salary raised to £700 or £800, straight away, rather than giving him an increase in this back-handed sort of way. He very much doubted, once this item appeared on the Estimates, whether they would be ever able to get it off again. He did not wish to take the extreme step of moving to strike it out, but he did think the increase of salary to this officer might have taken a different form.

MR. R. F. SHOLL said, if the hon. member for the Murray had not called attention to this item, the Premier would have allowed it to slip through without a word of explanation. He intended to move that the item be struck out, because he noticed a lot of extra clerical assistance and extra clerks provided in connection with this department. Apart from that, this method of increasing an officer's

salary was a wrong principle to go upon altogether. It was an under-handed sort of way of increasing an officer's salary. They all knew that once an item like this appeared on the Estimates it would remain there. He was aware that this particular officer, was a good officer, and a very old officer ; but the principle upon which it was proposed to supplement his salary was an objectionable one ; and for that reason, he moved that the item be struck out.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir. J. Forrest), replying to what the hon. member for the Gascoyne had said about the increase in the number of officers in the Treasury Department, said the hon. member's remarks were altogether undeserving. There were only three new clerks, at £110 each, which he did not think was extravagant, considering that the business of the country had increased threefold of late. at any rate there was no department in the service where so many juniors were employed ; because the Under-Treasurer believed he could get better service by bringing in youths and young men and training them himself, rather than bringing in officers who had been trained elsewhere. He (the Premier) believed this system was one that had worked very successfully up to the present time. He knew from experience, that there were some most efficient officers in the department,—who did not get very high pay either. The Under-Treasurer had performed these duties of paymaster during the last four or five years for nothing. It might be said they were not extra duties. At the same time it must be borne in mind that the colony was making money out of these transactions between the Imperial Government and ourselves ; and he did not think it could be fairly said that the officer who was responsible for conducting and managing these transactions was not entitled to some portion of the profits which the colony was making out of them. Should there be no Imperial funds available, the item could not appear on the Estimates in this form. He had made no promise to the officer in question in regard to an increase of salary. The amount received as commission from the Imperial Government was pretty regular, and, for the last four or five years, as he had already said, it had amounted to more than the emolument proposed to be given to the Under-Treasurer. Under the circumstances, he hoped the hon. member would not press his motion to strike out the item.

MR. ILLINGWORTH said they had already increased the salary of the head of one department to £700, and they were now practically asked to do the same thing for another head of a department; and the question that weighed with him was whether the salaries of the remaining heads of department were to be similarly raised, and, if not, why not? It appeared to him that if these gentlemen were worthy of these advances in their salaries, they should be all served alike. He did not see any reason why the Commissioner of Police and the Under-Treasurer alone should have their salaries raised to £700, while other heads of departments only received £600. This item was clearly an indication that the Government proposed to raise this officer's salary to £700, and, once they did raise it, it was not likely it would ever be reduced again to £600, although this Imperial fund should disappear. They might depend upon it the money would be provided from some other source. He did not suppose for a moment that the Under-Treasurer did all this work himself, and why should he receive all the benefit of it? He should like to ask the Premier whether it was proposed to make the same increase in the salaries of other heads of departments?

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest) said the Government did not at present propose to make any increases others than what appeared on the Estimates.

MR. R. F. SHOLL said he had no wish to press his amendment to strike out the item.

Amendment withdrawn.

Vote put and passed.

London Agency, £3,200:

MR. ILLINGWORTH wished to know if the Premier could give the House any information with reference to the re-appointment of the Agent-General. He thought the House on a former occasion had expressed a distinct opinion that it was undesirable to continue the same Agent-General in office for a long term of years, and that it was desirable there should be a change every few years. That was a view which the House had distinctly expressed, when dealing with the Agent-General Bill the other day. [THE PREMIER: I don't think so.] He had a fairly good memory, and he had a distinct recollection that during the debate upon that Bill—and *Hazard* would bear him out—there was a very distinct declaration of opinion that the office of Agent-General should not be continued year after year in the person of the same individual. It

was suggested on that occasion that we should send someone Home to fill this position who was *au courant* with the present conditions of the country. He wished to know whether the Government could now give the House and the country some reason for their re-appointing the same Agent-General again, and whether they would inform the House for how long he had been re-appointed.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest) regretted that, through an oversight on his part he had not already furnished the House with the information asked for. The Government had decided to extend the term of office of the present Agent-General, Sir Malcolm Fraser, until the 22nd April, 1897. As members were aware, Sir Malcolm Fraser had been Agent-General for this colony for three years, ended the 22nd April last; and the Government then extended his term of office to the 16th August this year; and, when that time arrived, the Government thought, taking everything into consideration, that the best thing they could do would be to extend Sir Malcolm Fraser's term of office until April, 1897, by which time he will have been five years in office. He did not know whether the House wanted any any reason for the action of the Government in this matter, he could only repeat that the Government, taking all the circumstances into consideration, thought they could not do better than what they had done in the matter. So far as he (the Premier) was concerned, he could say this: he had no fault whatever to find with the present Agent-General as to the way in which he had conducted the business of the country, in London. In fact, he had nothing but praise to give the Agent-General in this respect. He had carried out his instructions faithfully, and he had managed the financial business of the country, in London, in a satisfactory way, and the Government thought it would not be acting unwisely, in the interests of the colony, in extending Sir Malcolm Fraser's term of office until 1897. He did not suppose for one moment that whatever Government might be in office in 1897 would be likely to further extend the term of office of the present Agent-General unless something happened that could not be foreseen at present. By that time, as he had already said, the present Agent-General will have been in office five years, and no doubt it would be the desire of the colony that a new Agent-General should be appointed. But taking all the circumstances into consideration the Government felt they could do nothing

better, in the interests of the colony, than extend the term of office of Sir Malcolm Fraser as he had already stated.

MR. R. F. SHOLL hoped the Government would instruct the Agent-General that he was not to have anything to do with gold mining companies.

THE PREMIER: That has already been done.

MR. LEAKE regretted that the Government had not made up their minds before now as to what they propose doing in regard to the Agent-Generalship. He regretted they had not done so when the Agent-General Bill was before the House. It was important that the House, when dealing with that Bill, should have known what the intentions of the Government were, because the House had then to consider whether it would be right to limit the term of office of the Agent-General, and whether an Agent-General should have the right of re-appointment at all. For his own part he had been under the impression, when discussing that Bill, that another Agent-General was going to be appointed, and that there was not no necessity under the circumstances for him to force the opinion he held on the subject of the re-appointment of Agents-General upon the House, or to test the opinion of the House, by a division. Members were aware that it was contemplated at one time that Sir William Robinson should be appointed Agent-General; but when the Bill was under discussion, it was uncertain whether Sir William Robinson would accept the appointment. It was also felt that there were other gentlemen in the colony well fitted for the position of Agent-General, and he thought it was a pity that this office should continue to be represented by one and the same individual for so long a time. It was useless, of course to attempt to do anything in the matter now, because the appointment had been filled up, and it was no use beating the air. But he sincerely trusted that the Government would not extend the term of office of the Agent-General in future as they had done in the past, but let a new man be appointed. He urged that strongly upon the consideration of members. He thought it was a great pity, considering the great advance the colony had made during the last two or three years, that we should not have fresh blood and fresh representation in London, in the person of the Agent-General.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest,) referring to the charge of reticence on the part

of the Government when the Agent-General Bill was before the House, said he did not exactly remember what was said on that occasion; but he might at once say now—if he did not say so when the Bill was under discussion—that the Government were then in treaty with Sir William Robinson with regard to this office, and the Government at that time did not intend to re-appoint Sir Malcolm Fraser, who had been told some months previously that the Government could not promise to re-appoint him. He might say that ever since Sir Malcolm Fraser had been in office he had had no security of tenure as regards the office; he was appointed first for one year, and then for another year, and subsequently for a few months longer; and the Government now felt it was due to him that he should have some little better security of tenure. He might also point out too—although he did not wish to labor the point—that under the arrangement with Sir Malcolm Fraser, the colony was saving £700 a year; and, under all the circumstances, he could not see that the Government could have done better than re-appoint this gentleman, as he had already mentioned. He did not know what the hon. member for Albany's idea was as to the duties of an Agent-General, but his own idea was that the duty of the Agent-General was to faithfully carry out the instructions of his Government and do his best to represent the colony in London. They did not want an Agent-General to be too active, on his own account, or to be too ready to act upon his own responsibility. It was better to have a safe man, who could be relied upon to do what he was told. The result of the present arrangement had been very satisfactory so far. The Agent-General had successfully carried out some very difficult negotiations in which this colony was interested, particularly the agreement with the Midland Railway Company, which was well and thoroughly carried out, to the entire satisfaction of the Government. There were many other transactions of the same kind which the present Agent-General had carried out faithfully and satisfactorily, under the instructions of the Government.

MR. R. F. SHOLL said if this gentleman had given so much satisfaction to the Government and was also saving the colony £700 a year how was it that they were prepared to throw him over in favor of Sir William Robinson? If they were so well satisfied with the present

Agent-General as the Premier said they were, it seemed somewhat ungracious on their part to be prepared to throw over this good and faithful servant to make room for another gentleman.

Vote put and passed.

Customs, £17,145 :

Mr. MORAN thought this was the proper time to bring under the notice of the House some matters connected with the system which prevailed in the Customs Department in dealing with the valuation of articles passed through the Customs. It appeared that, under the Act, the Collector of Customs had the right to set his own valuation upon goods imported into the colony,—a provision that was probably put in the Act in order to, check people who might be disposed to declare goods imported from the other colonies at about one half or one quarter their value, with the view of defrauding the revenue. But he (Mr. Moran) had documents to show that this power was in some cases abused. He had a communication from a gentleman at Southern Cross who had occasion to import some buckboard buggies into the colony for prospecting purposes, and perhaps he could not do better than read the letter for the information of the House. It was addressed to him, and was as follows :

" Southern Cross,

" August 19th, 1895.

" DEAR SIR—

" I venture to bring before you an unjust and tyrannical act committed by the Collector of Customs at Fremantle. George Kiss, of Sydney, has been advertising in the *Sydney Mail*, the *Town and Country Journal*, and other papers, all this year, and up to date (copy of advertisement herewith), buckboard buggies at £11 10s., each. I bought two for £22, as they both went into one packing case. As a proof that this price is not unusually low, I may state that three years ago, I bought two similar buggies from Jewell, Davis & Co., of Sydney, for the same money.

" Now the Collector of Customs at Fremantle states that the invoice does not truly represent the value of the goods, and charges a further duty on his own valuation, (as per warrant No. 2413 and entry herewith.) He has been remonstrated with, and has been shown the advertisements, showing the price at which the buggies are advertised ; but he states he has the power to put on any

" valuation he pleases, and he refuses to make a refund. If he really has this power, it is one that no man should have in a free country.

" Let me assure you I have not written this from personal motives, as the amount involved is neither here nor there. It is the principle involved which I look at ; and the sooner such arbitrary powers are checked by the House the better, unless the Commissioner of Customs takes his subordinate in hand.

" I am using these buggies with my prospecting parties, and you will admit that a 20 per cent. duty is quite sufficient, without an increased value, evolved from the fertile train of a Collector, being placed upon your goods.

" I have, etc.,

" J. H. STUBBS.

" C. J. Moran, Esq., M.L.A."

When he (Mr. Moran) received that letter he was rather astonished, and he thought it disclosed a state of affairs which might fairly be regarded as unjust. Here were these buggies advertised for sale in the *Sydney* newspapers at £11 10s., and yet the Collector of Customs refused to accept that valuation, but insisted upon putting his own valuation upon them (£3 more than the advertised price), which was a gross injustice. If it had been a case of an attempt to defraud the revenue, it would have been another thing ; but the validity of the invoice, and the actual price of the buggies, could not be questioned in this instance.

MR. GEORGE said he knew that the class of buggies referred to could be purchased in Sydney at the price stated. He did not think it was clearly understood by the Customs authorities themselves upon what basis duties should be charged upon imported articles, whether the duty should be levied upon the invoiced price of articles at the place where they came from, or whether the duty should be charged upon the cost price plus the expense of importing them into the colony. With regard to the Collector of Customs, he had had many transactions through that officer's department, and he must say he had always found him a fair man and a just man. If the complaint which the hon. member for Yilgarn had thought fit to bring before the House had been brought to his (Mr. George's) notice, he would have first appealed for redress to the Collector of Customs himself and,

if he got no satisfaction from that officer, he would have brought the matter before the Minister, and, if he received no satisfaction, then he would perhaps have brought the matter before the House.

THE COMMISSIONER OF CROWN LANDS (Hon. A. R. Richardson) said that strange to say, that very afternoon in travelling around, he had heard something about the other side of this story about imported buggies. He was asked by a man who was concerned in the manufacture of buggies whether Ministers had any cognizance of the way imported buggies were smuggled into the colony at an extraordinary low value. He (the Commissioner) replied that he thought we had a pretty vigilant officer in the Collector of Customs. "Whether he is vigilant or not," was the answer, "these buggies come pouring in at most ridiculous prices,—at prices which I am sure they never could have been made for." No doubt some of these things were bought at bankrupt auctions in the other colonies, but, it was rather hard, as his informant, pointed out, upon honest manufacturers here to find themselves so very much undersold by those who imported bankrupt stocks in the other colonies, and then introduced here at such absurdly low prices, that a 20 per cent. duty was little or no protection to the local manufacturer. His informant told him that his honest conviction was that in many instances the value placed upon these buggies was absolutely fictitious, and that the invoices were in a great measure "cooked."

MR. ILLINGWORTH did not think there were many subjects of more importance than that now before the House, opening up, as it did, the question of Customs frauds and fiscal impositions generally; and he should like to ask the House to give it that serious consideration which its importance deserved. They were aware that in other countries there were constantly arising grave disputes between importers and the Customs authorities, and that serious frauds in the way of employing fictitious invoices, had been sheeted home to some of the most respectable firms. They were also aware that there were manufacturing firms who expressed their readiness to supply their clients with these fictitious invoices for the express purpose of evading the Customs duties. In Melbourne, even firms who were supposed to be beyond all possible suspicion, had been discovered to have

been defrauding the Customs for years by means of these fictitious invoices. With a knowledge of these practices which exist in the commercial world, it was only right and proper that the Collector of Customs should exercise every vigilance. At the same time they must expect that some discretion as well as vigilance should be exercised. It was a serious thing to throw doubt upon the accuracy of an invoice, casting a reflection as it did upon the honesty, not only of the exporter, but also of the importer of the goods. That being so the Collector of Customs ought to be very well satisfied that there was something radically wrong in an invoice before he placed the shipper and the importer in the invidious position. He was sure the House would support the Collector of Customs in all his efforts to discover any deliberate attempts at defrauding the revenue; but the greatest discretion should be exercised before placing people in the humiliating position of being deliberately accused of an attempt to defraud, when there was really no such intention. In this instance the hon. member who brought the matter before the House had shown the House the very advertisement in which these buggies were offered for sale at the price quoted; and all that was required to be done was to see that the articles introduced were the same as those that were advertised.

MR. MORAN: That is not disputed by the Collector.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: Then if the importer of these buggies placed this advertisement before the Collector of Customs, it was a very serious reflection to cast upon the importer, and also upon the firm who made out that invoice, for the Collector to dispute the value of these goods, in the face of such evidence. With reference to what had fallen from the Commissioner of Crown Lands about bankrupt stocks, no doubt prices had fallen so low in the other colonies that articles of this kind were often practically given away. He knew that vehicles, which had cost, in Melbourne, £35, had been sold under the hammer for £5. These vehicles were invoiced at the auction sale price (£5), and brought into this colony and passed through the Customs with that value upon them,—which was only one-seventh the original cost price. He thought the Collector of Customs should be allowed to place some reasonable valuation upon such articles. At the same time, he did not think the Customs authorities should unnecessarily

question the invoices of respectable firms. Another instance of reduced value he might mention as having come within his own knowledge was this: there was lately shipped from Melbourne to this colony, for £23, and was now to be seen driving about the streets of Perth, a handsome cab, with harness complete, which could not have cost less originally than £120. Was it fair to the manufacturers in this colony that such vehicles should be passed through the Customs at a valuation so ridiculously below their actual value? He thought the Government should provide some regulations for fixing a fair and reasonable value upon second hand articles introduced into the colony in this way, and that importers, instead of paying duty upon the auctioneer's invoices, representing a merely nominal value, should be compelled to pay duty upon a fair and reasonable valuation.

MR. LEAKE thought it would have been better, if, instead of causing a discursive discussion upon the Estimates on the interesting subject of buckboard buggies and fictitious invoices, this matter has been made the subject of a distinct resolution. He did not like to hear charges made against Government officers, like the Collector of Customs, unless they were thoroughly well substantiated; and he hoped the hon. member would not press the matter further upon the House, but would be satisfied with having drawn the attention of the responsible Ministers to the point. From his (Mr. Leake's) knowledge of the Collector of Customs he thought Mr. Mason was one of the last men to make any grave mistakes, so far as the revenue was concerned. Nor did he think there had been many complaints about his unfairness in fixing values upon goods, with regard to the value of which these might be a dispute.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest) said he had been between four and five years the Minister in charge of the Customs Department in this colony, and he did not recollect a single instance in which an importer had made any complaint to him in regard to the conduct of the Collector of Customs. It seemed to him that if the Collector acted harshly or unfairly in these matters, the first thing you would expect people to do would be to write to the Minister in charge of department. But no such thing had ever occurred. He was aware that in many instances the Collector had felt it his duty to place a lighter value upon some articles than the invoiced value—articles

probably bought at auction at a very low price and then shipped into this colony. But no complaints had reached him from importers. About a year ago, owing to certain complaints that had been made to him by manufacturers here, as to carriages and buggies being imported into the colony at a ridiculously low value he wrote to the Collector of Customs on the subject; and the reply he received from the Collector was that he was very careful in regard to this matter, and that in many instances he personally inspected these vehicles. No doubt, as was the case all over the world, many attempts were made here to introduce goods at as low a value as possible; and the law gave the Collector of Customs power to object to the invoice value placed upon goods, if he thought they were undervalued. With regard to what had fallen from the hon. member for Murray as to the principle upon which duties were levied, he might say that the practice was to charge duty upon the value of the goods in the country from whence they were imported; and the freight and other charges incurred in introducing the goods into this colony were not added to the value. It seemed to him that if this gentleman whose case had been brought before the House by the hon. member for Yilgarn had any good cause of complaint he should have written in the first instance to the Minister in charge of the department, rather than to a private member, in order to have his little grievance ventilated. He had no doubt that, if the matter were referred the Collector of Customs, that officer would have very good and sufficient reasons for his action in the matter.

MR. R. F. SHOLL failed to see why, if people purchased articles at a low price, at auction sales, in Melbourne or elsewhere, and shipped them to this colony at the price they actually paid for them,—he failed to see why the Collector of Customs should have a right to put his own value upon such goods.

MR. MOSS objected to a discussion of this kind involving a charge against a public officer, who had no opportunity of defending himself, being raised in this informal way. He had no doubt himself that the Collector of Customs had very good reasons indeed for putting the value he did upon the these buggies. With the opportunities which existed for committing frauds upon the revenue, it was only right and proper that the Collector of Customs should be armed with very extensive powers.

If an importer did not agree with the value fixed by the Collector, it was open to have an independent valuation. He knew the Collector of Customs was quite willing for that course to be adopted. This officer, to his mind, endeavored to treat everybody fairly: and if the gentleman whose case was under discussion could show that he had suffered any real hardship, his proper course would have been to have written to the Minister, who was in a much better position to investigate the matter than members of that House possibly could be.

Mr. SOLOMON also thought the hon. member for Yilgarn had made a mistake in bringing this matter before the House. The Collector of Customs, so far as he knew him, had always shown himself ready to act fairly, and, in cases of dispute, quite willing to have matters amicably and equitably settled. They all knew that fictitious invoices were used, and that sometimes fictitious advertisements were resorted to, with the view of defrauding the revenue. He thought it was very unfair to bring charges of this kind against a public officer behind his back.

Mr. MORAN: What about Mr. Allison Smith?

Mr. SOLOMON (continuing) said he considered the Collector of Customs as good a man for that position as we could get in the colony. At the same time he thought there were some anomalies in his department. He considered that there had not been fair play with regard to some of the officers of this department.

Mr. CONNOR said he hoped it was not the intention of the hon. member for Yilgarn to discuss the question of the justice, or injustice, of the Collector of Customs; because he (Mr. Connor) believed there was no more reliable officer in the colony than that gentleman. Instances could easily be cited showing not only the justice, but the consideration he had exercised. Whenever a case was brought before the Collector, that was likely to inflict an injustice upon any one, he was always ready to look into it, and adjust it fairly. It would neither be fair nor generous for any hon. member to cast a slur upon the character of the Collector of Customs, who was one of the most just and efficient officers in the service.

Mr. WOOD said if the discussion had done nothing else, it had established the fact that the Collector of Customs stood very high in the estimation of hon. members. The case

that had been brought forward by the hon. member for Yilgarn was a special one, and required special treatment. What the importer was to have done was to have paid duty on the £22 value, which was evidently a fair invoice, according to the advertisement appearing in the New South Wales paper, produced. The hon. member for Nannine had referred to a case where a hansom cab and horse and harness had sold for £23 in Melbourne, and had been imported into this colony, though originally costing £150. He very much doubted whether the Collector would allow such a thing to come into the colony upon such a valuation. He knew the Collector was particularly careful with vehicles, and furniture, and other things. The endeavors to defraud the revenue were fearful. Commercial travellers would even suggest to tradespeople that special invoices could be prepared for Customs purposes. If the Collector did sometimes exceed his duty it was not to be wondered at in view of the trickery that was attempted to be practiced.

Mr. MORAN, in replying, said he was not one of those who went crawling down the backs of civil servants. He repudiated the charge of the hon. member for North Fremantle that he had been maligning the character of a public servant. He had simply read a letter that he had received from one of his constituents, and said nothing at all about the character of the Collector of Customs, or anyone else. He had always stood up for, and spoken on behalf of civil servants, and he considered the lecture the hon. member for North Fremantle had given him was unwarranted, in view of the fact that that hon. member had himself upon a former occasion attacked a man who was in an even worse position than the Collector of Customs, because he was out of the colony. People who lived in glass houses should not throw stones. He was amused with the hon. member for South Fremantle, who immediately did what he had denounced in him (Mr. Moran). There was a principle involved in the matter he had brought forward. The evidence, too, was conclusive, and he did not doubt but his object would be attained by the Premier looking into the matter and making further enquiries. He would be glad to hear an expression of opinion from the Hon. the Premier upon the particular case brought forward.

Mr. MOSS said the hon. member for Yilgarn could surely not have listened to his

remarks or he would not have come to the conclusion he had. All he (Mr. Moss) had said was that the proper course was to make a complaint to the head of the department, and, if that did not succeed, to carry it on to the Minister at the head of the department, and after that to bring it before the House. The hon. member had alluded to something that was said during a debate in the earlier part of the session. He did not consider the cases were on all fours. In discussing that question, he (Mr. Moss) had taken the only course that was open to him, and when the occasion arose again he should take a similar course. In this matter the course to be pursued was laid down in Clause 96, and the following clauses of the Customs Act. He considered the wrong course had been pursued, and he had ventured to say so. If the hon. member for Yilgarn meant to insinuate that he was one who crawled down the backs of civil servants, he utterly repudiated it, and threw it back at the hon. member with all the force at his command.

THE CHAIRMAN said he regretted he had allowed the words to pass, because he considered they were highly improper.

MR. LOTON said he wished to have a word as to the facts that had been placed before them. He did not intend to refer to the character of the Collector of Customs, because that had been sufficiently established. Under the Customs Act, if an article were imported and the invoice stated the correct value, the Collector was not justified in placing a higher value upon the article. It was, however, altogether another matter if the goods were bought at an auction sale, and brought in at a low valuation. He submitted it was not within the province of the Collector of Customs under existing regulations to insert a higher value than was placed upon a sound invoice, for any article imported from any part of the world. So far as he was able to form an opinion he considered the matter brought forward by the hon. member for Yilgarn was based upon a sound and genuine invoice. He was satisfied that if proper representations were made a rebate would be allowed.

MR. CONNOR said he could not follow the argument of the hon. member who had just spoken. In the course of his business he had that day offered for sale a locomotive, which was valued in the other colonies at about £1,400, and had got an offer of £5.

If the House were to make a hard and fast line for the guidance of the Collector of Customs how could he treat a case like that.

MR. RANDELL said the Collector had to take into consideration the ordinary value of the articles he had a value. There might be peculiar circumstances in other places that would lead to articles being exported at very low prices. He understood those particular buckboard buggies were imported into New South Wales from America, and then exported to this colony. It was a very wise provision that authorised the Collector of Customs to fix values in cases where he doubted the genuineness or correctness of the invoices. In the particular case referred to, it appeared he had raised the valuation from £11 to £14, and he (Mr. Randell) considered that amount a fair and reasonable valuation for the article. It was perfectly right that the Collector should have power to protect the revenue of the colony by placing upon such articles a fair and reasonable valuation.

MR. WOOD said he wished to point out that though those particular buggies were evidently bought from an auctioneer, it did not follow they had been bought at auction. The public advertisement which was produced intimated it was a private sale, and the invoice declared the same thing.

MR. ILLINGWORTH said hon. members ought to remember that under the Customs Act, if an importer said his goods were properly invoiced, and the Collector wished to raise the value, if he refused to pay upon the higher valuation, the Collector could take over the articles at a 10 per cent. advance upon the invoiced price of the articles. If the buggies in question were imported at £11 10s. each, and the importer was not satisfied with the valuation of the Collector, he had his remedy under the Act. The Collector of Customs ought to be supported by the House, and no word should go forth to discourage him in his work. The matter ought not to have been brought before the House.

MR. MORAN said he did not suppose that every importer of a buggy was a lawyer, and understood the law upon the subject. He had only done his duty in bringing the subject forward, and should write and tell his correspondent that the matter had been discussed, and the general feeling of the House was that he had been unjustly treated. [HON. MEMBERS: No, no.]

THE ATTORNEY - GENERAL (Hon. S. Burt) said if the hon. member for Yilgarn thought proper to misrepresent the feeling of the House to his constituents, that was his affair. He did not know the full particulars of this case, but it was probable the Collector of Customs was right, and the particular gentleman in question was wrong. Upon several occasions he (the Attorney-General) had had dealings with the Collector, and he had always found him ready with a most convincing reason for his action. It was desirable that that discussion should end, and that the committee should proceed with the Estimates. The only word he wished to say was, that under the Act, the Collector, in fixing the *ad valorem* duty, had to take the real, fair, market value of the article. If an article were sold in Melbourne for £5 that was really worth £100, that £5 would not be the value that should be placed upon it when imported into this colony. The declaration of the invoice stated that to the best of the belief of the individual making the declaration, the value stated was the real fair market price of the article, at the place whence it was shipped. The market value was taken to be that which was implied in the ordinary and accepted meaning of that term. The fair market value of a buggy would be the price you would have to pay if you were to have one built to order. If anyone were dissatisfied with the valuation of the Collector, the Minister would, on appeal, make enquiry into the matter.

MR. HASSELL said he considered the person in question had been unjustly dealt with, but the hon. member for Yilgarn had made a mistake in bringing it first before the House. He would have got justice if he had gone to the Minister presiding over the Customs Department.

MR. CLARKSON said he gathered from the remarks of hon. members that some charge had been brought against the Collector of Customs. He had known the Collector for a good many years, and believed him to be a thoroughly trustworthy officer. He had known him in another capacity, and if his advice there had been followed, the colony would have saved the great blunder in connection with the Eastern railway.

MR. MORAN said he had brought forward no charge against any one, and he was rather astounded to hear the hon. member for Toodyay speaking so confidently of something he had not heard.

At 6.30 p.m. the Chairman left the chair.

At 7.30 p.m. the Chairman resumed the chair.

MR. SOLOMON asked what were the duties of the Chief Landing Surveyor, in the Customs Department.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest) said he was surprised at the hon. member asking such a question, because he must know that the Chief Landing Surveyor was the principal outdoor officer of the Customs Department, and managed all the outside work. He was the chief executive officer under the Collector of Customs.

MR. SOLOMON said he understood when the officer was first imported that his duty was to re-construct the Customs Department, and also to train the younger members of the service.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest) said the officer was appointed to his present position upon the recommendation of Dr. Wollaston, who had been over here and knew the position. The Government felt they needed an experienced officer as Chief Landing Surveyor, and as the Collector himself joined in Dr. Wollaston's recommendation, the Government wrote to Victoria and secured the services of the present officer, who was at that time a retired officer from the Customs Department of Victoria. He came to this colony with a splendid reputation, and had made many improvements at Fremantle, according to the testimony of the Collector and others. There was no doubt but that he had trained the younger officers, as far as he had had opportunity. He (the Premier) knew that the officer in question had had some difficulty in getting as good a staff as he would like, and that he had complained that he had not better officers than he had. He wished to have more experienced men, and with that view had made recommendations from time to time that two experienced men should be obtained from Victoria. The Collector had also recommended it, and accordingly provision was made on the Estimates. Hon. members would see that the business of the Customs Department had increased enormously during the last two years, and special efforts were necessary to cope with it. The volume of business was too great for them to go on, as they had been doing in the past. They must have experienced officers, and the department could not wait until young men learned their duty.

Mr. SOLOMON said he had no complaint to make against this particular officer, but the course suggested would cause dissatisfaction within the service. Two officers were to be brought over from the other side and given £250 a year, whereas there were others in the service who had been there a good many years, and had not had opportunities given them to show what they could do.

Mr. R. F. SHOLL said it appeared to him that the Landing Surveyor and Chief Clerk received undue consideration in the matter of increases. They received a £20 advance last year, and were receiving another £20 advance this. Such a course was calculated to cause dissatisfaction within the service where others were not equally pushed on. The Minister should have information as to the length of time officers had been in the service, and also as to their efficiency, before advances were given.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest) said the reason for the increase was that the two officers mentioned held responsible positions. The increase recommended by the Collector was larger than appeared on the Estimates, he had cut it down.

Mr. WOOD said he was sorry to hear Mr. Knight's advance had been cut down, because he was a faithful officer, and did very good work.

Mr. SOLOMON said he wished to call attention to Item 16 (Statistical Clerk, £275.) In 1894 the officer received £200 a year. Last year he was increased to £250, and now again another advance of £25 was proposed. In 1894 he had one assistant, but this year he had five. He asked for further information on the subject.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest) said the Statistical Clerk held a most important position, and the business in that particular branch had very largely increased, as was shown by the increased number of clerks that were necessary. He was informed by the Collector that the clerk in question was a very efficient officer.

Mr. R. F. SHOLL said the officer in question had been unduly pushed on. He had been in the service, and then left it, and re-entered it again. He was drawing considerably more salary than others who occupied equally important positions. He moved to reduce the item by £25, for the reason that he was unduly pushed on.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest) said

he hoped the hon. member would not press his motion. The officer received an increase last year, but he had not had one for two or three years previously. The Collector had strongly recommended him for an increase upon several occasions.

Mr. GEORGE said he should support the hon. member for the Gascoyne, not because he knew anything of the particular officer in question, but because he should like to see the statistical business taken out of the Customs and other departments, and made into a separate department of itself, where there would be a proper officer who understood the matter thoroughly. There were very many who only understood it partially. [THE PREMIER: There has been a great increase in efficiency in recent years.] In the other colonies they had a Government Statist, who looked after that one business entirely. [THE PREMIER: He would not do this.] He was seeking information, and should certainly support the amendment. It appeared all through the Estimates as though, because the colony was progressing, they felt they must push on the salaries. Altogether the increases would amount to some thousands of pounds. There had been such things as "Black Thursday" in Australian history, and such a thing might be known in West Australia. He would like to see a Bill brought in to put the Civil Service upon a proper basis, which would put an end to such unpleasant tasks as they had to perform there in the performance of their duty to the country.

Mr. MARMION said the office of the Statistical Clerk was no doubt an important one, and he did not think anyone would imagine a salary of £275 was too great for the responsibilities of the position. It looked to him as if the office were fast blossoming into a department. In 1893 there was only the officer himself and one assistant, whereas now there were five assistant clerks, besides what he might term a manager. It was true the revenue was increasing very largely, and no doubt the work had increased, too. He hoped, now the hon. member for the Gascoyne had dealt with the principle involved, that he would not press his amendment, seeing the increase was so small. He considered there were anomalies in the Estimates that only the Collector of Customs himself could explain.

Mr. CLARKSON said he did not think the salary proposed was a large one. He preferred to see a good man in the position, and paid

well, so that the number might then be reduced. He believed some officers could do double the work they were doing if they got better pay.

The amendment (to reduce the item by £25), was put, and a division taken, with the following result:—

Noes	...	...	...	...	11
Ayes	...	...	...	...	10

Majority against 1

Noes.	AYES.
Mr. Burt	Mr. Connor
Mr. Clarkson	Mr. George
Sir J. Forrest	Mr. Harper
Mr. Hassell	Mr. Hooley
Mr. Leake	Mr. Loton
Mr. Marmion	Mr. Moss
Mr. Richardson	Mr. Randell
Mr. Throssell	Mr. H. W. Sholl
Mr. Vann	Mr. Solomon
Mr. Wood	Mr. R. F. Sholl
Mr. Illingworth (Teller).	(Teller).

The amendment was therefore negatived.

MR. GEORGE moved that "Item No. 16 (Statistical Clerk, £275)" be reduced by £20. He did so because the hon. members who voted with the Noes were not in the House to hear the discussion.

THE CHAIRMAN said it was only necessary for hon. members to hear the question put from the Chair.

MR. GEORGE said the salary of the officer in question had been increased by leaps and bounds, so much so, that he seemed to be tacked on to the prosperity of the colony. He was one of the officers who seemed, to be always on the up grade. He had had £75 increase in two years.

MR. ILLINGWORTH said that the revenue of the colony was nearly £600,000 from Customs alone, and it could not be expected that the statistical work could be done as easily, or as cheaply, as when the revenue was only £200,000. It was unreasonable to expect it. If the country had to have the work done, then they should be willing to honestly pay for it. They could not possibly expect the statistics of a department like that to be taken for the same salaries as were paid three years ago. [MR. MOSS: They have got five assistants now.] The gentleman at the head of the office only had one assistant to look after a while ago, and now he has to take the responsibility of five. The argument to reduce the amount was preposterous.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest) said the amendment was rather amusing. He did not think the hon. member meant to be ob-

structive, but the House had already decided the amount was not to be reduced, and it was not likely to change its mind. Perhaps the hon. member would next move a reduction of £15 and then £10. He appealed to him not to adopt such tactics.

MR. RANDELL said he thought the object of the hon. member was to reduce some of the anomalies that were constantly cropping up in the Estimates. Why should one man receive £50 advance one year and £25 the next, and yet other poor unfortunates never got even £5 advance, some of whom occupied far more important positions than the statistical clerk. He had noted an instance, further on in the Estimates where an officer occupying a far more important position received only a £10 advance. It was the principle adopted that they objected to, and the case of the statistical clerk was a glaring instance of it.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest) said nearly the whole of the items were prepared by the Collector of Customs, who knew more of the position than he (the Premier) did. The figures of the Collector had not been altered except in the case of one or two of the higher salaried officers. It was impossible for the Minister to criticise every particular item. They had to be left to a large extent to the Collector of Customs for his own department. It had to be remembered as the hon. member for Nannine had pointed out, the colony was not now what it was a few years ago. The colony was increasing and the responsibilities of officers were increasing, and in such a great revenue producing department, if they did not have capable and trustworthy officers, they might easily lose by a cheese paring policy, far more than the increases proposed.

MR. R. F. SHOLL said the officer in 1893 got £100. [MR. MARMION: No, in that year he got £144.] Then he got £200, and after, £250, and now it was proposed to raise him to £275. Referring to the remarks of the hon. member for Nannine, he pointed out this officer was not the head of a department. The argument of the work having increased had nothing in it, or else they might argue the Commissioner of Police should have £1,500 a year. The same would apply to the Postmaster General, the Collector of Customs, and others.

The amendment to reduce Item No. 16 (Statistical Clerk £275)" by £20 was then

put, and division taken, with the following result.

Ayes	11
Noes	11

A tie	0
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AYES.

NOES.

Mr. Connor
Mr. George
Mr. Harper
Mr. Hooley
Mr. Loton
Mr. Moss
Mr. Randell
Mr. H. W. Sholl
Mr. R. F. Sholl
Mr. Solomon
Mr. Simpson (*Teller*).

Mr. Burt
Mr. Clarkson
Sir J. Forrest
Mr. Hassell
Mr. Illingworth
Mr. Leake
Mr. Marmion
Mr. Richardson
Mr. Throssell
Mr. Wood
Mr. Venn (*Teller*).

THE CHAIRMAN said, as the numbers were a tie, he should vote with the Ayes, because he believed it his duty to save the taxpayers.

The amendment to reduce Item 16 by £20 was, therefore, carried.

MR. CONNOR asked for further information as to the Statistical Clerks, who were marked as having previously been under "Salaries, Provisional and Temporary." He wanted to know if they were new officers.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest) said they had previously been paid out of the item for "Temporary clerical assistance." Four hundred and fifty-seven pounds had been spent last year, but only £250 were asked for that purpose for this year. The officers had been in the service before, and were now only transferred to the permanent staff. They were not new appointments.

MR. CONNOR said he noted there was a sum of £250 for clerical assistance in addition to the appointments he referred to.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest) said they always provided for extra clerical assistance, but the amount this year was not so large as last year.

MR. RANDELL said he wished to refer to Item 22 ("Jerquer, £250"), and asked if the Government had found an English equivalent for the name.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest) said they had found that a "jerquer" was one who searched a ship to ascertain if there were any concealed or unentered goods in the ship.

MR. MARMION said he thought when the Government gave an officer a name of that description it ought to carry with it a good salary. He knew the officer in question well. He entered the service in 1873, and was the oldest officer in the Customs Department at Fremantle. He was a very good officer, was

steady and industrious, and as capable a man as they had in the service. For some reason or other he was not now occupying the position to which he was entitled. He did not agree with the contention of the Hon. the Premier with regard to importing two landing surveyors at £250 a year, because there were good and capable officers within the service, who could fill the position well at a lower salary. He considered such an importation would lead to disorganisation in that particular branch of the service.

THE CHAIRMAN pointed out there would be other opportunities of speaking on the question of the two new landing surveyors.

MR. MARMION said by comparison the jerquer had not been as liberally dealt with as some other officers. If he could have moved the salary be increased, he would have done so. He asked the Treasurer to bear the officer in mind, and if it were possible in fairness to other officers, to give him a small increase, particularly as it was intended to introduce other officers into the service, at the same rate as was now proposed to be given to him.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest) said he had had this officer's name brought under his notice upon several occasions, and he thought he had been very fairly treated. He believed in 1893-4 his salary was only £195. [MR. MARMION: For a long time he was utterly neglected.] In the following year it was raised to £220, and now it was raised to £250. He had had an increase nearly every year since the present Government had been in office.

MR. WOOD said the reason the salary had not been increased as it should have been was, because there had been no one in the House to speak for the jerquer. He knew him to be a good officer in every respect, and thought it was his modesty that had kept him back. He hoped the Government would in the future see that that particular officer got justice.

MR. RANDELL said he was pleased to see the proposed increase, because he knew the officer to be one of the most obliging, and one of the most painstaking in the service. He did not think he had been treated fairly in the past. His advances had been very slow, especially when compared with those of other officers.

MR. SOLOMON said he did not believe there was a better officer in the whole service. He

was available night or day. He was steady and industrious, and looked after the interests of the department constantly. He was sorry the increase was not larger.

MR. RANDELL asked for further information upon Items 23 and 24 (two landing waiters at £250 a year), as they appeared to be new appointments altogether, and started at £250 a year.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest) said he had already stated it was proposed to obtain two experienced officers from Melbourne. They had not yet been appointed, and if the House decided not to have them he believed the Government was not committed to anything. He had pointed out that they must have some more experienced officers on account of the volume of business having increased so largely, and these were the appointments contemplated. He believed he had some time ago taken upon himself the responsibility of authorising two such appointments, but he did not think anything had yet been done. The information he had before him went to show the appointments had not been made, and that confirmed his recollection. There was a tremendous lot of revenue coming through the Customs, and they must have care and knowledge to cope with it. There was no more reason why they should not import two experienced landing waiters than there was against them getting Mr. Goodsir himself, and no one would say they did not do right in that appointment. It seemed to him that great care was being exercised in the choice, or they would have been appointed months ago. It was evident that two suitable men were not available at the salary. In view of the fact that an experienced officer like Mr. Goodsir recommended these appointments, and that he was supported in his recommendation by the Collector of Customs, he (the Premier) thought the House should hesitate before it struck out the items.

MR. SOLOMON asked if these gentlemen entered the service at £250 if they would expect to get a yearly increase, or whether they would be satisfied with the amount. [THE PREMIER: They will have to take their chance, I think.] It was strange if throughout the service, where some thousands of officers were employed, they could not find two gentlemen capable of filling the positions at £250 a year. If they could not find two such officers within the service, who were capable, it showed there must

be a great number who were not to be depended upon. He moved that Item 23 (Landing Waiter, £250) be reduced by £100.

MR. GEORGE said he wished if he were in order to move to strike out Item 23 altogether. He thought if the item were permitted to pass it would be a grave reflection upon the whole of the Customs Department. The Department had been established for 50 or 60 years, and had trained numbers of cadets and had sent them out to different parts of the colony. Those men had gone out east and north and south to do their duty, with a reasonable expectancy that their merits would be recognised; and he for one refused to believe they had not men within their own shores who were capable of filling the position. To pass that item would be to take from men in the service the reasonable hope of promotion which they had a right to expect. He moved to strike out Item No. 23 (Landing Waiter, £250).

THE CHAIRMAN said that, there being two motions before the committee relating to the same item, the question was that the item be struck out, this being the larger question.

MR. LOTON said the position taken by the hon. member for the Murray was untenable, for as the committee must assume that the increase of business required extra landing waiters, these must be obtained from somewhere; therefore the item should not be struck out. But, with regard to salary, it did seem strange that in this department there were not junior hands of sufficient experience, intelligence, and integrity to justify their being moved up, without importing more expensive officers from another colony.

THE PREMIER said he was assured that such officers were not available here.

MR. LOTON said if men had to be imported for this work, at a time when the depression in other colonies had so much reduced the employment there, he submitted that the newly imported officers should be started with less salaries than £250 a year. It was an injustice to other officers in the service to import two additional landing waiters at this higher rate of salary. Immense numbers of clerks, from England and elsewhere, could be obtained in all branches of commercial business; therefore there could be no necessity to pay these high salaries for new men willing to come here. The amount now offered might, at any rate, be reduced by £50.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest) said

he agreed generally with the hon. member's view; but Mr. Goodsir, who had charge of this work, had complained very much that better men were required and not available to assist him in the work. To import landing waiters from other colonies was very much against his (the Premier's) inclination; but the service was, in fact, being filled from other places, and even in the Customs Department probably many of the officers now in it had not been there very long. If the head of a department recommended a man as being suitable for the particular work, he (the Premier) did not enquire where the man came from, but had to take him accordingly. Perhaps it would be well to adopt the suggestion just made, and reduce these two proposed salaries by £50 each. On account of the hard times in other colonies, suitable landing waiters might possibly be obtained from there for less than £250 a year.

MR. GEORGE, after what had fallen from the Premier, asked leave to withdraw his motion.

Motion to strike out the item, withdrawn by leave.

MR. SOLOMON's prior motion, to reduce the item by £100, also, by leave, withdrawn.

MR. LOTON then moved that the amount of Item 23 (landing waiter, £250) be reduced by £50.

MR. RANDELL said the Government had done quite right in having previously sent to Victoria for an officer of long experience (Mr. Goodsir), to be at the head of the Customs' branch in this colony, and any recommendation which that officer gave, as to employing assistants, should be treated with every respect. But, at the same time, an effort should be made to fill these positions out of the present service, as being better than adopting the extreme step of bringing men from other colonies to fill the higher places here. He could not accept the idea that there was not sufficient ability and experience among the men in the department to fill these positions.

Motion, to reduce the item by £50, put and passed.

MR. LOTON further moved that the amount of Item 24 (landing waiter, £250) be reduced by £50.

MR. JAMES said that, by passing these items for employing two additional landing waiters, he hoped the House would not be committing itself to the obtaining of men

from other colonies for these positions. [SEVERAL HON. MEMBERS: No, no.]

Motion for reduction put and passed.

MR. RANDELL, referring to Item 25 (landing waiter, £250; last year, £130), asked for an explanation of the increase.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest) said he did not know the reason, other than that this officer's name was A. Patrick, who was reported to be the best landing waiter in the service. The salary voted last year was only £130.

MR. MARMION suggested that the amount might reasonably be made £200.

THE PREMIER said that would be reasonable.

MR. WOOD said he understood this officer had intended to go into business on his own account, and, being a good officer, this increase of salary which was recommended at the time, did induce the officer to remain in the service.

The item, on the motion of Mr. MARMION, was reduced to £200.

MR. GEORGE referring to items 27 and 28 (assistant landing waiter, £180; last year £150; ditto, same amounts) said he did not object to these increases, but desired to point out to the Treasurer that there did not seem to be much method in the madness of fixing these increases of salary, because one landing waiter (item 25), who had been described as the best in the service, received only £130 last year, yet these waiters (items 27 and 28) received each £150 last year, being £20 more than was paid to the best man. There could not have been much business management in the way these salaries were fixed last year.

MR. SOLOMON, referring to Item 46 (Customs detective officer, £144), asked if this officer was a person named Hopkins.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest) said that was so. Mr. Hopkins had been a member of Parliament in South Australia, and came here well introduced to him (the Premier) and to other members of the Government. However, in the detective branch of the Customs, Mr. Hopkins did not last long. In fact, he made himself very disagreeable, and had to be got rid of.

MR. HASSELL, referring to Item 61 (locker and warehouseman, Albany, £110), asked why there was not an increase, seeing that in Item 60 (clerk, Albany, £190, increase £20) a substantial increase had been given. The locker and warehouseman was a good officer, and it

was to be hoped an increase of salary would be given next year, if not this year.

MR. GEORGE, referring to Item 66 (Sub-collector of Customs and Revenue, Busselton, £60; increase £10), asked if this officer appeared in the Estimates under any other title and received any other salary.

THE PREMIER said this officer was also clerk to the magistrates at Busselton.

MR. JAMES said Bunbury had a clerk and landing waiter combined, receiving £80 last year, and now put down for £100; while at Busselton there was an assistant landing waiter, receiving £30 last year, now put down for £40, and holding another office for which he was paid separately. Was it not stupid to put one man's salary under several separate heads, in the Estimates, instead of showing the total amount in one item?

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest) said this officer was also a policeman, so that he filled several offices at Busselton. Two other policemen at Bunbury performed additional duties, in the same way.

MR. JAMES said if £10 a year was given to a policeman at Busselton for also performing Customs duties, would not other policemen at small ports want extra payment in the same way?

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest) said the landing waiter and the sub-collector of Customs at Busselton were one and the same person, Mr. Pries, who held three appointments at Busselton, namely, clerk to the magistrates, sub-collector of Customs, and landing waiter. Mr. Pries was one of the best officers in the service, and received altogether about £230 a year.

MR. MARMION, referring to Item 76 (landing waiter, Esperance Bay, £200; increase £20), asked whether this officer had much to do, as the salary was considerable for that place.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest) said this officer had a large and increasing amount of Customs work to do; so much so that an assistant had also been appointed, the other day.

MR. MARMION said he was surprised and pleased to hear that statement.

MR. CONNOR, referring to Item 93 (tide-waiters and landing waiters, &c., occasionally employed, £500; increase, £100; total expended last year, £1,943 13s. 6d.), directed attention to the fact that the amounts already passed under the heading of "salaries, pro-

visional and temporary," in other parts of the Estimates, amounted to £1,910; that £1,475 more was now proposed under this heading, making a total up to this stage of £3,385, besides the £250 which the Premier had suggested; and he (Mr. Connor) asked why such large amounts of a merely provisional and temporary nature were required to be voted.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest) said the Customs Estimates altogether were increased by only £3,574, as compared with last year's total. As the Customs revenue increased, there must be some increase in the expenditure. The total amount of salaries for this year, under the head of "provisional and temporary," was decreased.

MR. CONNOR said the expenditure as a whole was increasing in an alarming degree, and he hoped it was possible to make some reductions in this large amount of "salaries, provisional and temporary."

MR. JAMES, referring to Item 96 (house allowance, Collector of Customs, temporary, £100) asked how long this temporary allowance was to go on.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest) said the former Collector of Customs had a house provided; but as the present Collector did not occupy it, and the house brought in a rental of £100 a year, the Government had thought it reasonable to hand over that rental to the Collector as an allowance in lieu of house accommodation.

MR. GEORGE, referring to Item 99 (rent, Esperance Bay bond, £30), asked if that item was to disappear soon.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest) said an excellent jetty, with warehouse and sheds attached, was being built at Esperance Bay, and as soon as this work was completed the rent for a bond would cease.

MR. MARMION, referring to Item 102 (expert, explosives branch, £350), asked if this was to be a permanent office, and what were the duties?

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest) said the office was to be permanent. This officer would have the custody and control of explosives. The Government had received reports that some of the explosives stored were in a dangerous condition, both at Geraldton and Fremantle—he hoped they were not so dangerous as to explode. When the explosion occurred last January, at the harbor works in Fremantle, he sent immediate instructions that the owners of ex-

plosives then stored under care of the Government must remove them. He hoped that the report, then on the table, relating to the custody and control of explosives, would be read by hon. members. The Government were practically forced to get some one who was an expert to take the control of explosives stored at the ports.

MR. CONNOR asked what were this officer's qualifications.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest) said this officer was recommended by Mr. Hake, the Chief Inspector of Explosives in Melbourne. The officer was a graduate of Melbourne University, and would shortly pass the degree of Doctor of Science. Mr. Hake had certified that this officer was thoroughly competent for these duties.

MR. MOSS was glad to hear the Government had obtained such an officer; and glad also to hear the Premier's admission that there had not been sufficient care used in the past for the storage of explosives in Fremantle. Having lately asked a question in the House in reference to claims for compensation made on account of damage done in Fremantle by the explosion at the harbor works in January last, and seeing that the Government had not admitted the liability in these cases, it was something to find that the Premier now admitted there had been a want of care in the storage of explosives at Fremantle.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest) said the explosives he referred to as being reported to be dangerous were not the same. Those which the hon. member referred to as having exploded were stored for the harbor works.

MR. MOSS said the Government had repudiated liability for the damage done, yet the Premier now admitted there had been a want of care in the past, and a salary was now on the Estimates for paying an officer to exercise better care in the future. He (Mr. Moss) hoped the Government would not maintain the position of refusing to recognise the claims of persons against the Government, in these cases. If this expert did his duty, it would prevent a recurrence of such danger and damage as occurred on the 1st of January, when the Government had a lot of dangerous explosives stored, and nobody to look after them.

MR. CONNOR said this officer would have comparatively nothing to do, and a salary of £350 was too much. He moved that the amount of the item be reduced by £100.

MR. ILLINGWORTH said this officer, to be competent, must be a scientific expert; otherwise, if he did not understand chemicals, he could not know when an explosive was in a dangerous condition or not; therefore, if this salary were reduced, an expert of the requisite ability would not be obtained, and to have one who was not sufficiently qualified would be like living in a fool's paradise, the fancied security being illusory. Only a good expert could hit the happy mean when deterioration in an explosive had gone so far as to be dangerous, and to require that such explosive should be destroyed, as a necessary precaution. When an explosive became unsafe, it should be destroyed, even if it were found stored in a Government magazine. That was the safe course pursued in other colonies.

THE PREMIER said he was not aware that the Government had the power to do this, under the existing law, when such explosives belonged to other owners.

MR. ILLINGWORTH said the danger was caused by deterioration, and it was a question how far the deterioration might be allowed to go before the explosive became dangerous. The expert should be competent to determine this, or he would be useless. If competent, he would be worth his salary, certainly.

M. RANDELL asked if the salary had been promised and an arrangement made.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest) said the arrangement, so far as he remembered, was that this officer should come here for six months, at a salary of £350 a year, if the arrangement continued a year. The officer was not bound to stay longer than six months having got six months' leave of absence from the Government of Victoria, granted at the request of this Government. He (the Premier) did not think this officer would remain if the salary were reduced. This was not a high salary for an expert competent to deal with explosives. Mr. Hake had advised that if a competent expert were obtained from England, no good man would come for less than £400 or £500 a year. Mr. Hake received £800 a year as Inspector of Explosives in Victoria. Large quantities of explosives were now being imported into this colony, and it was a question how they were to be stored—whether the Government were to store them or whether the importers should do so. He believed that some of the persons who manufactured explosives were prepared to erect stores here. In any case, unless

the Government had some expert to advise as to explosives, the importation and storage of explosives would become too dangerous altogether. The salary proposed was not too much, and he advised the committee to pass it. The Government were not bound for more than six months under the present arrangement with this expert, and that period must be nearly expired, the expert having been here some months. This was the second officer under Mr. Hake in Melbourne, and the first officer having refused the offer, the second was induced to take it. If he had not come, this Government would, when the recent emergency arose, have had to telegraph for a competent expert to be sent out from England.

MR. RANDELL concurred in the opinion expressed by the Premier, and said this expert, being a professional man, who had most likely served a long training, and having come with the highest recommendations, the motion for reducing the salary might well be withdrawn.

MR. R. F. SHOLL said it had become absolutely necessary to have a competent officer of this description, and especially while explosives were being stored and used so largely in connection with the harbor works at Fremantle.

MR. SOLOMON said the Government should be congratulated on having obtained an officer who had already been so serviceable to the colony. If an accident were to occur through the want of supervision, the amount of salary would be nothing in comparison with the damage.

MR. GEORGE, referring to Item 104 (watchman, *Laughing Wave*, £110), asked how long this expense would continue, and whether the Government were providing a magazine for the storage of explosives.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest) said that, when the explosion at the Fremantle harbor works occurred in January last, instant instructions were issued to the harbor-master to remove all the explosives and place them on board a vessel, the *Laughing Wave*, and instructions were also issued to build a magazine at Owen's Anchorage. This magazine had now been built, on the most modern principles; but the vessel referred to had been kept in use for this purpose longer than had been expected. In a short time all the explosives would be transferred from the vessel to the magazine.

Motion, to reduce the salary, put and negatived.

Vote put and passed.

Vote—Harbor and Light, £14,255.

MR. WOOD, referring to Item 1 (Chief Harbormaster, £450), said this salary was totally inadequate for the responsibilities of the position. This officer was equivalent, in his department, to an Under-Secretary in other departments, and the salary should be increased accordingly.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest) said this officer had also a residence. However, he (the Premier) was glad to hear the hon. member's remarks; and Captain Russell, who was a valuable officer and performed his important duties very well, had not received an increase for some time. The remarks of the hon. member would be borne in mind.

MR. MARMION said he would be pleased if Captain Russell's services were to be remembered in the way suggested. Some years had elapsed since this officer received an increase, and although a residence was now allowed him, yet with the advance in the shipping business at Fremantle the time had arrived when a further increase should be given.

MR. RANDELL agreed that this officer's position was a most important one, and the work must have increased considerably, so that an advance of salary might well be given.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest) said that what hon. members had stated in reference to this salary would be borne in mind next year.

MR. JAMES expressed his thanks for the Chief Harbormaster having presented his estimates with so few increases. This was an example that might be commended to the heads of other departments.

MR. MARMION, referring to Item 3 (pilot, £250), said this officer was appointed in 1877, and had thus been in the service 18 years, bearing a very good character; yet comparing his salary with those given to pilots at Rottnest and Albany, this officer was entitled to an increase. It was not so much the inadequacy of his salary, as the want of some advance to mark his longer services, that called for consideration; and an advance of £25 might well be granted. Seniority should be recognised by giving a little more salary, as a rule.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest) said

he was glad to take note of what the hon. member had said. These Estimates, however, had not been altered by him since they were framed by the department.

MR. SOLOMON, referring to Item 5 (leading hand of boat's crew, £120), said this officer had been in the service 17 years, and was entitled to an advance of salary.

MR. GEORGE, referring to Item 42 (light keeper, Busselton. £40; last year, £21), asked whether this was the same man as referred to previously in Item 67. [THE PREMIER: Yes.] Was it to be understood that this man, besides filling the position of landing waiter at £10, was also to receive £40 a year as light keeper, the salary for this latter work being now increased from £21 to £40?

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest) said this was the same man, named Tomkins, a water policeman.

MR. GEORGE asked whether this man was in receipt of any other amounts.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest) said all the particulars were in the Blue Book. This officer received £10 a year as assistant landing waiter, £40 as light keeper, and about 7s. a day as a water policeman.

MR. R. F. SHOLL said it would be convenient, in making up the Estimates, for a note of reference to be placed at the bottom of a page showing the various sources from which an officer's emoluments were received. Many officers occupied more than one position, and the total amount received was often difficult to trace. As to referring to the Blue Book, the copy for last year was not yet issued.

MR. GEORGE asked why the increase was recommended in the case of the light keeper at Busselton. Was there an extra amount of shipping at Busselton?

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest) said the pay previously was considered too small.

MR. WOOD said the increase was well deserved, considering the great length of the Vasse jetty, which this man had to traverse two or three times a day.

MR. JAMES asked for further explanation of the reason for this increase. Perhaps it was because there were increases at Bunbury, and the Busselton man was also thought to be entitled to something.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest) said the only reason was that this officer must have been underpaid before. He (the Premier) had not had this matter brought under his

notice before, either as to increases at Bunbury or Busselton.

MR. JAMES, referring to Items 61 and 62 (allowance in lieu of firewood, harbor-master at Albany £10, pilot at Albany £7), asked why these or any officers should receive firewood allowance, instead of the amount being added to the salary, as it ought to be.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest) said it was thought better to give a money allowance instead of supplying the firewood.

MR. JAMES asked why the men should not, on the same principle, be supplied with clothing or boots. The allowance should properly be added to the salary.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest) said probably all the harbor-masters and pilots got firewood allowance. These allowances had been passed before.

MR. JAMES said that, according to these Estimates, £10 worth of firewood was required to keep the harbor-master warm, whereas only £7 had to do for the pilot, who might have a larger family than the other man. Perhaps in this case the pilot was the smaller man. The fact of these allowances having been passed before was no good reason why they should appear again in this form, separate from and additional to the salary. Not having got from the Premier a satisfactory explanation, he (Mr. James) moved that Item 61 (firewood allowance, £10) be struck out.

MR. MARMION said the hon. member surely would not have these men frozen to death.

Motion put, and Mr. James having called for a division it was taken, with the following result:—

AYES	...	...	...	...	2
NOES	...	...	...	...	12

Majority against ... 10

AYES.	NOES.
Mr. George	Mr. Burt
Mr. James (Teller)	Sir J. Forrest
	Mr. Hassell
	Mr. Hooley
	Mr. Loton
	Mr. Marmion
	Mr. Moss
	Mr. Randall
	Mr. Richardson
	Mr. Throssell
	Mr. Venn
	Mr. Wood (Teller)

Motion negatived.

MR. JAMES, referring to Item 62 (pilot Albany, allowance in lieu of firewood, £7), again asked why this pilot should be allowed

only £7 for firewood, when the harbor-master in the same place was allowed £10. Had one a smaller family?

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest) said that, previously to 1893, firewood was supplied to the harbor-master and pilot, and was paid for out of "incidentals" but a different arrangement was then made, by which a money allowance was given in lieu of firewood.

MR. JAMES asked why the amounts were different.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest) said that perhaps the harbor-master had a larger house, or the difference might be that he was the more important officer.

MR. JAMES said this item should not be separate from the salary.

THE ATTORNEY-GENERAL (Hon. S. Burt) said the same objection need not be repeated. The Government would make a note of it.

MR. ILLINGWORTH said that if the Government were not to be wood carters, the next best course was to make a money allowance in lieu of firewood, where necessary. If the allowance were added to the salary, the amount would be a misrepresentation by showing that the officer was getting an apparent increase of salary.

MR. JAMES complained that there was misrepresentation in the present form of the Estimates, because all that an officer received did not appear under one heading.

MR. GEORGE said the sooner these allowances were knocked on the head the better. All the amounts of a salary should be together under one head, so that members might see how much was actually being voted to each officer.

MR. RANDELL said there might be a principle behind this that was convenient and useful, and, having prevailed for some years, there was no evident reason why it should be altered. The hon. member (Mr. James), in attacking these small allowances for firewood, was using a steam hammer to crack a nut.

MR. JAMES said his objection was to these amounts appearing as allowances, instead of being added to the salary in each case.

MR. RANDELL, referring to Item 71 (two steam launches, one for Fremantle and one for Albany, £3,000), asked what was to be the material used, and whether it was to be ordered from England; also what was to be the tonnage of each boat, the speed, and the intended use; especially the one for Albany.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest) said the intention was to import steam launches for the use of the pilots. For instance, at Albany the oar-boat was found altogether inadequate for the necessities of that harbor, as the pilots could not go much distance to a ship in that kind of boat against a strong sea, the pulling being so laborious and the time long. The Chief Harbor-master at Fremantle had been urging on the Government the necessity of having a steam launch for the pilot service, and the same was the case at Albany. The Government thought the time had arrived when steam launches should be obtained for the purpose of the Harbor-master and the Customs officers at these ports. The Harbor-master had stated that a steam launch would not only serve for his work, but be available also for the Customs, when required. It seemed almost beyond belief that in this colony the Government had no steam launch for either of these purposes, whereas they were considered indispensable in the important harbors of other colonies. How these launches were to be obtained was another question. The machinery might be imported, and the hull be built here, or the complete construction might be imported from England. The Chief Harbor-master recommended that two good launches could be obtained, fit for the service, for £3,000; and he (the Premier) would strongly urge the committee to pass this item. The present method was very inadequate, for in rough weather a boat propelled with oars could scarcely go beyond the entrance of the harbor at Albany to board a steamer or ship; and surely, with so many ships coming to this colony now, some better provision should be made.

MR. RANDELL trusted that the Harbor-master would recommend the purchase or construction of a proper boat and not a toy. While they were about it they should get a proper vessel and not one that would be of no use, for the mere sake of saving a few hundred pounds.

MR. WOOD agreed with the necessity for the steam launches, but regarded the amount proposed to be voted as altogether too small. To be of use the amount should be increased.

MR. HASSELL supported the proposition of the hon. member for West Perth. £1,500 was too small an amount for a boat for Fremantle. These boats were very necessary, not only at Fremantle, but also at Albany.

Mr. MARMION understood the Colonial Secretary to state that these launches would be required, because the boats in use at present were unable to face any rough weather in King George's Sound. The same thing would apply to Fremantle. The fact was, however, that it would be absolutely impossible to use steam launches in rough weather. They would immediately be swamped. It would be necessary to have a deck boat which would cost as much as was placed on the Estimates for the two boats. If it was intended that the Harbormaster should have the use of a boat as well as the pilots, one boat would not be sufficient for Fremantle, and two separate boats would be necessary. The same necessity did not arise at Albany, for the reason that the circumstances were different. Steam launches of the type suggested would be very useful in fine weather, but the vessels required for the pilots, at any rate, should be suitable for all weathers.

THE PREMIER intimated that the advice of Captain Russell would be followed, and care would be taken to secure boats of a thoroughly satisfactory description.

Mr. R. F. SHOLL did not believe a boat was required so much for the Customs as it was for the Pilot service. There was no hurry for Customs officers to get on board a vessel at Fremantle, but that was not the case of the pilot. Steam vessels were undoubtedly what were required. He joined in the hope that the Government would have the boat built in the colony, even if the engines were imported.

Mr. GEORGE enquired if any provision had been made for a crew.

THE PREMIER (Hon Sir J. Forrest) had made no such provision, for the reason that the boats were hardly likely to be available for twelve months.

Mr. JAMES expressed a hope that the Government would have these boats built in the colony. The engines could be imported from England if it was necessary and if the engineering establishment of the hon. member for the Murray was not capable of manufacturing them. Other boats built here had been successful, the only trouble in connection with them being the imported engines. There was no reason why the Government should go out of the colony to have these boats built.

Mr. SIMPSON would like to be informed what had become of another Government vessel purchased sometime ago at a high price.

What was the costly toy used for now? Her engines were valuable and should be utilised. What work was it doing and when would it be in Perth?

THE ATTORNEY-GENERAL (Hon. S. Burt) replied that the vessel was doing whatever work was necessary and would be brought to Perth whenever it was requisite. The engines would be too small to be moved into a pilot boat.

Mr. SIMPSON was dissatisfied with the answer. The only work of the toy had ever done to his knowledge was when it nearly put an end to the Ministry. He had heard it declared that the hardest work the vessel did was in keeping at anchor.

Item agreed to.

Gas repairs, etc., of Jetty Lamps, £250.

Mr. GEORGE enquired whether there was anything in this vote for the same gentleman included in various other votes for work at Busselton.

THE CHAIRMAN ruled that the question was not relevant. There was nothing in the item about any particular individual.

THE ATTORNEY-GENERAL: The Ministry is not bound to answer these questions.

Item agreed to.

Vote agreed to.

Government Stores, £4,345.

Item, foreman, £170.

Mr. RANDELL noticed that this salary had been increased by £30 a year, and the Committee should be informed of some of the reasons for the increase from £87 16s. 8d. paid last year to £170 for the year now running.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest) explained that the duties of this official were responsible and that he had the full control of the fuel supply. He superintended the coal required for all parts of the colony and the storekeeper had recommended him for the increase. This department had charge of all stores including those of the Railway Department.

Item agreed to.

Store clerk, Fremantle Prison, £25.

Mr. GEORGE asked if the Government expected a man to exist on this wage.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest) replied in the negative. This officer was also a most exemplary official in the gaol department, but he did a good deal of work for the Government Storekeeper outside his regular duties and two or three years ago this additional provision was made. This official received a salary of £225 as clerk and record

keeper, and the additional £25 as assistant to the Government Storekeeper, making his salary £250 in all. Strong representations had been made for an increase in this salary, but the Government had postponed the matter so far as this year was concerned.

MR. GEORGE would not have objected to the salary being £250. What he protested against was the manner in which the Estimates were prepared, and the difficulty to find out exactly what any official was obtaining altogether. The principle was a bad one, and the committee could not have the proper information to proceed upon.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir. J. Forrest) had not had the time or the clerical assistance to prepare a list of every official and his duties. This case was among the few exceptions where one official held more than one office. There were few cases, indeed, where this occurred. In this particular case the clerk was being paid for work done outside of his own duties in the gaol, although the work was done in the gaol itself.

MR. GEORGE thought if there were very few cases it would be all the easier for the Ministry to follow the New Zealand style, and state in each item what other offices any particular officials held.

THE PREMIER intimated that he would endeavor to have this done on a future occasion.

MR. E. F. SHOLL regarded the Estimates as being placed before the committee for the information of hon. members, and if the information was incorrect or incomplete, it would be impossible to ascertain the meaning of the Estimates. There was too much of the system whereby emoluments were drawn by one officer from several branches of the service. The necessary information could be embodied in the Estimates without much trouble.

MR. LOTON confessed that it had seemed to him a little strange that a man in the Gaol Department should receive £25 for work done in connection with the Government Storekeeper, but he now understood that all the work was done in the Gaol Department. He supposed that the salary in the Gaol Department was not sufficient, and could hardly be raised, and that the Government had adopted this as an easy way to increase his income.

THE PREMIER pointed out that certain officers had been given more than one office, and appeared on the Estimates several times,

but their positions were easily ascertained if members would take the trouble and enquire, or else look at the Estimates themselves. They were very clear.

Item agreed to.

Vote agreed to,

Ecclesiastical Grant, £1771 10s. 1d.

MR. RANDELL suggested that progress should be reported at this stage. There were one or two would like to speak on this subject for the last time, and echo the last words on the Education Question before it was buried in oblivion.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir. J. Forrest) pressed the Committee to go on. The House would have the Bill in a day or two, and there was no necessity for discussion on the subject now. Members could discuss the Bill itself very shortly.

Vote agreed to.

Literary, Scientific and Agricultural Grants, £5,750.

Item — Agricultural and Horticultural Societies, £1,200.

MR. GEORGE enquired whether these grants were made on any particular system. He thought the Government contribution should be on the basis of a societies' revenue.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest) replied there was no particular system beyond the fact that the Government regulated the amount to each society according to its importance and work. The amounts varied from £35 to £50, and the list was published in the *Government Gazette*. If hon. members wanted the particulars in another way, they could have it by calling for a return.

MR. WOOD would like to be informed whether this item included an increased amount to the Dog and Poultry Society.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest) did not know that they were anxious to do a very great deal to bring more dogs into the place, but the breeding of poultry was a valuable thing to encourage and the contribution had been raised, he believed, from £35 to £50.

Item agreed to.

Perth Museum, £2,000.

MR. R. F. SHOLL enquired how this amount was to be expended.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest) replied that it would be handed over to the committee to be expended in the interests of the country by completing the fittings of the Museum, the purchase of specimens, and generally making it a successful Museum.

Bureau of Agriculture, £4,100.

MR. R. F. SHOLL noticed that the Estimates for the Bureau had sprung from £2,600 last year to £4,100 for the present one. No one was readier to admit that the Bureau was doing excellent work than he was. The increase here, however, was a large one, and it was right that Parliament should have more information both as to the revenue of the Bureau as well as the expenditure.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest) thought the Bureau had no receipts other than the amount from the Government. The expenditure was all shown.

MR. R. F. SHOLL believed there must be other receipts. The paper of the Bureau contained advertisements, and these had to be paid for, and a valuable book had been issued which also contained advertisements. Everything should be shown. He thought also that the work of the Bureau would not be regarded with so much suspicion if the Press were admitted to the meetings.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): There is no suspicion now.

MR. R. F. SHOLL was opposed to any of these boards or societies carrying out their business in secret, for secrecy was the cause of suspicion. It had been stated there was a proposal to purchase land for the Bureau. There was nothing on the Estimates, and if there was any truth in the rumor, he hoped the Premier would place the matter on the Estimates, so that it could be discussed.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest) intimated that neither the Government or the Bureau could go outside of the vote, nor intended to.

MR. R. F. SHOLL considered the work of the Bureau would be received with more confidence if more details were given of the expenditure.

MR. LEAKE would like the Premier to inform the committee whether it was intended to in any way alter the *personnel* of the board, or rather the committee of the Bureau.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): We know nothing about that. The Government has nothing to do with the proceedings of the Bureau.

MR. LEAKE asked the question because there was a strong feeling in favor of less Parliamentary representation on the Bureau, and he would like an expression of opinion from the Government on the point. Personally he did not think it right for a Minister

of the Crown to be on this committee. He did not desire in the slightest degree to be personal, and was convinced that so far as the committee itself was concerned, it was composed of practical agriculturists, who were entitled to and obtained the respect of all the country. It would, at the same time, be better for the committee to be composed of gentlemen who could not afterwards be asked to take part in the voting of money to the Board, or to criticise its actions.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest) did not believe there was any feeling against either Ministers of the Crown or members of Parliament being on the committee of the Bureau. The Minister for Lands was a member of the Committee before he joined the Government. So far as the business of the Bureau was concerned it was all done in a formal manner between the secretary and his (the Premier's) department. Instead of being an objection, the presence of the Minister both at the Bureau and with the Government was a great advantage. The gentleman who managed this Bureau were entitled to the warmest thanks of the House and the country. It was difficult to get practical men with sufficient time to take up these duties, and who were prepared to give up that time without any fee or reward whatever. The object of the Bureau was to foster the agricultural interests of the colony, and this duty was being carried out so thoroughly and so satisfactorily that no one should cavil at any of its expenditure. The Bureau was, as yet, in its infancy, but it had done most valuable work, and the money given to it had been wisely expended, with the best of results. The presence of members of this Bureau in the House, or the Ministry, was not adverse to either the interests of the country or of the Bureau. The least that could be done, after the excellent way in which the Bureau was doing its work, would be to pass the vote without question. It was not proper for members to suggest that the proceedings of the Bureau had at any time been regarded with suspicion, and as to any details of the expenditure, he had no doubt they would always be ready to give this. Mention had been made of receipts from advertising, and as to this, it was only right to say that the amount had been tendered to the Treasury, but refused, on the ground that it could not form part of the revenue of the country, and should be used for the purposes of the Bureau.

If the Government accepted the income of a newspaper, they would probably be responsible for any sentiments contained in that journal, and that would not be advisable. Apart from that, it appeared to him that the Bureau had more right to the money than the Government had. The duty of the Government was to find the funds for the Bureau, and not to cavil at the expenditure while the Bureau was doing the excellent work every hon. member admitted to be the case at present.

MR. R. F. SHOLL was quite of the same opinion as to the excellent work done by the Bureau, but that did not alter his opinion as to the necessity for complete details being given. It was the duty of the House to check the expenditure of the Bureau.

MR. CLARKSON quite agreed with what had fallen from the Premier on this question. There was no reason whatever why the Minister for Lands should be precluded from holding a seat on the committee of the Bureau, but every reason why he should hold the two positions. The Bureau was doing splendid work, and should be encouraged, and the country was to be congratulated on securing the services of those who composed it.

MR. HASSELL said he had no doubt the Bureau was of great advantage to the agricultural community, but personally he agreed with the hon. member for Albany that it was not a good thing for members of the Ministry to be on the committee of the Bureau, or for there to be too much parliamentary influence on the Board.

MR. JAMES wished to say that the Premier misunderstood the feeling of the House when he thought there was a single hon. member inclined to quibble at the expenditure of the Bureau. The people of the country were most grateful for the work good done by this body, and it could not be over estimated. Personally he did not think there was any reason to suppose that the fact of members of the House being members of the Bureau also, was going to interfere with their independence in either place. The advantages of such a connection were very clear, and greater good was bound to follow a condition of affairs where the Bureau was brought into direct sympathy with the wishes of Parliament. The members of the Board who were also members of the House, were amongst the best and ablest members of the latter, and if taken away from the former, would mean to reduce the strength of the

Bureau by half. He would like to see even more members on the Bureau, and the Minister of Lands an *ex-officio* member by virtue of his office.

MR. HARPER, as Chairman of the Bureau, was prepared to explain what the hon. member for Gascoyne had regarded as suspicious circumstances. The Colonial Treasurer had already informed the Committee that the revenue from advertising had been tendered to the Treasury but refused, and the Bureau had thereupon determined to lay this amount out in directions where it would be useful, and an expenditure which would not have been passed by the Auditor-General as coming within the Estimates. There was a good deal of the work to be done in various ways not provided on the Estimates, but the figures and details could be produced, and he hardly thought there would be much astonishment or suspicion at the expenditure when it was examined.

MR. R. F. SHOLL had no suspicion that the money voted to the Bureau was pocketed by any member of it, but the whole of the receipts, even if only for three half-pence, should be shown.

THE COMMISSIONER OF CROWN LANDS (Hon. A. R. Richardson) thanked hon. members for the kindly manner in which the Board and its work had been criticised. When he was appointed Minister for Lands he weighed the position most carefully and came to the conclusion that his duty lay in continuing the two offices for the reason that by so doing he could better advance the interests of agriculture, and better serve the interests of the country. The only object for the existence of the Bureau was to promote the interests of agriculture and settle people on the lands of the colony, and the whole of the money voted by Parliament was devoted to this end. There could be no sinister designs in the work of the Board. Its objects were of a practical nature, and were steadily kept in view. A short time ago there were five members of Parliament in the Bureau, and to-day there were only three. It was to the advantage of all parties, that these should continue in their positions.

MR. LOTON could not allow the debate to close without expressing his opinion that the formation of this Bureau had been one of the very best works ever undertaken by the Government. Every gentleman connected with it was distinctly interested in the advance of agriculture. The work of this Bureau should

be viewed with much gratitude. The members did not work in their personal interests but in the interests of the whole colony. At the same time it was the duty of the Government and of Parliament to watch most carefully the manner in which the funds placed at the disposal of the Bureau were expended. It was requisite that they be supplied with the fullest details as to the expenditure. The Bureau was really a new department. It had only recently been created, but had already done excellent work, and such work as could not be done without the expenditure of money. There were several additions to the Estimates and that made it all the more necessary why full details of the expenditure should be given. Between the items for a viticultural expert, inspectors, lecturers, &c., there was a large expenditure, and it was not a small matter the Committee had to deal with. The viticulture expert was doing the proper work of an expert, and the whole efforts of the board were bearing good fruit. He did not intend to cavil at any items of expenditure, but still thought the fullest details should be given. He knew of instances where large sums were expended when to his mind a lesser sum would have done, and it was because of the possibility of such instances as this occurring, the House should have every opportunity to check the expenditure.

MR. HARPER was very glad attention had been called to the Item "Inspectors, lecturers, veterinary surgeons, &c., £1,000," for it would enable him to explain. The Insect Pests' Act had come into force, and its provisions could not be carried out without inspectors and other expenditure. It was like the Scab Act in its operations; neither of these Acts could be properly administered without the expenditure of money. This being the first year it was impossible to state the actual cost, and no further details could be given. It had been thought best to place this amount on the Estimates to administer this particular law. With regard to the remarks of the hon. member for the Swan, he could only say that he would bring the matter before the Board so that fuller details could be given. So far, the expenditure by the Board had been attended with the most beneficial results, and that was the whole aim of the Bureau.

MR. GEORGE would like to direct the attention of the committee to the fact that the Bureau did not seem to be fairly treated by the Government, according to their own

report. He noticed the report stated—"The Bureau would also point out that weeds are permitted to grow apparently unchecked on the banks of the railway lines, and are a continual source of danger to those holding land in the vicinity. The Bureau made representations to the Hon. the Commissioner of Railways, but so far without tangible result."

THE CHAIRMAN: That is not relevant to the question before the Chair.

MR. R. F. SHOLL was surprised that in this item there was included a fee of £40 for the Government Veterinary Surgeon, who was already receiving a handsome retaining fee of £300.

MR. HARPER explained that at first the Bureau was under the belief that they had the right to the services of the veterinary surgeon, but it was informed that the work of the Government did not mean the work of the Bureau as well. The veterinary surgeon was also compelled to write treatises for the journal on all subjects submitted to him. Provision was made for a probably larger expenditure in the direction of veterinary work. It was intended to make a most thorough examination into all the poison plants of the colony, with their chemical properties, and it was possible that, to enable this to be done, it would be necessary to secure the services of other veterinary surgeons in different parts of the colony.

Progress reported.

PUBLIC HEALTH ACT 1886 AMENDMENT BILL.

Introduced by Mr. Traylen, and read a first time.

ADJOURNMENT.

The House, at 11.10 p.m., adjourned until 4.30 p.m. on the following day.